

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP, MAP AND SAMPLE EXERCISE AT
WORKHOUSE LANE, BURBAGE, LEICESTERSHIRE**

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Cremation Urn 6

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SUMMARY

- Trent & Peak Archaeology was commissioned by Bellway Homes to undertake archaeological excavation on land west of Workhouse Lane, Burbage prior to residential development of the site.
- The excavation comprised an area of c.6000m² and was undertaken between 29th April and 20th June 2014 according to a written scheme of treatment which was approved by Teresa Hawtin of Leicestershire County Council. The project was supervised by Kate Mapplethorpe and was managed by Dr Steve Malone.
- Three broad phases of activity were identified: a cluster of Bronze Age pits, including urned cremations, in the east of the site; a curvilinear enclosure of possible Iron Age date in the centre of the site; and Romano-British linear boundary ditches in the east. Stratigraphic relationships could be established between the latter, but the site had been substantially truncated in later ploughing and few features yielded any direct dating evidence.
- Eight urned cremations were uncovered in two clusters together with a series of other small pits containing cremated bone and/or charcoal. The cremation urns were badly truncated, so that only the base and lower body survived. A single rim-shoulder and one decorated body sherd suggest the Deverel-Rimbury tradition and this is confirmed by radiocarbon dating which places this activity in the second half of the 15th or early 14th-century BC. Cremation cemeteries of this date are rare in this part of Leicestershire..
- The enclosure was c. 50m east-west by 60m north-south defined by a (truncated) ditch up to 1.10m wide and 0.45m deep with an entrance 5m wide present on the eastern side. The nature/purpose of this enclosure remains unclear as only a single small pit was identified within the interior. However, truncation by medieval ploughing had removed at least 300-400mm over the Bronze Age cremation urns and probably at least as much elsewhere. Radiocarbon dating of charred material from basal fills of the ditches produced mid-late Iron age dates, but the difficulties of precise calibration in this period produce a wide spread of possible dates and the samples have only a small overlap.
- Cutting the western edge of the Phase 2 enclosure was a north-west to south-east aligned ditch running the length of the excavated area and joined at right-angles along its length by a further ditch running south-west beyond the excavated area. This appears to represent an eastward extension of previously identified Romano-British field systems but no direct dating evidence was retrieved
- The entire site had been truncated by ploughing in the medieval period with remnants of earthwork ridge and furrow surviving across the surface of both fields prior to the start of excavation.

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1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1 Site name: Land west of Workhouse Lane, Burbage, Leicestershire. SP 4424 9198.

1.2 Client: Bellway Homes

1.4 Planning application no: APP/K2420/A/13/2202989

1.5 WSI: Workhouse Lane, Burbage, Leicestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Investigation (Strip, map and Sample Excavation). Report/document No: 036/2014

1.6 Proposed development: Residential estate

1.7 Geology/Soils: The study area sits on bedrock geology consisting of Mercia Mudstone with superficial deposits of Oadby Member Diamicton (BGS 50000 Scale Digital Geology). The site slopes down from the NNW to the SSE and lies at a height of c.120m OD to the north-west, dropping to c. 115m OD to the south-east.

1.8 Previous Archaeological work: University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) evaluation report (Kipling 2014).

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Trent & Peak Archaeology (TPA), part of the York Archaeological Trust, were contracted by Bellway Homes to undertake an archaeological strip, map and sample exercise on an area of land off Workhouse Lane, Burbage (Fig. 1) in anticipation of the construction of 35 residential units with associated highway and engineering operations.

2.2 The excavations were carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation which was approved by Teresa Hawtin Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council.

2.3 Stripping of the area outlined for ground-works was carried out between 29th April and 20th June 2014. Archaeological works were supervised by Kate Mapplethorpe and the project was managed by Dr Steve Malone.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Although there are no HER records regarding the development site itself, an archaeological evaluation and resulting excavation undertaken on land immediately to the south-west of the site uncovered a Neolithic arrowhead (MLE 7235) and Romano-British gullies, ditches and post-holes indicating an agricultural field system. Immediately adjacent to the development site, probably in the area used as playing fields to the west, a scatter of 12 Roman coins, two brooches and pottery along with an Anglo-Saxon Brooch and pottery sherd were found during the 1990s (MLE 2846) (Kipling 2014, 4).

3.2 HER records from outside the immediate surrounding area include:

- An Iron Age or Romano-British beehive quern uncovered at Burbage House Lake (MLE 9028)
- A Romano-British mosaic supposedly found within the Horsepool/The Croft area of the village (MLE 7936)
- The medieval core of the village of Burbage (MLE 2848)
- The 13th century church of St. Catherine (MLE 13031)
- Several post-medieval Listed buildings within the village core (MLE 13029, MLE 13024, MLE 13027, MLE 13034)
- A post-medieval brick-lined well and pit (MLE 10461) recorded during a watching brief on Lutterworth Road

These records show that the village of Burbage and the immediate area has been occupied to some degree since at least the Neolithic period, indicating that there was a possibility that the development site could contain archaeological finds or features.

3.3 The evaluation undertaken on the site by ULAS uncovered several ditches spread across the site, along with several pits and post holes and a curvilinear gully interpreted as a possible roundhouse ditch (Kipling 2014, 17). As a result of these findings a strip, map and sample exercise was requested by the Senior Planning Archaeologist, and as the trenches at the northern and eastern limits of the site were largely blank the strip, map and sample exercise was focused at the central, southern and western areas of the site.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 All topsoil/subsoil stripping was carried out using a toothless ditching bucket with a tracked 360° machine. The strip was carried out in c.15-20cm spits.

4.2 Topsoil stripping began in the south-west corner of the site and was pulled back in a northerly direction. Once the western half of the site was cleared of topsoil, the machine then removed the subsoil. Once the whole of the western field (Area 2) was stripped, the process was repeated on the eastern field (Area 1). The spoil was stockpiled at the north-eastern and eastern limits of Area 1, in the areas shown to be largely blank during the evaluation trenching. A contingency for extension of the strip was in place within these areas in case significant archaeological remains were found within 15m of the edge of the excavation.

4.3 All features were hand cleaned, excavated and recorded to demonstrate plan/form and to recover any datable artefacts. Linear features were 10% excavated, while discrete features were 50% excavated. In the event of significant finds (i.e. burials) within the discrete features, the features were 100% excavated.

4.4 Features were sectioned, photographed and hand-planned, and the entire site was planned by GPS allowing locations and heights of all features to be accurately recorded.

4.5 Spoil and archaeological levels were searched with a metal detector .

5 RESULTS

5.1 The development site consisted of two pasture fields separated by the north-west to south-east treeline (Fig. 2). The eastern field (Area 1) was roughly L-shaped in plan with a line of residential houses and garden in the north-east corner. Workhouse Lane was situated to the east. The western field (Area 2) was rectangular and bordered to the north-west by a large house with a substantial garden. This garden area is to be included within the development, but as the evaluation trench here uncovered no features of interest it was not included in the excavation. The field was bordered to the south-west by an unrelated housing development. Both areas were bordered to the south-east by pasture fields, and given the remnant ridge and furrow visible on the ground it is likely that both were heavily truncated by ploughing.

5.2 Area 1

5.2.1 Machine stripping of topsoil and subsoil revealed a lower layer of compact clay natural varying in colour from pale bluey grey to mid reddish brown with irregular bands and patches of softer mid reddish brown sand within it. The sand was centred around an area containing a large amount of animal burrows which abutted the dividing treeline, close to the gateway between the two fields. This area was left untouched both for ecological reasons and also because the size and number of the burrows suggested a large amount of disturbance to the stratigraphy below.

5.2.2 The strip revealed a large curvilinear feature [036] which ran from the north-west corner of the excavation around to the south towards a terminus approximately 25m from the north-east corner (Fig. 3; Plates 1, 2). A second curvilinear [038] was present 5.1m to the south of [036] with a northern terminus. The alignment of the two curvilinears along with their termini suggests a gateway into a single large enclosure rather than two separate features. The north-western portion of [036] is lost under the dividing treeline, while the south-western portion of [038] is lost in plough disturbance and wheel ruts around the area of the gateway between the two fields.

Two 1m slots and one 2m slot were excavated in [036]: one 1m slot at the northern end, one 1m slot in the centre, and a 2m slot at the terminus. Slot 1, at the northern end, was 0.5m deep and 1.02m wide with an irregular profile that was curved to the west and straight to the east. Slot 2 towards the centre was 1.3m wide and 0.28m deep, with a gently curving profile. Slot 3, the terminus, was 1.2m wide and 0.34m deep. The feature was filled by (037), a mid greyish orange sandy clay containing infrequent inclusions of small angular pebbles. Several large flint nodules were found towards the base, particularly in the terminus.

Three 1m slots were excavated in [038]: one at the terminus, one towards the centre and one to the south-west. Slot three at the south-west was quickly flooded due to a broken field drain close by and was not able to be fully excavated. Slot 1 showed a very differently shaped terminus to that of [036]: 1.22m wide and 0.16m deep, with a very irregular base (possibly as a result of later animal disturbance). Slot 2 at the centre was irregularly shaped, with a steeply sloping eastern edge and gently sloping western edge. The fill (039) was almost identical to (037): a mid greyish orange sandy clay with infrequent inclusions of small angular pebbles.

If the two features are indeed part of the same large enclosure it is apparent that the initial construction of the enclosure was haphazardly undertaken. The depth, width and recorded profiles of the slots all vary, with the north-west area of the feature deep but fairly narrow, the terminus of [036] very wide and shallow and the terminus of [038] narrower and deep. The fill of both is likely to be the result of gradual silting of the ditches while they stood open. No finds were recovered from either ditch.

5.2.3 A cluster of pits was uncovered to the east of [038], four of which contained Bronze Age cremation urns (Figs 4-8 and see section 6 below).

Pit [010] was found 3.2m east of [038], slightly isolated from the rest of the cluster. This was an ovoid pit feature 0.77m by 0.68m in diameter and 0.25m deep, with a bowl-shaped profile. The pit contained Cremation Urn 1 (Find AAB), around which the fill (011) was tightly compacted. It consisted of a mid reddish brown sand containing patches of pale pinkish-yellow clay, a mixture probably created from two different deposits during backfilling.

Approximately 2.7m east of [010] was the main cluster of pits containing [012], [014], [016], [020] and [028] (Fig. 4). [012] was a small sub-circular pit 0.61m x 0.54m in size and 0.23m deep. The pit was bowl-shaped in profile and contained Cremation Urn 2 (Find AAC) (Plate 10). Due to the difficulty of excavating the urn from the fill the western side of the pit was boxed to allow for better access. The fill of the pit was composed of highly compacted mid reddish-brown clayish sand containing patches of pale pink clay.

[014] was a small sub-circular pit measuring 0.51m x 0.44m in diameter and 0.18m deep. The sides slope sharply, the break of slope at the base is sharp and the base itself is largely flat. The pit contained Cremation Urn 3 (Find AAD). Due to the difficulty of excavating the urn the north-west and south-east edges were boxed to allow for greater access. The fill was composed of compacted mid reddish-brown clayish sand with a higher proportion of clay than (011) or (013).

[016] was an ovoid pit 0.58m x 0.41m in diameter and 0.17m deep. It had an irregular profile, sloping more steeply on the northern edge than the southern. The pit contained Cremation Urn 4 (Find AAE) which was surrounded by (017), a compacted dark greyish-black clayish sand with moderately frequent inclusions of charred bone and charcoal, probably the remains of pyre debris related to the cremation contained within the urn (Plate 11).

[020] was an ovoid pit slightly larger than the adjacent pits at 0.86m by 0.6m in diameter and 0.14m deep. It had sloping sides and a flat base and was filled by (021), a dark bluish-black clay material containing infrequent inclusions of small stones and moderately frequent inclusions of charred bone and charcoal.

[028] was a small ovoid pit 0.4 x 0.5m in diameter and 0.18m deep with a bowl-shaped profile. It was filled by (029), a dark greyish-black sandy clay containing moderately frequent inclusions of charred bone and charcoal.

5.2.4 Several pits containing burnt material were uncovered directly adjacent to the eastern limit of the excavation and therefore this edge was extended by approximately

20m in order to uncover any further pits. Once this area had been stripped a second cluster of pits was uncovered in an irregular horseshoe shape. The cluster was made up of pits [026], [030], [060], [062], [064], [068], [074] and [076].

[026] was a small sub-circular pit feature 0.47m x 0.47m in diameter and 0.22m deep. The sides are steep with the northern side slightly steeper than the southern, and the base was flat. The pit was filled by a dark bluish-black silty clay loam (027) containing infrequent inclusions of small stones. Infrequent flecks of charred bone were present and a large amount of charred wood fragments were also present, particularly towards the base.

[030] was an irregularly-shaped pit feature 1.34m x 0.8m in diameter and 0.1m deep. The sides were undulating and sloping and the base was flat and irregular suggesting disturbance from roots. It was filled by (031), a sandy gravel deposit that was mid grey in colour. The deposit contained a high amount of charred material and a very high amount of fire cracked pebbles. Identical pebbles were also spread across the adjacent area, indicating plough disturbance. The presence of heat affected pebbles within the feature may well be related to the presence of burning and charring in the adjacent features.

[060] was a circular pit feature 0.4m x 0.38m in diameter by 0.24m deep with straight, almost vertical sides and a flat base. It contained Cremation Urn 6 (Find AAO) which fitted tightly inside the pit (Fig. 8; Plate 13). The remainder of the pit was filled by (061), a clayish sand deposit that was dark greyish-black in colour and contained inclusions of charred bone.

[062] was a small ovoid pit 0.3m x 0.42m in diameter by 0.28m deep. The sides were steeply sloping and the base was mostly flat. Cremation Urn 7 (Find AAP) was present within the pit and was tightly packed around by (063), a dark grey silty clay deposit containing moderately frequent flecks of charred bone. Due to the fact that the pit was only just big enough for the urn it was necessary to box the western edge of the pit in order to excavate the urn.

