

The background of the page is a stylized, monochromatic illustration in shades of green and grey. It depicts a cemetery with several tombstones of various shapes and sizes. In the upper right, there are silhouettes of three people: a man, a woman, and a child, standing together. The overall scene is misty and atmospheric, with trees and foliage in the background.

**CHAPTER 28**

**Inhumed bone**

*by Jacqueline I McKinley and Kirsten Egging*

## 28 Inhumed bone

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Human bone from twelve contexts (seven from the MTCP site (BAAMP00), four from the LTCP site (BAACP00) and one from the M11 site (BAALR00)) was analysed, including the remains of one Late Iron Age/early Romano-British and four late Romano-British *in situ* burials. Other contexts comprised bone redeposited in the fills of various pits and ditches including one Middle Bronze Age, two Late Iron Age, one mid Romano-British, one late Romano-British, and one undated (Table 28.1).

### **Methods**

The degree of erosion to the bone was recorded following McKinley (2004, fig 6). Age was assessed from the stage of skeletal development (Bass 1987; Scheuer and Black 2000) and the patterns and degree of age-related changes to the bone (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). Sex was ascertained from the sexually dimorphic traits of the skeleton (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). A standard suite of measurement were taken where possible (Brothwell and Zakrzewski 2004) but insufficient evidence remained for the calculation of any indices. Non-metric traits recorded (Berry and Berry 1967; Finnegan 1978).

### **Results**

A summary of the results is presented in Table 28.1; details are in the archive.

The depth of the surviving grave cuts ranged from 0.05 m (121048) to 0.40 m (359024). There was clear plough damage to some graves and most of the bone was moderately to heavily (context 359026) fragmented. There was a lower percentage of skeletal survival within the shallow graves in comparison with that from the deeper ones – 20-25% in graves of 0.05-0.10m compared with 55-98% in those >0.30 m – indicating direct bone loss and possibly a detrimental change in the burial environment with decreased grave depth. The bone is generally in good condition (graded 0-2) with some localised heavier erosion (up to grade 5+). Brown discoloration to the bone from context 323028 suggests it was buried in an organic-rich environment, whilst the greenish staining to the bone from context 110090 implies the presence of cess within the ditch.

A minimum of ten individuals were identified; five from the *in situ* burials (three juvenile and two adults) and a minimum of five from the redeposited bone (one juvenile and four adults). The *in situ* burials included one late Iron Age/early Romano-British juvenile, and two juveniles and two adults from late Romano-British deposits. The redeposited bone includes one Middle Bronze Age juvenile, two Late Iron Age adults, one mid Romano-British adult and two late Romano-British adults. The dating of the disarticulated, redeposited bone is based on contextual association, however, and bone may have been redeposited in much later contexts. Poor bone survival and low levels of skeletal recovery limited the assessment of the sex of

individuals, only one of the adults (late Romano-British) being tentatively sexed as male.

The inhumation burials and redeposited human bone from the LTCP site were all recovered within close proximity of one another, suggesting continuity in burial location from the Late Iron Age into the late Romano-British period (Figs 6.9, 8.2). The numbers are too small, however, for this to represent the only mortuary area for even a small community. The two inhumation burials from the MTCP site are also within the general vicinity of one another (Figs 8.7-8.8), most of the redeposited bone – from all periods – being recovered from the southern portion of the site. The overall impression is a common one for rural areas in the later prehistoric and Romano-British periods of small grave groups or singletons dispersed across agricultural areas within the proximity of farmsteads.

Minor pathological lesions were observed in the remains of eight of the identified individuals (Table 28.1). Slight to moderate dental calculus (calcified plaque/tartar; Brothwell 1972, fig. 58b) was observed four of the five dentitions recovered, including all the juvenile dentitions. Small, occlusal caries were observed in molar teeth from two of the adult Romano-British dentitions, giving an overall rate of *c* 2.6%, which is low compared with the average of 7.6% for the period (Roberts and Cox 2003, table 3.10). Non-specific infection, in the form of healed periosteal new bone, was observed in the leg bones of one Romano-British individual. Slight eburnation, indicative of osteoarthritis (Rogers and Waldron 1995) was observed in the remains of one Romano-British individual (Table 28.1), giving an overall rate of 2.5% for non-spinal joints. Destructive lesions may form in response to a number of conditions and it is not always possible to ascertain the specific cause of individual lesions. Similarly, it is not always possible to be conclusive with respect to the aetiology of exostoses, bony growths which may develop at tendon and ligament insertions on the bone. Causative factors include advancing age, traumatic stress, or various diseases. Poor bone recovery and dispersed nature of this small multi-period assemblage preclude any meaningful general comment on health and lifestyle.

Table 28.1: Summary of results

Context	Cut	Deposit type	Quantification	Age/sex	Pathology
<b>LTCP (BAACP00)</b>					
110090	110084	LIA/ERB <i>in situ</i> burial	c 98%.	juvenile c. 9-12 yr.	calculus; mv - retarded eruption maxillary canine
121047	121048	LRB <i>in situ</i> burial	c 25% a.u.l.	juvenile c. 10-12 yr.	
121077	121074	C2 – C3 redep.	3 frags. l.	adult > 18 yr.	exostoses – tibia, 5 <sup>th</sup> metatarsals
134025	134027	LRB <i>in situ</i> burial	c 30%	adult c. 25-35 yr. ??male	caries; eburnation – left talus; destructive lesion – distal tibia; exostoses – femur, calcanea;
<b>MTCP (BAAMP00)</b>					
306039	306038	LRB redep.	c 33 frags. l.	adult >18 yr.	periosteal new bone – right tibia, fibula
309119	309075	MBA redep.	1 bone s.	juvenile c. 8-10 yr.	calculus
324015	324016	u/d redep.	10 frags. l.	adult >18 yr.	
323028	323025	LIA redep.	c 26 frags. s.	adult > 25 yr.	mv - wormian bone
355047	?	LRB redep.	22 frags. u.	adult >15 yr.	
355067	355068	LRB <i>in situ</i> burial	c 20% s.u.l.	adult c. 17-25 yr.	calculus; caries
359026	359024	LRB <i>in situ</i> burial	c 55%.	juvenile c. 6-8 yr.	calculus; mv – wormian bone
<b>M11 (BALR00)</b>					
434005	434004	LIA redep.	1 frag. l.	adult > 25 yr.	

KEY: s. – skull; a. – axial skeleton; u. – upper limb; l. – lower limb; m.v. – morphological variation





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