

4. LATER BRONZE AGE AND IRON AGE (c.1150-cal BC – AD43): UPDATED RESEARCH AGENDA

4.1 *Dating*

1. How can we maximise the potential of scientific dating methods as tools for refining the regional chronological framework for the first millennium BC (especially radiocarbon, luminescence and dendrochronology)?
2. How can we refine further the ceramic chronology for the first millennium BC?

4.2 *Archaeological visibility, site prospection and landscape exploration*

1. What mechanisms may underlie intra-regional variations in site densities?
2. May the density and/or spatial extent of settlements of particular types and periods and within particular landscape zones be underestimated?
3. How can we expand our knowledge of first millennium BC activity in areas with a poor record of settlement (e.g. Mercia Mudstone claylands of Nottinghamshire, upland valleys of the Derbyshire Peak) and coastal zones?

4.3 *Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age settlements (c. 1000 - 450BC)*

1. Why are sites of this period comparatively rare in the archaeological record?
2. What can we deduce about the morphology, spatial extent and functions of settlements, and in particular the processes underlying the development in some areas of enclosed occupation or activity foci?
3. How many hillforts might have developed during this period and what functions may they have performed?

4.4 *Middle Iron Age settlements (c. 450 - 100BC)*

1. Why were settlements increasingly enclosed during this period and to what extent may the progress of enclosure have varied regionally?
2. What were the functions of hillforts and analogous enclosed sites dating from this period, and how were these related to each other and to other settlements?
3. How and why did more extensive 'village' or 'ladder' settlements develop?

4.5 *Late Iron Age settlements (c. 100BC - AD50)*

1. Why did large nucleated settlements emerge in areas such as Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, and can we clarify further their character and functions?
2. How are the nucleated settlements related to one another and to other settlements of the period? In particular, is there evidence for a developing settlement hierarchy?
3. How may nucleated and other settlements have developed in the Roman period?

4.6 *Field systems and major linear boundaries*

1. When and how may field and boundary systems have developed, how did this vary across the region and what processes may underlie their development?
2. What were the economic, social or political roles of the pit alignments and linear ditch systems that characterised many areas of the East Midlands?

3. What may we deduce from studies of linear boundaries with respect to changes in the agrarian landscape?

4.7 *Ritual and structured deposition and religion*

1. What is the nature of structured deposits in this region and may sub-regional patterns or trends be discerned?
2. What roles may wet and other natural locations have performed and how might these have changed over time?
3. How may studies of boundaries within, around and between settlements contribute to our understanding of votive and structured deposits?

4.8 *The agricultural economy and landscape*

1. Can we chart more closely the processes of woodland clearance and agricultural intensification, their impact upon alluviation and colluviation, and variations between different areas?
2. How may diet and land-use have varied over time and between different ecological zones? Can we identify specialist pastoral zones (e.g. in major river valleys such as the Trent) or determine coastal resource exploitation strategies?
3. How may changes in the agricultural economy have impacted upon the settlement pattern? Can the relationship between sedentary and mobile economies be clarified, and how might this have varied spatially and over time?
4. What was the impact of climate change upon farming practices, and especially the settlement and economy of upland areas such as the Derbyshire Peak?

4.9 *Finds, craft, industry and exchange*

1. How can we add to our existing knowledge of industries and crafts in this region, particularly the extraction and smelting of iron and lead, salt production and quern manufacture?
2. How can we ensure adequate analysis and publication of artefacts, particularly those recorded under the Portable Antiquities Scheme?
3. What can we determine from artefact studies about trade and exchange and the role of coinage?

4.10 *Social relations and society*

1. What was the social structure in this period and the role of open and enclosed sites? In particular, may the progression in some areas from open to enclosed settlements imply the development of less mobile societies?
2. What may further analyses of burials and of settlement architecture and morphology contribute to studies of social and political organisation?
3. How can we better understand the nature of the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age and the socio-political changes of the later Iron Age.