[064] was a small pit of uncertain shape and size due to plough damage, but known to have been present due to the presence of a severely damaged cremation urn (Cremation Urn 8, Find AAQ). The fill (065) appears to be an extremely dense silty clay, medium orangey-brown in colour. The fill of the urn (078) appears to have been scattered and spread by the plough and no distinct cut can be seen.

[068] was a small oval pit 0.44m x 0.3m in diameter and 0.16m deep with straight, sloping sides and a flat base. The pit was filled by (069), a dark greyish-black silty deposit containing moderately frequent inclusions of small stones and rounded pebbles. Charcoal was frequently present and several sherds of pottery were recovered from the base. No charred bone was evident.

[074] was an ovoid pit 0.68m x 0.64m in diameter and 0.12m deep with gradually sloping sides and a slightly rounded base. It was filled by (075), a dark grey sandy clay deposit containing frequent flecks of charcoal and infrequent inclusions of rounded pebbles. Chunks of orange clay similar of the natural substratum were present within the fill, suggesting that the deposit was mixed with excavated natural during backfilling.

[076] was a circular pit feature 0.34m by 0.38m in diameter and 0.18m deep, with straight sides and a flat base. It was filled by (077), a dark greyish-black sandy clay containing frequent inclusions of charred bone and stone.

5.2.5 Several isolated pit features were present across the area of the site containing the pit clusters. Although these were not directly spatially related to the pit clusters, their nature and fills/contents make it clear that they are of a similar provenance.

[004] was a small ovoid pit 0.52m x 0.38m in diameter and 0.12m deep with steeply sloping sides and a rounded base. The pit was filled by (005), a dark bluish-black sandy clay containing frequent inclusions of charcoal and charred bone. Infrequent inclusions of small stones are also present. The area immediately surrounding the pit is stained black, indicating leeching of the black residue from the fill into the surrounding natural.

[018] was a small pit situated slightly south-west of the second pit cluster, but not close enough to be definitively classed as part of it. The pit was circular with steep sides and a slightly rounded base, and was approximately 0.38m x 0.34m in diameter and 0.2m deep. The pit contained Cremation Urn 5 (Find AAF) which had, over time, become fractured and skewed due to pressure from the surrounding fill and/or plough damage (Figs 7, 14; Plate 12). The cut of the pit was difficult to make out due to the tight fit of the urn, and the western edge was boxed to allow for access. The pit was filled by (019), a dark greyish-black silty loam material containing a moderately high frequency of charcoal and flecks of charred bone.

[022] was a small sub-circular pit feature 0.3m x 0.31m in diameter and 0.11m deep. The profile was slightly angular due to a large stone that was removed during excavation, but in general the sides were steep and slightly concave and the base was flat and slightly irregular. It was filled by (023), a dark bluish-black clayey silt deposit containing moderately frequent inclusions of charred bone and charcoal. Infrequent inclusions of small rounded stones were also present. The pit is cut by [024], a narrow modern trench 0.06m in width by 0.14m deep which runs the length of the excavated area in alignment with the field boundaries (north-west to south-east). This trench is likely to be the result of deep, modern mole ploughing for drainage purposes. Other such scars are present across the site, many through medieval or post-medieval plough furrows (Figs 15, 16).

[042] was a small ovoid pit 0.55m x 0.43m in diameter with a straight-sided profile and slightly concave base. It was filled by two distinct deposits. The primary deposit (044) was a dark greyish-black silty deposit 0.12m deep with occasional patches of orange clay, containing occasional small pebbles and frequent inclusions of charred bone. The secondary fill (043) was a mid greyish-brown silty clay with orange mottling and a small amount of charred material. It is probable that the primary fill represents a deposit of pyre debris or a small cremation, and the secondary fill consisted of backfilled material deposited in order to fill the rest of the pit (Fig. 8; Plate 14).

[066] was a small pit or post hole 0.48m x 0.44m in diameter and 0.16m deep. The profile of the feature is very irregular, with a wide, flaring upper edge that narrows to a much smaller pit towards the base (no more than 0.05m in diameter). It is filled by (067), a dark blackish-grey clayey silt deposit containing frequent inclusions of charcoal and infrequent inclusions of small rounded stones. The surrounding natural has been stained bluish-grey due to leeching of the black colour from the fill.

[070] was a small pit feature 0.49m x 0.49m in diameter and 0.17m deep. It was irregular in shape but roughly circular, with a bowl-shaped profile. It was filled by (071), a dark bluish-grey clayey silt with patches of paler brownish-grey silt. A small amount of charred bone was present, along with a high frequency of charcoal. The blackish colour has leached into the surrounding natural turning it grey.

[072] was a small, shallow pit feature 0.61m x 0.4m in diameter and 0.1m deep. The sides were irregular but the feature is generally bowl-shaped. It was filled by (073), a mid brownish-grey sandy clayey silt showing root lines of dark blackish charred material indicating that burned vegetation was present above at some point. The fill contained moderately frequent inclusions of rounded pebbles.

[084] was a rectangular pit feature with slightly rounded edges aligned north-east to south-west. It was 2.62m by 0.88m in size and 0.44m deep with straight sides and a V-shaped base, slightly deeper towards the south-east. It was filled by (083), a mottled light brownish grey soft sandy silt containing frequent inclusions of sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles.

5.2.6 The possible roundhouse gully uncovered during the ULAS evaluation was observed during the strip, with the area that was previously investigated obvious from the recent darker backfill. On investigation the gully was found to be very ephemeral and winding in plan rather than ring-shaped, and when taken in context with the nature of the natural substratum across the site (i.e. clay containing bands and patches of sandy material) it is probable that the gully in fact represents a natural feature.

5.2.7 Several plough furrows, field drains and scars from deep mole ploughing (e.g. [024]) for drainage were present aligned north-west to south-east across the site. It is likely that these features are post-medieval or modern in date, and the fact that they cut [036], [038] and [022] is illustrative of the fact that they post-date the archaeological features on the site. Slots through three of the plough furrows ([032], [079] and [081]) were excavated in order to determine size and shape, and once they were determined to be furrows they were drawn and photographed but no further work was undertaken on them.

A modern agricultural animal burial was present in the south-east corner of the extended area.

5.3 Area 2

5.3.1 Machine stripping of Area 2 showed a sandier natural substratum than that of Area 1, although the clay substratum was present towards the south and against the dividing tree line. Flooding was encountered at the south-western end throughout the excavation, but during the strip this area was seen to be devoid of features (other than portions of linear features observed as spanning the site and recorded in other areas).

5.3.2 A single pit was seen in Area 2, located within the enclosure area. [006] was a small ovoid pit feature with steeply sloping sides and a pointed base, 0.58m x 0.5m in diameter by 0.22m deep. It was filled by (007), a compacted dark greyish brown sandy clay mottled with orange sand. The fill was darker towards the centre but with no

discernible horizon between separate fills. The fill contained six small sherds of Bronze Age pottery (AAA, AAG).

5.3.3 Several linear features were uncovered during the strip (Figs 3, 9, 10). As many of these linears intersect it is possible in several cases to suggest phasing.

[040] was a small, south-west to north-east aligned ditch or gully of which a 7m stretch was visible in the north-west corner of Area 2. A slot was excavated from the gully and it was found to be 0.7m wide by 0.28m deep with straight sides and a flat base. It was filled by (041), a mid brownish-grey sandy clay containing moderately frequent inclusions of small rounded pebbles and flint chips. No finds were recovered from the fill. The gully was cut by a modern north-west to south-east field drain ([045]) but it did not intersect with any other features.

[049]/[057] (two numbers were assigned - one to the northern half ([049] and one to the southern [057] - due to a gap from plough damage) was a curvilinear ditch which ran from the north-west corner of Area 2, around to the south-west and then down to the south-east (Fig. 3; Plates 3, 4). Towards the south-east corner and the gateway between the fields the ditch was lost in plough damage. It is likely that this ditch comprises the other half of the enclosure seen in Area 1 ([036] and [038]).

Several slots were excavated along the length of the ditch including where it intersected with [051] and [047] (see below). The ditch was found to be 1.4m wide by 0.52m deep in the north-west corner, lessening to 0.86m wide and 0.34m deep towards the south. The northern portion was found to be slightly stepped in profile, particularly on the north-west edge, with a rounded base, while to the south the profile is more bowl-shaped. The primary fill comprised (056), a light grey clayish sand with flecks of orange and red, no more than 0.1m deep and probably primary silting of this part of the ditch. The secondary fill (050) was a dark greyish-orange silty clay, quite compacted with a small amount of charcoal and infrequent rounded pebbles. This ditch was cut by linear ditches [047] and [051] (see below), indicating it is earlier in date than these features.

[047] was a south-west to north-east aligned linear ditch feature located approximately 19m to the south-east of [040] and roughly parallel. Upon excavation it was found to be 1m wide and 0.39m deep with a V-shaped profile with slightly rounded base (Fig. 10; Plate 5). It was filled by (048), a soft, light orangey-brown sandy clay containing occasional small and medium rounded, sub-rounded and angular quartzite pebbles. This ditch intersects with and terminates at linear feature [052], and appears to be related to it, possibly as part of a rectilinear boundary ditch system (perhaps related to the Roman field systems identified in earlier work immediately to the west).

[051] was a north-west to south-east aligned linear ditch spanning the entire length of Area 2. Four 1m slots were excavated within the feature along with a slot at the intersection of the ditch with [047]. Towards the south-east end the feature was 0.66m wide and 0.28m deep with a wide V-shaped profile with slightly rounded base, whilst at the north-west it was 1.04m wide and 0.31m deep (Figs 9, 10 ; Plates 6, 7).

In the north-westernmost slot there are also two distinct fills, while all other slots show only one. The exact reason for this difference is not known, but one possibility is that this portion of the ditch was recut and made wider once the natural silting had already begun.

The primary fill (055), present only in the north-westernmost slot, was a dark brownish-orange silty sandy clay no more than 0.1m deep, containing a small number of rounded stones. The secondary fill (052) was a paler brownish orange sandy clay containing infrequent rounded and sub-rounded stones.

5.3.4 Several modern features were present within Area 2, with a field drain and a plough furrow being investigated for clarification. Field drain [045] spanned the length of the site on a north-west to south-east alignment, with plough furrow [053] running parallel.

5.3.5 The phasing of the linear features was slightly unclear due to the similarity of the ditch fills in the intersections, but it appears as though [049] was the earliest feature. This was then cut by [047] and [051] which appeared to be contemporary with each other. It is unknown when in the sequence [040] was excavated as it does not intersect with any of the other linear features within the boundaries of the excavation. Its general shape and its alignment almost parallel to [047] could suggest that it is contemporary with [047] and [051]. The enclosure [049]/[057] was cut by the plough furrow [053], and the field drain [045] cut both [040] and [047].

6 Bronze Age pottery from Workhouse Lane, Burbage, Leicestershire

David Knight

6.1 Excavation uncovered a total of eight Bronze Age cremation urns. With the exception of Urn 1 (AAB), which was badly truncated, these were lifted in blocks for later, off-site, controlled excavation. Contents were removed in 25mm spits with a photographic and drawn record of each spit. The record drawings are reproduced here as figures 11-17. Analysis of the contents appears in Section 7 below.

	Finds code	Description	Dimensions d(iameter) h(eight)
Urn 1	AAB	badly truncated and crushed	n/a
Urn 2	AAC	base and lower part of body - upright	d0.19m h0.09m
Urn 3	AAD	base and lower part of body - upright	d0.28m h0.20m
Urn 4	AAE	Base and part of body – upright where surviving	d0.35m h0.22m
Urn 5	AAF	base and lower part of body - distorted	d0.39m h0.35m
Urn 6	AAO	base and lower part of body - upright	d0.36m h0.24m
Urn 7	AAP	base and lower part of body – upright; some distortion	d0.42m h0.24m
Urn 8	AAQ	base and lower part of body – badly distorted/crushed	d0.33+m h0.12m

6.2 The eight urns themselves represent the vast majority of the pottery assemblage. Only four other contexts (007), (050), (052) and (069) yielded any prehistoric pottery, a total of just 18 sherds averaging 5.95g (107.2g all told). Only (069), filling pit [068], has any spatial association with the urned cremations and might represent primary deposition but the sherds here are just as small and fragmentary; the remainder of this material is likely residual.

6.2 The cremation urns and associated pottery were laid out and examined by the author with the aim of providing an assessment of vessel fabrics, forms, surface treatment and typological affinities. Further detailed analysis would be required to characterise precisely the inclusions in the urn fabrics.

6.3 All vessels had been severely truncated by ploughing, and only the lower part of the body and the base survived of each. Insufficient survived of the walls of most of the vessels for the body profile to be established with certainty, but the better preserved examples are plausibly reconstructed as the lower parts of flat-based ellipsoid (barrel-shaped) or cylindrical forms (see fig xx below: Urns 3 and 6 are the best examples). Only one rim has survived: a short length of rim with a flattened lip, pinched out slightly internally and externally, from Urn 4. Some pot surfaces preserve traces of finger smearing or of light brushing with a bundle of twigs or fibres prior to firing (e.g. Urn 5), but decoration is almost entirely absent. The only evidence for intentional ornament is a single body sherd from Urn 8, which preserves an applied or pinched-out cordon embellished with two finger impressions (forming part probably of a continuous row of finger impressions). It should be noted that ornament on Bronze Age cremation urns in southern Britain is commonly restricted to the upper parts of the vessel wall and the rim, and hence the paucity of decoration may be due in part to the loss of the upper parts of these pots as a result of plough truncation.

