Leicestershire and Rutland in the First Millennium BC

by Patrick Clay

Following on from the examination of the Neolithic and Bronze Age evidence from Leicestershire and Rutland (Clay 1999) this paper considers how the area now covered by the two counties changed during the Later Bronze Age and Iron Age. Settlement, land division, ritual, burial, trade, industry and material culture are examined and a model for society in this part of the East Midlands during the 1st millennium BC is suggested.

Introduction

The last 25 years have seen great advances in our understanding of the archaeology of the 1st millennium BC in Britain covering the Later Bronze Age and Iron Age. Since the publication of Barry Cunliffe's seminal work on the Iron Age, *Iron Age Communities in Britain*, in 1974 (Cunliffe 1974; 1991) there have been several major developments in the study of this period. These have included the impact of aerial archaeology (e.g. Riley 1980; Pickering & Hartley 1985, Pickering 1989), large scale field surveys (e.g. Raunds in Northamptonshire, Parry 1994 and forthcoming), environmental archaeology (e.g. van der Veen 1992) and large scale excavations (e.g. Crick in Northamptonshire (G. Hughes pers. comm.). There has also been a re-interpretation of the evidence, including the role of hillforts (Hill 1989; 1993) and the identification of deliberate deposition of artefacts and ecofacts (Hill 1995, Thomas 1997). Some of these developments have also begun to redress the balance of information on 1st millennium BC societies from the south of England to the Midlands and the North (Haselgrove 1999).

For Leicestershire and Rutland it is the Iron Age, more than any other period, that has appeared to benefit from the increase in fieldwork resulting from the change in archaeology and planning policies following the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guideline No. 16 (PPG16; 1990). For these two counties, surveys and evaluations have located over 25 previously unknown Iron Age sites since 1990, mainly on boulder clay substrata, and far larger scale fieldwork has been undertaken than had hitherto been possible (e.g. Humberstone; Charles *et al* 2000; Normanton le Heath; Thorpe *et al* 1994 and Wanlip; Beamish 1998). Difficulties remain, however, in establishing a chronology for a period of time which has long-lived pottery styles (e.g. Elsdon 1992) and where calibration of C14 dates is difficult (Stuiver *et al* 1993). Although new pottery styles are evident with the introduction of wheel-thrown wares after *c.* 100BC (e.g. Clamp 1985, Marsden 2000, 179) other pottery traditions continue. As the wheel-thrown pottery is only present on a few sites they cannot be used as a sole

indicator of 1st century BC activity. In view of this, it has been suggested that the terms 'Middle' and 'Late' Iron Age are indicators of cultural rather than chronological designations and that there is considerable overlap between these cultures in eastern and central England (Hill 1997). In the absence of chronological refinement within the Iron Age, therefore, for the purpose of this paper the following period divisions have been used: Later Bronze Age – Earlier Iron Age, *c.* 1000BC–400BC; Later Iron Age, 400BC–*c.* AD50.

The Later Bronze Age – Earlier Iron Age

Environment and economy

Traditionally, the beginning of the 1st millennium BC has been interpreted as a period of climatic deterioration with consequent settlement contraction, although its impact on this part of central England is uncertain. The evidence for a reduction in settlement activity during this period, in response to the climatic deterioration, however, has been challenged (Young and Simmonds, 1995) and may be more apparent than real. The East Midlands have provided few pollen diagrams and consequently information on the environment and climatic change is scarce. However, systematic sampling for bone, land snail fauna and plant macro-fossils, and where appropriate deposits are present, pollen and insect remains, has begun to provide information on the environment, land-use and economies of Later Bronze Age and Iron Age societies (Monckton 1995). Palynological data from Croft (Rosseff *et al* forthcoming), Hemington, Kirby Muxloe (A. Brown pers. comm.) and Oakham (J. Greig pers. comm.) together with land snail faunal evidence from Tixover (Monckton 1995) show an increase in clearance and a predominance of grassland from the Later Bronze Age which continues throughout the 1st millennium BC. Evidence for cereal cultivation has been located in Later Bronze Age contexts at Kirby Muxloe (Cooper 1994) where charred cereal grain and chaff were present in small quantities including barley, bread wheat type, spelt and emmer (Monckton 1995). Spelt, emmer, bread wheat and barley have been recovered, also in small quantities, from the Earlier Iron Age site at Wanlip (Monckton 1998) with processing of cereals suggested from the presence of quern fragments (Marsden 1998a).

