OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT 2011

THE IRON AGE

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Version: 28/1/2012

Abbreviations

BP – Before Present ('present' is defined as 1950)
LAA – Oxford Local Authority Area
MIS – Marine Isotope Analysis
OHER – Oxford Historic Environment Record
UAD – Oxford Urban Archaeological Database

Introduction

This assessment report summarises the Iron Age evidence from the Oxford City Council Local Authority Area and forms part of the resource assessment stage of the Oxford Archaeological Plan. The aim of the report is to aid heritage asset management and inform field investigation and academic research.

The Oxford Resource Assessment is designed to compliment the county level resource assessment produced as part of the Solent Thames Research Frameworks (Allen 2007). A recent regional level overview has been provided in the recent *Thames Through Time* monograph (Lambrick with Robinson 2009) and a regional research agenda by Lambrick (2010). Earlier local overviews have been produced from Tom Hassall Lectures (Miles 1986; Miles 1997). In addition the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (OHER) and the Oxford Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) have been consulted.

Chronology

The Iron Age spans a period from broadly 800 BC until 43 AD and the arrival of the Romans in Britain. Identification of Iron Age sites is largely based on artefact typologies although crop marks at Port Meadow and University Parks have been tentatively assigned to either the Late Bronze Age or Iron Age based on their form. Iron Age pottery sequences are well established but generally only provide very broad date ranges for use (See Fig 2; Allen 2010).

A basic chronology of pottery fabrics can be identified from local sites in the Upper Thames Valley. The chronology of the later Bronze and Iron Ages can be divided by forms into the following main phases (from Allen 2010):

- Late Bronze Age decorated ware assemblages
- Earliest Iron Age decorated ware assemblages
- Early Iron Age angular vessels
- Middle Iron Age slack-profiled assemblages characterised by globular bowls and jars
- Late Iron Age handmade and wheel turned vessels, characterised by necked jars and bowls

Early Iron Age occupation sites located near to Oxford such as at Yarnton, Abingdon and Farmoor have produced a significant percentage of shell tempered fabrics, which seem to have replaced flint, quartzite and sand tempered pottery of the Late Bronze Age. Forms were mostly angular and with linear incised geometric motifs decorating finer wares and finger tipping on larger pots. A period of transition, c. 450-200BC in which angular forms gave way to more curvaceous pots in sandy wares and decoration declined is rather poorly defined in the region. By the later Middle Iron Age the shell tempered wares further declined in favour of sandier wares, while decoration of fine wares such as the regionally characteristic globular bowls was more often tooled and curvilinear. In the Late Iron Age more Romanised styles of pottery became fashionable and for some of these sandy wares are overtaken by grog tempered wares (Biddulph 2003, 38). These trends probably date to after the turn of the millennium, and it is increasingly evident that at some sites the later middle Iron Age wares persisted alongside or instead of the more Romanised styles of late Iron Age pottery (pers. comm. T Allen).

Metalwork can be identified either through typological sequences or through metallurgical analysis but there have so far been few significant metal finds from excavated sites within the LAA and none have been of sufficient quality to undertake metallurgical analysis. Generally brooch typology can be a useful aid to the dating of some late Iron Age sites, but the rarity of brooches on earlier sites limits the usefulness of these artefacts.

Coinage can provide a more detailed sequence for the Late Iron Age than pottery fabrics, but this too comes with its own problems. As site finds Iron Age coins are hardly ever found in Iron Age contexts in the region, and there are also problems even as a general indicator of political history. Cunliffe refers to two distinct groups of Late Iron Age coinage in Britain, the first dates to around 150-50 BC and bore no inscriptions, dating of this group is largely based on typological and distribution date. The second group from 50 BC to AD 43 adopt classical and native symbolism and bear the names of prominent individuals and settlements (Cunliffe 1991: 107). Two general sources are known; those minted in Gaul (approximately 150-20 BC in Britain) and those minted in Britain from 75 BC (*ibid.*).

Environmental analysis can provide an overall picture of climate change and environmental factors throughout the prehistoric period and an increasing number of sites have contributed to this field, this is discussed in greater detail in the General Oxford Archaeological Resource Assessment.

Some sites have been identified through scientific dating, but a distinct spike in the radiocarbon curve has been recorded between 800-400 cal BC which can distort the data for the Early Iron Age (Allen 2010). C14 dating of the middle to late Iron Age has also posed problems in the region. A radio-carbon date from peat recovered at 89-91 St Aldates, produced at date of to 760-50 cal BC (Dodd ed. 2003: 10-11, 425). Other forms of dating such as Optical Stimulated Luminescence dating (OSL) and Thermo-Luminescence dating (TL) have been used on a few sites within the county but to date only one site within the LAA at the Radcliffe Infirmary, (Ruddy 2009; Braybrooke 2010).

Nature of the evidence base

A significant number of Iron Age sites have been recorded through air photography and archaeological investigation in and around Oxford, contributing to an understanding of landscape and land use in the later prehistoric (Figure 1). Over 60 archaeological investigations have recorded evidence of Iron Age or late prehistoric (i.e. not definitively Iron Age) activity in the LAA (Appendix 1: Iron Age and Late Prehistoric Site Gazetteer). Of these, the vast majority have been development led investigations with only a handful of late 19th century records.

The distribution of sites indicate several areas of Iron Age activity across the different geologies of the LAA. For example on the 1st gravel terrace/flood plain at Port Meadow, at the Wolvercote Viaduct site (on alluvium) and Whitehouse Road (on a low gravel island in the floodplain but not covered in alluvium); on the 2nd terrace gravels in the University Parks/Parks Road area and at Middle Way Summertown; to the south east on the Corallian Ridge at the King of Prussia site, Rose Hill, Bernwood First School, Barton and at Zone A Blackbird Leys on clay.

Some ninety records are noted in the OHER for the Iron Age in the Oxford LAA, of which twenty-five are find spots recording pottery, flint and some coins. In addition the PAS database records twenty four Iron Age coins for the Oxford LAA taken from the Oxford University Celtic Coin Index, though it is uncertain how many of these coins are already recorded in the OHER.

The following notable sites can be identified within the Local Authority Area:

Middle Iron Age unenclosed roundhouse/ring gully sites

- Whitehouse Road: Mixed farming, penannular sub-circular enclosure (Excavation-Mudd 1993)
- Blackbird Leys Zone A: Penannular enclosure early-middle Iron Age (Excavation- Booth and Edgeley-Long 2003)
- Port Meadow- extant roundhouse earthwork (Lambrick and McDonald, 1985)

Middle Iron Age enclosed settlement on higher ground

- King of Prussia, Rose Hill (Evaluation and watching brief- Gilbert 2008 & 2011)
- Bernwood First School, Barton. (Early-Middle Iron Age) Linear storage pit alignment (Excavation- Gilbert 2005)

Possible enclosure and Iron Age pit burial tradition

- Bernwood First School, Barton (Excavation- Gilbert 2005)

Late Iron Age or Early Roman transition sites

- Middle Way, Summertown (Excavation- Williams 2007)
- Eastfield House, Brasenose Driftway (Excavation- Challis 2005)
- Halifax House (Excavation- Anthony 2005)

Unexcavated sites

- Possible unenclosed settlement at Binsey identified from aerial photographic evidence (Rhodes 1949)
- Extensive rural settlement and field boundaries identified as parch marks at University Parks (Hassall 1986)

The landscape

Inheritance

Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monumental landscapes on the 1st and 2nd gravel terrace have produced little Middle and Late Bronze Age evidence and in the Iron Age, and while the character of activity appears to shift from religious/ceremonial to functional pastoralism, this transition remains poorly understood. In an equivalent situation at Stanton Harcourt, the area of the Devils Quoits henge and major barrow cemetery surrounding was respected and only used for grazing well into the Roman period. While a similar trend might apply in Oxford, this has not been demonstrated.

Arguably, at Port Meadow Iron Age activity continued to respect the existing Bronze Age monuments with farmsteads mostly avoiding at least the larger ring ditches. Evidence from the University Parks however, may suggest a different pattern as aerial photographic analysis indicates enclosures and other features, possibly of Iron Age date amongst and perhaps over the earlier barrow cemetery (See Fig 2).

Excavations at St John's College have recorded evidence of a substantial Neolithic henge that remained a visible part of the landscape until the Saxon period (Wallis 2010: 7). The henge feature, constructed in around 2200 BC, shows only gradual evidence of silting throughout the prehistoric period indicating that it remained a visible feature that was respected into the Iron Age and Roman periods (*ibid*.: 11). Elsewhere there is some evidence for the re-use of Bronze Age settlement/activity sites at several locations in the LAA if not evidence for direct continuity.

The picture is far from clear, but there may still have been a hiatus in activity in the archaeological record in the later Bonze Age respecting the earlier ceremonial complex, but perhaps breaking down or weakening with an organisational shift occurring earlier than at Stanton Harcourt, perhaps at some point in the middle to late Iron Age (pers. comm. G Lambrick)

Key characteristics of the landscape

The modern riverine landscape comprises the main river channels of the Thames and Cherwell and their tributaries. Archaeological investigation within the city has identified further palaeo-channels throughout the floodplain and environmental evidence has provided information on the local fluvial sequences. The importance of palaeo-channels in providing a sequence of alluviation in the Upper Thames Valley was first discussed by Robinson and Lambrick (1984) when it was suggested that human activity such as woodland clearance and agricultural activity was reflected in patterns of ancient flooding and alleviation [omit?]. Environmental evidence from nine sites in the Upper Thames Valley, including four of Oxford sites, formed the initial basis of the study. A summary of the palaeo-environmental evidence is provided in the General Resource Assessment.