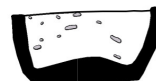
6.4 Each urn preserves thick walls, and was manufactured from a coarse, soft fabric with incompletely oxidised surfaces. Examination of the fabric with a x10 hand lens identified a variety of inclusions, including grog (crushed pottery), calcined bone and quartz. Crushed pottery is a common component of Bronze Age cremation urns, and has often been interpreted as a symbolic link with ancestral groups (by the incorporation of urn fragments derived from antique vessels that in some cases might have been linked to named ancestors: e.g. Knight *et al* 2003, 121). Detailed fabric analysis combined with petrographic analysis would help to characterise more precisely the range of inclusions in the clay matrix and to investigate the possible sources of the raw materials with reporting according to the guidelines of the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 2010).

6.5 The emphasis upon plain ellipsoid and cylindrical forms suggests an affinity with the East Midlands variant of the mid-late Bronze Age Deverel-Rimbury ceramic tradition, dating predominantly from the middle to late second millennium cal BC (Allen *et al* 1987; Knight 2002, 123). Radiocarbon dating of the associated cremated bone (Beta-408679 3120 +/-30; Beta-408680 3160 +/-30) calibrates to the second half of the 15th century BC (perhaps overlapping onto the early 14th century BC). This enhances further our currently poor understanding of the chronological development of this important ceramic tradition. Deverel-Rimbury cemeteries are not widespread in the East Midlands, and the discovery of such a cemetery at Burbage is of considerable regional significance. In view of this, long-term conservation of this fragile ceramic material is recommended.

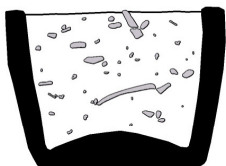
These compare to cremations discovered in Countesthorpe in 2010 dated to 1500-1390 BC and 1500-1310 BC (95% probability). Three heavily truncated cremation burials were recorded, buried in early Bronze Age collared urns. Nine small features containing charcoal were noted in the vicinity as well as a larger pit and a ditch. (LAHS 2012, 37-8). The radiocarbon dating is very close to that obtained here. If the identification of the collared urns is correct, these would be very late examples and exemplify the potential overlaps between the two pottery traditions.

Trial trenching in 2010 quite close by (some 3km to the north-west at Sketchley Brook, Burbage: LAHS 2012, 230) recorded a pit containing a possible cremation (18 sherds of pottery from one vessel and burnt bone) and a gully and undated pit that could be associated.

Urn 2



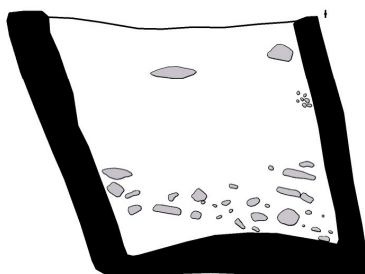
Urn 3



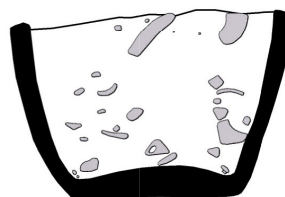
Urn 4



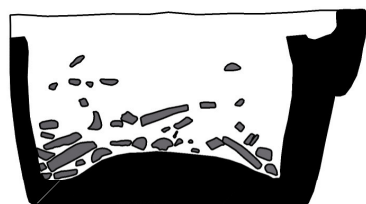
Urn 5



Urn 6



Urn 7



Urn 8



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7. CREMATED BONE ANALYSIS

Kate Mapplethorpe

7.1 Introduction

Cremated or burnt bone was recovered from 27 contexts including the contents of all eight urn burials. The amount of bone recovered varied greatly, with several contexts only containing a very small amount of bone. This analysis provides a precise measurement of the assemblages of cremated bone, along with an assessment of the heat of the fire or pyre in which it was burnt, and whether the bone was 'green' (i.e. still containing a significant amount of water and organic material) or 'dry' (i.e. whether the bone was significantly dehydrated, suggesting that the remains had already skeletonised by the time they were burnt).

7.2 Methods

The analysis was undertaken in accordance with Chapter 4 of the Clfa document *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains* (Brickley and McKinley 2004, 9-13). The cremated remains were passed through sieves of 4mm, 2mm and 1mm and the weight of each was recorded along with its percentage of the whole assemblage. Each fragment was examined for anatomical landmarks and any identifiable fragments were recorded and bagged separately. The remains were examined to determine colour, dehydration and to identify any pyre debris. The level of disturbance of each assemblage was assessed, and the type of deposit was identified (i.e. pyre site, burial, redeposited pyre debris or cremation-related deposit).

7.3 Results

Urn 1 Contents

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	1.12	33.43
2mm	1.97	58.81
1mm	0.26	7.76
Total Weight	3.35	100%

No identifiable fragments of bone were recovered from Urn 1, and only 3.35g of bone was recovered in total. Fragment size was small, with the largest fragment recovered measuring 2.44cm x 0.71cm. This fragment size is too small to observe any useful surface changes that would indicate the state of dehydration of the bone when burnt. The colour of the cremated fragments was almost exclusively white, indicating a temperature of over 600°C. A small amount of pyre debris was present, consisting of small fragments (<2mm) of charred wood and a single tiny fragment of pottery (4.3mm x 2.1mm). Although there were no identifiable fragments of bone recovered, it is assumed that the remains are from a severely truncated urned cremation burial.

Urn 2 Contents

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	147.76	46.92
2mm	109.45	34.75
1mm	57.71	18.33
Total Weight	314.92	100%

The assemblage of cremated bone from Urn 2 consisted of a total of 314.92g of material from a truncated and moderately disturbed urned cremation burial. Many fragments of long bone were recovered, although due to the lack of anatomical landmarks none could be fully identified. The assemblage contained a small amount of pyre debris (less than 1g, mostly consisting of charred wood), along with several tiny fragments of pottery less than 0.5cm in size.

The largest fragment of bone measured 2.01cm x 1.13cm. The colour of the deposit was approximately 90% white and 10% blue/grey, indicating cremation at a high temperature (over 600°C). The blue/grey fragments are likely to be from areas that were slightly shielded from the full heat of the pyre. The presence of transverse and longitudinal crack on the bone fragments, along with several showing U-shaped cracks indicates that the bone was 'green' (i.e. still containing a significant organic component, likely to be still covered by flesh) when burnt.

Urn 3 Contents

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	270.90	64.92
2mm	138.44	33.17
1mm	7.98	1.91
Total Weight	417.32	100%

The assemblage of cremated bone from Urn 3 consisted of a total of 417.32g of material from a truncated and moderately disturbed urned cremation burial. Pyre debris was present but minimal, consisting of small fragments (<2mm in size) of mostly charred wood, and several small fragments of pottery were found. The majority of the bone fragments were over 4mm in size, with the largest measuring 2.47cm x 1.93cm in size. Transverse and longitudinal cracking was observed, indicating a 'green' cremation.

Nine fragments of cranium were identified, along with three fragments of vertebra, five fragments of femoral or humeral head, one tooth root and one fragment of hand phalanx. The remains were over 90% white in colour, with blue/grey fragments making up less than 10% of the assemblage. As with the remains from Urn 2, this probably indicates an incomplete cremation at a high temperature (over 600°C).

Urn 3 (0015)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	4.33	85.07
2mm	0.71	13.95
1mm	0.05	0.98
Total Weight	5.09	100%

The assemblage from (0015) contained a total of 5.09g of material. The largest fragment was 1.82cm by 1.07cm in size. No identifiable fragments were present. The material was white in colour, with a small amount of blue/grey, indicating a cremation at a high temperature over 600°C. Transverse and longitudinal cracks were observed, indicating the bone was 'green' when burnt.

The deposit was associated with Urn 3 and therefore the bone recovered may in fact be part of the disturbed assemblage from inside the urn. As such is it not deemed to be a cremation burial, but a cremation-related deposit.

Urn 4 Contents

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	46.21	63.92
2mm	23.81	32.94
1mm	2.27	3.14
Total Weight	72.29	100%

The assemblage of cremated bone from Urn 4 consisted of a total of 72.29g of material from a truncated and moderately disturbed urned cremation burial. Pyre debris was not present, although several small fragments of pottery were included. The largest fragment of bone measured 2.11cm x 1.44cm in size. U-shaped cracks along with transverse and longitudinal cracks were observed, indicating that the bone was 'green' when burnt.

Two fragments of skull were identified (one fragment of cranium and one fragment from the nasal area), and the majority of the larger fragments of bone appeared to be from the shafts of long bones. The remains were approximately 95% white in colour, with the remaining 5% blue/grey in colour, indicating an almost complete cremation at a high temperature.

Urn 5 Contents

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	230.20	80.08
2mm	53.58	18.64
1mm	3.69	1.28
Total Weight	287.47	100%

The assemblage from Urn 5 consisted of a total of 287.47g of material from a moderately disturbed and truncated urned cremation burial. A small amount of pyre debris was present, measuring no more than 2mm in diameter and consisting mostly of charred wood.

The largest fragment of bone measured 2.20cm by 1.722.22cm in size and was identified as a fragment of cranium. A further 13 fragments of cranium were identified within the assemblage, along with a fragment of zygomatic arch. An intermediate hand phalanx was recovered which had fragmented into two pieces during the cremation process, and a single fragment of tooth root was also identified. The remains were almost exclusively white in colour, indicating a thorough cremation at over 600°C, and transverse, longitudinal and U-shaped cracking indicated that the bone was 'green' when burnt.

Urn 6 Contents

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	1663.56	87.99
2mm	162.33	8.59
1mm	64.78	3.42

Total Weight	1890.67	100%
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The assemblage from Urn 6 consisted of a total of 1890.67g of material from a slightly truncated and disturbed urned cremation burial. A small amount of pyre debris was present, most of it fused to bone fragments, which consisted mostly of charred wood. The largest fragment of bone measured 4.82cm by 3.87cm in size.

A single identifiable fragment of long bone was identified, which was a 5.96cm long section of radius. 30 undiagnostic fragments of cranium were identified, along with a fragment of cruciform eminence from the occipital, a fragment of petrous portion from the parietal, one fragment of left supraorbital margin, one fragment of right supraorbital margin showing porotic hyperostosis on the supraorbital ridge, and two mandibular condyles. Four undiagnostic fragments of vertebral body were identified, along with three cervical vertebral bodies and the posterior part of an axis (second cervical vertebra). One rib fragment was identified. Several hand bones were found: A single distal hand phalanx, two fragments of distal metacarpal, two fragments of proximal hand phalanx (one proximal end and one distal end), and a single fractured pisiform. A total of 14 distinct tooth roots were identified, composed of 18 fragments. Finally, it is worth noting the unusual inclusion of an incus, one of the ossicles of the inner ear. This was likely protected from fire damage by the temporal bone which surrounded it, and was then shaken loose during excavation.

The remains were approximately 80-85% white and 15-20% blue/grey in colour, indicating an incomplete cremation at a moderate-high temperature. This is supported by the fragment size of much of the assemblage, which is larger by far than the average fragment size of the assemblages from the other seven urns. Transverse, longitudinal and U-shaped fracturing indicates that the bone was 'green' when burnt.

Urn 7 Contents

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	412.77	93.21
2mm	28.45	6.42
1mm	1.60	0.37
Total Weight	442.82	100%

The assemblage from Urn 7 consisted of a total of 442.82g of material from a disturbed and truncated urned cremation burial. Fragment size was small on average, with the largest fragment measuring 2.43cm by 1.13cm in size. Small fragments of pyre debris were present (<2mm), mostly consisting of charred wood.

Six tooth roots were identified, along with a single distal foot phalanx, probably from the 5th toe, and a single skull fragment. The remains were approximately 95% white and 5% blue/grey, indicating an almost complete cremation at a high temperature. Fracture patterning was transverse and longitudinal, with a small amount of U-shaped fractures, indicating that the bone was 'green' when burnt.

Urn 8 Contents

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	76.83	65.78
2mm	35.72	30.58

1mm	4.25	3.64
Total Weight	116.80	100%

The assemblage from Urn 8 consisted of a total of 116.80g of material from a highly truncated and disturbed urned cremation burial. The average fragment size was very small, with the largest fragment measuring 2.06cm by 0.58cm in size. Pyre debris was extremely scarce, with the only inclusion being tiny fragments (<1mm) of charred wood.

The only identifiable fragment present within the assemblage was a small fragment of cranium, probably from one of the parietals. The material was almost exclusively white in colour, indicating a near-complete cremation at a high temperature greater than 600°C. The fragment size is very small on average, so fracture patterning is not easily discernable. However, the shape of several of the larger fragments indicate that it is more likely that the bone was 'green' when burnt than 'dry'.

ES7 (0019)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	262.16	58.75
2mm	150.95	33.83
1mm	33.11	7.42
Total Weight	446.22	100%

The assemblage from ES7 consisted of a total of 446.22g of material. Fragment size was generally small, with the largest fragment measuring 2.28cm by 1.69cm. A small amount of charred wood was found, indicating that the bone is a cremation-related deposit. Context (0019) was the fill of the pit within which Urn 5 was found, and therefore the bone may be part of the cremation which had been disturbed by the plough.

Only four fragments of cranium were identified, one of which shows a small amount of porosity. The bone was almost exclusively white in colour, indicating a high pyre temperature of over 600°C. The bone surfaces show transverse and longitudinal fractures indicating that the bone was 'green' when burnt.

ES4 (0021)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	14.83	55.03
2mm	10.20	37.85
1mm	1.92	7.23
Total Weight	26.95	100%

The assemblage from ES4 consisted of a total of 26.95g of material from a truncated cremation-related deposit. The largest fragment was 1.38cm by 0.94cm in size. Pyre debris was absent. Context (0021) is the fill of a pit immediately adjacent to the pit within which Urn 4 was found, and may be related to this cremation burial.

No identifiable fragments of bone were found. The bone was almost exclusively white in colour, indicating a high pyre temperature of over 600°C. The bone fragment size was generally too small to determine fracture patterning, but small transverse cracks on the

surface of several of the larger pieces would indicate that the bone was more likely 'green' than 'dry' when burnt.