Settlement and land-use

Evidence for occupation during the Later Bronze Age-Earlier Iron Age is elusive in the two counties. The identification of settlement of this period is often reliant on diagnostic ceramic material which has poor survival qualities within surface scatters (Jackson and Denham forthcoming). Later Bronze Age-Earlier Iron Age pottery traditions in the East Midlands begin with post-Deverel-Rimbury plainwares in the *c.*11th-9th century BC (Knight forthcoming; Barrett 1980). This pottery typically includes round-shouldered and carinated forms and ovoid, ellipsoid and open vessels (e.g. Barrett 1980 fig. 5). A lack of decoration, thin-walled vessels and pronounced finger-smearing or smoothing are also typical of these late Bronze Age plainwares. The Later Bronze Age – Earlier Iron Age tradition of decorated vessels dates to around the 9th to 5th or 4th century BC (Knight 1992 and forthcoming; Bradley 1980; Barrett 1980). This is characterised by 'carinated profiles, extensive finger-tipping and certain styles of incised geometrical ornament' (Knight 1992, 48).

Early 1st millennium BC sites are often difficult to differentiate from those of the later 1st millennium BC and some of the cropmark enclosures identified and believed to be

of Later Iron Age date may have origins in the Later Bronze Age – Earlier Iron Age. From the small number of Later Bronze Age – Earlier Iron Age settlement sites which can be identified on the Leicestershire and Rutland Sites and Monuments Record some trends are identifiable. Sixty per cent of the sites are from areas with clay substrata at an average altitude of 105.75m O.D and an average distance from water sources of 0.7km. The average altitude is slightly higher, and the distance to water slightly greater, than that for the Later Neolithic – Earlier Bronze Age (Clay 1999, 8) which may infer more exploitation of the interfluves between the valleys.

Later Bronze Age settlement evidence has been identified during excavations at Glen Parva (Liddle 1982, 19), Kirby Muxloe (Cooper 1994), Eye Kettleby, Melton Mowbray (Finn 1998) and Ridlington in Rutland (Beamish 1997) while hilltop occupation is suggested at Buddon Wood, Mountsorrel (Liddle 1982, 20), and possibly Beacon Hill, Woodhouse Eaves (Liddle 1982, 19). Earlier Iron Age origins are suggested for the two developed hillforts at Breedon on the Hill and Burrough Hill (Kenyon 1950, 26; Wacher 1964; 1977). At Breedon, occupation pre-dating the construction of the defensive circuit is suggested (Kenyon 1950). A defended enclosure of possible late Bronze Age date survives as an earthwork at Ridlington, Rutland (illus. 1).

The earliest evidence of 1st millennium BC occupation comes from a rectangular building of post hole and beam slot construction associated with Later Bronze Age pottery (post-Deverel Rimbury plain wares of 11th-9th century BC date; illus. 2) at Eye Kettleby, Melton Mowbray (Finn 1998; P. Marsden pers. comm.). At Kirby Muxloe, a settlement with Later Bronze Age origins continued to be occupied during the Iron Age
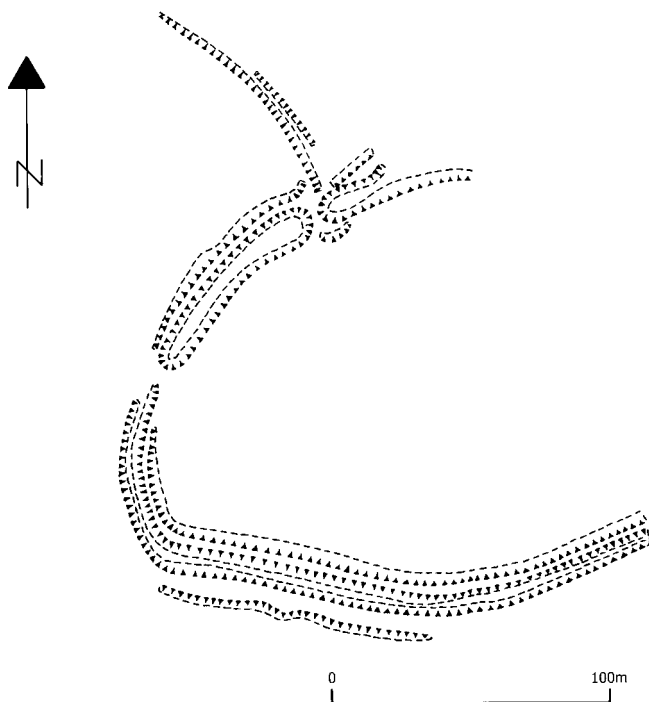

1. Plan of the earthwork remains of an enclosure of possible Later Bronze Age date at Ridlington, Rutland.

and Roman periods (Cooper 1994). Later Bronze Age circular structures are present from this site and Glen Parva (Liddle 1982, 19) while double-ring roundhouses of Later Bronze Age – Earlier Iron Age date are known from Castle Donington (illus.3) and Ridlington (Coward and Ripper 1998; Beamish 1997) which are of similar plan to examples from Swarkestone Lowes, Derbyshire (Guilbert and Evans 1999). Earlier Iron Age origins were identified at the settlement at Empingham, Rutland (Cooper 2000, 45).