For this period, the available environmental evidence indicates that the hydrology at the end of the Bronze Age had changed quite significantly as increased clearance, perhaps mainly for expanding grazing, led to a rise in the floodplain water table and increased flooding but with little alluvial deposition on the valley floor. The general climate probably also become wetter by the Iron Age. Evidence from a number of sites indicate a gradual rise in the water table throughout the period leading to wetter conditions on the floodplain and gravels (Parker 2006: 285).

At the Oxford Science Park site, Littlemore, for example, pollen analysis indicated a steady increase in woodland clearance from the mid Bronze Age, peaking in the Late Iron Age to Roman period. The evidence suggests that clearance then led to sufficient changes in the hydrology of the area to create wetter fen formation (Parker in Moore 2001: 215). However changes in the local water table appeared to have been gradual and sites such as Port Meadow and Whitehouse Road on gravel islands in the floodplain have shown that seasonal flooding and alluvial deposition did

not reach its greatest extent until the medieval period (Robinson and Lambrick 1988; Mudd 1993). Whitehouse Road appears to have been located on a small spur within the floodplain, but investigations nearby at 41-43 St Aldates indicated that the lower lying areas next to the main Thames Channels were covered by a reed swamp in the Bronze Age to Iron Age period (Dodd ed. 2003).

It has been suggested that by the Late Bronze Age and into the Early Iron Age an increase in permanent settlement led to the greater definition of agricultural and farming zones. Changing environmental conditions may have been an important factor for the location of settlement as a wider variety of soils including less nutrient rich soils, were used for agriculture (Lambrick with Robinson 2009: 43). An increasing population is evident, leading to settlement on areas with less favourable soils. In the Upper Thames Valley this appears to have resulted in agricultural intensification on existing sites and diversification onto new sites. Miles notes that the higher water table on the gravel terraces may have improved agricultural conditions on the terraces, at least for a short time (Miles 1986).

Evidence for cultivation and pastoralism

Environmental evidence becomes increasingly vital in identifying agricultural evidence through sedimentology, molluscan studies, analysis of charred and waterlogged plant remains and insects (Lambrick with Robinson 2009: 46).

Molluscan analysis from a single Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age ditch near the Rover plant site at Cowley indicated that the area, whilst open at this time, was not in use for pastoral farming but produced evidence for molluscs favouring un-grazed grassland, scrub and woodland (Robinson 1997: 97-8). However a sample taken from brown silty peat from 89-91 St Aldates on the floodplain radio-carbon dated to 760-50 cal BC and contained scarabs suggesting the presence of domesticated animals nearby (Dodd ed. 2003: 10-11).

At Eastfield House, Cowley environmental analysis suggested that cereal crops were processed on site during the Middle Iron Age (2nd -1st century BC). Wood charcoal from a domestic hearth was also recorded (Robinson in Challis 2005: 111). Sufficient environmental evidence was recorded to draw parallels with similar settlements on the gravel terraces at Abingdon. A series of early Roman gullies forming a possible paddock or field system contained some residual Late Iron Age pottery that may indicate the gullies were originally cut in the Iron Age (Challis, 2005, 99).

At Blackbird Leys 'Zone A' a system of small enclosures of Middle Iron Age date were recorded in 1995. These suggest stock management, but a moderate level of cereal production was also demonstrated by the Littlemore Brook pollen sequence and the Zone A enclosures could also be interpreted as a group of small rectilinear fields (Booth and Edgeley-Long 2003: 260-1; Lambrick with Robinson 2009: 84).

At Barton primary school, a ditch and a series of pits several containing human burials may be part of an enclosed settlement with pits originally used for below ground grain storage which are a feature of late Bronze Age and Iron Age mixed farming settlements on better drained land (Gilbert 2005).

On the gravel terrace parch marks in the University Parks suggest an extensive complex of droveways and enclosure (Fig 2; Riley 1942; RCHME 1992) and a possible Middle Iron Age stock enclosure was excavated at the Rainwater Attenuation tank site there in 2009 (Wessex Archaeology forthcoming). A Late Iron Age enclosure was found on the gravel terrace at the Wolvercote Viaduct (King 2008).

On the 1st gravel terrace at least three probable Middle Iron Age farmsteads with enclosures, almost certainly for livestock, have been identified at Port Meadow (Lambrick 1982; Benson and Miles 1974; RCHME 1992). Waterlogged plant remains and insects from the bottom of the penannular house ditches showed that the

environment was heavily grazed grassland closely similar to the existing flora of Port Meadow, but with additional disturbed ground species associated with the farmsteads (Lambrick and Robinson 1988). At Whitehouse Road a settlement on a gravel island above the alluvium produced evidence indicating a mixed arable-pasture settlement (Mudd 1993).

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Social organisation and settlement patterns

Nationally, later prehistory is characterised by the emergence of defended enclosures differing in relative presence or absence of settlement, and larger and denser enclosed and unenclosed farming settlements in which common structures included post built round house forms, storage pit clusters and four poster structures. Settlement evidence from Oxfordshire indicates that most farmstead sites were typically small, perhaps comprising one to five families, but with some larger settlements that may have been more like villages.

Significant change took place took place towards the end of the Iron Age as tribal territories emerged, evident from the coin record and manifested themselves in new expansive defended and undefended sites (enclosed and territorial oppida) and linear dykes. The Thames and Cherwell appear to have been the approximate geographical boundaries of competing tribal territories, with Oxford situated at the junction of three groupings. The Dobunni were based to the north of the Thames and west of the Cherwell, taken literally their territory would have included the Port Meadow area of Oxford. The Catuvellauni developed a power base from Hertfordshire, stretching to Essex east and north of the Thames and Cherwell. The Atrebates controlled lands south of the Ock and the Thames east as far as Dorchester, perhaps located in the southern part of Oxford (Allen 2007). These boundaries are not well-defined, and indeed were probably contested, so that Oxford was in the midst of fluid political control, at the centre of a remarkable concentration of massive late Iron Age earthworks either side of the Cherwell and the Thames south to Wallingford and Henley (Lambrick with Robinson 2009). In parallel to this, Cunliffe has proposed a series of socio-economic zones in the Late Iron Age tribal hierarchy where Oxford lay on the outer limits of a zone based at Dyke Hills, Dorchester (Cunliffe 1991: 132: Figure 7.2).

Settlement patterns in relation to topography

Settlement modelling in the Upper Thames Valley has suggested that different trajectories of change were present on the different gravel terraces and surrounding hills. The higher terraces with dryer conditions tend to have been the main focus of earlier and more prolonged settlement practising both arable and pastoral farming. Early Iron Age settlements often showed settlement continuity from the Late Bronze into the Middle Iron Age. Lambrick has suggested that a rapid growth of population resulted in settlement on the higher terraces becoming denser and increasing spread of settled farming into uncleared or under-exploited areas both in the surrounding hills and on the lower terraces and floodplain of the Thames valley, which were characterised by more short lived pastoral based settlement (Lambrick with Robinson 2009). Very high levels of bracken spores in the pollen sequence at Sidlings Copse NE of Oxford indicates that following clearance in the early Bronze Age the rest of Bronze Age and most of the Iron Age was characterised by open rough grazing or heath. Similarly, evidence from the flood plain consistently points to the dominance of grazed grassland from the later Bronze Age and most settlements in these lower lying areas originated in the middle Iron Age and less commonly survive through to the Roman period.

Within the area covered by Oxford City Council a number of areas of Iron Age activity have been identified through aerial photographic analysis. Enclosures and tracks have been recorded at Binsey, (Rhodes 1949), Port Meadow (Lambrick 1982) and the University Parks, while further areas of crop-marks have been identified off the Woodstock Road and at Summertown in the RCHME Aerial Photographic Survey (1992) possibly representing further settlements. Several early, Middle and Late Iron Age sites have been subject to archaeological excavation within the LAA. Several settlement sites have been examined, these are summarised below by period and form (where possible). However, it should be noted that the small scale of many

excavations in Oxford means that are sites can often only be identified in general period terms as Late Bronze Age to Early/Middle Iron Age due to difficulties in typological and scientific dating of small assemblages for this period. The character of settlement appears to have changed little throughout this period, with both open and enclosed settlement recorded

Settlements on the hills surrounding Oxford

Several sites on the Corallian Ridge have produced small groups of features of early Iron Age date, with more substantial evidence of settlement in the early/middle, middle or late Iron Age.