4. LATER BRONZE AGE AND IRON AGE (c.1150-cal BC – AD43): RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Updated Research Agenda Research Objectives	4.1 Dating		4.2 Visibility, prospection & landscape exploration			4.3 LBA & EIA settlements			4.4 MIA settlements			4.5 LIA settlements			4.6 Field systems & major linear boundaries			4.7 Ritual & structured deposition & religion			4.8 The agricultural economy and landscape				4.9 Finds, craft, industry & exchange			4.10 Social relations & society		
	14	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	1	2	3			
4A Compile audit of radiocarbon, dendro-chronological and other scientific dates	•	•				•																						•		
4B Refine ceramic chronology by additional radiocarbon dating and typological analyses	•	•				•																						•		
4C Characterise the LBA-EIA settlement resource and investigate sub-regional variability			•	•	•	•	•	•							•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
4D Assess the regional resource of hillforts and analogous sites				•					•	•	•													•		•				
4E Assess the evidence for the evolution of LIA settlement hierarchies											•	•	•	•												•	•			
4F Investigate sub-regional variations in development of field and linear boundary systems				•											•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
4G Study the production and distribution of artefacts																								•	•	•	•	•		
4H Characterise placed deposits and possible shrines																		•	•	•										
4I Prospect for Iron Age settlement in upland areas			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•																	•	•		
4J Investigate settlement and environmental resource of the Witham Valley							•											•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		

Research Objective 4A

Compile audit of radiocarbon, dendrochronological and other scientific dates

Summary:

There is a pressing need for the compilation of a database of radiocarbon, dendrochronological, luminescence and archaeomagnetic dates from Late Bronze Age and Iron Age sites in the East Midlands, incorporating details such as material type, context and artefact associations. This could provide the basis for a review aimed at assessing the relative reliability of dates and at identifying particular lacunae and problems. A particular concern for this period, which should be central to the development of a scientific dating strategy, is the flattening of the calibration curve from around 800 to 400 cal BC and the particular problem of dating Early Iron Age sites¹. This baseline study would provide a secure basis for a regional guidelines document, building upon current recommendations for the period² and the results of successful dating programmes at sites such as Fiskerton in Lincolnshire³. It would also allow the identification of sites yielding series of radiocarbon dates appropriate for Bayesian analysis.

Agenda topics addressed: 4.1.1; 4.1.2

East Midlands Resource Assessment and Research Agenda: 116, 128-29

SHAPE 2008 sub-programme: 11112.510

Other research frameworks:

EH Research Strategy for Prehistory 2009: Topic 27 (Priority vi)
Understanding the British Iron Age: An Agenda for Action 2001: B2.1

References:

¹ Baillie, M.G.L. and Pilcher, J.R. 1983 Some observations on the high-precision calibration of routine dates, in Ottoway, B.S. (ed) *Archaeology, Dendrochronology and the Radiocarbon Curve*, University of Edinburgh Dept of Archaeology Occasional Paper 9, 51-63

² Haselgrove, C., Armit, I., Champion, T., Creighton, J, Gwilt, A., Hill, J.D., Hunter, F. and Woodward, A. 2001 *Understanding the British Iron Age: An Agenda for Action*, Salisbury: Trust for Wessex Archaeology

³ Field, N. and Parker Pearson, M. 2003 *Fiskerton, An Iron Age Timber Causeway with Iron Age and Roman Votive Offerings: The 1981 Excavations*, Oxford: Oxbow

Research Objective 4B

Refine first millennium BC ceramic chronology by additional radiocarbon dating and typological analyses

Summary

The synthesis of the East Midlands first millennium BC ceramic sequence published in 2002¹ requires updating to take account of the substantial body of new data that are now available for study. There is also considerable scope for refining the regional ceramic typology and developing an East Midlands ceramic type series as guidance for ceramic specialists, excavators and other researchers. This should be accompanied by a systematic programme of radiocarbon dating, targeting the carbonised residues that occur commonly on the inner and outer faces of pre-Roman Iron Age domestic pottery². It is recommended that major published assemblages, with well-ordered archives providing details of vessels preserving carbonised pottery residues appropriate for radiocarbon dating, should be targeted initially. It is recommended that dating programmes focus upon typologically diagnostic vessels such as Scored Ware³ and pottery embellished with curvilinear and rectilinear designs inspired by the La Tène ornamental style⁴. Sites with well-stratified ceramic assemblages should be accorded priority for further excavation⁵.

Agenda topics addressed: 4.1.1; 4.1.2

East Midlands Resource Assessment and Research Agenda: p.116

SHAPE 2008 sub-programme: 11112.510

Other research frameworks:

EH Research Strategy for Prehistory 2009: Topic 16 (Priority v)

Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group 1997, 4: 1.2

Understanding the British Iron Age: An Agenda for Action 2001: B.2.2

References:

¹ Knight, D. 2002. A regional ceramic sequence: pottery of the first millennium BC between the Humber and the Nene, in Woodward, A. and Hill, J.D. (eds) *Prehistoric Britain: The Ceramic Basis*, 118-42.

