Iron Age Enclosures at Enderby and Huncote, Leicestershire

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with contributions from Jennifer Browning, Nicholas J. Cooper, Wayne Jarvis, Patrick Marsden and Angela Monckton,

Archaeological fieldwork at Enderby and Huncote has recorded two contrasting clayland late Iron Age enclosures. At Enderby (SP 550 999), a cropmark enclosure was excavated in advance of proposed development. The enclosure revealed at least two main phases of occupation, characterised by a pair of differing sized roundhouses enclosed within a large ditch. Evidence for a gated entrance into the enclosure was also revealed.

To the west of Forest Road, Huncote (SP 516 985), some 4km to the south-west, a sub-rectangular Iron Age enclosure was located close to the discovery of a late Iron Age linch pin. This was a small farmstead, which was in use during the late Iron Age with possible continuation into the early Roman period. This included two circular buildings and a later series of stock control boundaries within the enclosure.

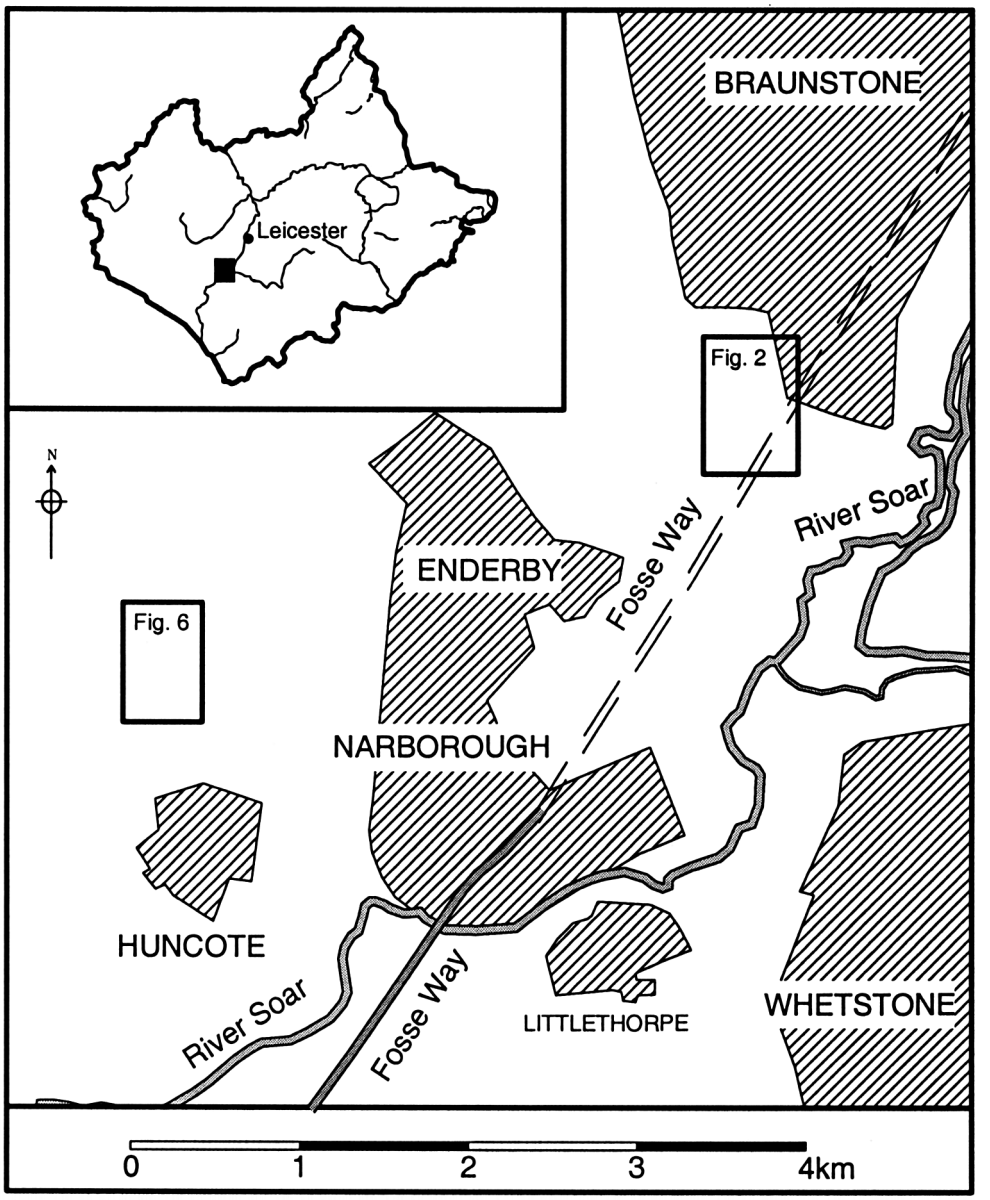
The excavations have enabled comparisons in the chronology, development, trading contacts and economies of these two neighbouring Later Iron Age settlements to be made.