Blackbird Leys Zone A (OHER 16244)

At Blackbird Leys, a small number of likely Middle Bronze Age pits were recorded along with a number of distinctive early Iron Age sherds (Booth and Edgeley-Long, 2003, 201). Lambrick has suggested that the ephemeral character of the earlier occupation might indicate the survival of earlier prehistoric forms of less sedentary life styles (Lambrick with Robinson 2009). These ephemeral traces of activity were followed by a possible settlement of early-middle Iron Age date consisting of two concentric ditches forming a penannular double ditched enclosure and a system of shallow gullies and ditches representing several small enclosures (Booth and Edgeley-Long 2003: 258). The penannular ditches had south-east facing entrances, the inner ditch with a diameter of 18-19m could have comfortably accommodated a round house and appeared similar to Enclosure B at Whitehouse Road (see below). Although not dissimilar to a few other sites in the Thames Valley such as Claydon Pike, the excavators noted that the domestic enclosure was unusually substantial and well defined for this kind of open settlement, perhaps an indication of relatively higher status. There was no evidence for Late Iron Age activity at this site.

Eastfield House

A small excavation at Eastfield House, Brasenose Driftway in east Oxford produced a small assemblage of pottery dating to the 2nd-1st century BC and at least one pit of this date and the evidence would suggest that cereal crops were processed on site. Subsequent early Roman features forming a paddock or field system and enclosure also contained Iron Age pottery and it is possible that they represent Roman re-use and re-cutting of Late Iron Age boundaries (Challis 2005: 99).

Cowley car plant

Excavations at the Rover plant site in Cowley recorded pottery sherds dating to Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age and Middle Iron Age within the middle and upper fills of a single ditch. (Keevill and Durden 1997).

Littlemore

At the Oxford Science Park, Littlemore three pits containing early-middle Iron Age pottery were located close to Littlemore Brook (Moore 2001).

Headington

At Ruskin College, Headington, two circular pits with similar fills were recorded, one containing five sherds from a single Early Iron Age carinated vessel.

At the Manor Ground, Headington, a small quantity of Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery were recorded from a single feature, and there was also evidence of middle to late Iron Age activity (Hart 2003). The underlying sand geology did not favour the preservation and identification of features, but a relatively large assemblage of middle to late Iron Age pottery was recorded (Biddulph 2003).

Evidence of possible middle to late Iron Age activity was also recorded during excavations at the New Music Building, Headington School (Cass and Pine 2008), where early Roman boundaries formed part of a rectilinear plan. The site appears to have been abandoned in the early 2nd century (Cass 2007).

Bernwood First School (OHER 16972)

An excavation at Bernwood First School, North Way, Barton in 2005 identified a long lived enclosed settlement, established at the end of the early Iron Age and continued to be used into the late Iron Age (Gilbert 2005: 1). The site was located at the top of a north-facing slope overlooking Bayswater Brook. The enclosure ditch had a 5m wide causeway on the west side and between the ditch terminals were two groups of inter-cutting post holes suggesting a gate structure. The available evidence suggested a enclosure ditch of considerable size (perhaps 1.8m deep and up to 3m wide). There was no evidence or the ditches having been re-cut, despite the evidence for a long period of occupation (see below) perhaps suggesting that the most recent re-cut had enlarged the ditch, or perhaps that the settlement was originally unenclosed.

Two groups of postholes were identified within the enclosure both showing evidence of re-cutting. The first group represented the possible gate structure with the re-cutting suggesting that it was maintained and rebuilt over an extended period of time (*ibid.*: 31). A row of pits was also partially excavated on the south-east side and appeared to be similar to other sites of an Early to Middle Iron Age date (e.g. Allen, 2000). The majority of these pits were circular and were probably used for storage and again there is evidence of re-cutting indicating an extended period of use (*ibid.*). At least one pit contained pottery typical of the early Iron Age or the transitional period into the middle Iron Age (Raymond, 2005). Two burial pits from the linear pit alignment also contained at least four inhumations of a probable Late Iron Age date (Gray Jones in Gilbert 2005: 29).

King of Prussia pub, Rose Hill

A small evaluation on the high ground at Rose Hill on the Corallian Ridge at the former King of Prussia pub site (OHER 26190) in 2008 revealed a series of ditches indicating a possible enclosed settlement with activity from the Early to Middle Iron Age. There were at least four major phases of re-cutting of a V shaped ditch which appeared to be characteristic element of an early Iron Age box framed earth and timber rampart. The series of inter-cutting or re-cut ditched spanned an at least 6.5m in width. No internal postholes were recorded, but only a small area was investigated and the site was truncated. One of the intercut or re-cut ditches was at least 2m wide and flat-bottomed and appeared similar to Fécamp defences (Gilbert 2008: 12), such defences are characteristic of the 1st century BC in southern England (Cunliffe 2005). However following a subsequent watching brief the excavator noted that the ditches were relatively shallow and therefore a defensive intent could not be clearly inferred The subsequent watching brief also revealed evidence for a four post structure perhaps contemporary but without associated finds (Gilbert 2011:18).

A small amount of pottery recovered from the King of Prussia site contained shell-tempered fabrics more common in the early Iron Age, however a middle Iron Age date was favoured for the material (Booth in Gilbert 2008).

The Western Hills

The LAA does not extend as far west into the Corallian Ridge as it does eastwards, but discoveries just outside the City boundary to the west include Hinksey Hill (Myres 1930), North Hinksey golf course (Allen Reference not traced) and Cumnor Hurst Hill (Wallis 1983).

Settlement on the 2nd gravel terrace

Radcliffe Infirmary

At the Radcliffe Infirmary site the pottery evidence for Iron Age activity was limited with evidence of some broadly dated and poorly preserved 'Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age pottery' from the upper fills of a double ditched barrow. Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating indicated that the barrow ditch had silted up by the Late Bronze Age-Iron Age transition (Braybrooke 2010).

University Parks and Science area

An area of parch-marks have long been recorded within what is now the University Parks on South Parks Road (Fig 2). The marks were first noted by Dr Robert Plot, the first Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum in 1686, and although they were not initially considered archaeological, there is evidence to suggest they were excavated at the time (Parkinson *et al*. 1996: 62). The features were subsequently plotted from the air in the mid 20th century. The marks demonstrate the presence of a multi-period landscape of Neolithic to Roman date, including enclosures and trackways of likely Iron Age origin, as suggested by a possible Middle Iron Age stock enclosure excavated at the University Parks Rainwater Attenuation tank site in 2009 (Wessex Archaeology forthcoming).

Chance finds of Belgic pottery and animal remains were recorded beneath the nearby Clarendon Laboratory in 1956 (UAD 165) and investigations at the Rex Richards Building in the University Science Area adjacent to the Parks between 1982 and 1993 (UAD 307-309) suggested that early to middle Iron Age pits and ditches were into Bronze Age ring ditches. They produced a small quantity of well-preserved pottery indicative of domestic settlement around the still partially extant late Neolithic-Bronze Age ritual complex suggesting that the two Bronze Age ring ditches had become silted up and perhaps no longer respected by the early to middle Iron Age (Parkinson *et al*. 1996: 41).

More uncertain evidence of a later prehistoric to Roman date has been recorded adjacent to the Science Area at Halifax House (UAD 1621) where phasing suggested some activity represented by a pit and two ditches of a probable Iron Age date followed by a late Iron Age to Roman transitional period (Anthony 2005: 133). This transitional phase was represented by a shift in alignment of features, some appearing to represent a fragment of a field system, perhaps a paddock for stock management (*ibid*.: 132).

North Oxford

North of the University Parks there is also significant but very ill-defined evidence of Iron Age settlement in North Oxford from chance finds such as those at Crick Road and Wykeham House, 56 Banbury Road.

An archaeological watching brief/excavation at Middle Way, Summertown, recorded the periphery of a farmstead that was in use from the late Iron Age. The earliest phase of activity on the site dates to around 50 BC- 70 AD and comprised a possible ditch, pit, a gully, an area of hard-standing and a post built structure possibly a four posted granary. The site apparently continued in use until the 3rd century AD (Williams 2007: 26).

First gravel terrace and floodplain

Whitehouse Road, Grandpont, 1993 (UAD 302)

Investigations at Whitehouse Road (UAD 302) in 1992 revealed a sub-circular penannular enclosure with several phases of re-cutting indicating prolonged use of the site from around the 3rd to 1st centuries (Mudd 1993). Ancillary features include two possible structures and a series of linear features suggestive of field boundaries. The economy of the settlement appeared to have been based upon subsistence mixed farming, with perhaps a more substantial arable component than other low-lying Middle Iron Age sites in the region. Despite the site's location on a low gravel island within the floodplain of the Thames, there was little indication of flooding or alluviation.

Port Meadow

Port Meadow is a Scheduled Monument located east of the River Thames south of Lower Wolvercote. Parch-marks have been identified over a much larger area including Binsey Meadow to the west of the river (see Fig 3). Here an extensive Late

Neolithic-Early Bronze Age barrow cemetery was superseded in the Iron Age by a succession of settlements on both sides of the river. The Iron Age settlement is remarkable for the preservation of slight settlement earthworks and for providing excavated environmental evidence for a grazing regime adjacent to the river which mirrors the later use of the meadow, believed to have been in nearly continuous use as a grazing meadow from the Late Saxon period until the present day.