² Willis, S. 2002. A date with the past: Late Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery and chronology, in Woodward, A. and Hill, J.D. (eds) *Prehistoric Britain: The Ceramic Basis*, 5-21.

³ Elsdon, S.M. 1992. East Midlands Scored Ware, *Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions* 66, 83-91.

⁴ Elsdon, S.M. 1975. *Stamp and Roulette Decorated Pottery of the La Tène Period in Eastern England*, BAR British Series 10, Oxford.

⁵ e.g. Knight, D. 2010. Iron Age pottery from Market Deeping, Lincolnshire. In Lane, T. and Trimble, D. *Fluid Landscapes and Human Adaptation. Excavations on Prehistoric Sites on the Lincolnshire Fen Edge 1991-1994*, Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Series Monograph.

Research Objective 4C

Characterise the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age settlement resource and investigate sub-regional variability

Summary:

Further research is recommended to establish the character, morphology and components of settlements dating from this crucial transition period and to investigate the environmental evidence for seasonal or permanent settlement. Settlements of this period are represented over much of the region by extensive and seemingly random spreads of unenclosed roundhouses, pits, post-holes and other features¹. The picture is clouded by the difficulty of locating such ephemeral remains prior to large-scale excavation and by the growing evidence for significant intra-regional variability. Baseline surveys are recommended to define more precisely the distribution of enclosed settlements, which are known to have been constructed in this early period along the Lincolnshire Fen Edge and some other parts of the region², and their relationship to unenclosed settlements. It would also be useful to review the range of contemporary monument types, which in some parts of the region may include ringforts³ hillforts⁴, palisaded enclosures⁵, middens⁶ and burnt mounds⁷. Many settlements of this period have been found by chance, often stratified beneath later settlements, suggesting protracted but not necessarily continuous use of preferred locations. It would be useful to review unpublished archive data with the aim of identifying hitherto undetected activity foci of this period⁸ and the resource for further analysis and publication. From the management perspective, such work could also assist determination of the most appropriate evaluation techniques for locating settlements of this period.

Agenda topics addressed: 4.2.1 - 4.2.3; 4.3.1 - 4.3.3; 4.6.1 - 4.6.3; 4.8.1 - 4.8.3; 4.9.1; 4.9.3; 4.10.1 - 4.10.3

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SHAPE 2008 sub-programme: 11111.170

Other research frameworks:

EH Research Strategy for Prehistory 2009: Topic 8 (Critical Priority 1)
Understanding the British Iron Age: An Agenda for Action 2001: C2.1

References:

- ¹ Knight, D. 2007. From open to enclosed: Iron Age landscapes of the Trent Valley, in Haselgrove, C. and Moore, T. (eds) *The Later Iron Age in Britain and Beyond*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 190-218.
- ² Chowne, P., Cleal, R.M.J., and Fitzpatrick, A.P. with Andrews, P. 2001 *Excavations at Billingborough, Lincolnshire, 1975-8: A Bronze-Iron Age Settlement and Salt-working Site*, East Anglian Archaeology 94
- ³ Hull, G. 2001 A Late Bronze Age ringwork, pits and later features at Thrapston, Northamptonshire, *Northamptonshire Archaeology* 29, 73-92
- ⁴ Avery, D.M.E., Sutton, J.E.G. and Banks, J.W. 1967 Rainsborough, Northants: excavations 1961-65, *Proceedings Prehistoric Society* 33, 207-306.
- ⁵ Hart, C. 1981. *The North Derbyshire Archaeological Survey*, Chesterfield: North Derbyshire Archaeological Trust, 77-78.
- ⁶ Knight and Howard 2004, 89-90
- ⁷ Beamish, M. and Ripper, S. 2000 Burnt mounds in the East Midlands, *Antiquity* 74, 37-38.
- ⁸ Gwilt, A. 1997 Popular practices from material culture: a case study of the Iron Age settlement at Wakerley, Northamptonshire, in Gwilt, A. and Haselgrove, C. (eds) *Reconstructing Iron Age Societies: New Approaches to the British Iron Age*, 153-166.