ES3 (0023)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	4.13	67.15
2mm	1.65	26.83
1mm	0.37	6.02
Total Weight	6.15	100%

The assemblage from ES3 contains a total of 6.15g of bone from a truncated cremation-related deposit. The largest fragment was 0.93cm by 1.16cm in size. Two very small fragments of burnt wood (<1mm) were present, as was one larger piece (<5mm). However, no identifiable fragments of bone were found. The bone was white, indicating a high pyre temperature of over 600°C, but no clear fracture patterns were present. Therefore, the organic component of the bone prior to burning could not be determined. It is possible that this context represents the remains of domestic cooking activity rather than the remains of a cremation burial or cremation-related deposit. The small bone fragment size precludes any positive species identification.

ES5 (0027)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	0	0
2mm	0.27	96.43
1mm	0.01	3.57
Total Weight	0.28	100%

The assemblage from ES5 consisted of a total of 0.28g of material from a truncated cremation-related deposit. The largest fragment measured 0.34cm by 0.47cm in size. A very small amount of pyre debris was identified within the assemblage, consisting of charred wood, but no identifiable fragments of bone were present. The bone was white in colour, indicating a high pyre or fire temperature. No fracture patterning was identifiable. It is possible that the deposit is not in fact related to human cremation; the small amount of bone present and the small size of the fragments could indicate waste from domestic activities rather than funerary activity. However, the pit's proximity to urned burials would suggest otherwise.

ES28 (0027)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	0	0
2mm	0.61	91.04
1mm	0.06	8.96
Total Weight	0.67	100%

The assemblage from ES28 consisted of a total of 0.67g of material from a truncated cremation-related deposit. The largest fragment was 0.68cm by 0.28cm in size. Several tiny grains of pyre debris were present within the assemblage, probably charred wood

fragments, but none of the bone fragments were identifiable. The bone was white or yellowish-white, indicating a high pyre temperature of over 600°C. No fracture patterning was observable due to the small size of the bone fragments. As with ES5, which was recovered from the same feature, it is possible (but unlikely) that the bone represents cooking waste rather than a cremation burial.

ES6 (0029)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	17.80	31.65
2mm	31.65	56.28
1mm	6.79	12.07
Total Weight	56.24	100%

The assemblage from ES6 contained a total of 56.24g of material from a cremation-related deposit. The largest fragment measured 1.77cm by 0.86cm in size. No identifiable fragments of bone were recovered, although a small amount of pyre debris was identified, consisting of charred wood. The bone was almost exclusively white in colour, indicating a high pyre temperature. The amount of bone present is small, although the possibility that it is the remains of a truncated cremation burial cannot be dismissed. However, context (0029) was very close to the pits containing Urns 2, 3 and 4, indicating that it is possible that this deposit was instead related to one of these cremation burials.

ES12 (0037)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	0.05	100
2mm	0	0
1mm	0	0
Total Weight	0.05	100%

The assemblage from ES12 consisted of a single fragment of burnt bone weighing 0.05g and measuring 0.49cm by 0.56cm in size. The fragment was mostly white in colour, with a small area of pale blue/grey on the only area of cortical bone (present on the exterior surface of the bone and the internal surface surrounding the marrow cavity) remaining. The fragment of bone is so tiny that it cannot be identified as either human or non-human. The bone was found within an environmental sample from a linear feature rather than from a pit, and so it is probable that it is not a deliberate burial of human remains.

ES9 (0043)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	1.94	46.19
2mm	2.15	51.19
1mm	0.11	2.62
Total Weight	4.2	100%

The assemblage from ES09 consisted of a total of 4.2g of bone from a cremation-related deposit. No pyre debris was present within the assemblage. Fragment size was generally very small, with one larger fragment measuring 1.48cm by 0.78cm in size. The fragments

were almost exclusively white in colour, with a small amount of blue/grey colour present (<5%). Fracture patterning on the largest fragment of bone suggests that the bone was 'green' when burnt.

ES10 (0044)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	8.61	42.35
2mm	8.00	39.35
1mm	3.72	18.30
Total Weight	20.33	100%

The assemblage from ES10 consisted of a total of 20.33g of bone from a cremation-related deposit. Two tiny fragments of charred wood were present within the assemblage. The largest fragment of bone measured 1.27cm by 1.01cm in size, although the majority of the fragments were much smaller. The bone was almost exclusively white, and the fracture patterning suggests that the bone was 'green' when burnt. Context (0044) was from the same feature as (0043), with (0044) being the primary fill of the pit and (0043) being the secondary. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that the two are related.

ES16 (0050)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	0	0
2mm	0.01	50
1mm	0.01	50
Total Weight	0.02	100%

The assemblage from ES16 consisted of a total of 0.02g of bone. No pyre debris was present. The size of the assemblage was so small that it is very unlikely that this is related to a cremation burial. The context was the fill of a linear ditch, rather than a pit, which further supports this theory. The size of the fragments is so small that it is impossible to determine whether they are human or non-human. Therefore, it is not possible to tell whether these fragments of bone are redeposited from a nearby cremation burial or whether they are waste from domestic cooking. However, the latter seems more likely.

ES15 (0058)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	0	0
2mm	0.10	90.91
1mm	0.01	9.09
Total Weight	0.11	100%

The assemblage from ES15 consisted of a total of 0.11g of bone. Only four fragments were present, the largest of which measured 0.84cm by 0.37cm in size. The fragments were white in colour, indicating a high fire temperature. It was not possible to determine whether the fragments were human or non-human due to their small size. Context (0058) was the fill of a curvilinear ditch, making it likely that they are not the result of a

deliberate burial of human remains. It is more likely that they are the waste from a domestic cooking fire.

ES21 (0063)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	11.59	57.49
2mm	6.77	33.58
1mm	1.80	8.93
Total Weight	20.16	100%

The assemblage from ES21 contained a total of 20.16g of bone from a truncated cremation-related deposit. No pyre debris was present within the assemblage. The largest fragment of bone measured 1.54cm by 1.05cm in size.

Five fragments of tooth root were present within the assemblage, comprising four distinct roots. A distal hand phalanx was also present. The bone was approximately 95% white and 5% dark grey indicating a high pyre temperature over 600°C. The dark grey fragments were largely tooth root fragments, the difference in colour likely due to the roots being protected from the full heat of the pyre inside the jaw. Transverse and longitudinal fracture patterns, along with one fragment showing a U-shaped fracture, indicating the bone was 'green' when burnt.

Context (0063) is the fill from the pit which contained Urn 7, and it is likely that the bone contained within this assemblage is related to this burial, probably disturbed during truncation by the plough.

ES24 (0065)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	20.34	59.53
2mm	13.63	39.89
1mm	0.20	0.58
Total Weight	34.17	100%

The assemblage from ES24 contained a total of 34.17g of material from a cremation-related deposit. No pyre debris was present within the assemblage. The largest fragment of bone measured 2.17cm by 0.85cm.

A fragment of proximal fibula was present within the assemblage, along with a small fragment of tooth root and a fragment of distal hand phalanx. The bone was predominantly white in colour, indicating a high pyre temperature of over 600°C. Fracture patterns on the bone surface indicate that the bone was 'green' when it was burnt.

ES27 (0067)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	1.39	29.44
2mm	2.51	53.18
1mm	0.82	17.38

Total Weight	4.72	100%
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The assemblage from ES27 consisted of a total of 4.72g of material. No pyre debris was present within the assemblage. The largest fragment of bone present measured 1.23cm by 0.64cm in size and the bone was exclusively white or whitish yellow in colour. The fragment size is too small to identify any fracture patterns, and it was not possible to identify any fragments to anatomical element for the same reason. Therefore, it cannot be definitively stated that the bone is human. However, the proximity of the pit to others containing cremation burials suggests that the bone recovered from ES27 is likely to be related.

ES29 (0068)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	16.75	74.12
2mm	5.84	25.84
1mm	0.01	0.04
Total Weight	22.60	100%

The assemblage from ES29 consisted of a total of 22.6g of material from a cremation-related deposit. No pyre debris was present. The bone fragment size was small, with the largest fragment measuring 1.80cm by 1.36cm in size. The assemblage was predominantly white in colour (>95%), with several small fragments completely blue/grey or with blue/grey patches, indicating a high fire temperature of over 600°C. The fragments showed transverse, longitudinal and U-shaped fracture patterns, indicating that the bone was 'green' when burnt. Context (0068) was situated in close proximity to two urned cremation burials and therefore is likely to constitute a truncated and disturbed cremation-related deposit, if not a separate cremation burial.

ES17 (0071)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	0.29	42.03
2mm	0.39	56.52
1mm	0.01	1.45
Total Weight	0.69	100%

The assemblage from ES17 consisted of a total of 0.69g of material. Fragment size was very small on average, with the largest fragment being 0.50cm by 0.62cm in size. The assemblage was predominantly white in colour (>95%), with one fragment charred black but not calcined. This indicates that while most of the bone was burnt at a high temperature of over 600°C, this fragment was shielded from the hottest part of the fire and was burnt at a lower temperature of between around 300°C and 600°C. The fragments were too small to determine whether the remains were 'green' or 'dry' when burnt, and no identifiable fragments were present. It cannot be positively determined, therefore, that the bone fragments are human. The pit from which the fragments were recovered, [0070], was not situated in close proximity to any of the urned cremation burials, and so cannot be assumed to be a cremation-related deposit on this basis.

ES22 (0073)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	12.07	37.92
2mm	12.21	38.36
1mm	7.55	23.72
Total Weight	31.83	100%

The assemblage from ES22 consisted of a total of 31.83g of material. A small amount of pyre debris, mainly small fragments of charred wood <2mm in size, was present. The assemblage was mostly white in colour (approximately 75%) with frequent blue/grey patches, indicating a high fire temperature of over 600°C. Patterns of fragmentation were not obvious due to the generally small fragment size, but one of the larger fragments showed a small amount of transverse fracturing as well as longitudinal, suggesting that the bone was 'green' when burnt. No identifiable fragments were observed, and the largest fragment measured 2.01cm by 1.91cm in size. This assemblage cannot be ruled out as domestic cooking waste, but its proximity to a cluster of cremation burials suggests that it is likely to be related.

ES26 (0073)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	0	0
2mm	0.39	69.64
1mm	0.17	30.36
Total Weight	0.56	100%

The assemblage from ES26 (from the same context as ES22) consisted of a total of 0.56g of material. Several small fragments of charred wood <2mm in size were present within the assemblage. The bone was predominantly white in colour (>95%), with some fragments showing a blue/grey colour. This indicates a high fire temperature of over 600°C. It was not possible to observe patterns of fracturing due to the small size of the fragments, the largest of which was a mere 0.86cm by 0.47cm in size. It is reasonable to assume that this assemblage is part of the same larger assemblage as the bone from ES22, as it was recovered from the same context.

ES32 (0073)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	1.59	59.33
2mm	0.96	35.82
1mm	0.13	4.85
Total Weight	2.68	100%

The assemblage from ES32 (from the same context as ES22 and ES26) consisted of a total of 2.68g of material. A very small amount of pyre debris was present, comprised of charred wood fragments <2mm in size. The assemblage was white in colour, indicating a high fire temperature of over 600°C. It was not possible to observe patterns of fracturing due to the small size of the fragments, the largest of which was 0.99cm by 0.72cm in size.

It can be assumed that this sample and the material from ES22 and ES32 are all part of the same assemblage.

ES33 (0075)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	0.10	35.72
2mm	0.17	60.71
1mm	0.01	3.57
Total Weight	0.28	100%

The assemblage from ES33 consisted of a total of 0.28g of material only. No pyre debris was identified. The assemblage was white in colour, indicating a high fire temperature of over 600°C. The fragments were small in size, with the largest being only 0.62cm by 0.38cm in size. Due to the small fragment size it was no possible to observe fracture patterns, so it is not known whether the bone was 'green' or 'dry' when burnt. No identifiable fragments were present, and therefore it is not known whether the bone is human or non-human. It can be assumed from the close proximity of this context to several urned cremation burials that it is a cremation-related deposit.

ES25 (0075)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	0.57	98.28
2mm	0.01	1.72
1mm	0	0
Total Weight	0.58	100%

The assemblage from ES25 consisted of a total of 0.58g of material, comprising four fragment of bone. The bone was predominantly white in colour (approximately 80%) with a small amount of blue/grey colour present. This indicates a high fire temperature of over 600°C. The fragments were small in size, with the largest measuring 0.76cm by 0.85cm in size. Due to this small size it was difficult to see any fracture patterning on the bone surface. However, a small transverse crack on the largest fragment suggests that the bone was probably 'green' when burnt. The material is from the same context as ES33, and is likely to be part of the same assemblage.

ES30 (0077)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	308.12	68.23
2mm	120.26	26.63
1mm	23.18	5.13
Total Weight	451.56	100%

The assemblage from ES30 consisted of 451.56g of material from an un-urned cremation burial. A small amount of pyre debris was present in the form of small fragments of charred wood <2mm in size. The bone was predominantly white in colour (>90%) with fragments and areas of blue/grey, indicating a high pyre temperature of over 600°C. Transverse, longitudinal and U-shaped cracking suggests that the bone was 'green' when burnt. A total of 16 fragments of cranium were identified, along with one fragment of

tooth root. Although this deposit was not contained within an urn or other extant container, it is likely that it is the remains of a cremation burial or redeposited pyre debris. The feature from which it was recovered, [0076], was within a cluster of pits, two of which contained urned cremation burials.