A small settlement dating from the end of the Earlier Iron Age has been excavated at Wanlip (Beamish 1998) which was in use between *c.* 450 and 350 BC. The identification of this date range would not have been possible without an extensive programme of C14 and thermoluminescence dating (Beamish 1998, 24-27). Circular buildings denoted by ring grooves at Wanlip show evidence of polygonal construction (Beamish 1998, 30-1). Two and four post structures were also located at Wanlip and are discussed below (p. 10). Examination of the lithic material from Wanlip suggests that flint working may have continued into the mid-1st millennium BC (Cooper and Humphrey 1998; Young and Humphrey 1999).

Later Bronze Age pit clusters, which, based on evidence from Northamptonshire, have been interpreted as markers serving as possible precursors of pit alignments (Taylor 1996) are possible interpretations for pit groups at Lockington (Meek 1995) and Castle Donington (Coward and Ripper 1998) in the Trent valley. Later Bronze Age – Earlier Iron Age origins are suggested for pit alignments at Eye Kettleby (Finn 1998) and a triple ditch system at Ketton in Rutland (Mackie 1993). The Eye Kettleby pit
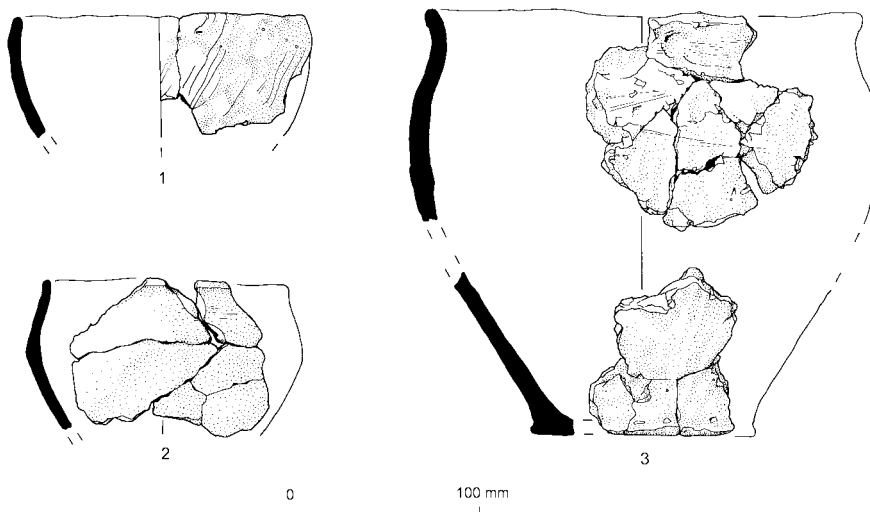
2. Later Bronze Age Post-Deverel-Rimbury ware jars from Eye Kettleby.

3. A Later Bronze Age – Earlier Iron Age circular building demarcated by post holes at Willow Farm, Castle Donington.

alignment was later replaced by a ditch, which is a sequence paralleled in other parts of the East Midlands (Taylor 1996).

Special deposition

The deliberate deposition of metalwork hoards is a phenomenon noted in many parts of Britain during the Later Bronze Age, although interpretations for the reasons for their deposition vary. Seven Later Bronze Age hoards are known from Leicestershire and Rutland of which those from Beacon Hill and Welby are of particular note. The Beacon Hill hoard consists of a socketed axe, two leaf-shaped spearheads and a socketed gouge, and was located in a pit within the bounds of a hill-top enclosure (Herrick 1866; Liddle 1982, 17). A half-mould for a socketed axe, found nearby, suggests that metalworking was being undertaken on the site. At Welby a remarkable collection of metalwork included three socketed axes, a leaf-shaped spearhead, a sword, a carinated cup, cauldron handles and slided discs was located (Powell 1948). The latter are paralleled from Hungary and the surrounding area.

Evidence of ritual deposition may be interpreted from the discovery of two skulls within a palaeochannel deposit at Birstall, one of which has been dated to 990-830 CAL BC (1s resolution; Oxa-6831; Ripper 1997). Cut marks on the atlas vertebra of these skulls may indicate decapitation before deposition either in the river or surrounding marsh. These remains were close to a burnt mound and timber bridge although their association is unclear at present.