Introduction

One of the most significant changes in our understanding of archaeology of the East Midlands since the introduction of Planning Policy Guideline 16 (PPG16) in 1990 has been in the late Iron Age (Clay 2001; Willis 2001). The most common type of settlement of this period is the small farmstead often associated with different types of enclosure. Two enclosures, with settlement evidence, located on the west side of the Soar valley 5km and 9km south of Leicester respectively were excavated by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in 1996 and 2000 (illus.1). This paper is a synthesis of the results of these two excavations; the full reports with specialist contributions are available from ULAS. The archives will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services under accession numbers A81.1990 (Enderby) and X.A55.2000 (Huncote).

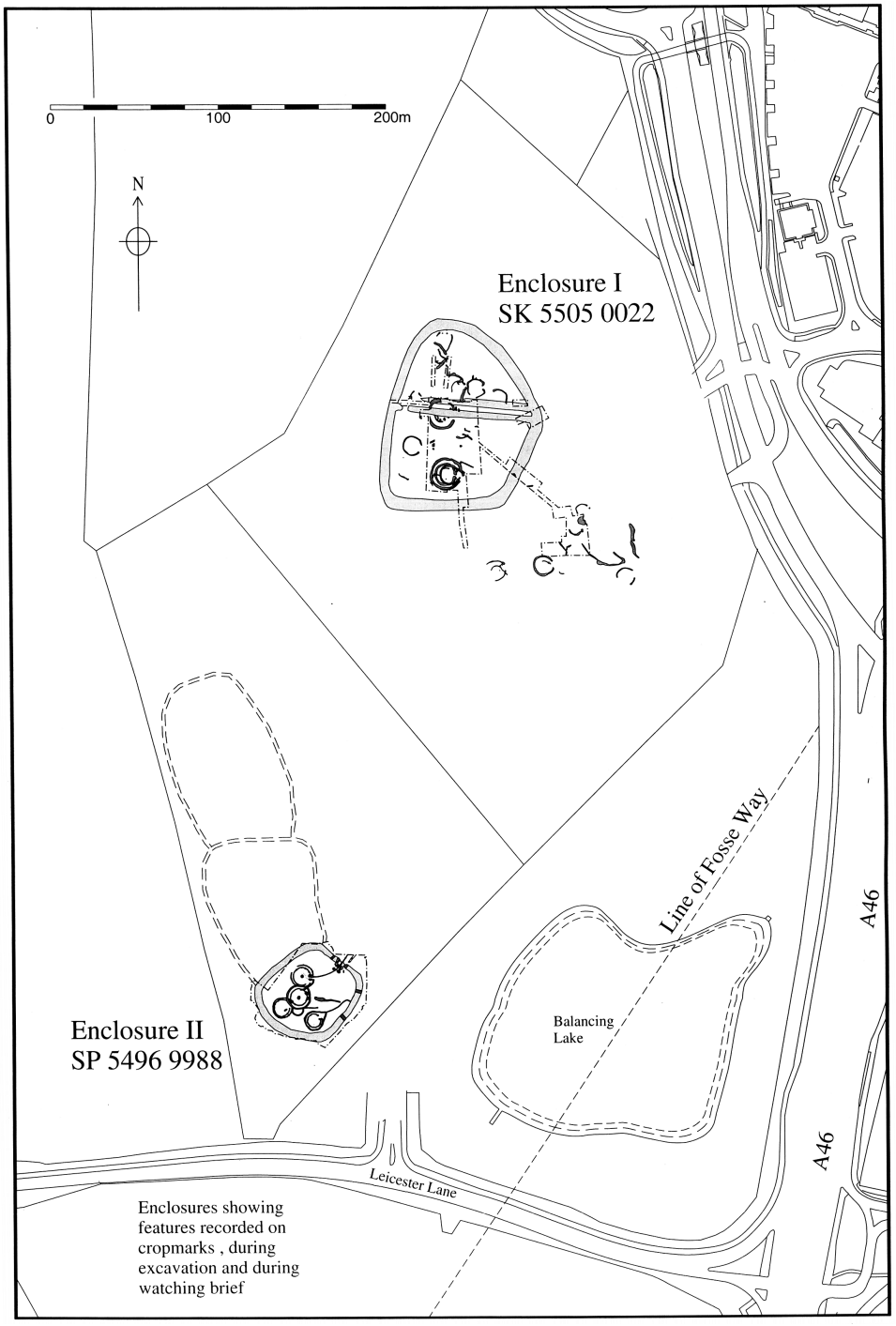
Enderby Enclosure II *James Meek*

Enclosure II is located 1.5km northeast of Enderby, 100m to the north of Leicester Lane and 300m to the west of the A46 (SP 550 999). The site lies on a slight east-facing slope, on a boulder clay ridge overlooking the confluences of Lubbesthorpe



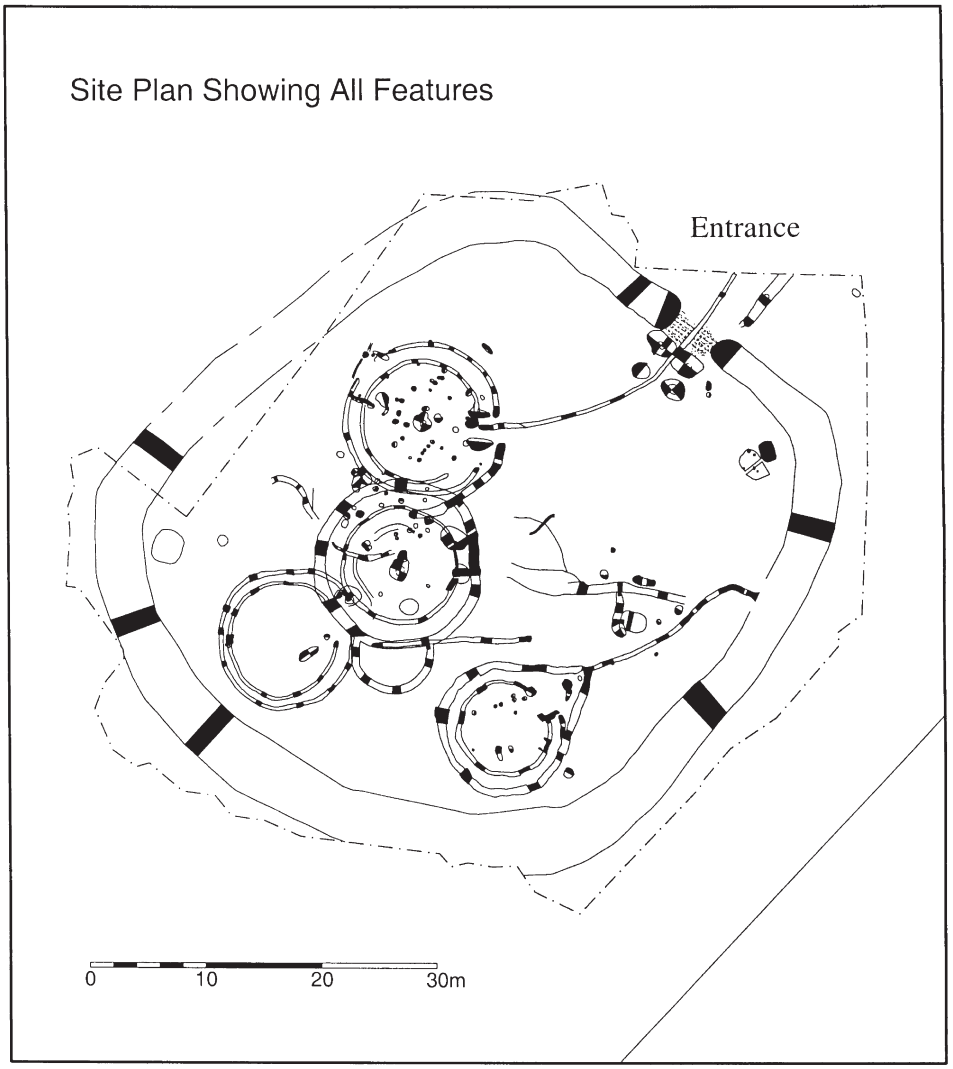
1. Location of the enclosures at Enderby and Huncote.