Research Objective 4D

Assess the regional resource of hillforts and analogous sites

Summary:

It is proposed that resources be focused upon characterising the heterogeneous group of defensible sites of the region¹, including hillforts², ringforts³, 'marsh forts'⁴ and other lowland defensible enclosures such as Aslockton, Nottinghamshire⁴, with a view to identifying further sites, examining their relationship to other settlements of the period and investigating sub-regional patterning. Comparatively few hillforts or analogous enclosures within the region have been excavated to modern standards, among them Mam Tor⁵ and Gardoms Edge⁶, Derbyshire, and Rainsborough, Northamptonshire⁷, and many questions remain regarding their origins, functions and interrelationships. Further investigations, following the examples of on-going excavations at Borough Hill in Leicestershire⁸ and Fin Cop in Derbyshire⁹, should include geophysical survey, excavation and detailed studies of the associated pottery, other artefacts and environmental data. These sites may also provide appropriate foci for community projects, with opportunities for involvement in a broad range of fieldwork and post-excavation activities, as demonstrated by the Heritage Lottery Fund-supported investigations at Fin Cop by the Longstone Local History Heritage Group in partnership with Archaeological Research Services Ltd.

Agenda topics addressed: 4.2.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.1; 4.4.2; 4.9.1; 4.9.3

East Midlands Resource Assessment and Research Agenda: pp.92-95

SHAPE 2008 sub-programme: 11111.170

Other research frameworks:

EH Research Strategy for Prehistory 2009: Topics 1 (Critical Priority 2); 6 (Critical Priority 1); 35 (Priority viii)

Understanding the British Iron Age: An Agenda for Action 2001: C2.1

References:

¹ Willis, S. 2006 *The Later Bronze and Iron Age, in Cooper, N. J. (ed) The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*, 117-121.

² e.g. Fell, C.I. 1936 The Hunsbury hillfort, Northants: a new survey of the material, *Archaeological Journal* 93, 57-100

³ e.g. Hull, G. 2001 A Late Bronze Age ringwork, pits and later features at Thrapston, Northamptonshire, *Northamptonshire Archaeology* 29, 73-92

⁴ e.g. Chowne, P., Girling, M. and Greig, J., 1986. Excavations of an Iron Age defended enclosure at Tattershall Thorpe, Lincolnshire, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 52, 159-88.

⁴ Palmer-Brown, C. and Knight, D. 1993. Excavations of an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement at Aslockton, Nottinghamshire: interim report, *Transactions Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire* 97, 146-147; Willis 2006, 131

⁵ Coombs, D.G. and Thompson, F.H. 1979 Excavation of the hillfort of Mam Tor, Derbyshire, 1965-69, *Derbyshire Archaeol. J.* 99, 7-51.

⁶ Barnatt, J., Bevan, B. and Edmonds, M. 2002. Gardom's Edge: a landscape through time, *Antiquity* 76, 51-56; unusual scarp-edge enclosure now dated to early first millennium cal BC (source: J. Barnatt)

⁷ Avery, D.M.E., Sutton, J.E.G. and Banks, J.W. 1967 Rainsborough, Northants: excavations 1961-65, *Proceedings Prehistoric Society* 33, 207-306.

⁸Borough Hill: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/archaeology/documents/borough%20Hill%20poster%201.pdf>

⁹ Fin Cop: <http://www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com/projects/fincop.html>.

Research Objective 4E

Assess the evidence for the evolution of settlement hierarchies

Summary:

It is recommended that the character of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement be assessed to identify sites that on the basis of landscape situation, structural remains and/or finds may represent sites of higher social and economic status, and to investigate sub-regional variability. Potential higher status settlements include the Late Iron Age 'nucleated settlements' of Lincolnshire¹, many yielding large quantities of metalwork, coins, mint debris and high quality pottery (e.g. Sleaford²), 'aggregated' settlements in Northamptonshire (e.g. Duston³), Leicestershire (e.g. Lockington⁴) and Nottinghamshire (e.g. Collingham and Rampton⁵), some hillforts (e.g. Hunsbury⁶) and analogous large, lowland enclosures (e.g. Aslockton, Nottinghamshire⁷). Cropmark studies, combined with analyses of surface scatters of metalwork, coins and other artefacts recorded during fieldwalking and metal detecting, may highlight high status settlement foci. This may guide further targeted investigation by detailed area geophysical survey and excavation, perhaps involving community groups. Coins and other metal objects recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme have particular potential as evidence for hitherto undetected high status sites.

Agenda topics addressed: 4.5.1 - 4.5.3; 4.9.1; 4.10.1.