ES31 (0078)

Sieve Size	Bone weight (g)	Percentage
4mm	127.01	67.96
2mm	51.18	27.39
1mm	8.69	4.65
Total Weight	186.88	100%

The assemblage from ES31 contained a total of 186.88g of material from a cremation-related deposit. Several small fragments of pyre debris were present, consisting of charred wood. The bone was largely white in colour (>90%), with the remainder blue/grey. This indicates a high pyre temperature of over 600°C. Transverse and longitudinal fracturing was present, indicating that the bone was 'green' when burnt. Six fragments of cranium were identified, along with one small fragment of tooth root. Context (0078) was a spread of disturbed bone between features [0076] and [0064], probably the result of plough damage to [0064], which contained an urned cremation burial. Therefore this assemblage is likely to be related to Urn 8.

7.4 Conclusions

The analysis of the cremated remains from within the eight urns shows that all eight cremations were undertaken in a similar manner. All were cremations of 'green' bone, probably of a recently deceased individual rather than an individual who had been previously interred, and all were cremated at a temperature of over 600°C (with the exception perhaps of Urn 6, which was likely to have been slightly cooler, between 400°C and 600°C). All of the urns had been disturbed to some extent, with the worst affected being Urn 1 and Urn 8. This is probably due to plough damage.

Of the remaining assemblages of cremated bone, a total of 10 ((0019), (0021), (0029), (0043), (0044), (0063), (0065), (0068), (0077) and (0078)) either contained identifiable fragments or were within sufficiently close proximity to an urned burial to be classed as a cremation-related deposit. In fact, the assemblage from (0077) could actually be an un-urned cremation burial. The remaining 9 did not contain enough bone to be reliably classed as a cremation-related deposit. As the bone fragments within these assemblages were too small to be identified as human or non-human, it is not possible to identify whether they are the remains of domestic cooking waste or are redeposited fragments from one of the cremation burials. The former is more likely in most cases, due to the fact that several of these contexts are not situated at all close to any of the cremation burials.

7.5 Recommendations

The presence of eight urned cremation burials, one un-urned cremation burial and nine cremation related deposits indicate that this site was used as a cremation cemetery. It is recommended that the cremated remains are deposited with the Leicestershire Museums service for long-term storage. No further analysis is necessary, however if further excavation revealing additional burials is undertaken within the immediate area, the results of this analysis should be referred to.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY

By Alison Wilson

8.1 Introduction

This report provides an interim assessment of the palaeo-environmental samples retrieved during an archaeological strip, map and sample exercise carried out by Trent & Peak Archaeology, between the 29th of April and the 20th of June 2014, on behalf of Bellway Homes

Following English Heritage guidelines, the sample size taken was 40 litres when possible, although 10 litre samples were taken when features were too small for full sampling.

The samples are listed in table form below, with a brief description of the deposit from which the samples were taken and any environmental material found.

8.2 Method

The soil samples were processed in the following manner:

Sample weight and volume was measured prior to processing and a sub-sample was removed in case any further analysis should be required. The samples were then processed using a 'Siraf' flotation tank (Williams 1973), using a sieve with a 250 μ mesh and an internal 1mm mesh for the residue.

Both the residues and flots were dried. A total of 490 litres of soil were processed in this way.

The weight and volume of the residue was recorded, before it was sorted by eye for any environmental and archaeological finds. These were picked out, noted on the assessment sheet and bagged. A magnet was run through the residue in order to recover any magnetised material such as hammerscale. The residue has been kept as part of the archive record.

The flot of each sample was studied using 10x magnification and the presence of environmental finds noted and their abundance and species recorded on the assessment sheet. The flots were then bagged and along with the finds from the residue constitute the material archive of the samples.

8.3 Sample Contents

Table 1: environmental finds from Urn 1, Feature [010], fill (011)

Feature description: Cremation urn (find code AAB)

Sample volume before processing: 11 litres

Sample weight before processing: 7 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Average charcoal

Table 2: environmental finds from Urn 2, Feature [012], fill (013)

Feature description: Cremation urn (Find code AAC)

Sample volume before processing: 3 litres

Sample weight before processing: 2.5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Good, charcoal and bone

Table 3: environmental finds from Urn 3, Feature [014], fill (015)

Feature description: Cremation urn (find code AAD)

Sample volume before processing: 5 litres

Sample weight before processing: 3.5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 51-150 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Good, charcoal and bone

Table 4: environmental finds from Urn 3, Feature [014], fill (015)

Feature description: Fill from around cremation urn

Sample volume before processing: 6 litres

Sample weight before processing: 5.5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 51-150 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Charred grain	Abundance 1-10, degraded, possibly barley (<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>)
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Excellent, grain, bone and charcoal

Table 5: environmental finds from Urn 4, Feature [016], fill (017)

Feature description: Cremation urn (find code AAE)

Sample volume before processing: 6 litres

Sample weight before processing: 5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Charred seed	Abundance 1-10, degraded, possibly brome (<i>Bromus sp.</i>)
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Excellent, seed, bone and charcoal

Table 6: environmental finds from Urn 5, Feature [018], fill (019)

Feature description: cremation urn (find code AAF)

Sample volume before processing: 25 litres

Sample weight before processing: 17 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Excellent, seed, bone and charcoal

Table 7: environmental finds from Urn 6, Feature [060], fill (061)

Feature description: Cremation urn (find code AAO)

Sample volume before processing: 13 litres

Sample weight before processing: 9 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 11-50 indet. comminuted fragments, <2mm
Charred seed	Abundance 1-10, grass (<i>Poaceae</i>)
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
Molluscs, indet.	Abundance 1-10
C14 potential	Good, seed, bone and charcoal

Table 8: environmental finds from Urn 7, Feature [062], fill (063)

Feature description: Cremation urn (find code AAP)

Sample volume before processing: 19 litres

Sample weight before processing: 13 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Good, bone and charcoal

Table 9: environmental finds from Urn 8, Feature [064], fill (065)

Feature description: Cremation urn (find code AAQ)

Sample volume before processing: 15 litres

Sample weight before processing: 10.5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 11-50 indet. comminuted fragments, <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Good, bone and charcoal

Table 10: environmental finds from feature [036], Fill, (037)

Feature description: Large, curvilinear feature, possibly part of a large enclosure filled with a mid greyish orange sandy clay containing infrequent inclusions of small angular pebbles.

Environmental sample number: 02

Sample volume before processing: 9 litres

Sample weight before processing: 9 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
C14 potential	Average, charcoal only

Table 11: environmental finds from feature [022], (023)

Feature description: Small sub-circular pit filled with a dark bluish-black clayey silt deposit containing moderately frequent inclusions of charred bone and charcoal

Environmental sample number: 03

Sample volume before processing: 3 litres

Sample weight before processing: 3 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 11-50 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Good, charcoal and bone

Table 12: environmental finds from feature [020], fill (021)

Feature description: Ovoid pit filled with a dark bluish-black clay material containing infrequent inclusions of small stones and moderately frequent inclusions of charred bone and charcoal.

Environmental sample number: 04

Sample volume before processing: 14 litres

Sample weight before processing: 15 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Charred grain	Abundance 1-10, degraded, possibly barley and Spelt (<i>Triticum spelta</i>)
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Excellent, grain, bone and charcoal

Table 13: environmental finds from feature [026], fill (027)

Feature description: Small sub-circular pit filled with a dark bluish-black silty clay loam containing infrequent inclusions of small stones. A large amount of charcoal and infrequent flecks of charred bone were present.

Environmental sample number: 05

Sample volume before processing: 6 litres

Sample weight before processing: 6 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
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Charcoal	Abundance 11-50 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
C14 potential	Average, charcoal

Table 14: environmental finds from feature [028], fill (029)

Feature description: Small ovoid pit filled with a dark greyish-black sandy clay containing moderately frequent inclusions of charred bone and charcoal.

Environmental sample number: 06

Sample volume before processing: 16 litres

Sample weight before processing: 17 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Charred grain	Abundance 1-10, degraded, possibly bread wheat
Charred seed	Abundance 1-10, Hazelnut shell fragments (<i>Corylus avellana</i>)
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Excellent, Nutshell, grain, bone and charcoal

Table 15: environmental finds from feature [018], fill (019)

Feature description: Small pit filled with a dark greyish-black silty loam material containing a moderately high frequency of charcoal and flecks of charred bone. Contained cremation urn 5.

Environmental sample number: 07

Sample volume before processing: 17 litres

Sample weight before processing: 17.5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 11-50 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Average, charcoal

Table 16: environmental finds from feature [006], fill (007)

Feature description: Small ovoid pit filled with compacted dark greyish brown sandy clay mottled with orange sand

Environmental sample number: 08

Sample volume before processing: 25 litres

Sample weight before processing: 28 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 11-50 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Good, charcoal and bone

Table 17: environmental finds from feature [042], fill [043]

Feature description: Small ovoid pit filled with a secondary fill of mid greyish-brown silty clay with orange mottling and a small amount of charred material.

Environmental sample number: 09

Sample volume before processing: 17 litres

Sample weight before processing: 15 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 11-50 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Charred grain	Abundance 1-10, hulled barley
Cremated bone	An abundance of >250
C14 potential	Excellent, grain, bone and charcoal

Table 18: environmental finds from feature [042], fill (044)

Feature description: Small ovoid pit, primary fill a dark greyish-black silty deposit 0.12m deep with occasional patches of orange clay, containing occasional small pebbles and frequent inclusions of charred bone

Environmental sample number: 10

Sample volume before processing: 21 litres

Sample weight before processing: 16.5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 151-250 indet. comminuted fragments, most <2mm
Charred grain	Abundance 1-10, degraded, possibly spelt
Charred chaff	Abundance 1-10, indet.
Charred seed	Abundance 1-10, possibly Fool's Parsley (<i>Aesthusa cynapium</i>)
Cremated bone	An abundance of 51-150
C14 potential	Excellent, grain, chaff, seed, bone and charcoal

Table 19: environmental finds from feature [030], fill (031)

Feature description: Irregularly shaped pit filled with a mid grey sandy gravel deposit.

Environmental sample number: 11

Sample volume before processing: 14 litres

Sample weight before processing: 12.5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of 1-10
C14 potential	Good, charcoal and bone

Table 20: environmental finds from feature [036], fill (037)

Feature description: Large curvilinear feature filled with a mid greyish orange sandy clay containing infrequent inclusions of small angular pebbles.

Environmental sample number: 12

Sample volume before processing: 21 litres

Sample weight before processing: 23 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 1-10 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Charred grain:	Abundance 1-10, degraded indet. fragments
C14 potential	Average, charcoal and grain

Table 21: environmental finds from feature [038], fill (039)

Feature description: Curvilinear feature filled with a mid greyish orange sandy clay with infrequent inclusions of small angular pebbles.

Environmental sample number: 13

Sample volume before processing: 29 litres

Sample weight before processing: 29 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 51-150 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Charred grain:	Abundance 1-10, degraded indet.
Charred seed	Abundance 1-10, Possible Vetch (<i>Vicia sp.</i>), Brome
C14 potential	Average, charcoal and seed

Table 22: environmental finds from feature [051], fill (052)

Feature description: north-west to south-east aligned linear ditch

Environmental sample number: 14

Sample volume before processing: 10 litres

Sample weight before processing: 11 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 1-10 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
C14 potential	Poor, charcoal

Table 23: environmental finds from feature [057], primary fill (056)

Feature description: Probable enclosure ditch filled a light grey clayish sand with flecks of orange and red

Environmental sample number: 15

Sample volume before processing: 28 litres

Sample weight before processing: 32 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 1-10 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
C14 potential	Poor, charcoal

Table 24: environmental finds from feature [057], secondary fill (050)

Feature description: Probable enclosure ditch filled with dark greyish-orange silty clay, quite compacted with a small amount of charcoal and infrequent rounded pebbles.

Environmental sample number: 16

Sample volume before processing: 25 litres

Sample weight before processing: 29 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 11-50 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
C14 potential	Average, charcoal

Table 25: environmental finds from feature [047], fill (048)

Feature description: South-west to north-east aligned linear ditch, a soft, light orangey-brown sandy clay containing occasional small and medium rounded, sub-rounded and angular quartzite pebbles.

Environmental sample number: 17

Sample volume before processing: 4 litres

Sample weight before processing: 4 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 1-10 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
C14 potential	None

Table 26: environmental finds from feature [070], fill (071)

Feature description: Small pit filled with a dark bluish-grey clayey silt with patches of paler brownish-grey silt. A small amount of charred bone was present, along with a high frequency of charcoal.

Environmental sample number: 19

Sample volume before processing: 5 litres

Sample weight before processing: 3.5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 11-50 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of 1-10
C14 potential	Average, charcoal and bone

Table 27: environmental finds from feature [068], fill (069)

Feature description: A small oval pit filled with a dark greyish-black silty deposit containing moderately frequent inclusions of charcoal, small stones and rounded pebbles.

Environmental sample number: 20

Sample volume before processing: 6 litres

Sample weight before processing: 6 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 1-10 indet. comminuted fragments most <2mm
C14 potential	Poor, small charcoal fragments

Table 28: environmental finds from feature [062], fill (063)

Feature description: Small ovoid pit containing cremation urn 7 (find code AAP), filled with a dark grey silty clay deposit containing moderately frequent flecks of charred bone.

Environmental sample number: 21

Sample volume before processing: 8 litres

Sample weight before processing: 8 kilograms
% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 51-150 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of 51-150
C14 potential	Average, charcoal and bone

Table 29: environmental finds from feature [072], fill (073)

Feature description: Small shallow pit filled by a mid brownish-grey sandy clayey silt showing root lines of dark blackish charred material.

Environmental sample number: 22

Sample volume before processing: 7 litres

Sample weight before processing: 8 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 51-150 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
C14 potential	Poor, small charcoal fragments

Table 30: environmental finds from feature [060], fill (061)

Feature description: Circular pit feature containing cremation urn 6 (find code AA0), filled with a clayish sand deposit that was dark greyish-black in colour and contained inclusions of charred bone.