Ceremonial and burial sites are rare for the early part of the period and some Middle – Later Bronze Age flat burial cemeteries may have continued to be used into the 1st millennium BC. A cremation burial was located at Wanlip, placed centrally within a four-post rectangular building (Beamish 1998, 28-9) close to evidence of domestic activity, perhaps indicating a trend towards ritual being incorporated into the context of everyday life.

Special deposition of placed artefacts as offerings has been identified in 1st millennium BC contexts (Hill 1993). A deliberately placed Later Bronze Age pottery vessel was located during excavation of a ring ditch with central burial of Earlier Bronze Age date at Tixover in Rutland. This had been placed in a pit central to a gap in the ring ditch (Beamish 1992). Deliberate deposition of artefacts in five distinct groups has been identified at the Earlier Iron Age settlement at Wanlip (Beamish 1998, 40-1). While pottery was the only artefact in four of these, one example comprised pottery, querns and burnt bone (Beamish 1998, 40).

The Later Iron Age

Settlement

The Later Iron Age sees far more evidence for settlement and land-use. Settlement evidence can be interpreted from cropmark data (Pickering and Hartley 1985; Hartley 1989) together with earthwork, artefact scatter (querns and pottery) and excavated data. Over 220 locations of Later Iron Age occupation are included in the Leicestershire and Rutland Sites and Monuments Record. The average height above sea level is slightly lower than that in the Later Bronze Age-Earlier Iron Age at 103m OD perhaps reflecting a movement onto the lower floodplain areas. There is again a preference for a south-facing aspect while the average distance to water is 0.4km. From analysis of well-surveyed areas including Medbourne, Oakham and Misterton (Clay 1996 and forthcoming) a density of one Later Iron Age site per 1.8-2 sq. km may be extrapolated.

The settlements of this period can be divided into different types from farmsteads to hillforts with extensive lowland settlements increasingly becoming evident. Farmsteads are both unenclosed and enclosed, the latter usually showing evidence of having unenclosed origins when excavated. The enclosures come in circular, oval, 'D' shaped and sub-rectangular forms and some have survived as earthworks (Liddle 1982, 22). Although some of the cropmarks of enclosures may represent sites of Roman date, the vast majority of excavated examples provide evidence of Later Iron Age origins. Excavation and watching briefs at Enderby have located two *foci* of Iron Age occupation consisting of several circular buildings some of which were within enclosures (Clay 1992; Meek 1997; Ripper and Beamish 1997). Different phases of enclosure in the northern area comprised the replacement of a small rectangular version by a larger 'D' shaped example (Clay 1992, 24). At Huncote, 3.5 km south-west of the Enderby sites, an oval enclosure of Later Iron Age date has been located which showed evidence of two circular buildings (below p.144-5). In Rutland, Later Iron Age settlements have been examined at Empingham (Cooper 2000, 46-49), Ketton (Meadows 1999), Oakham (G. Hughes pers. comm.), Preston (Beamish 1997), Ridlington (Beamish 1997), Tixover (Beamish 1992) and Whitwell (Todd 1981).

Hillforts are known from Beacon Hill, Breedon on the Hill, Burrough Hill (illus. 4) with other possibilities at Bringhurst, Life Hill and Robin a Tiptoe (Liddle 1982, 19-22). At Breedon, the first phase of the defences appears to have been a free-standing

4. The hillfort at Burrough Hill

palisade which was in turn replaced by a substantial rampart and ditch (Kenyon 1950, 26; Wacher 1964; 1977). Limited excavation around the entrance to Burrough Hill in the 1960's showed evidence of occupation continuing from the Iron Age into the Roman period (Liddle 1982, 22).

In addition to the hillforts, characterised by their location and surrounding ditches and ramparts other larger 'agglomerated' settlements have been identified in the region. These apparently larger settlements, even when allowing for focus shift, would appear to have supported several family groups. Two sites have been excavated on higher glacial drift plateaux. Partial excavation of a series of rectangular cropmark enclosures at Normanton le Heath has revealed Late Iron-Age and Roman occupation over *c.* 9 ha. (Thorpe *et al* 1994). At Humberstone (Charles *et al* 2000) an agglomerated settlement, different phases of which may extend over *c.* 8 ha, has been partially excavated on a boulder clay ridge. Within the area of *c.* 1 ha examined a sequence of phases was discernible showing several changing *foci* during the Later Iron Age in the same location as a Middle Bronze Age enclosure.