East Midlands Resource Assessment and Research Agenda: pp.109-110

SHAPE 2008 sub-programme: 11111.170

Other research frameworks:

EH Research Strategy for Prehistory 2009: Topics 5 (Priority iii) and 35 (Priority viii)

Understanding the British Iron Age: An Agenda for Action 2001:F2.2-F2/3

References:

¹ May, J. 1984 The major settlements of later Iron Age Lincolnshire, in Field, N. and White, A. (eds) *A Prospect of Lincolnshire*, 18-22

² Elsdon, S.M. 1997 *Old Sleaford Revealed*, Oxbow Monograph 78, Oxford

³ Willis, S. 2006 The Later Bronze and Iron Age, in Cooper, N. J. (ed) *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*, 110

⁴ Clay, P. 1985 A survey of two cropmark sites at Lockington-Hemington, Leicestershire, *Trans. Leicestershire Archaeol. Hist. Soc.* 59, 17-26

⁵ Knight, D. and Howard, A.J. 2004 The later Bronze Age and Iron Ages: towards an enclosed landscape, in D. Knight and A.J. Howard, *Trent Valley Landscapes*, Kings Lynn: Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd, 99-100

⁶ Fell, C.I. 1936 The Hunsbury hillfort, Northants: a new survey of the material, *Archaeological Journal* 93, 57-100

⁷ Willis 2006, 131.

Research Objective 4F

Investigate landscape and sub-regional variations in the development of field and linear boundary systems

Summary:

Extensive Bronze Age field systems are known in some upland and lowland areas of the region, including the Derbyshire gritstone moors¹ and the Lincolnshire Fen Edge², but are very unevenly spread. In the Trent Valley, for example, field systems are currently unknown before the mid-first millennium BC³, whereas in Northamptonshire rectilinear ditched field systems appear to have developed in parts of the Middle Nene Valley from the Middle Bronze Age⁴. These contrasts may reflect intra-regional variations in the agricultural economy or variable pressures upon land resources, but further investigations into the possible mechanisms of change remain priorities for research. Linear land divisions are a particularly distinctive feature of the East Midlands⁵, and further research on the origins, functions and interrelationships of pit alignments⁶ and linear ditched boundaries and their relationship to field systems is a major priority. Work is also recommended to investigate the uses to which the fields were put, variations within the region and their relationship to contemporary settlements. Further information on the spatial extent of these boundary systems should be recovered from air photography, lidar and other remote sensing techniques, but only targeted excavation can hope to unravel the development of field systems and their relationship to other linear boundaries. Particular attention should also be focused upon the impact of topography, which in Nottinghamshire could explain the contrasting spatial organisation of the Late Iron Age to Roman coaxial field systems around Newark⁷ and the broadly contemporary 'brickwork plan' systems of the Sherwood Sandstones⁸.

Agenda topics addressed: 4.2.2; 4.6.1 - 4.6.3; 4.7.1; 4.8.1; 4.8.3; 4.10.3.

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SHAPE 2008 sub-programme: 11111.170

Other research frameworks:

EH Research Strategy for Prehistory 2009: Topic 8 (Critical Priority 1)
Understanding the British Iron Age: An Agenda for Action 2001: C2.2

References:

- ¹ Barnatt, J. 1987 Bronze Age settlement on the East Moors of the Peak District of Derbyshire and South Yorkshire, *Proceedings Prehistoric Society* 53, 393-418
- ² Yates, D. 2007 *Land, Power and Prestige. Bronze Age Field Systems in Southern England*, Oxford: Oxbow, 110-112
- ³ Knight, D. and Howard, A.J. 2004 The later Bronze Age and Iron Ages: towards an enclosed landscape, in D. Knight and A.J. Howard, *Trent Valley Landscapes*, Kings Lynn: Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd, 100-106; Knight, D. and Elliott, E. 2008 Towards a bounded landscape: excavations at Gonalston, Nottinghamshire, and the development of the earliest field systems in the Trent Valley, in A.M. Chadwick (ed) *Recent Approaches to the Archaeology of Land Allotment*, BAR International Series 1875, Oxford: Archaeopress
- ⁴ Parry, S. 2006. Raunds Area Survey. An Archaeological Study of the landscape of Raunds, Northamptonshire, 1985-94, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 46, 272.
- ⁵ Willis, S. 2006 The Later Bronze and Iron Age, in N. J. Cooper (ed) *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*, 2006, 121-125.
- ⁶ Thomas, J. 2003. Prehistoric pit alignments and their significance in the archaeological landscape, in J.Humphrey (ed) *Re-searching the Iron Age*, Leicester Archaeology Monograph 11, University of Leicester, 79-86
- ⁷ Whimster, R.P. 1989 *The Emerging Past. Air Photography and the Buried Landscape*. London: RCHME
- ⁸ Riley, D.N. 1980. *Early Landscape from the Air: Studies of Cropmarks in South Yorkshire and North Nottinghamshire*. Department of Prehistory and Archaeology, University of Sheffield; Garton, D. 2008 The Romano-British landscape of the Sherwood Sandstone of Nottinghamshire: fieldwalking the brickwork-plan field-systems, *Transactions Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire* 112, 15-110