Brook and other tributary streams that flow into the River Soar to the east. The cropmark was first identified on aerial photographs taken by James Pickering in August 1989. It comprised a sub-rectangular enclosure with other possible ditch features to the north and south, visible as parchmarks in pasture (Clay 1992, illus. 2;



2. Enclosures I and II and associated features at Enderby

Sharman and Clay 1991, illus. 4). Excavation of the enclosure was undertaken by ULAS in 1996, prior to development of the area. The enclosure is one of two identified within the area of the Grove Park development. The other was a larger 'D'-shaped enclosure, identified as a cropmark, which lay some 350m to the north (SK 551 001, illus. 2 Enclosure I). Enclosure I was surveyed by fieldwalking and magnetometer between 1981 and 1982 by the Leicestershire Museum's Archaeology Section (LMAS) and the University of Leicester Department of Archaeology, followed by two seasons of partial excavation in 1983 and 1984 by Leicestershire Archaeological Unit (LAU), directed by Patrick Clay. The enclosure was discovered to be of late Iron Age date, probably originating in the late 1st century BC containing contemporary and possibly



3. Excavated area of Enclosure II at Enderby.

earlier circular structures (Clay 1992). A watching brief by University of Leicester Archaeological Services in 1996 revealed further circular buildings within and to the south of the enclosure (illus. 2; Ripper and Beamish 1997).

Proposed development of the Grove Park site at Enderby by Centre 21 Ltd, in which Enclosure II lies, prompted advice from the Leicestershire Museums Senior Planning Archaeologist, as advisor to the planning authority, to request archaeological evaluation and recording of the cropmark as part of the planning conditions.

The cropmark enclosure at Enderby was first evaluated by trial trenching in the summer of 1990 by the LAU (Sharman and Clay 1991). The evaluation targeted the area of the enclosure, the line of the Fosse Way Roman road to the south as well as other fainter cropmark features to the north and south. The trenches located on the cropmark enclosure revealed minimal evidence for the enclosure ditch, due to very dry ground conditions, although numerous internal features were revealed suggesting the presence of at least two round houses. A cremation in a pottery vessel was also located during these works. A second phase of evaluation was undertaken at the site in March 1995 by the LAU in the area immediately surrounding the cropmark. A number of features were located, including part of the enclosure ditch, post holes, ditches and gullies.

In the summer of 1996 an archaeological excavation of the area of the cropmark was carried out by ULAS, directed by James Meek (1997). The area was initially laid out using existing location plots and survey data from the 1990 and 1995 evaluation. Topsoil across the enclosure varied in depth between 0.2m and 0.4m, and was removed using a JCB with a ditching bucket. Archaeological levels lay directly beneath the topsoil at a depth of *c*.0.3m. The total area of the topsoil stripped site was *c*.0.29 hectares and the area within the enclosure ditch covered *c*. 0.19 hectares (illus. 3–4).

4. Excavations in progress at Enderby Enclosure II.

As the site strip progressed the archaeological remains of circular buildings were revealed and assigned numbers in the order that they were recorded. Roundhouse 1 was the most northerly structure, Roundhouse 2 is located in the southeastern part of the enclosure, Roundhouse 3 in the southwest and Roundhouse 4 in the centre. The term Roundhouse used in this report does not necessarily indicate that they were all used as dwellings (below p.17).

Following the excavation and during construction work at the site a watching brief was undertaken by ULAS in the areas around both of the cropmark enclosures and further archaeological observation was carried out by the Leicestershire County Council Museums Service across the remainder of the Grove Park development area.