Aerial photographs taken by Major Allen in 1933 were studied by Atkinson (1942) who identified a substantial number of parch-marks (Atkinson Areas One to Three). At the same time, the Oxford University Archaeological Society (OUAS) also carried out the first detailed excavations of some of the features. Following a new photographic survey of Port Meadow and the adjacent Binsey Meadow by Riley in 1944 a further series of crop-marks were identified by Rhodes (1949; Rhodes Areas A-F). More recently regional surveys of the Upper Thames Valley have identified further crop-marks as well as clarifying known features (Benson and Miles, 1974; RCHME. 1992). Revisions of the aerial photographic data using Thames Water photogrammetric mapping was undertaken in the 1980s (Lambrick 1981-85). Small scale trenching of some of the Late Neolithic-Bronze Age and Iron Age features was undertaken in the 1980's (Lambrick and MacDonald , 1985; Lambrick and Robinson, 1988). The 1992 RCHME aerial photograph mapping survey is currently the most comprehensive interpretation of the aerial photograph evidence. Small scale geophysical survey was carried prior to excavation of a boat near Medley Weir (Linford 2004; Durham *et al*, 2006), and examination of Environment Agency LiDAR survey (Briscoe 2006) and botanical and other environmental surveys (McDonald 2007).

At Port Meadow four broad concentrations of features can be defined with an extensive complex of undated linear features. Atkinson Area One appears to be Bronze Age in date while the three remain areas (Atkinson Areas Two and Three and Rhodes Area F) appear to be Iron Age domestic settlement areas. Oblique photographs of the meadow examined in the 1980s (Lambrick 1981-5) suggest the Middle Iron Age farmsteads were on slightly higher gravel islands surrounded by marshy areas. (Lambrick 1982: 129; Lambrick with Robinson 2009: 32). Small scale field investigation showed that the Bronze Age monuments occupied a dryer landscape than the Iron Age features whose, the ditches of which were at a comparable depth but contained gleyed soils (Robinson and Lambrick 1984; Lambrick with Robinson 2009: 29). Environmental samples from Late Neolithic-Bronze Age features had a lower level of archaeological preservation than those taken from Iron Age features (*ibid.*). Similar results have been obtained from investigations at the Hamel (Palmer 1980) and King's Weir (Bowler and Robinson 1980). The Middle Iron Age waterlogged macroscopic plant remains and insects investigated at Port Meadow indicated that grazed grassland predominated on the floodplain at this time (Lambrick and Robinson 1988). The port meadow parch mark evidence suggests the presence of at least one sizable 'four post' arrangement, perhaps a platform for grain or excarnation (Lambrick with Robinson 2009: 271-2).

Atkinson Area Two

Atkinson Area Two lies in the centre of Port Meadow and comprises nine discrete features including two overlapping ring ditches (Atkinson 5 and 6) originally thought to have been one monument however excavations in 1940 revealed evidence of two distinct ditches (Atkinson 1942: 30). North of this are two further low mounds, and adjacent to these is a rectangular enclosure (Atkinson 9) marked by a ditch 1.8m wide and 0.9m deep**.** Some distance to the north of this a feature of uncertain origin (Atkinson 10). The Environment Agency LiDAR survey of this area was only able to identify three sites (5, 12, 13) and two curvilinear earthworks that may indicate enclosure ditches within this area that survive as topographical features, the remaining features appear to only survive as crop-marks (Briscoe 2006: 17).

Atkinson Site 7 was excavated in 1946 by the OUAS and evidence of Iron Age domestic activity was recorded within the ditch (Atkinson and McKenzie 1946-7: 163). The site comprised a single concentric ditch with evidence of re-cutting and an entrance on the south surrounding a gravel area. An irregular paved area was also recorded leading from the entrance to the centre where four shallow depressions or pits were recorded. At Site 9, a section was excavated through the enclosure (Atkinson 1942: 28). The enclosure was defined by a broad flat bottomed ditch, around 1.8m wide and 0.9m deep, the purpose of which remains uncertain (*ibid.*).

Atkinson Area Three and Rhodes Area F

In the northwest corner of the meadow is a trapezoidal enclosure (Atkinson 14) visible on the ground as a slight ditch and cut by a circular ring ditch (Atkinson 15) which could be surveyed on the ground as a slight bank. South of this a circular ditch (Atkinson 16) recorded as a complete circle on the ground but survives only as a semi-circular earthwork. When Atkinson sites 15 and 16 were re-examined in 1947 they appeared more oval in shape and 16 indicates a clear opening on the east side (Rhodes, 1949, 84). Another concentric ditch immediately to the north of Site 16 was also recorded (*ibid.*). Here also there is a circular ditch (Atkinson 17) visible in the ground survey but only just visible on the aerial photographs as well as two rectangular enclosures or ditches (Atkinson 18 and 19). The LiDAR survey of this area failed to identify any significant surviving topographic features as substantial interference was noted across the area (Briscoe 2006: 21). The ring ditches appear to be enclosed to the east by a curving ditch while a large rectangular enclosure is recorded to the northeast is also thought to be contemporary (Lambrick 1982: 129).

Rhodes Area F lies adjacent to the River Thames in Port Meadow and comprises a series of concentric ring ditches (Rhodes 21-23, 26) and two rectangular enclosures (Rhodes 24, 25) all of which were recorded in 1944 from newly available aerial photographs (Riley 1944-5b: 197).

Binsey cropmark complex

The Rhodes survey in 1949 concentrated on the visible crop-marks at Binsey west of the river. Rhodes areas A-C were thought to be Iron Age farmsteads while Area E were thought to comprise a more extensive 'village' settlement. Rhodes Area A comprises a group of five concentric ring ditches on a linear alignment (Rhodes 1-5) just south of Binsey village, with an additional ring ditch recorded approximately 20m to the south by the RCHME survey, and three rectangular enclosures 60m to the north (Rhodes 7-9). Two parallel ditches around 5m apart are also recorded on an approximately north-south alignment running through the ring ditches and may represent a later feature (Rhodes 1949: 83).

Rhodes Area B comprises three, possibly four concentric ring ditches (Rhodes 11, 13, 14, 15) with a trapezoidal enclosure (Rhodes 12) in the central grouping north of Binsey village (Rhodes, 1949, 83). Area C comprises a third group of three concentric ditches (Rhodes 19-21) to the north of Binsey Meadow near Godstow (Rhodes 1949: 83). Area D lies to the west of Binsey Meadow and comprises a series of circular features of possibly natural origin (Rhodes 1949: 83). Area E in the central part of Binsey Meadow comprises an extensive area of cropmarks including a system of small enclosures and ring ditches (Rhodes 16-18) again thought to represent a 'village' settlement (Rhodes 1949: 83).

Wolvercote Paper Mill

Further evidence for Middle Iron Age activity on the first gravel terrace (Thames floodplain) was recorded at Wolvercote Paper Mill in 2007. Here a posthole containing a shell tempered Middle Iron Age sherd and associated oval feature were recorded cut into the gravel and sealed by thick grey blue alluvial silt (Mumford 2007).

Wolvercote Viaduct

At the Wolvercote Viaduct site a long-lived low status rural settlement was indicated by enclosure ditch and pits cut into the alluvium. Settlement activity spanned from the late Iron Age/early Roman to the 4th century with a possible break in activity between the mid 2nd and mid 3rd century (King 2008). The earliest features recorded were two ditches that appeared to form a small enclosure in the southern end of the site. Within the possible enclosure, two pits and three possible postholes were also recorded. A series of features were identified as Late Iron Age to Roman including two probable pits and two ditches. The site appears to indicate an area of long-lived activity from the Iron Age to the 4th century AD and it is suggested that it lay close to an area of Roman settlement (King 2008, 5.2).

Other areas of settlement activity

There are a number of sites in Oxford where there is good evidence of Iron Age settlement but their form is ill-defined, and/or the dating of different elements is too uncertain to be clear how they relate to each other – as for example at Old Marston.

Overall form of settlements

Settlement Forms: Open Settlement

Three very loose categories of Iron Age open settlement have been identified in the Upper Thames Valley, pit cluster settlements and house, pen and paddock settlements (Lambrick with Robinson 2009).

Pit cluster settlements [omit] have been well studied (notably at Gravelly Guy, Stanton Harcourt, Ashville, Abingdon and Coxwell Road Faringdon). These settlements are frequently in use from the Late Bronze Age to Late Iron Age and are characterised by dense clusters of pits, small ditched enclosures and post built structures (Lambrick with Robinson 2009: 105). Typically this settlement type is located on the upper gravel terraces and the sands and limestones of the Corallian Ridge. No examples of 'classic' pit cluster settlements are known within the City, though it would not be entirely surprising if some of the pits found in North Oxford turned out to be part of such a settlement.

House, pen and paddock open settlements can similarly have early Iron Age origins, but many date from the Middle Iron Age when their elements became more clearly defined by ditches and gullies. This settlement form is identified as comprising one or more groups of houses with associated enclosed pens and paddocks of penannular, rectilinear or irregular shapes, and often a thinner scatter of pits and other features. Several small settlements in Oxford may fall into this category, suggesting a filling up of the landscape. They most clearly typify the expansion of middle Iron Age grazing farmsteads onto the lower gravel terraces and floodplains of the Upper Thames Valley, as illustrated by Whitehouse Road and Port Meadow.