Research Objective 4G

Study the production, distribution and use of artefacts

Summary:

Further scientific analyses are recommended to elucidate the production and distribution of artefacts that may be tied to specific raw material sources. Examples of closely provenanced finds include prehistoric pottery tempered with granodiorite derived from the Mountsorrel outcrop of Charnwood Forest¹, ceramic salt containers originating from production centres in the Droitwich area or in the Cheshire Plain², and querns of Millstone Grit, granite, greensand and other materials that may be tied to specific raw material sources³. Typological analyses of artefacts may also elucidate medium to long distance exchange networks, as demonstrated by studies of Glastonbury Ware pottery from Weekley, Northamptonshire⁴, coins attributed to the Corieltavi⁵ and metalwork deriving from other regions of Britain and the Continent⁶. Further systematic study of the residues occurring on Late Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery should also be encouraged as an aid to understanding their use⁷.

Agenda topics addressed: 4.9.1 - 4.9.3; 4.10.1; 4.10.3

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SHAPE 2008 sub-programme: 11111.510

Other research frameworks:

EH Research Strategy for Prehistory 2009: Topics 8 (Critical Priority1), 15 (Priority v) and 29 (Critical Priority 5)

Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group 1997, 4 (1.4)

Understanding the British Iron Age: An Agenda for Action 2001: D2.1

References:

¹ Knight, D, Marsden, P. and Carney, J. 2003 Local or non-local? Prehistoric granodiorite-tempered pottery in the East Midlands, in Gibson, A. (ed) *Prehistoric Pottery: People, Pattern and Purpose*, 111-125. BAR International Series 1156, Oxford

² Morris, E.L. 1994. Production and distribution of pottery and salt in Iron Age Britain: a review, *Proceedings Prehistoric Society* 60, 371-393

³ Wright, M.E. and Firman, R.J. 1992 The quernstones and rubbing stones, in Knight, D. Excavations of an Iron Age settlement at Gamston, Nottinghamshire, *Transactions of the Thoroton Society* 96, 70-74; Wright, M.E. 1996 Querns in

May, J. *Dragonby: Report on Excavations at an Iron Age and Romano-British Settlement in North Lincolnshire*. Oxford: Oxbow, 365-376.

⁴ Williams, D.F. 1987 Weekley, Northamptonshire: petrological examination of Iron Age pottery, in Jackson, D.A. and Dix, B., Late Iron Age and Roman settlement at Weekley, Northants, *Northamptonshire Archaeology* 21, microfiche 124-126

⁵ May, J. 1994 Coinage and the Settlements of the Corieltavi in East Midland Britain, *British Numismatic Journal* 64, 1-21; Daubney, A. 2010. The use of gold in late Iron Age and Roman Lincolnshire, in Malone, S. and Williams, M. (eds) *Rumours of Roman Finds. Recent Work in Roman Lincolnshire*. Heckington: Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, 64-74.

⁶ e.g. Fiskerton, Lincs: Field, N. and Parker Pearson, M. 2003. Fiskerton. An Iron Age Timber Causeway with Iron Age and Roman Votive Offerings. Oxford: Oxbow Books, especially 49-85, 171-178

⁷ Morris, E.L. 2002. Staying alive: the function and use of prehistoric ceramics, in Woodward, A. and Hill, J.D. (eds) *Prehistoric Britain: The Ceramic Basis*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 54-61.