An example of a larger agglomerated lowland settlement may be interpreted from Lockington where settlement and field systems, possibly linked by a trackway, have been identified (illus. 5). Originally located from aerial reconnaissance by Dr. J. K. St. Joseph in 1960, along with a juxtaposed Roman Villa, geophysical survey and trial trenching has shown this complex to extend over a 7 ha. area (Frere and St Joseph 1979, 198-9; Clay 1985a;. Ripper and Butler 1999). Finds distribution at Leicester also suggests a large lowland settlement covering *c.* 8 ha. and includes imported pottery, metalwork and possible evidence of coin manufacture (Clay 1985b; Clay and Pollard 1994). A smaller

5. The ramparts of the Later Iron Age enclosure at Ratby Bury.

defended sub-rectangular earthwork covering *c.* 3 ha. previously thought to be Roman camp at Ratby Bury has also produced Later Iron Age material (illus. 6; Liddle 1982, 26).

Long distance boundary systems have been identified from aerial reconnaissance in Leicestershire and Rutland including pit alignments (56) and double and triple ditch systems (14). Double ditched systems have been examined at Tixover, Ridlington and Preston in Rutland (Beamish 1992; 1997) while a triple ditch system sampled at Ketton showed evidence of primary filling during the Earlier Iron Age (above p.4) but with continued use into the Later Iron Age (Mackie 1993).

Structures

Circular buildings are common from various Later Iron Age sites including those at Braunstone, (Taylor 2000), Breedon on the Hill (Wacher 1977), Cossington (Sturgess and Ripper 2000), Crown Hills (Chapman 2000), Empingham (Cooper 2000, 47), Enderby (Clay 1992: Meek 1997; Ripper and Beamish 1997), Humberstone (Charles *et al* 2000), Leicester (Clay and Pollard 1994, 37), Mountsorrel (Beamish 1993), Normanton le Heath (Thorpe *et al* 1994) and Tixover (Beamish 1992). A pattern of paired circular buildings possibly showing a division between living and kitchen areas can be interpreted at two juxtaposed settlements at Enderby (Clay 1992; Meek 1997). The circular buildings can be divided into those using post hole construction (e.g. Enderby; Clay 1992) and those with ring grooves (e.g. Cossington, Sturgess and Ripper 2000;
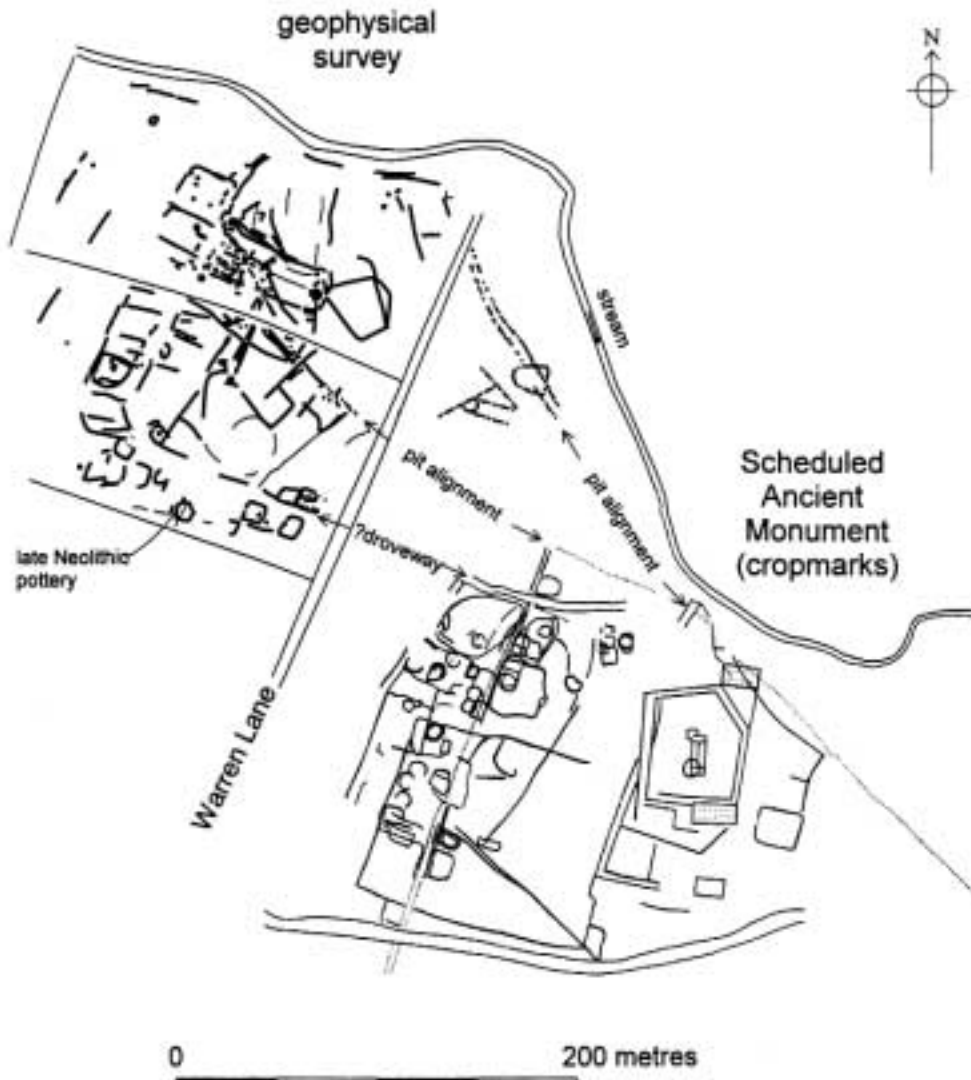
6. Settlement, trackway and field systems at Lockington interpreted from cropmarks
and magnetometer survey.