A third form of open settlement can be termed 'trackway and paddocks' not dissimilar to the previous form by typified by it being organised around or associated with a one or more trackways. Although potentially originating in the middle Iron Age, as at Mount Farm (Lambrick 2010) these settlements typify the later Iron Age to Roman period, suggesting further organisation and subdivision of land. Examples in Oxford perhaps include some of the settlements in the vicinity of the University Parks and South Parks Road, and perhaps also Summertown. Some of the undated settlements at Binsey may also fall into this group.

Enclosed Settlements

Enclosed settlements typically comprise a ditched enclosure defining the limit of settlement within a discrete zone, the most classic example is the defended hill fort (discussed in more detail below) but settlements are not necessarily enclosed for defensive purposes (Lambrick and Robinson 2009: 118). Enclosed settlements can take a variety of forms, including so called 'banjo' enclosures commonly found on the

Eastern Cotswolds to the north and Berkshire and Hampshire chalk downs to the south, but with some rather similar sites in the Thames Valley near Stanton Harcourt.

Of the examples identified within the City, at Barton Primary School and the King of Prussia pub site, too little has been revealed to say anything about their overall form. While some enclosed sites have early Iron Age origins, they are more commonly middle to late Iron Age – and in some cases may originate as open settlements and later become enclosed (as might possibly be the case at Barton Primary school).

Overall chronology of settlements

A significant proportion of settlement areas on the surrounding hills have produced evidence of multiple periods of activity, but in most cases the excavations have been too limited to obtain a clear picture of the nature of chronological development. There is some indication that the late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age activity was very ephemeral, perhaps perpetuating earlier forms of non-sedentary living, with more permanent settlements emerging in the early/middle or later Iron Age.

On the second gravel terrace, which might usually be favoured for early establishment of permanent farming settlements, the evidence of late Bronze Age and early Iron Age settlement is scarce, with most of the excavated evidence being middle Iron Age and more particularly late Iron Age and Roman. This extensive topographical zone is mostly obscured by the modern city so the picture is very patchy, but most excavations have taken place within the general area of the earlier prehistoric ceremonial complex, where, by analogy with Stanton Harcourt, Iron Age settlement may have been constrained by a legacy of respect for a sacred landscape.

The lower (first) gravel terrace and floodplain fits more obviously into the regional pattern with little evidence of late Bronze Age or early Iron Age activity except on some gravel islands (e.g. Binsey), but clear indications of expansion of predominantly grazing settlements in the middle Iron Age, in some cases continuing into the late Iron Age.

Tracking direct continuity from middle Iron Age to late Iron Age pottery assemblages is problematical, but several sites have produced middle and late Iron Age material implying either continuity or re-occupation. At Whitehouse Road, the evidence suggests a shift or abandonment in around the 1st century BC (Mudd 1993: 78).

Several late Iron Age to early Roman sites have been identified in the LAA with the evolution from largely Belgic to Roman forms implying continuity of settlement over the conquest period. Continuity is also suggested by the re-cutting of late Iron Age ditches in the Early Roman period e.g. Wolvercote Viaduct (King 2008) and Eastfield House, Brasenose Driftway (Challis 2005).

Overall the evidence seems consistent with the regional pattern of a disruption or shift, and sometimes abandonment of settlement at the middle to late Iron Age transition, but much clearer continuity of occupation from the late Iron Age into the early Roman period (Lambrick 1992; Booth *et al*. 2007).

Warfare and defences

Weaponry

Few examples of Iron Age weaponry are recorded from potential depositional contexts along the Oxford section of the Upper Thames. A single find of an early Celtic iron dagger and sheath was recovered during dredging of the Minster Ditch in North Hinksey in the early 20th century (OHER 6133). It is currently held by the Ashmolean Museum.

Defensive enclosures and communal earthworks

There are no definite hill- or valley forts within the City boundaries, though the topography certainly offers possible defensive sites. There are however some intriguing possibilities, such as the very large early Iron Age ditch on the south east slopes of Wytham Hill just outside the City boundary north west of Botley, which could be part of a hillfort (Mytum 1986). Two low lying sites in the floodplain in west Oxford offer other very speculative possibilities.

Binsey Enclosure?

It has been suggested that an earthwork enclosure surviving in part at Binsey could be Iron Age in origin. A potsherd sealed by the fill of the primary enclosure ditch was probably 5th- or 6th-century. Radio carbon date for bones within the fill were AD 190-390 at 68 per cent confidence, and AD 50-530 at 95 per cent confidence. Blair suggests that the ditch could have been dug, or was still being kept clean, in the sub-Roman or early Anglo-Saxon period, but it remains possible that the rampart and ditch were both Iron Age in origin, the latter scoured out in the early Anglo-Saxon period. Alternatively an early Anglo-Saxon ditch could have been dug against the face of an Iron Age rampart (Blair 1988). If so, most low lying valley forts (such as Cherbury west of Oxford, and Burroway near Clanfield are though to be early or middle Iron Age in origin (Lambrick with Robinson 2009), but without more complete evidence this remains very doubtful and a Saxon origin is perhaps to be preferred.

Osney enclosed oppidum?

Lambrick (pers comm.) has noted that within the network of watercourses that surround Osney, an island in the west Oxford floodplain, there is a noticeable conjunction of river channels and drainage ditches forming a circular or oval area about 2km across. This may just be a coincidence, but just could have been created deliberately to form a late Iron Age enclosed oppidum of a similar size others in the region bounded by a mixture of natural and artificial channels. The idea is highly speculative, there being no excavation or objects from the area to support the suggestion except, as it happens, the dagger sheath from the Minster Ditch which forms part of the circuit. It is also perhaps not entirely idle speculation given the context of Oxford's geographical position in the late Iron Age, when the Thames and Cherwell were the territorial boundaries of some major tribal groups led by self-styled kings. The control of territory, economically and politically, was the basis of their power which was perhaps both reflected and expressed through the construction of massive territorial and defensive earthworks, a remarkable concentration of which characterises the Cherwell and Thames Valley north and south of Oxford (Lambrick with Robinson 2009). These include

- the North Oxford Grims Ditch, a huge, probably unfinished territorial oppidum
- the Aves Ditch, a linear dyke along the Cherwell valley
- the probably unfinished Big Rings defensive enclosure at Cassington
- the Abingdon enclosed oppidum
- another enclosed oppidum at Dyke Hills, and
- the South Oxfordshire Grims ditch, another linear dyke apparently cutting off the great loop in the course of the Thames between Wallingford and Henley.

It is noticeable that of these, the two in supposedly Dubonnic territory west of the Cherwell and north of the Thames are unfinished (the Dobunni had another territorial oppidum at near Cirencester and an important enclosed oppidum at Salmondsbury near Bourton-on-the-Water). Speculation might therefore be that this was another attempt (whether successful or not) to make a major political mark within what may have been claimed as the eastward limit of Dobunnic territory. Speculative though

the idea may be, it is at least worth noting in terms of opportunities to confirm or refute it.

Ritual and ceremonial sites

Human Burials

Iron Age cemeteries are very unusual in the Thames valley region, though it is worth noting the rare example of a Middle Iron Age cemetery at Yarnton, just north of Oxford (Hey et at. 1999; Hey forthcoming). Most human remains in the Upper Thames are found as pit burials and disarticulated human bone within or adjacent to Iron Age settlements though some human remains from the river itself could be of this period (Lambrick with Robinson 2009).

At Bernwood First School, Barton, three crouched inhumations located in pit fills were recorded during investigations in 2002 and 2005. Radio-carbon dating on the 2002 inhumation produced a late Iron Age or Roman date (20-240 cal AD) whilst the evidence recovered with the two inhumations recorded in 2005 strongly indicated an Iron Age date, suggesting the continuity at this site of an early to middle Iron Age burial tradition into the Roman period (Gilbert 2005: 31). Of the 2005 inhumations, both contained evidence of disarticulated remains from at least one other individual and one was certainly located in the primary fill of a circular pit orientated west-east. The fills of all the pits containing the three inhumations all showed signs of scorching and burning, from which the excavator suggests that the burning could indicate the ritual cleansing of features previously used for storage.

Although only a small number of features were excavated, the proportion containing human remains was very high, possibly suggesting an area where more ritual activity took place or a settlement where it was commoner than usual. So far there are no other recorded burials of this date from within the LAA, but Lambrick has observed that the density of human burials and scattered remains on Iron Age sites in the region is very variable. For example, he notes by contrast the absence of any from the well excavated site at Whitehouse Road (Lambrick with Robinson 2009: 313).

No late Iron Age cremations or high status burials have been found in the LAA, but again this is unsurprising given their very limited occurrence in the Upper Thames (Lambrick with Robinson 2009: 316-9).

Animal burials and other ‘special deposits’

Like the deposition of human remains, the occurrence of other ritualistic disposal of animals and other special deposits is common on Iron Age settlements in the region, but very variable in rate of occurrence from one settlement to another. While chance discoveries of such deposits occur, such as the pair of horse bits found in a pit in Wytham just outside the City, finding them more usually demands reasonably extensive excavation, which is rare for most sites in Oxford, so it is again not very surprising that no definite examples have been recorded.