Research Objective 4H

Characterise placed deposits and shrine-like features

Summary:

A wide range of ritual activities may be implied by discoveries of metalwork and other artefacts that appear to have been deliberately deposited in watery and riverside locations¹, notably along the Trent and at such remarkable sites as the timber causeway at Fiskerton in the Witham Valley². Further evidence for ritual activity may be provided by the discovery in pits and other features associated with settlements of human and animal remains³ and artefacts such as pots or querns⁴ that appear to have been deliberately placed. Further work is required to characterise the variety of placed deposits, examine their spatial and chronological distribution and review their relationship to settlements and other site types. The relatively common discoveries of metalwork in watery contexts contrast with the apparent paucity of deliberately placed human and animal burials, and may suggest specific regional characteristics. Research may usefully be extended to rare examples of possible shrines or temples, among them a probable late Roman temple at Red Hill, Nottinghamshire, which is thought to have had an Iron Age predecessor⁵. Little is currently known of the landscape setting of placed deposits and possible shrines or temples, or of their relationship to settlement features. There is also a strong likelihood that many shrines may have been sited without associated buildings at significant locations in the landscape⁶, and hence may be underrepresented in the archaeological record.

Agenda topics addressed: 4.7.1 - 4.7.3

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SHAPE 2008 sub-programme: 11111.140

Other research frameworks:

EH Research Strategy for Prehistory 2009: Topic 18 (Priority iv)

Understanding the British Iron Age: An Agenda for Action 2001: D2.3

References:

¹ Willis, S. 2006 The Later Bronze and Iron Age, in Cooper, N. J. (ed) *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*, 126;

² Field, N. and Parker Pearson, M. 2003. Fiskerton. An Iron Age Timber Causeway with Iron Age and Roman Votive Offerings. Oxford: Oxbow Books

³ Chowne, P., Cleal, R.M.J., and Fitzpatrick, A.P. with Andrews, P. 2001 *Excavations at Billingborough, Lincolnshire, 1975-8: A Bronze-Iron Age Settlement and Salt-working Site*, East Anglian Archaeology 94, 95: dog burial

⁴ Marsden, P. 1998 The querns, in Beamish, M., A Middle Iron Age site at Wanlip, Leicestershire, *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 72, 62-63

⁵ Elsdon, S. 1982 Iron Age and Roman sites at Red Hill, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Nottinghamshire: Excavations by E. Greenfield, 1963, and previous finds, *Transactions of the Thorton Society*, 86, 31

⁶e.g. Hallaton, Leicestershire: Score, V. 2006. Rituals, hoards and helmets: a ceremonial meeting place of the Corieltavi, *Transactions Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 80, 197-207; *British Archaeology* 89, 2006, 35-39; *Current Archaeology* 236, 2009, 36-41.



Iron Age torc of electrum (alloy of gold and silver), deposited in a pit on a settlement near Newark, Nottinghamshire; outside diameter xxcm. © The Trustees of the British Museum

Research Objective 4I Prospect for Iron Age settlement in upland areas of the Peak District

Summary:

Iron Age settlement in the upland areas of the East Midlands is poorly known, especially on the gritstone and limestone moors and in the upland valleys of the Peak District¹⁻². It remains unclear whether this is an accurate reflection of original settlement activity or a reflection of site visibility. Palaeoenvironmental sampling suggests that agricultural use of the Derbyshire uplands continued into the later Bronze Age and Iron Age³. In addition, recent discoveries of first millennium BC circular buildings during excavations at Gardoms Edge, Derbyshire⁴, together with finds of first millennium BC pottery and structural remains during investigations of other settlements and hillforts in the region⁵⁻⁶, suggest that this absence of activity may be more apparent than real. There is a strong possibility, therefore, that many of the known Bronze Age settlements and field systems of the eastern gritstone moors continued in use into the Iron Age, while many of the well preserved Romano-British earthworks of the Dark and White Peak could conceal Iron Age settlements (e.g. Chee Tor, Derbyshire⁷). There is a need to review the field evidence and to encourage further field survey, airborne remote sensing and excavation, with particular emphasis upon the retrieval of palaeoenvironmental evidence. This should extend to the use of caves, which in the White Peak have yielded some interesting collections of pottery and other artefacts (including at some sites items of exotic metalwork⁸). Much of this seems to date from the later Iron Age, but reassessment of the range and variety of material and its chronological range is now long overdue.

Agenda topics addressed: 4.2.1 - 4.2.3; 4.3.1 - 4.3.3; 4.4.1; 4.4.2; 4.8.3; 4.10.2; 4.10.3.