Humberstone, Allen 2000). Entrances, in common with other examples from Britain, are usually orientated to the east or south-east (Oswald 1997; Beamish 1998, 32). At Cossington the juxtaposition of an Iron Age circular building adjacent to a Bronze Age barrow with evidence of monument re-use in the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods, together with an absence of domestic debris, may suggest that it had a ritual function.

Rectangular buildings are known from Normanton le Heath and Leicester (Thorpe *et al* 1994; Clay 1985b). The examples from Normanton le Heath are unusual in that they

use a combination of two structural components, beam pads and post holes, a feature which is unique for the Iron Age of the Midlands. Other examples from the south of England using a similar construction method have been interpreted as shrines (e.g. Little Waltham in Essex; Drury 1978, figs 8,19; Wait 1985, fig.6.7).

Four-post and two-post structures have been located on several sites including Enderby (Clay 1992), Castle Donington, Gimbro Farm (Derrick 1999) and Normanton le Heath (Thorpe *et al* 1994). Two- post structures may denote the location of entrances to circular buildings where other evidence has been eroded, drying frames or upright looms (Knight 1984; Ellison and Drewett 1971; Beamish 1998 34). Four-post structures have variously been interpreted as granaries, drying racks, funerary structures, shrines and watch towers (Ellison and Drewett 1971; Gent 1983; Knight 1984; 154; Beamish 1998, 29).

Environment and economy

Animal bone assemblages from excavations of Iron Age sites in Leicestershire and Rutland have been relatively small. Sheep/goat, cattle and pig were the most common domestic animals from bone assemblages at Breedon on the Hill, (Wacher 1964), Burrough Hill (Liddle 1982, 20), Humberstone (Charles 2000), Enderby (Gouldwell 1992) and Tixover (Baxter 1991). These assemblages compare with others from the East Midlands (Knight 1984, 256). The presence of sheep aged over two-three years old at Enderby and Humberstone suggests they were being kept for wool production. The cattle bones from Humberstone indicate that they were being used for traction as well as for meat while deer bones from Enderby and Humberstone suggest that hunting was taking place. Although no animal bone survived, the sequence of rectangular enclosures either side of a trackway at Normanton le Heath is interpreted as evidence for stock control (Thorpe *et al* 1994, 3).

Excavations on the clayland sites at Enderby (Clay 1992; Meek 1997) have shown evidence for mixed economies during the Late Iron Age perhaps with a greater emphasis on a pastoral-based economy with sheep and cattle dominant. A similar picture of a mixed arable/pastoral economy is evident from excavations of the extensive clayland settlement at Humberstone (Pelling 2000, 211) and of a 'clothes line' enclosure of Later Iron Age date at Tixover in Rutland (Beamish 1992). Cereals are consistently present from excavated sites, with spelt, barley and bread wheat type being the most common, although concentrations, despite extensive sampling, are usually low. Whether this reflects survival, past usage or less emphasis on cereal farming is unclear (Monckton 1995, 35). Grain-rich deposits of processed cereals are known, however, from Rushey Mead (Pollard 1996 and below p.20) and Humberstone (Pelling 2000).

Excavations of the hillfort at Breedon on the Hill recovered over forty querns suggesting that cereal processing was taking place on the site (Liddle 1982, 19). Concentrations of querns were also located during the limited excavations at the hillfort at Burrough Hill (Liddle 1982, 20) while they were also present in smaller numbers at the settlements at Castle Donington, Gimbro Farm (Derrick 1999) Kirby Muxloe (Cooper 1994), Enderby (Clay 1992) and Humberstone (Roe 2000).