Sacred sites and places

Iron Age religion was woven into the tapestry of everyday life and people’s relationships with the natural world, so the need for temples and purpose-built religious sites was limited. The shrine and temple complexes south west of Oxford at Frilford, and north east at Woodeaton are classic examples and other less obvious possible shrine sites are known from the region, though not from Oxford itself.

In terms of the natural environment, the river and other wet places such as important springs were often the focus of ritualistic deposits. The Iron Age material from the river consists very largely of weaponry, all of which would have been very valuable, some of it displaying especially rich craftsmanship. Finds were commoner when the Thames was subject to regular dredging for navigation purposes, but some finds come from erosion or clearing of lesser channels, and the single, especially fine

example from Oxford, is the ornate La Tène dagger sheath found in the Minster Ditch which now forms part of the boundary of the Osney trading estate.

Crafts, industry and exchange

Material culture and industry

Pottery

The broad trends in form, fabric and decoration have been noted in the section on chronology above [moved]. The vast majority of Iron Age ceramics were made locally, hand formed without the use of a wheel or kilns at least until the end of the Iron Age. Fabrics are usually varied and only sometimes where much less variation is evident is it likely to have been crafted by people living in the settlements where it is found (Lambrick with Robinson 2009).

No outstanding assemblages from this period have been recovered from within the LAA. One pit at Bernwood First School produced Early Iron Age or transitional Early Iron Age- Middle Iron Age sherds paralleled in the assemblage from Stanton Harcourt (Raymond 2005). The range of fabrics identified in the small 2nd-1st century BC assemblage from Eastfield House, Brasenose Driftway is typical of the Middle Iron Age in this locality. These consisted of ferruginous wares, sandy wares, calcareous wares and organic tempered wares (Timby 2005). Elsewhere Whitehouse Road produced a similar, slightly earlier assemblage (3rd-1st centuries BC) as did Bernwood First School (Raymond, 2005) and Blackbird Leys (Brown 2004).

Other ceramic objects on note include fired clay loomweight fragments such as those recovered from the Whitehouse Road site (Underwood-Keevil 1993b: 64). A perforated and notched loom-weight was also recovered from the banks of the River Thames at Binsey in 1960 (OHER 1714).

Bone working and craft tools

Bone was commonly worked to form tools for other purposes, as again illustrated by the Whitehouse Road site which produced tooth made into an awl and a grooved and polished sheep metapodial, a very distinctive type of Iron Age bone tool of uncertain purpose, sometimes thought to be for weaving or thong stretching (Underwood-Keevil 1993a).

Metalwork

Objects such as the Minster Ditch dagger sheath, and the horse pits from Wytham just outside the LAA, shine valued light on the quality of craftsmanship achieved by Iron Age metal smiths for specialist high status objects.

For most ordinary settlements metal working did not rise to more than blacksmithing to make or mend tools and other objects. A small amount of lining slag, hammer scale, fuel ash slag and a possible mould or crucible were recovered from the Middle Iron Age open settlement at Whitehouse Road (Salter 1993).

Quarrying

At Barracks Lane, Cowley on the Upper Jurassic Wheatley limestone and Beckley sand, two irregular quarry cuts were recorded dug in a linear fashion like an irregular ditch up to 1.2m deep into a thin layer of limestone capping the sand bedrock. The cuts contained thirty sherds of Iron Age pottery and a quantity of animal bone showing evidence of butchery, including cattle, horse and pig. An environmental sample produced a small amount of cereal chaff and charcoal (Tannahill and Diez 2008: 195). The features were tentatively identified as evidence for quarrying, and might perhaps indicate the sort of feature from which the large quantity of limestone used to build the middle Iron Age stone causeway at Yarnton would have been obtained (Hey forthcoming).

Trade and exchange

Ceramics, Querns, Briquetage and Personal Ornaments

The fabrics, and to some extent the decorative styles of pottery, the geological sources of quern stones and the form and fabric of briquetage salt containers provide

valuable insights into the extent of exchange networks. The extent of direct (one-to-one) exchange or more complex networks of indirect links of exchange are unknown, as are transport routes, but the range of sources evident in such objects gives a very generalised pattern of both local regional and for some objects national patterns of exchange. In terms of general distributions Oxford is in an interesting locality, more or less at the respective limits of regional exchange networks for querns and briquetage and also on the border between distinctive local styles of globular bowl (Lambrick with Robinson 2009).

Unfortunately, despite this potential, assemblages from within City boundaries are generally too small to provide much evidence of Iron Age exchange. Fragments of Lower Greensand and Lower Calcareous grit querns recovered at the Whitehorse Road site (Roe 1993) are typical of the local exchange network for these objects.

Coins

The PAS database includes eight silver Dobunnic coins, a single gold of the Atrebates, twelve Trinovantian/Catuvellaunian coins (seven gold, four silver and one bronze alloy) and two unsubscribed coins for the Oxford area. OHER records several Iron Age or pre Roman coins from the city and hinterland. Finds noted in Evans *Coins of Ancient Briton* include one silver 'Greek' coin from 1938 (OHER 3677), a 19th century coin hoard comprising one unsubscribed Dobunni coin, one quarter stater of Cunobelinus and one stater of Addedomanus (OHER 3678) and an unsubscribed gold coin (OHER 3838). The distribution of these coins may reflect patterns of trade and exchange or areas political influence. Further work is required to map and assess the distribution of these coins and their relevance to wider distribution patterns.

Legacy

There is no evidence in the archaeological record to indicate a period of abandonment and re-settlement after the late Iron Age: in keeping with the rest of the Upper Thames region (Lambrick 1992; Booth *et al* 2007) the Oxford area saw some evidence of a distinct break or shift in settlement between the middle and late Iron Age with first century farmsteads with native 'Belgic' pottery traditions then continuing in use into the 2nd century and sometimes beyond. Other evidence for legacies into the Roman period is provided by the apparent continuation of a local burial practice at Bernwood First School (Moore 2005).

The survival of the Thames as a political boundary more or less lasted (or was revived) into the modern era. But the most impressive living legacy of Iron Age Oxford is the surviving habitat of intensively grazed floodplain pasture at Port Meadow, which almost certainly is a continuous survival over 2500 years or more (Lambrick with Robinson 2009).

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Williams, G, 2007 An Archaeological Intervention at Walled Garden, Middle Way, Oxford. John Moore Heritage Services, Unpublished report.

Further resources:

Geology

- Geological Conservation Review

Summary descriptions of site evaluation of geological stratification for the county: http://www.jncc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=2947)

- *British Geological Survey Online Maps:*

http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html

Archaeological Evidence

- Oxford Urban Archaeological Database, Oxford City Council

A database of archaeological records for the historic city centre area. For a map of the area covered by the UAD see visit:
http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/UrbanArchaeologicalDatabase.htm
To search a version of the database visit:
http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/

- Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record, Oxfordshire County Council

A database of archaeological records for the County of Oxfordshire. To search the database visit the Heritage Gateway:
http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/
or Oxfordshire Heritage Search:
http://publicapps.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/portal/publicapps/applications/heritage

- Oxford History Centre (formerly the County Records Office)

Holds large collection of historic maps and historic documents from the medieval period to the present.

http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/oxfordshire-history-centre

- *Oxoniensia*

Archaeological and architectural journal for Oxfordshire
http://www.oahs.org.uk/oxof.php

- Archaeology Data Service.

Holds archive of grey literature by participating archaeological units from c2000 onwards. Also holds complete catalogue of several archaeological journals including Medieval Archaeology as well as complete archive of CBA publications:
http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/.

- Portable Antiquities Scheme

Voluntary scheme recording archaeological objects recorded by members of the public including those by metal-detector users
http://www.finds.org.uk/

Museum Archives

- The Ashmolean Museum:

http://www.ashmolean.org/
Also for ceramics online see the Ashmolean Potweb:
http://potweb.ashmolean.org/PotChron7g.html

- The Pitt Rivers Museum:

http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/
The Collection of Flints from Iffley have been reviewed by Nicholas, M, (undated). See http://england.prm.ox.ac.uk/englishness-Iffley-Bell.html (accessed July 2011)

- Oxfordshire County Museums:

http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/oxfordshire-museum

Appendix 1: Iron Age and Late Prehistoric Site Gazetteer

1. **Cornmarket Street (UAD 20)**

Observations in 1953 recorded prehistoric antler pick

2. **Clarendon Laboratory 1956 (UAD 165)**

Excavations recorded Late Iron Age pottery and animal remains

3. **Logic Lane 1960-1 (UAD 181)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric flint implements, pick and several ditches

4. **Christ Church, 1961 (UAD 185)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric flint implements

5. **Balliol College in 1962-3 (UAD 193)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric flint scraper

6. **Christ Church 1962-3 (UAD 200)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric flint implement, Lower Palaeolithic flint implement

7. **Church Street, St Ebbe's, 1968-72 (UAD 210)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric flint implement

8. **79-80 St Aldate's 1970-1 (UAD 227)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric plant remains, Iron Age soil layer

9. **New Inn Court 1972 (UAD 260)**

Excavations recorded 3 prehistoric postholes, 5 flint implements

10. **The Hamel 1975-6 (UAD 281)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric Iron Age soil layer

11. **Whitehouse Road 1992 (UAD 302)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric Middle Iron Age pits, gullies, ditches, postholes. Dated through Middle Iron Age pottery, animal remains, several unidentified objects some slag and plant remains

12. **Jowett Walk 1993 (UAD 304)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric tree throw hole

13. **Rodney Porter Building, University Science Area, 1989 (UAD 307)**

Excavations recorded Early Iron Age pit and pottery

14. **Rex Richards Building, University Science Area, 1993 (UAD 308)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric flint implements, Early to Late Iron Age pottery, Iron Age ditches and pits with animal remains and slag.