East Midlands Resource Assessment and Research Agenda: p.132

SHAPE 2008 sub-programme: 11112.510

Other research frameworks:

EH Research Strategy for Prehistory 2009: Topics 3 (Priority i) and 8 (Critical Priority 1)
Understanding the British Iron Age: An Agenda for Action 2001: E2.3

References:

- ¹ Bevan, B. 2000 Peak practice: whatever happened to the Iron Age in the southern Pennines? In Harding, J.R. and Johnstone, R. *Northern Pasts*, Oxford: BAR 302, 141-155
- ² Compare Haselgrove, C., Armit, I., Champion, T., Creighton, J, Gwilt, A., Hill, J.D., Hunter, F. and Woodward, A. 2001 *Understanding the British Iron Age: An Agenda for Action*, Salisbury: Trust for Wessex Archaeology, 25: Table 3
- ³ Long, D.J., Chambers, F.M. and Barnatt, J. 1998 The palaeoenvironment and the vegetation of a later prehistoric field system at Stoke Flat, on the gritstone uplands of the Peak District, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 25, 505-519
- ⁴ Bevan, B. 2007 The Early Iron Age of the Peak District: re-reading the evidence, in Haselgrove, C. and Pope, M. *The Earlier Iron Age in Britain and the Near Continent*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 254-256.
- ⁵ Bevan 2007, 255
- ⁶ Fin Cop, Derbyshire: <http://www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com/projects/fincop.html>.
- ⁷ Bevan 2000, 148; material in Chesterfield Museum from limited excavation at Chee Tor by H. Lane, catalogued by C. Hart (2005,) includes no pre-Roman finds.
- ⁸ Hart 1981, 77, 81; e.g. Harborough Rocks and Cave: Storrs-Fox, W. 1909. Harborough Cave, near Brassington, *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* 31, 89-114; Makepeace, G.A. 1990. An Early Iron Age settlement at Harborough Rocks, Brassington, *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* 110, 24-29.

Research Objective 4J

Investigate the settlement and environmental resource of the Witham Valley

Summary:

The Witham Valley is well known as a focus of activity from Mesolithic and Neolithic times, but has yielded an especially impressive battery of evidence for exploitation of this wetland zone during the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age periods. An exceptional collection of riverine metalwork² is rivalled in quantity only by finds from the Thames. There are numerous logboat finds³, later Bronze Age ritual and ceremonial sites such as Washingborough⁴ and, most remarkable of all, the Iron Age timber causeway with associated votive finds at Fiskerton^{2, 5}. A valley-wide palaeoenvironmental research design has been published by the Witham Valley Archaeology Research Committee and provides a valuable springboard for studies of landscape change during the first millennium BC and beyond^{6,7}. Other key themes include the development of later Bronze Age and Iron Age rural settlement, the changing agricultural economy, the role of the river as a focus for ritual activity, trade and transport, and in view particularly of the proximity of Roman Lincoln⁸ the impact of the Roman Conquest upon the rural landscape.

Agenda topics addressed: 4.3.2; 4.7.1-2; 4.8.1-3; 4.9.1; 4.10.3

East Midlands Resource Assessment and Research Agenda: 272, 285-286

SHAPE 2008 sub-programmes: 11111.110; 11111.120

Other research frameworks:

EH Research Strategy for Prehistory 2009: Topic 8 (Critical Priority 1)
*The City by the Pool*⁸ Archaeological Research Agenda Zones 5.8 and 5.9
Time and Tide

References:

- ¹ Catney, S. and Start, D. (eds) 2003 *Time and Tide: the Archaeology of the Witham Valley*, Heckington: Witham Valley Archaeological Research Committee.
² Field, N. and Parker-Pearson, M. 2003 *Fiskerton: an Iron Age Timber Causeway with Iron Age and Roman Votive Offerings*, Oxford: Oxbow books, 162-164
³ Field and Parker-Pearson 2003, 158-159

⁴ Allen, C.S.M. 2009 *Exchange and Ritual at the Riverside: Late Bronze Age Life in the Lower Witham Valley at Washingborough, Lincolnshire*. Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) Monograph Series 1

⁵ Field, N., Parker-Pearson, M. and Rylatt, J. 2003 The Fiskerton Causeway: research-past, present and future, in Catney and Start (eds) 16-32

⁶ French, C. and Rackham, J. 2003 Palaeoenvironmental research design for the Witham Valley, in Catney and Start (eds) 33-42

⁷ Stocker, D. A. and Everson, P. 2003 The straight and narrow way: Fenland causeways and the conversion of the landscape in the Witham valley, Lincolnshire, in M. Carver (ed) *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD300-1300*, 271-288

⁸ Jones, M.J, Stocker, D. and Vince, A. 2003 *The City by the Pool: Assessing the Archaeology of the City of Lincoln*, Lincoln Archaeology Studies 10, Oxbow Books, Oxford