Structured deposition and burial

In addition to the structured deposition of artefacts at the Earlier Iron Age site at Wanlip (above p.00) this has also been identified at Humberstone (Allen 2000, 159). These included groups of pottery and animal bone some of which were within the ditch

surrounding a circular enclosure which may have had a ceremonial function (Allen 2000, 160). Later Iron Age cremation burials are known from Enderby (Meek 1997), Humberstone (Boyle 2000) and Market Harborough (Liddle 1982, 27) while crouched burials are known from Leicester (Clay 1985b, 17) and Rushey Mead (Pollard 1996 and below p.20-35). Disarticulated human bones in Later Iron Age contexts are also known from Humberstone (Boyle 2000), Leicester (Clay 1985b), Mountsorrel (Walker 1994) and Tixover (Beamish 1992). The presence of disarticulated human bones is known from other Iron Age sites and may have resulted from dispersal following excarnation (Carr and Knusel 1997).

Trade and industry

Later Iron Age metalwork, although not abundant, is known from 29 sites with, of note, an enamelled copper alloy linch pin from Huncote (below p.144), a copper alloy scabbard mouth from Normanton le Heath (Fitzpatrick 1994a) and a copper alloy horse trapping from Whitwell, Rutland (Todd 1981). Late Iron Age (La Tene III) brooches were present at Breedon on the Hill, Kirby Muxloe and Normanton le Heath (Mackreth 1994a) while there is a significant group of imported pre-Roman bow brooches from Leicester (Mackreth 1994b; 1999).

Late Iron Age coins are known from 41 sites with concentrations at Leicester and Thistleton and it has been suggested that coinage was being adopted in Leicester by the late 1st century BC (Fitzpatrick 1994b). Fragments of flan trays which may have been connected with coin manufacture have also been located at Leicester (Clay 1985b, 69) .

Metalworking moulds have been found at Breedon on the Hill (Wacher 1977), Humberstone (Northover 2000) and Ketton (Mackie 1993). Small-scale iron working (smelting and smithing) is known from several Later Iron Age sites although iron artefacts are rare. An exception was from the settlement at Kirby Muxloe where several iron objects were located including knives and a bucket fitting.

The most common form of Iron Age pottery from the two counties is East Midlands Scored Ware (Elsdon 1992) which has a long life, perhaps originating in the 5th century BC (Marsden 1998b). Local trade of pottery might be inferred from different fabrics suggesting movement of raw materials or finished items from Charnwood Forest and the eastern Jurassic ridge to the Leicester area. Raw materials for querns located at Humberstone originate in south Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Northamptonshire (Roe 2000). Coarse pottery containers for salt (VCP) originating from Cheshire have been located at Kirby Muxloe (P Marsden pers. comm.) and Normanton le Heath (Elsdon 1994).

Arguably the most interesting evidence for trading links comes from Leicester where pre-Roman imported pottery from Gaul, Italy and Spain is present including Arretine ware, Gallo-Belgic butt beakers and Terra Rubra/Terra Nigra ware (illus. 7 Clamp 1985; Pollard 1994). Together with the fragments of flan trays with their possible connection with coin production and the presence of a significant group of pre-Roman imported brooches, the material would appear to suggest that a high status settlement was developing at Leicester by the Roman Conquest (Clay 1985b). It was this settlement which was to become the *Civitas* Capital during the Roman occupation.

Discussion

Evidence from the area of Leicestershire and Rutland suggests that there was a significant increase in occupation by the end of the 1st millennium BC in common with

7. Later Iron Age Butt beaker manufactured in North Gaul found during excavations at
Blackfriars Street, Leicester. Photo: LMARS

much of lowland Britain. In contrast, however, evidence from the beginning of the millennium is elusive as the Later Bronze Age/Earlier Iron Age is in many ways archaeologically invisible (above p.2). This has led to interpretations of it having been a period of settlement contraction perhaps in the face of climatic deterioration. The evidence from Leicestershire and Rutland would appear at face value to support this theory. However, recent fieldwork and a growing body of palynological data is beginning to locate settlement and indicate more permanent clearance with grassland dominating. This may reflect the gradual increased use of metal tools, which would have seen more efficient and rapid forest clearance. Soil erosion during this time would have

had a significant impact on the landscape, with alluvial and colluvial deposition gradually changing the speed of river flow and the shape of valley slopes. This would have led to changes in settlement location but not necessarily a significant contraction. This period may have been characterised by more intensive farming of fewer locations with an emphasis on pastoralism, supporting a similar sized population as before but within a less dispersed settlement pattern. It may also have seen the beginnings of an increase in land management with the introduction of extensive long distance boundary systems.

