



## INTRODUCTION TO A DAY OF 'POST-EX', RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

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I'm taking part in the [Day of Archaeology](#) to demonstrate that there's more to archaeology than digging. I'm current involved in [archaeological research](#), although I also teach archaeology (primarily within the Adult Education sector, but I have taught workshops in schools). At present, I am preparing to teach a workshop on Derbyshire in the Roman period and early Middle Ages, writing up research I undertook whilst at the University of Sheffield, and completing [post-excavation](#) analysis on the [late pre-Roman Iron Age \(LPRIA\), Roman, and early medieval activity](#) at [Crickley Hill](#), Gloucestershire, in order to write volume 6 in the series of [site reports](#) in this series. For more information on this work, I've started a website <http://crickleyhillad.community.officelive.com/>, but I've provided a summary of the site here.

**Crickley Hill: Romano-British and [Early Medieval](#) ('Dark Age') reoccupation of an Iron Age hillfort**



Aerial view of Crickley Hill in Google Earth

**Crickley Hill** is a limestone promontory fort located on the limestone **Cotswolds Escarpment**. It has **several phases of settlement and ritual activity**, that begin in the **Neolithic** ('New Stone Age': 8000-2500 BC). In the late Neolithic to Early **Bronze Age** (c. 2500 BC), a monument now called the '**Long Mound**' was built, and later extended (Roman period – during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD – ritual activity was also found at this monument). Ramparts were built during the late **Bronze Age** to Early **Iron Age** (c 650 BC), enclosing an area of more than 4 ha. / 10 ac., with successive settlements built within this hillfort. After a final attack, the hillfort was abandoned at the end of the early Iron Age (around the middle of the first millennium BC).

The hillfort remained unoccupied until the very end the first millennium BC – around the turn of the first century BC to AD (activity, in the form of a hearth, has been accurately dated, using a technique called **archaeomagnetic** analysis, and pottery that is likely to belong to this date was also found). But this activity – near to the entrance – was limited and seemingly sporadic. There is evidence for early Roman period activity (and possible settlement during this time) in the area of the entrance, in the form of a Roman **hobnail** from **sandals or shoes** and a type of early Roman pottery called '**samian**' ware. At some point, the wall collapsed, burying this evidence.

During (or, less probably, after) the Roman period, huts were built upon the silted up ditch outside the hill fort – one near to the **main entrance**, and one near to a probable post-Roman settlement inside the fort. Possibly during the Roman period (but more likely in the **early Middle Ages**), the tumbled main entrance was also occupied. Either during or after the Roman period (I believe in the 5<sup>th</sup> century), a smaller version of the 'Long Mound' (the 'Short Mound') was built **near the western** tip of the hill, on top of a path that led to the valley below. It lay above a nearly complete locally made **bowl** (dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century),

which copied a well-known type of Romano-British pottery (made in Dorset, but widely distributed) known as [Black Burnished ware](#).

The main reoccupation comprised of two settlement zones. One was an unenclosed settlement [behind the ramparts](#) (where there was also evidence for bronze- and iron-working) – consisting of small sub-circular and sub-rectangular buildings (some of which may have been made of turf, others of clay with thatched roofs), with floors scooped into the earth. The other, an enclosed settlement of circular (and one rectangular) timber buildings lay c. 200m uphill to the northwest. This settlement also contained a granary – itself further enclosed by a fence. The central (rectangular) building of this settlement had been built [near](#) to the end of the ‘[Long Mound](#)’, which was now practically enclosed by the shape of the hill and the palisade fence. Similar pottery was found in both settlements, suggesting that they co-existed; and both settlements burnt down twice – after the second time, the hill was again abandoned. The main piece of dating evidence is a worn military type [buckle](#), dating to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, which lay on a path in the unenclosed settlement. However, some of the [pottery](#) was of a type (‘[organic-tempered](#)’ ware) that is found within 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century contexts in the region. Some other finds are also similar to those found on regional site within contexts dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century (see post 4: ‘Roman and early Medieval Crickley Hill: post-excavation analysis’, for another discussion of finds).

Sporadic activity during the Middle Saxon period was dated by the presence of 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century finds; it’s possible that settlement in the entrance area belongs to this period.

I’ve written a post explaining and why I came into archaeology, and why I went into the field of early medieval archaeology (‘2. Getting started in Archaeology and studying as a part-time mature student’). But for those who don’t wish to read that post, I’ll provide a brief summary of my background and research interests:

I studied for my [BA in Archaeology](#) (1997) and [MA in Archaeological Research](#) (1999) at the [University of Nottingham](#), and my [PhD](#) (Thesis: ‘Ethnic, Social, and Cultural Identity in Roman to post-Roman Southwest Britain’) at the [University of Sheffield](#) (2010). I have taught archaeology at the [University of Nottingham](#), [Keele University](#), and for the [WEA](#). I specialise in the archaeology of Roman and Early Medieval Southwest Britain, and am undertaking research on Roman and Early Medieval Derbyshire, [early 20<sup>th</sup> century housing](#), and late 20<sup>th</sup> century East Midlands.

I’ve written a number of posts – backgrounds to my work and Roman and Early Medieval Crickley Hill, as well as descriptions of a days work in archaeology. As I’m dyslexic (and it takes me quite a while to write), I’ve had to write much of my post text in advance – although where I am describing my ‘day of archaeology’, I will be doing all that I describe I’m doing on the day.