Environmental sample number: 23

Sample volume before processing: 7 litres

Sample weight before processing: 7 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 1-10 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
C14 potential	Poor, charcoal

Table 31: environmental finds from feature [064], fill (065)

Feature description: Pit containing cremation urn 8 (find code AAQ) filled with an extremely dense silty clay, medium orangey-brown in colour.

Environmental sample number: 24

Sample volume before processing: 12 litres

Sample weight before processing: 10.5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 1-10 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of 51-150
C14 potential	Average, charcoal and bone

Table 32: environmental finds from feature [074], fill (075)

Feature description: Ovoid pit filled with a dark grey sandy clay deposit containing frequent flecks of charcoal and infrequent inclusions of rounded pebbles

Environmental sample number: 25

Sample volume before processing: 8 litres

Sample weight before processing: 8 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 11-50 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of 11-50
C14 potential	Average, charcoal and bone

Table 33: environmental finds from feature [072], fill (073)

Feature description: Small shallow pit filled by a mid brownish-grey sandy clayey silt showing root lines of dark blackish charred material

Environmental sample number: 26

Sample volume before processing: 8 litres

Sample weight before processing: 8 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 11-50 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of 11-50
C14 potential	Poor, small charcoal fragments

Table 34: environmental finds from feature [066], fill (067)

Feature description: Small post hole filled with a dark blackish-grey clayey silt deposit containing frequent inclusions of charcoal and infrequent inclusions of small rounded stones.

Environmental sample number: 27

Sample volume before processing: 4 litres

Sample weight before processing: 5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 1-10 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Charred chaff	Abundance 1-10, indet.
C14 potential	Average, charcoal and chaff

Table 35: environmental finds from feature (0027), fill [0026]

Feature description: Small sub-circular pit filled with a dark bluish-black silty clay loam containing infrequent inclusions of small stones. A large amount of charcoal and infrequent flecks of charred bone were present.

Environmental sample number: 28

Sample volume before processing: 10 litres

Sample weight before processing: 6 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250, indet. comminuted fragments <2mm

Charred grain	Abundance 1-10, possible barley
C14 potential	Average, charcoal and grain

Table 36: environmental finds from feature [068], fill (069)

Feature description: A small oval pit filled with a dark greyish-black silty deposit containing moderately frequent inclusions of charcoal, small stones and rounded pebbles.

Environmental sample number: 29

Sample volume before processing: 6 litres

Sample weight before processing: 6 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 1-10 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Charred chaff	Abundance 1-10, degraded indet.
Cremated bone	An abundance of 51-150
C14 potential	Good, charcoal, chaff and bone

Table 37: environmental finds from feature [076], fill (077)

Feature description: Circular pit feature filled with a dark greyish-black sandy clay containing frequent inclusions of charred bone and stone.

Environmental sample number: 30

Sample volume before processing: 17 litres

Sample weight before processing: 15 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Charred grain	Abundance 1-10 degraded indet.
Cremated bone	An abundance of 51-150
C14 potential	Poor, small charcoal fragments

Table 38: environmental finds from fill (078)

Feature description: Fill of Urn 8 (find code AAQ)

Environmental sample number: 31

Sample volume before processing: 16 litres

Sample weight before processing: 13.5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of 51-150
C14 potential	Good, charcoal and bone

Table 39: environmental finds from feature [072], fill (073)

Feature description: Small shallow pit filled by a mid brownish-grey sandy clayey silt showing root lines of dark blackish charred material.

Environmental sample number: 32

Sample volume before processing: 5 litres

Sample weight before processing: 5 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance >250 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
Cremated bone	An abundance of 51-150
C14 potential	Good, charcoal and bone

Table 40: environmental finds from feature [074], fill (075)

Feature description: Ovoid pit filled with a dark grey sandy clay deposit containing frequent flecks of charcoal and infrequent inclusions of rounded pebbles

Environmental sample number: 33

Sample volume before processing: 9 litres

Sample weight before processing: 9 kilograms

% of processed sample examined: 100%

Material	Quantity
Charcoal	Abundance 1-10 indet. comminuted fragments <2mm
C14 potential	Poor, charcoal

8.4 Results

8.4.1 Residues

The samples washed down to produce residues of varying proportions of sub-rounded gravel, mostly between 1mm and 1cm in size.

The residues also produced quantities of flint as well as fragments of middle Bronze Age pottery.

Some magnetic material was present, which on examination was shown to be magnetised as a result of exposure to prolonged and intense heat. No hammerscale was found.

8.4.2 Flots

The majority of the flots contained a minimal charcoal assemblage of unidentified comminuted fragments mostly less than 2mm in size. The charred botanical remains included a small number of charred cereal grains, tentatively identified as Spelt (*Triticum spelta*), as well as a small amount of chaff (indet.) and Hazelnut shell (*Corylus avellana*).

There were uncarbonised seeds of Fat hen (*Chenopodium album*) and Chickweed (*Stellaria media*), both of which are arable weed seeds. These are likely to be modern intrusions as they are not carbonised and the deposit is not waterlogged. The small number of molluscs are also likely to be modern. The majority of the samples contained roots and insect remains, the occurrence of which explains the modern seeds which will have been introduced by bioturbation or other post-depositional processes.

8.5 *Conclusion*

The environmental samples came from a series of pits and ditches, many of which were attributed to the middle Bronze Age by the typology of pottery recovered during excavation.

Pits containing charcoal, grain and chaff included feature numbers 020, 027, 028, 042, 066 and 076. Pit 028 also contained charred Hazelnut shell. Curvilinear features (036) and (038) contained a limited quantity of charcoal, grain and weed seeds.

Despite the poor preservation and limited occurrence, the presence of grain, along with fragments of chaff, are indicative of some degree of cereal processing having taken place on the site. However, the most likely explanation for the presence of archaeobotanical remains in the pit and ditch features is that the material was blown or washed in.

In summary, the presence of cereals and woodland resources would suggest at least a small domestic component to the function of the site.

The quantity and quality of the environmental remains is quite poor. However, given the early date for the site, charcoal identification might help provide evidence regarding local vegetation and land utilisation of value to overall interpretation.

9 RADIOCARBON DATING

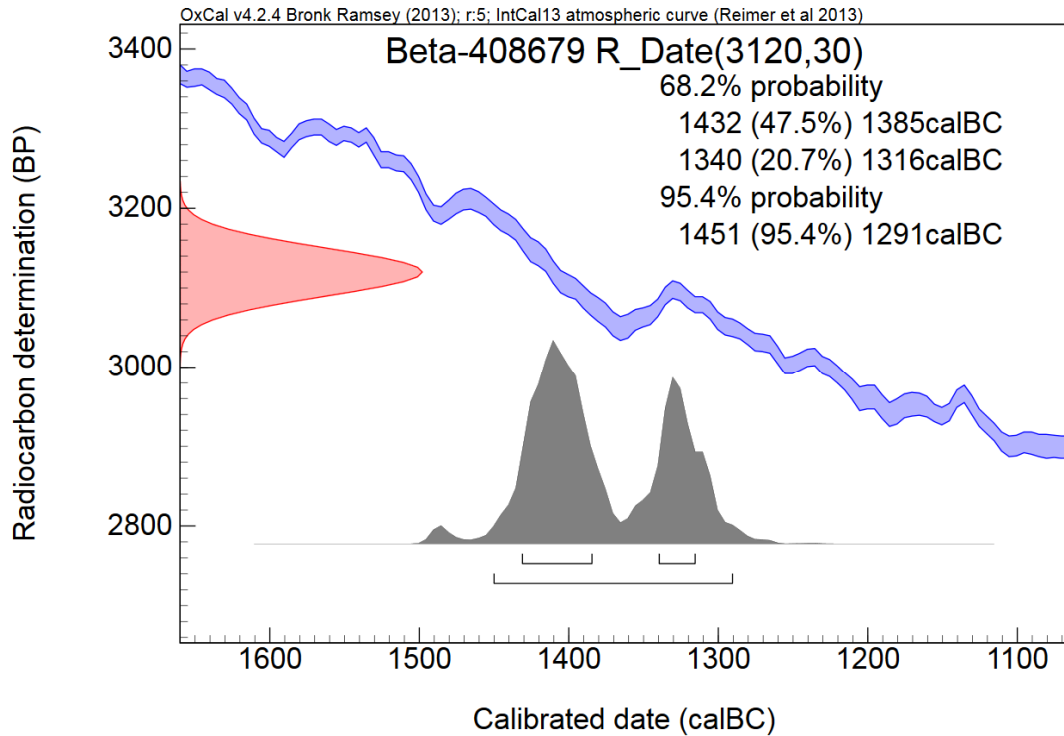
Steve Malone

WBU C14 dates

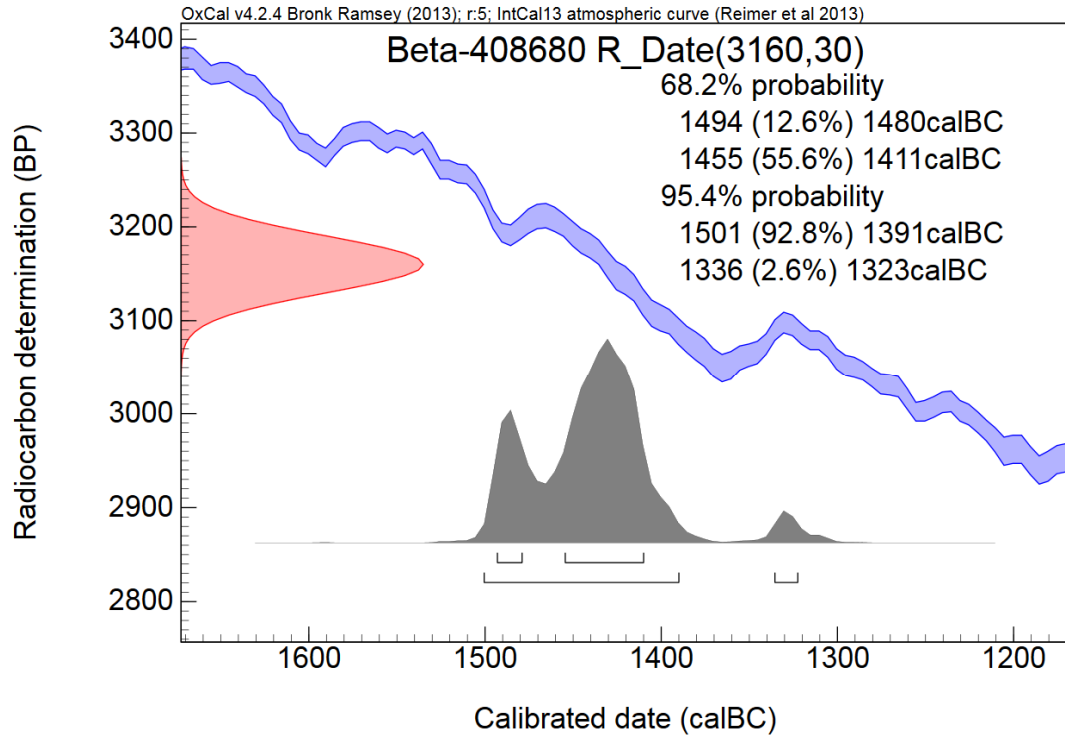
C14 dates were obtained from two samples of cremated bone retrieved from in situ urned cremations (Urn 3 and Urn 4) as well as from charcoal from one of the associated pits (023; unurned cremation?). Dates were also obtained from charcoal recovered from sections across the otherwise undated enclosure ditch.

Lab Ref.	Context	material	C14date
Beta-408679	Urn 3	cremated bone	3120 +/- 30
Beta-408680	Urn 4	cremated bone	3160 +/- 30
Beta-408681	(023)	charred material	3150 +/- 30
Beta-408682	(050) enclosure	charred material	2190 +/- 30
Beta-408683	(036) enclosure	charred material	2120 +/- 30

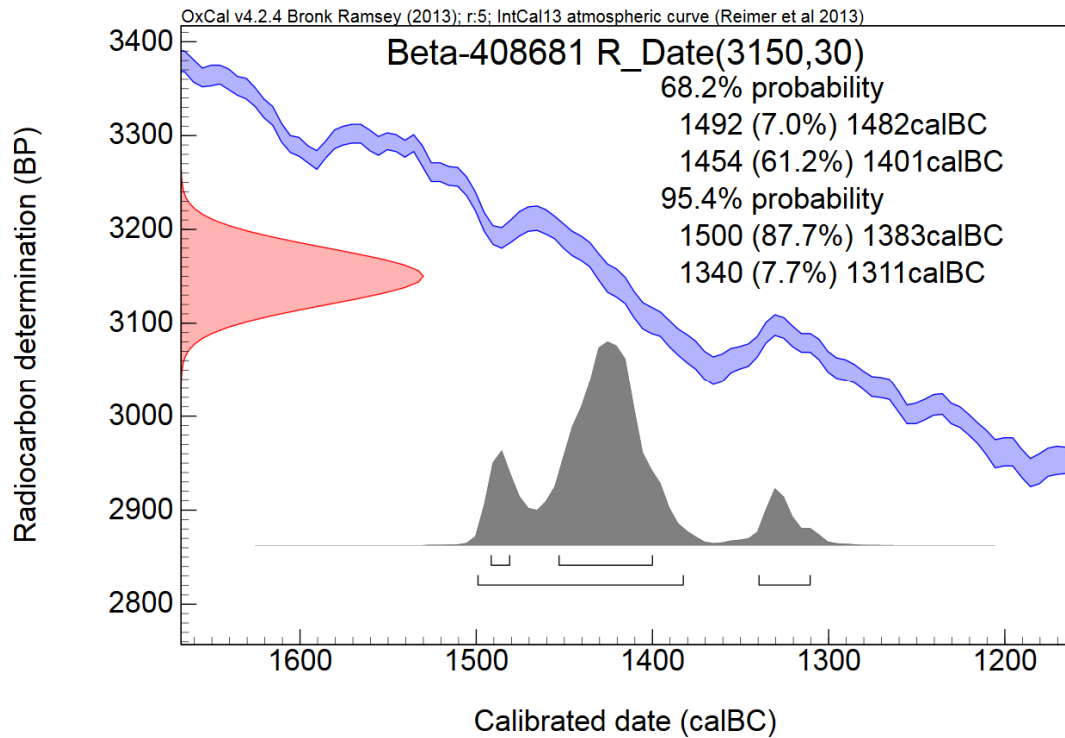
Beta-408679 WBU (Urn 3 cremated bone)