The Later Iron Age evidence suggests that settlement morphology and landscape were of great variety in the area. For the first time previously unoccupied areas including the boulder clay plateaux were settled and farmed with environmental evidence again suggesting an emphasis on pastoralism. The settlement evidence suggests a growing population operating within a tribal system, with increased trading contacts. The East Midlands, with its profusion of large navigable rivers, may have been a pioneering trading area perhaps developing separately from the south-east in a more complicated way than the core, periphery model suggested by Haselgrove (1982). The location of important Later Iron Age settlements in the East Midlands at points where land and/or water routes would have passed has been noted (May, 1984). As well as being practical locations they may also have been seen to relate to or acknowledge the importance of rivers to the nature of Iron Age society in the area (Willis 1997).

A phenomenon identified during the 1st millennium BC is the deliberate or structured deposition of artefacts (Hill 1993). Although caution should be exercised in their interpretation, as concentrations of pottery in the terminals of eaves drip gullies, for example, may often have resulted from unstructured rubbish disposal, deliberate deposition has been identified at Wanlip (Beamish 1998, 40) and Humberstone (Allen 2000). The deliberate location of artefacts and structures is increasingly being recognised within Iron Age settlements reflecting the importance of place and cosmology to the societies using them (Fitzpatrick 1997; Oswald 1997).

The settlement evidence for the region can enable alternative models of the Later Iron Age society to be suggested. Whereas the majority of settlement appears to have been at the level of the farmstead probably consisting of family or extended family groups, the identification of extensive 'agglomerated' settlements, often in lowland locations, is beginning to add a new tier of settlement type to the Later Iron Age in the region. The size of these settlements at any one time, however, is often difficult to interpret owing to difficulties in refining the dating evidence. Notwithstanding this, it does appear that the emergence of larger settlements, perhaps having more affinities with medieval villages, is a phenomenon which can be interpreted for the East Midlands.

This raises the question of the relationship between these 'village' type settlements and hillforts. It could perhaps be argued that these settlements were basically the same as hillforts without the hills or the ditches and ramparts. Perhaps they used other means of defence which have left little trace. Alternatively hillforts still may have had a specialised role which need not always have meant permanent settlement (Hill 1993).

In Leicestershire and Rutland, the Later Iron Age society appears to have comprised relatively insular self-sufficient groups sharing some resources. It is the farmstead with some larger 'village-like' settlements with mixed but predominantly pastoral economies which appear to have been the most typical form of Iron Age settlement for the region. This area may, therefore, have comprised a landscape of these types of settlement having shared 'outfield' pasture land with their own small scale subsistence cereal

production nearer to the living areas? Bearing in mind the quantity of trees needed for Iron Age structures (Reynolds 1982), woodland would have been important. Managed woodland may have formed part of the infield areas close to the settlements enabling ready access to this important resource. The communities may also have practised transhumance with the 'outfield' pasture land supplemented by seasonal upland or floodplain areas further afield.

On present evidence, Leicester appears to show some affinities in common with larger proto-urban settlements including *oppida* identified in the south of England. By the late 1st century BC, although there appear to be some 'village-like' settlements, supporting larger populations and serving as local points of contact and trade, only Leicester has provided evidence of having more extensive trading contacts with the continent (Clay 1985b; Jarvis 1986). Other hinterland Later Iron Age settlements around Leicester during the same period appear to show a different 'culture' with comparatively little imported pottery, metalwork or coins.

Leicestershire and Rutland would have formed part of the southern area controlled by the tribe now believed to have been called the *Corieltauvi* (Tomlin 1983a and 1983b; Hassall and Tomlin 1993, 318, Pl. XVb). From the quality of artefactual evidence the centres of *Corieltauvian* control may have been Old Sleaford in Lincolnshire and Leicester although other contenders may be settlements that developed into Roman small towns, for example Medbourne or Thistleton (May 1984; Liddle 1994). More difficult to determine is how the tribe functioned and what level of control was maintained within their territory. The dual names on *Corieltauvian* coins could perhaps be interpreted as an indication of a loose federation of alliances rather than a strong centralised control (Fitzpatrick 1994b). To many of the population of Iron Age farmers in the smaller settlements, occasional trading contact at the larger settlements may have been their only link with the *Corieltauvi* which may have appeared to be little more than a veneer, having little impact on their own subsistence economies. In fact their society may have differed little from that created by the new elites, which developed following the Roman conquest in the 1st century AD.

Acknowledgements

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