Sir William Dunn Laboratory, University Science area, 1995-6 (UAD 309)

Evaluation recorded Iron Age pottery

15. **Holywell Ford 1993 (UAD 312)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric soil layer, flint implements

16. **Longwall Quadrangle, Magdalen College 1995 (UAD 321)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric flint flake

17. **89-91 St Aldate's 1982 (UAD 340)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric river channel

18. **Mansfield College 1992 (UAD 362)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric pottery

19. **Department of Earth Sciences 1990 (UAD 507)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric ditch

20. **113-119 High Street 1992-4 (UAD 365)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric lithic implement

21. **High Street, 1873 (UAD 683)**

Finds recorded prehistoric animal remains, deposits, needle, net sinker

22. **Osney Lock 19th century (UAD 701)**

Finds recorded prehistoric arrowhead, blade

23. **Magdalen College (UAD 708)**

Finds recorded prehistoric hammerstone

24. **Manor Road, 1913 (UAD 710)**

Finds recorded prehistoric axe

25. **Minster Ditch 1895-8 (UAD 716)**

Finds recorded Early Iron Age bronze fibula, Iron Age sheath and dagger

26. **Merton Allotments, St Cross Road (UAD 763)**

Finds recorded prehistoric scraper

27. **Whitehouse Road 1975 (UAD 789)**

Aerial photographic survey of Iron Age crop marks

28. **Chester Street 1896 (UAD 1235)**

Finds recorded prehistoric implement

29. **University Parks 1941 (UAD 1462)**

Finds recorded prehistoric arrowhead

30. **South Parks Road and Mansfield Road, 2001 (UAD 1596)**

Excavations recorded Late Iron Age pottery

31. **University Club House Mansfield Road 2003 (UAD 1617)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric ditch

32. **Halifax House South Parks Road, 2003 (UAD 1621)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric field boundary

33. **The Manor Ground, Headington, 2003 (UAD 1632)**

Excavations recorded Iron Age pottery

34. **Magdalen College School Dining Hall 2006 (UAD 1688)**

Evaluation recorded Iron Age post hole

35. **15 Norham Garden, 2005 (UAD 1711)**

Evaluation recorded prehistoric gully

36. **Wycliffe Hall New Library, 2008 (UAD 1733)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric ditch

37. **Round Hill, Port Meadow, 1842**

19th century excavation of barrow

38. **Former Joinery Works, Cowley, 1994 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded residual Iron Age pottery

39. **Windale First School, Blackbird Leys, 1995 (OHER)**

Prehistoric parallel ditches

40. **Ferry Pool Road,. 1995 (OHER)**

Iron Age ditch and possible pit or ditch, some Iron Age pottery

41. **Littlemore Hospital, Yamanouchi Site Redevelopment 1995 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric palaeo-channel

42. **Peripheral Road and Housing Area C2, Blackbird Leys, 1995 (OHER)**

Iron Age settlement indicated with several ditches and gullies, finds include large quantities of pottery and some flint flakes

43. **Blackbird Leys Peripheral Road 1995 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric palaeo-channel

44. **Paint Shop Building, Garsington Way, 1995 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded Iron Age pottery

45. **Rover VQ Building, Garsington Way, 1995 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric ditch of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age date

46. **University Parks, Parks Road, 1995 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric palaeo-channel

47. **Oxford United Football Club Stadium Volume 1. 1996 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded prehistoric postholes and ditch, Late Bronze Age pottery

48. **Zones E and D Blackbird Leys, Oxford 1996 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded Iron Age pottery and flint

49. **Heyford Hill Lane, Littlemore, Oxfordshire 1997 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded 1 end scraper, 2 fragments

50. **Phase 2 and 3 Oxford Science Park, Littlemore Oxford 1999 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded North-south aligned ditch and Iron Age pottery

51. **Transco site, Watlington Road, Oxford 2000 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded Iron Age pottery

52. **Oxford Science Park, Littlemore, 2001 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded 3 Iron Age pits, Beaker pit, Iron Age pottery and flint

53. **Bernwood First School site, North Way, Barton 2002 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded Iron Age inhumation and some pottery

54. **Eastfield House, Brasenose Driftway, 2002 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded Iron Age gully and pottery

55. **Morris Motors Sports and Social Club, Barracks Lane phase II. 2005. (OHER)**

Excavations recorded Iron Age quarry pit and pottery

56. **Bernwood First School, North Way, Barton, 2005 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded Early to Middle Iron Age 8 circular pits, 2 inhumations, 2 parallel ditches, 6 intercutting postholes and a possible gateway, further possible inhumation. Large quantity of Iron Age pottery

57. **Armstrong Road, Littlemore, 2006 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded Iron Age pottery

58. **Walled Garden, Middle Way, 2007 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded 2 possible Late Iron Age to Roman ditches and features. Structural evidence of 1 building in the form of 2 postholes and a gully, structural evidence of 2nd building 10 postholes and a gully. Some Late Iron Age to Roman pottery

59. **Wolvercote Paper Mill, 2007 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded Iron Age pits and possible postholes

60. **New Music Building, Headington School, 2008b (OHER)**

Excavations recorded 4-5 prehistoric parallel linear features and a pit

61. **King of Prussia, Rose Hill, 2008 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded ditch with 3 phases of recutting in the Iron Age, another ditch with flat bottom, possibly representing settlement. Iron Age pottery

62. **A34 Wolvercote Viaduct Replacement, 2008 (OHER)**

Excavations recorded Iron Age pits and ditches, possible Iron Age pits and postholes. Iron Age pottery