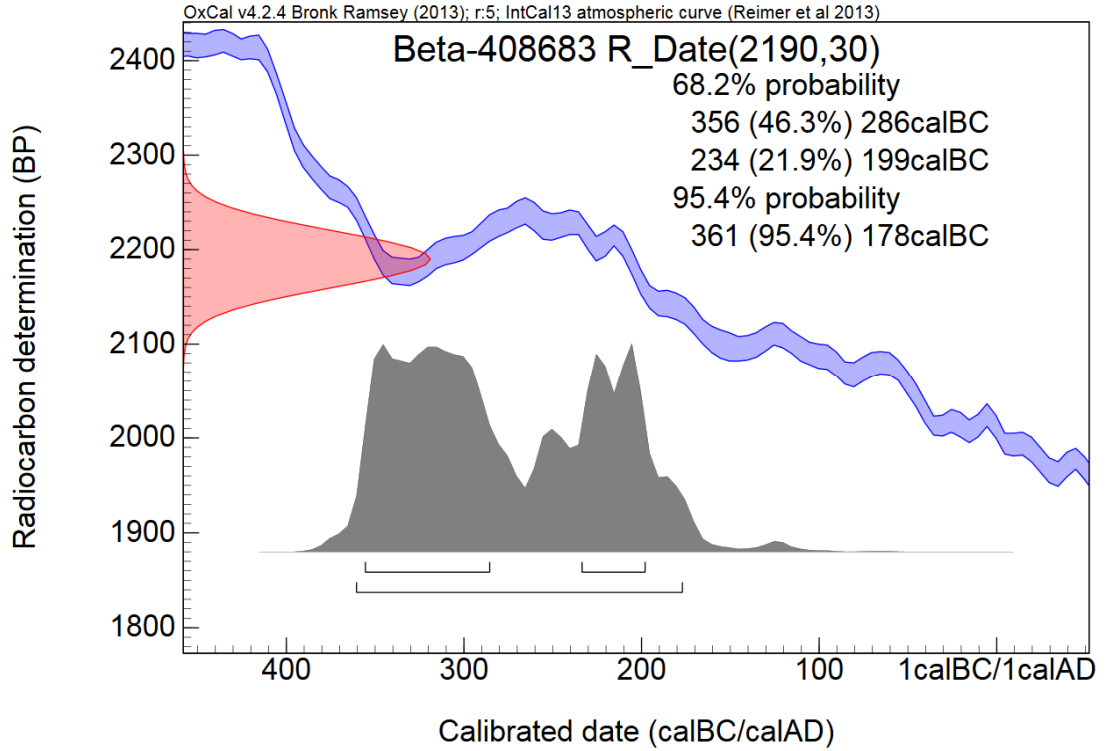
Beta-408680 WBU (Urn 4 cremated bone)



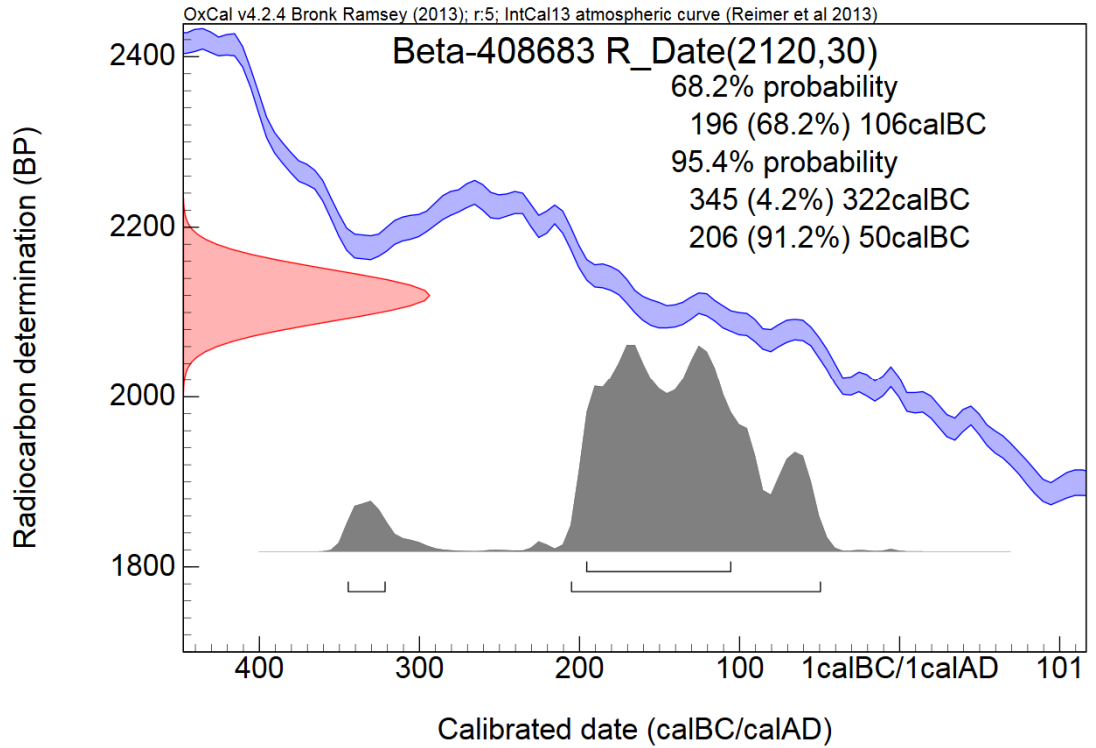
Beta-408681 WBU (023 charred material)



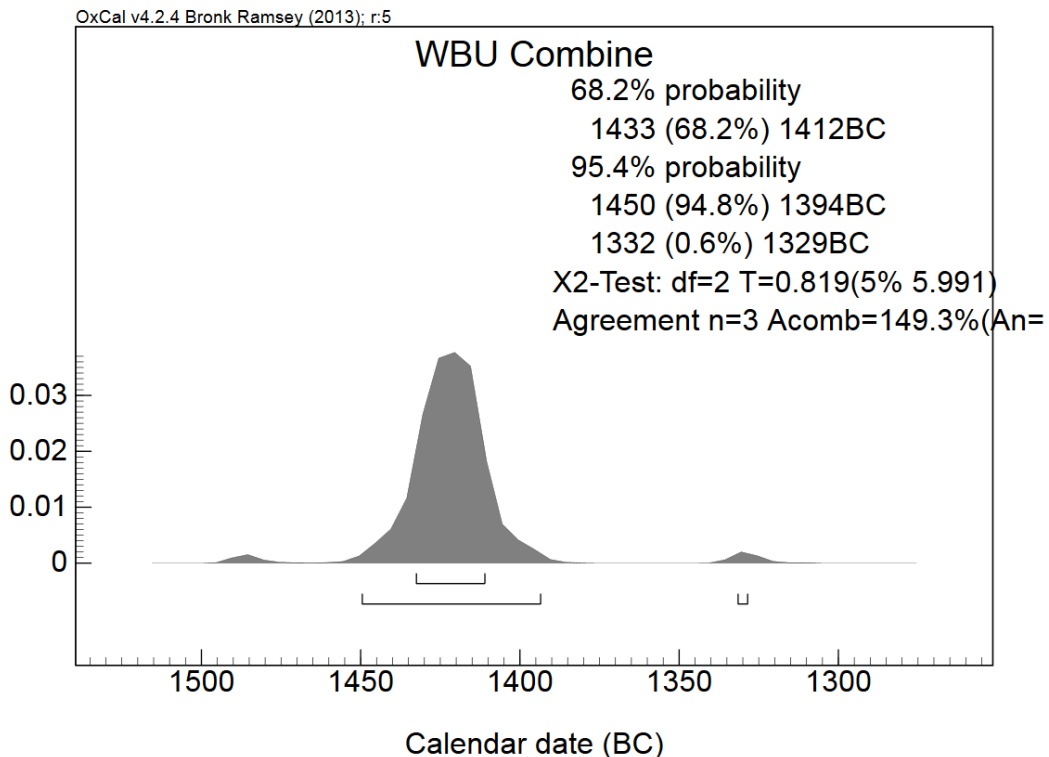
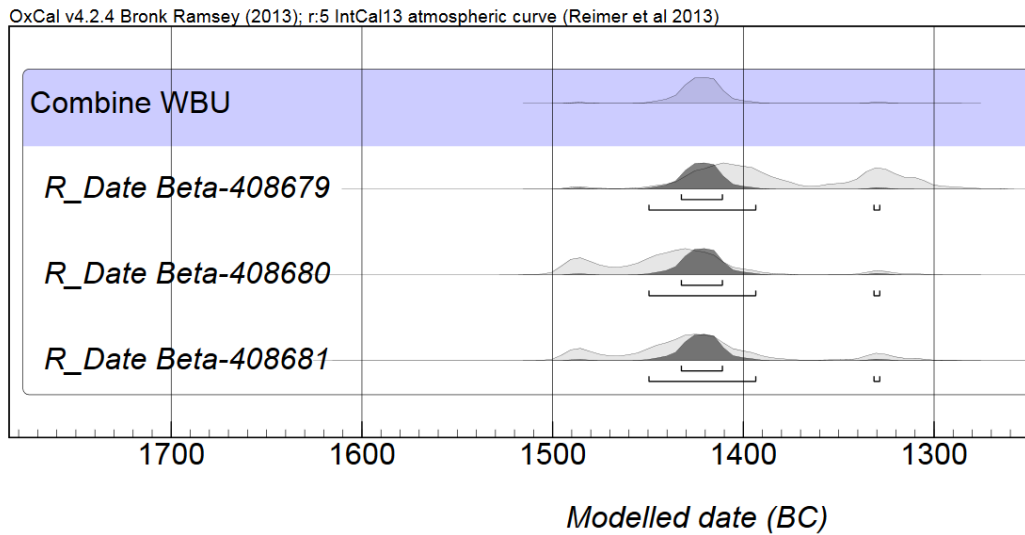
Beta-408682 WBU (050 charred material)



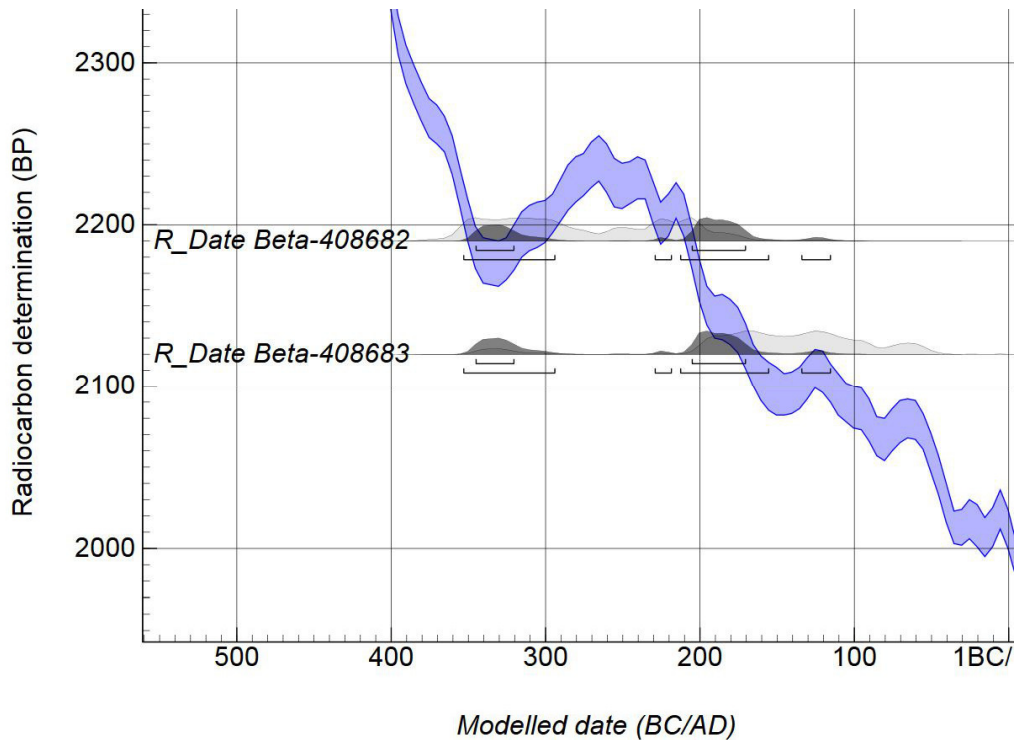
Beta-408683 WBU (036 charred material)



Stratigraphic (or even inferred) relationships between the features are insufficient to allow more sophisticated analysis of the chronology (e.g. Bayesian Modelling: Buck et al. 1996). However, the C14 dates from the urned cremations and associated deposits do give a fairly consistent set of overlapping dates. On the assumption that this activity is broadly contemporary (within the +/-30 year range of the C14 determinations) then the dates can be combined (using OxCal v4.2.4) to suggest a date range in the second half of 15th century BC, just overlapping into early 14th century BC (1450-1394BC at 95% probability; 1433-1412BC at 68% probability). This is consistent with the known date range of Deverel-Rimbury pottery within the East Midlands. However, the dating would not rule out a somewhat later date for Urn 3, extending the life of the cemetery by about a century.