Phasing

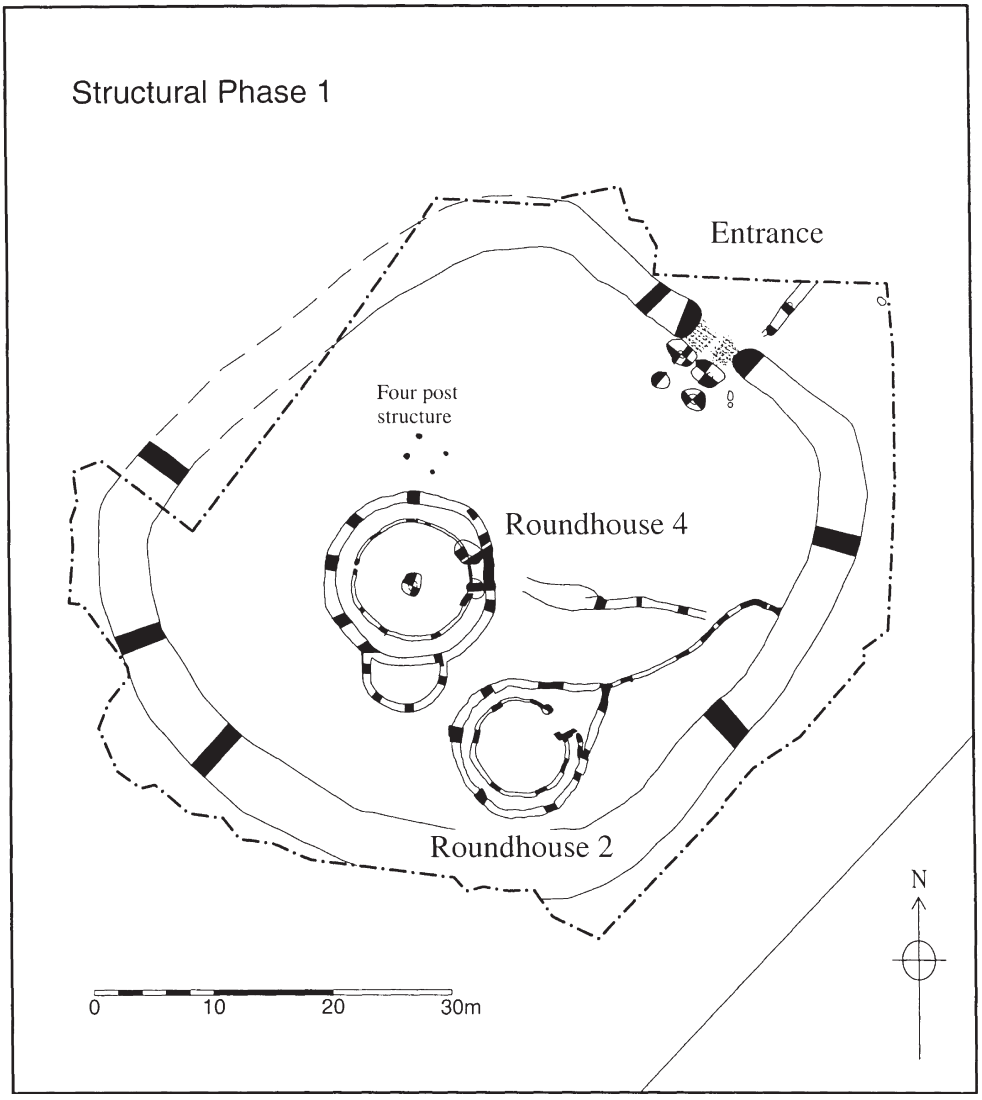
The stratigraphical phasing of the Enderby enclosure is somewhat conjectural due to the lack of many intercutting features. The enclosure ditch itself had episodes of recutting evident within the excavated ditch sections, although there were no direct relationships with other features on the site. Roundhouse 4 was stratigraphically earlier than Roundhouses 1 and 3. Roundhouse 2 had no stratigraphic relationship with other structures on the site, although its archaeological remains were directly comparable with Roundhouse 4. It also had a drainage gully that ran into the enclosure ditch demonstrating it must have been contemporary with the enclosure.

Archaeological activity can be divided into two broad structural phases, demonstrating occupation of the enclosed area. Both parts are characterised by a pair of roundhouse structures within the enclosure, and associated drainage features. Other archaeological activity was revealed and recorded within the enclosure which may suggest some earlier structures on the site, although these were very fragmentary. These included curvilinear gullies, possibly associated with roundhouse structures, and stratigraphically earlier than Roundhouse 4, perhaps indicating pre-enclosure occupation. Numerous post holes were also recorded across the site that could possibly suggest other structures or fence lines, although these cannot be easily attributed to any specific phase. The location of some of these features within the footprints of the roundhouse structures would preclude them from being of the same phase (except in the cases where they are likely to form part of the structure).

Discrete features were present on the site, including an oven in the northeastern part of the enclosure and a shallow pit in the southwestern corner. They are presumed to be contemporary with the enclosure, but cannot be confidently attributable to either structural phase.