Appendix 2: Figures

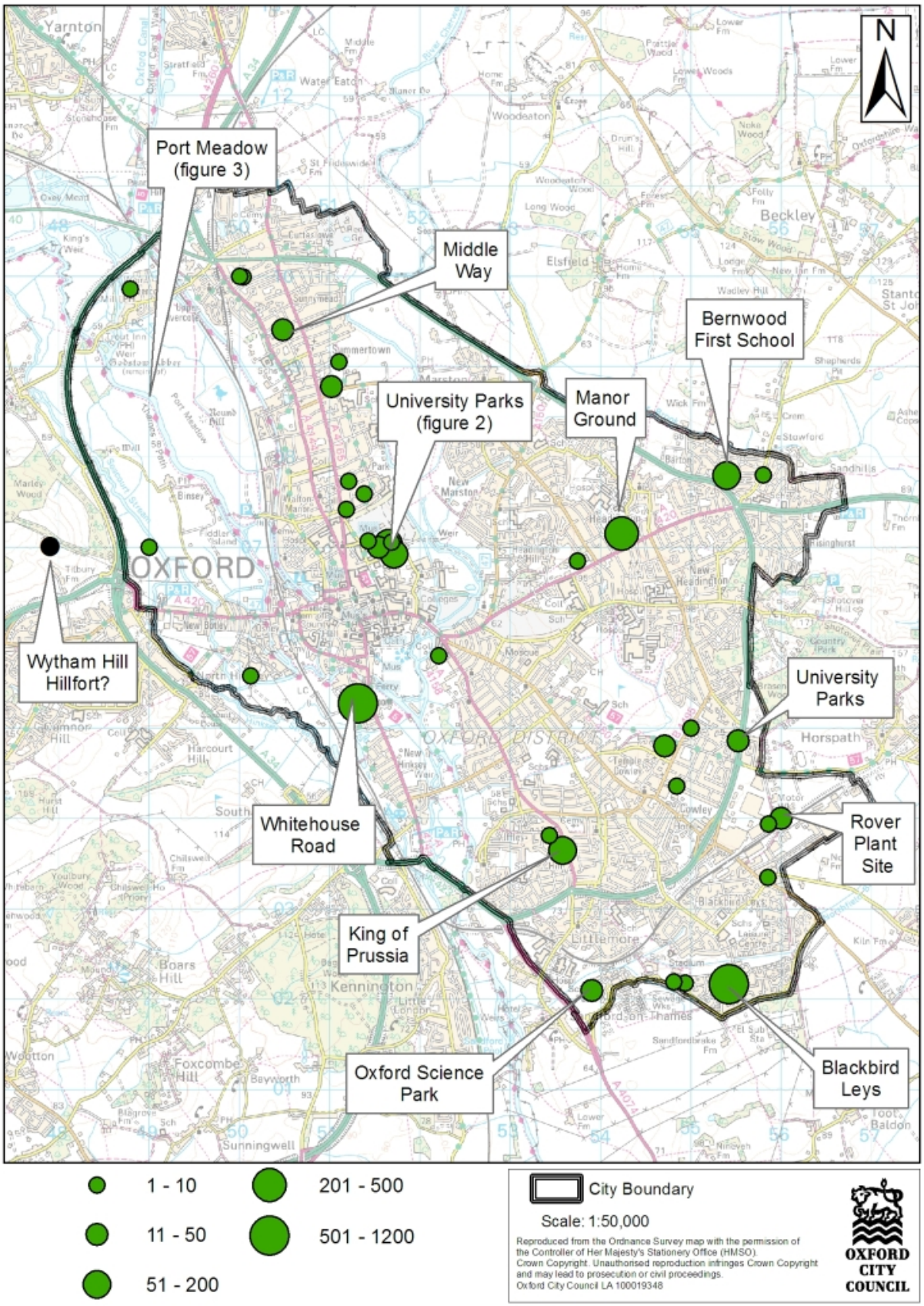

Figure 1: Distribution of Iron Age artefacts within the Oxford LAA

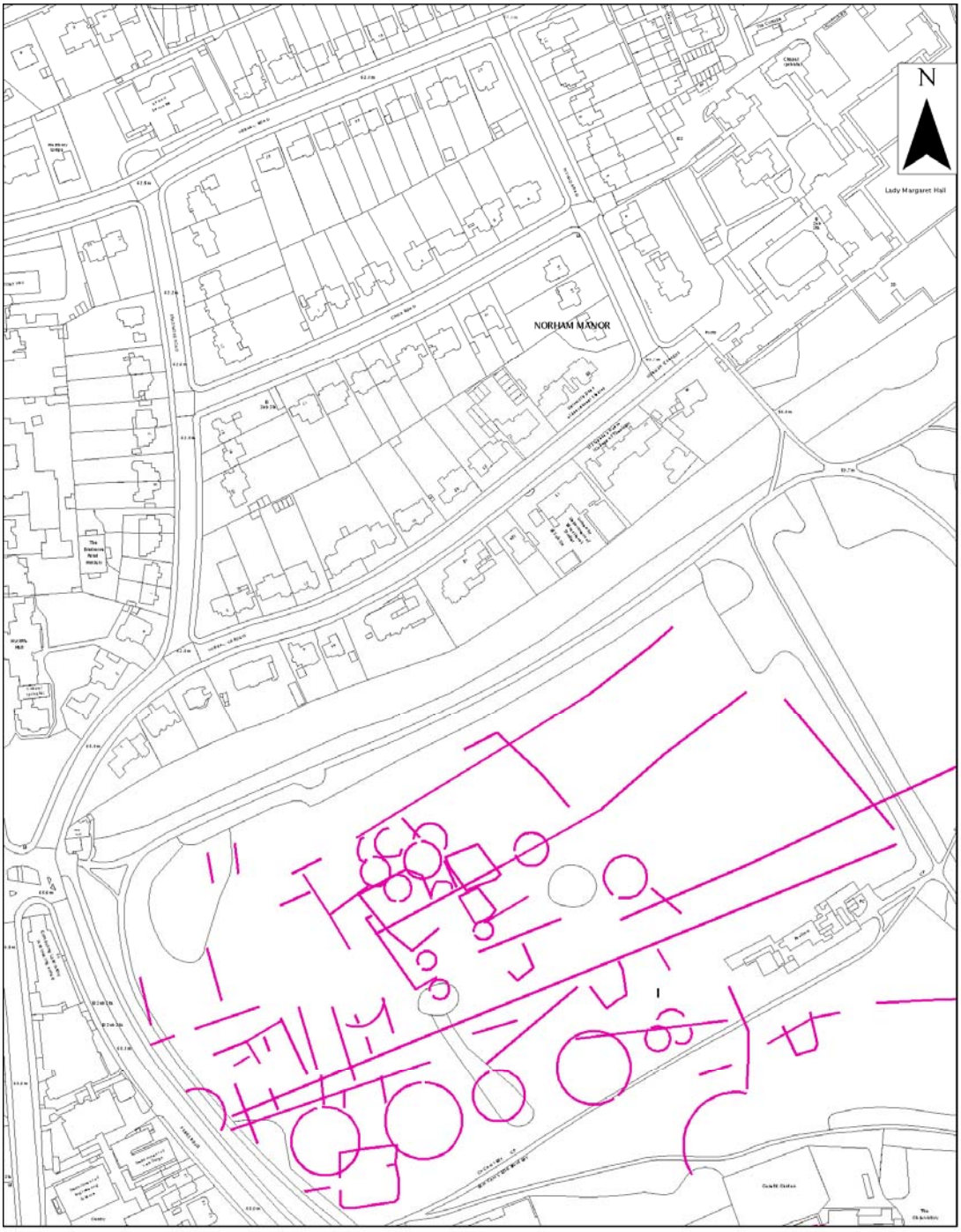

Figure 2: Parchmarks recorded from aerial photographs of University Parks showing a mixture of Late Neolithic - EArly Bronze Age ritual and funerary monuments overlaid with Iron Age and Roman field systems.

Scale: 1:2,720

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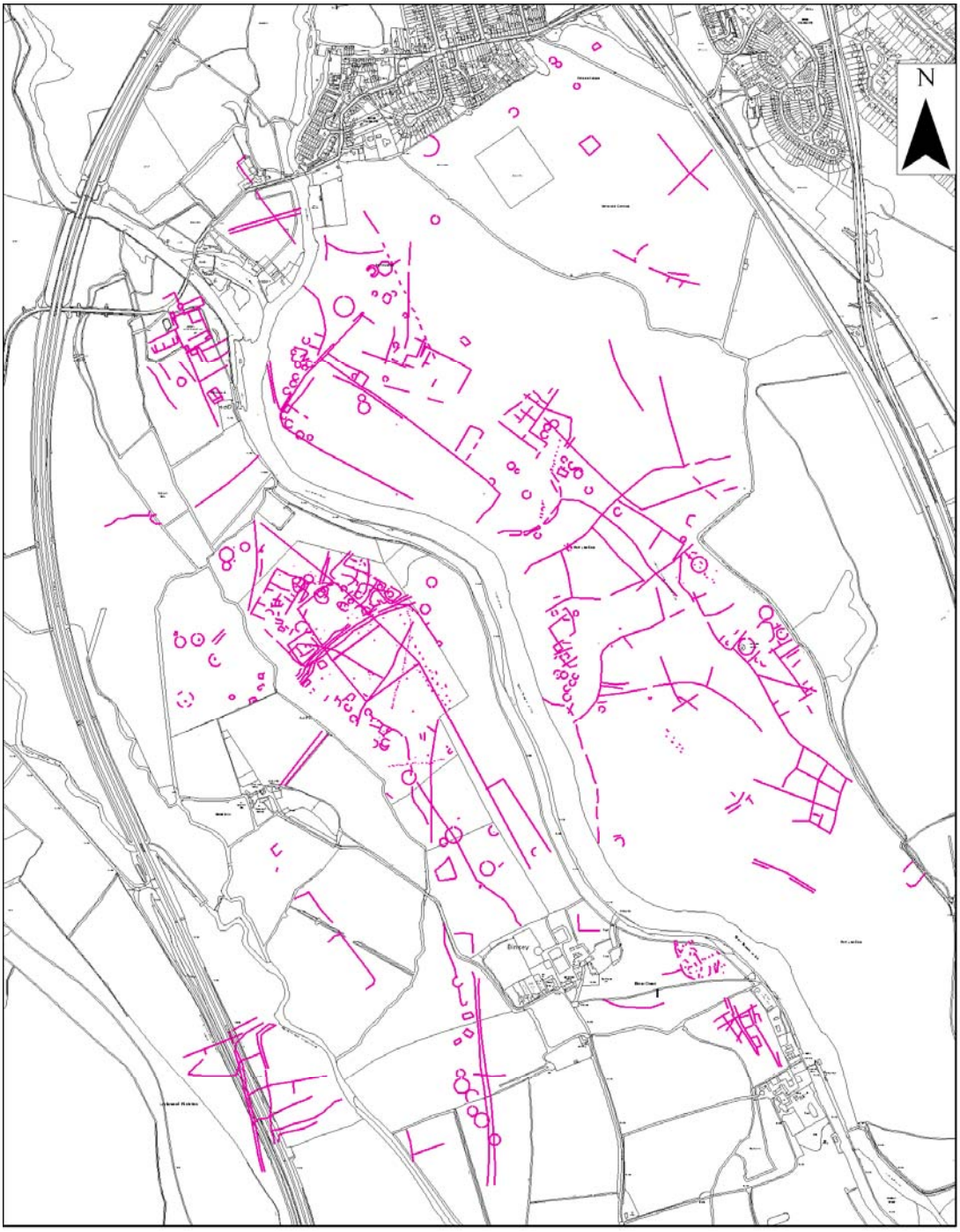

Figure 3: Parchmarks recorded from aerial photographs of Binsey and Port Meadow showing a mixture of Late Neolithic - EArly Bronze Age ritual and funerary monuments overlaid with Iron Age settlement clusters and field systems.

Scale: 1:10,657

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