The samples from the ditch fills of the enclosure give mid-late Iron Age dates. The fragmentary nature of the charred remains means that no assessment can be made of the potential age of the wood prior to charring (i.e. mature oak heartwood as opposed to twigs or brushwood). However, given the problems with precise calibration in this period this would not necessarily help. The wide range of possible dates returned by Beta-408682 exemplifies the difficulties. If the samples are contemporary then dates in either the late 4th or late 3rd-early 2nd century BC would be possible. Alternatively they might imply a longer period of use (or residuality). Small amounts of charred material could easily be intrusive into a later feature, but the C14 determinations would appear to rule out an association with the cremations at least, if not offering much precision.



10 DISCUSSION

10.1 The archaeological excavation of the site established three broad phases of activity: a Bronze Age flat cremation cemetery, including urned cremations, in the east of the site; a curvilinear enclosure in the centre of the site; and linear boundary ditches in the east. Stratigraphic relationships could be established between the latter, but the site had been substantially truncated in later ploughing and few features yielded any direct dating evidence.

10.2 Phase 1. Bronze Age cemetery. Twenty-one pits can be attributed to this phase, based on their contents, character and spatial relationships. Eight pits contained urned cremations; a further eight pits contained deposits of cremated bone; five more contained quantities of charred material apparently also related to this funerary activity (Fig. 4). There were two apparent clusters within the pits, one containing Urns 1-4 and two other pits with cremated bone, and a second rather looser cluster containing the other urned cremations and associated features centred some 12m to the north-east. Only a very small amount of Bronze Age material was recovered outwith the cremation burials and is largely residual in later features. The cremation urns were badly truncated by later ploughing, so that only the base and lower body survived. A single rim-sherd and one decorated body sherd suggest the Deverel-Rimbury tradition and this is supported by radiocarbon dating which places this activity in the second half of the 15th or early 14th-century BC. Cremation cemeteries of this date are not common in this part of Leicestershire. A possible cremation (18 sherds of pottery from one vessel and burnt bone) was recovered just 3km to the north-west in 2010 (LAHS 2012, 230), but apart from antiquarian and chance 20th century finds the nearest parallel are the three heavily truncated urned cremations found at Countesthorpe in the same year (LAHS 2012, 37-8; these urns are described as early Bronze Age collared urns, despite the dating being very close indeed to those recovered here).

10.3 Phase 2. Curvilinear enclosure. The enclosure was c. 50m east-west by 60m north-south defined by a (truncated) ditch up to 1.10m wide and 0.45m deep (Figs 3, 9). An entrance 5m wide was present on the north-eastern side (but parts of the northern and southern circuit were not fully exposed or did not survive). The nature/purpose of this enclosure remains unclear as only a single small pit was identified within the interior. However, truncation by medieval ploughing had removed at least 300-400mm over the Bronze Age cremation urns and probably at least as much elsewhere. Two small sherds of Bronze Age pottery were retrieved from one of the ditch sections, but these were the only artefacts recovered and seem likely to be residual. Environmental sampling of the ditch fills yielded a limited quantity of charcoal, grain and weed seeds suggesting at least a small domestic component to the function of the site. Radiocarbon dating of charred material from basal fills of the ditches produced mid-late Iron age dates, but the difficulties of precise calibration in this period produce a wide spread of possible dates and the samples have only a small overlap. If they can be seen as contemporary then a date in the late 3rd-early 2nd century BC would be possible, but the complete absence of any Iron Age material from the site as a whole gives pause. A small length of curvilinear gully identified in evaluation trenching (Kipling 2012) was thought possibly to represent part of a round-house, but lay outside of the enclosed area and lacked any direct dating evidence (no further extension of this was discovered during wider area stripping).

10.4 Phase 3. Rectilinear field system. Cutting the western edge of the Phase 2 enclosure was a north-west to south-east aligned ditch running the length of the excavated area and joined at right-angles along its length by a further ditch running south-west beyond the excavated area (Fig. 3). No further features on this alignment were identified to the east, so this may represent the eastward limit of this field system. However, the alignment here very closely matches that of the medieval ridge and furrow and the lack of very distinctive character, or any datable material within fills, mean that some of the features identified as furrows might represent the truncated remnants of further field system ditches. One residual Bronze Age pot-herd was recovered from the ditch fill, but no other datable material. These ditches are assumed to relate to the Romano-British field system ditches identified further to the west (Higgins 2012), but dating remains elusive. One or two abraded sherds of grey and orange-sandy wares within topsoil and subsoil attest to the low-level background activity in that period, but none was directly associated with identified features. A small length of ditch in the north-west corner of the excavation area may be associated, but is not on the same alignment and remains undated and unphased.

10.5 The results of the archaeological excavations were somewhat unexpected. Evaluation had identified a number of ditched features which were interpreted as an extension of the Romano-British field systems identified immediately to the west. These had yielded only sparse artefactual material and were assumed to be peripheral to settlement. The discovery of further ditches of apparently similar character and equally sparse in finds encouraged this identification, but in retrospect it can be seen that the majority of these features in fact formed part of the enclosure identified in the centre of the site. A small length of curvilinear gully identified in trenching was thought possibly to represent part of a round-house, but would have lain outside of the enclosure and was again lacking any direct dating evidence. No further extension of this was discovered during wider area stripping, so that the interpretation remains uncertain. Elements of the later field system were identified cutting the western edge of the enclosure, but the major discovery was the presence of an entirely unexpected Bronze Age flat cremation cemetery, badly truncated by medieval ploughing, but a rare discovery in the county, nonetheless. Despite the presence of a ditched enclosure in later phases, evidence for activity on the site was minimal, with only a very sparse scatter of artefacts, limited quantities of palaeoenvironmental remains and no survival of bone other than the Bronze Age cremated material.

11 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Appendix 1 Contexts

Context	Area	Category	Description	Interpretation
001		Deposit	Topsoil	Topsoil
002		Deposit	Subsoil	Subsoil
003		Deposit	compact clay varying in colour from pale bluey grey to mid reddish brown with irregular bands and patches of softer mid reddish brown sand	Natural
004	1	Cut	Small pit with burnt bone	
005	1	Fill	dark bluish-black sandy clay containing frequent inclusions of charcoal and charred bone	Fill of [004]
006	2	Cut	Small pit with pottery	
007	2	Fill	compacted dark greyish brown sandy clay mottled with orange sand	Fill of [006]
008			VOID	
009			VOID	
010	1	Cut	Cremation 1	
011	1	Fill	mid reddish brown sand containing patches of pale pinkish-yellow clay	Fill of [010]
012	1	Cut	Cremation 2	
013	1	Fill	highly compacted mid reddish-brown clayish sand containing patches of pale pink clay	Fill of [012]
014	1	Cut	Cremation 3	
015	1	Fill	compacted mid reddish-brown clayish sand with a higher proportion of clay than (011) or (013)	Fill of [014]
016	1	Cut	Cremation 4	
017	1	Fill	compacted dark greyish-black clayish sand with moderately frequent inclusions of charred bone and charcoal	Fill of [016]
018	1	Cut	Cremation 5	
019	1	Fill	dark greyish-black silty loam material containing a moderately high frequency of charcoal and flecks of charred bone	Fill of [018]
020	1	Cut	Pit with burnt bone next to [016]	
021	1	Fill	dark bluish-black clay material containing infrequent inclusions of small stones and moderately frequent inclusions of charred bone and charcoal	Fill of [020]
022	1	Cut	Small pit cut by narrow linear [024]	
023	1	Fill	dark bluish-black clayey silt deposit containing moderately frequent inclusions of charred bone and charcoal	Fill of [022]
024	1	Cut	Narrow linear running through [022]	
025	1	Fill	mid brownish-grey sandy clay	Fill of [024]
026	1	Cut	Pit with burning next to trench edge	
027	1	Fill	dark bluish-black silty clay loam containing infrequent inclusions of small stones and flecks of charred bone, large amount of charred wood fragments at base	Fill of [026]
028	1	Cut	Small pit with burning next to [016]	
029	1	Fill	dark greyish-black sandy clay containing moderately frequent inclusions of charred bone and charcoal	Fill of [028]

030	1	Cut	Pit with burning	
031	1	fill	mid grey sandy gravel containing large amount of charred material and fire cracked pebbles	Fill of [030]
032	1	Cut	Plough furrow	
033	1	Fill	mid brownish-grey sandy clay	Fill of [032]
034	1	Cut	Narrow linear running through [032]	
035	1	Fill	mid brownish-grey sandy clay	Fill of [034]
036	1	Cut	Linear aligned N-S	
037	1	Fill	mid greyish orange sandy clay containing infrequent inclusions of small angular pebbles	Fill of [036]
038	1	Cut	Linear south of gateway (same as [036])	
039	1	Fill	mid greyish orange sandy clay with infrequent inclusions of small angular pebbles	Fill of [038]
040	2	Cut	Field boundary	
041	2	Fill	mid brownish-grey sandy clay containing moderately frequent inclusions of small rounded pebbles and flint chips	Fill of [040]
042	1	Cut	Pit with burnt bone	
043	1	Fill	mid greyish-brown silty clay with orange mottling and a small amount of charred material	Upper fill of [042]
044	1	Fill	dark greyish-black silty deposit with occasional patches of orange clay, containing occasional small pebbles and frequent inclusions of charred bone	Lower fill of [042]
045	2	Cut	Field drain NW-SE	
046	2	Fill		Fill of [045]
047	2	Cut	Linear running SW-NE	
048	2	Fill	soft, light orangey-brown sandy clay containing occasional small and medium rounded, sub-rounded and angular quartzite pebbles	Fill of [047]
049	2	Cut	Linear ditch - continuation of [036]	
050	2	Fill	dark greyish-orange silty clay, quite compacted with a small amount of charcoal and infrequent rounded pebbles	Fill of [049]
051	2	Cut	Linear ditch	
052	2	Fill	paler brownish orange sandy clay containing infrequent rounded and sub-rounded stones	Fill of [051]
053	2	Cut	Plough furrow	
054	2	Fill	mid brownish-grey sandy clay	Fill of [053]
055	2	Fill	dark brownish-orange silty sandy clay, containing a small number of rounded stones	Fill of [051]
056	2	Fill	light grey clayish sand with flecks of orange and red	Fill of [049]
057	2	Cut	Curvilinear ditch	
058	2	Fill	compacted dark greyish-orange silty clay, small amount of charcoal and infrequent rounded pebbles	Fill of [057]
059	2	Fill	light grey clayish sand with flecks of orange and red	Fill of [057]
060	1	Cut	Cremation 6	
061	1	Fill	dark greyish-black clayish sand; inclusions of charred bone	Fill of [060]
062	1	Cut	Cremation 7	

063	1	Fill	dark grey silty clay deposit containing moderately frequent flecks of charred bone	Fill of [063]
064	1	Cut	Cremation 8	
065	1	Fill	dense silty clay, medium orangey-brown in colour	Fill of [064]
066	1	Cut	Small pit/post-hole	
067	1	Fill	dark blackish-grey clayey silt deposit containing frequent inclusions of charcoal and infrequent inclusions of small rounded stones	Fill of [066]
068	1	Cut	Pit with burning	
069	1	Fill	dark greyish-black silty deposit containing moderately frequent inclusions of small stones and rounded pebbles. Charcoal was frequent	Fill of [068]
070	1	Cut	Pit with burning	
071	1	Fill	dark bluish-grey clayey silt with patches of paler brownish-grey silt; small amount of charred bone with a high frequency of charcoal	Fill of [070]
072	1	Cut	Small pit with burning	
073	1	Fill	mid brownish-grey sandy clayey silt	Fill of [072]
074	1	Cut	Small pit with burning	
075	1	Fill	dark grey sandy clay deposit containing frequent flecks of charcoal and infrequent inclusions of rounded pebbles	Fill of [074]
076	1	Cut	Small pit	
077	1	Fill	dark greyish-black sandy clay containing frequent inclusions of charred bone and stone	Fill of [076]
078	1	Deposit	Burnt spread between [076] and [064]	
079	1	Cut	Field drain in furrow	
080	1	Fill	mid brownish-grey sandy clay	Fill of [079]
081	1	Cut	Plough furrow	
082	1	Fill	mid brownish-grey sandy clay	Fill of [081]
083	1	Fill	mottled light brownish grey soft sandy silt containing frequent inclusions of sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles	Fill of [084]
084	1	Cut	Cut of rectangular pit	

Finds

Find code	Material	Object/date	Context	Area	Cut	No.	Weight (g)
AAA	Pottery	Rim, prehistoric? Bronze Age	007	2	006	2	20.5
AAB	Pottery	Cremation urn 1	011	1	010		
AAC	Pottery	Cremation urn 2	013	1	012	4	84
AAD	Pottery	Cremation urn 3	015	1	013		
AAE	Pottery	Cremation urn 4	017	1	016		
AAF	Pottery	Cremation urn 5	019	1	018		
AAG	Pottery	Body sherd, prehistoric	007	2	006	4	24.6
AAH	Flint	Worked tool	044	1	042		
AAI	Pottery	Small fragment Bronze Age	050	2	049	2	9.6
AAJ	Pottery	Small fragment Bronze Age	052	2	051	1	5
AAK	Flint	Flint - natural	048	2	047	1	20.7
AAL	Flint	Flint - natural	048	2	047	1	17.3
AAM	Flint	Flint - possible flake	048	2	047	1	3.2
AAN	Flint	Core	050	2	049	1	24.1
AAO	Pottery	Cremation urn 6	061	1	060		
AAP	Pottery	Cremation urn 7	063	1	062		
AAQ	Pottery	Cremation urn 8	065	1	064		
AAR	Pottery	Body sherds	069	1	068	9	47.5
AAS	Flint	Bladelet	039	1		1	1.9
AAT	Pottery	Body sherd - orange sandy	002	2		2	6.1