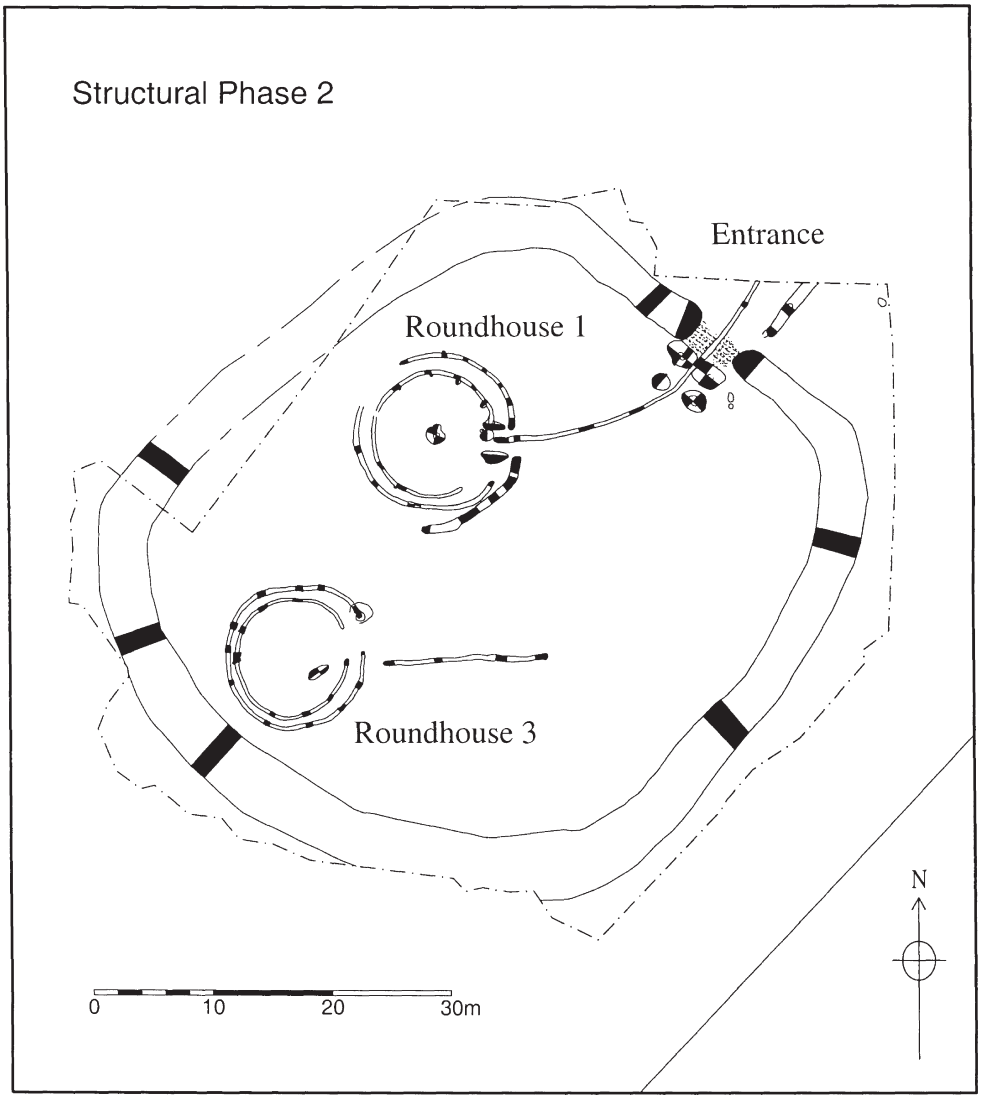
Structural Phase 1 (illus.5)

This phase of activity includes the construction and occupation of Roundhouses 2 and 4 within the area of the enclosure ditch, both with east-facing entrances. The larger structure, Roundhouse 4, measures *c.*10.2m in diameter internally, the remains of which were made up of two concentric ring gullies with a large central post hole. The internal ring is presumed to be structural, and a number of sections excavated through it would appear to demonstrate that it would have served as a bedding trench for wall panels. This internal ring terminated on both sides of the entrance with post hole settings at the entrance to form a doorway. The external ring gully would have been for



5. Enderby, Enclosure II Phase 1.

drainage, and completely circuited the building, being present even across the entrance to the building, which would have required some form of bridging to allow access to the structure. On the southern side of the outer ring gully a semi-circular gully projected out from the external gully. The gully was very similar in character to that of the main outer gully and it may have surrounded a semi-circular annex to Roundhouse 4. If this interpretation is correct the presence of the ring gully between the main structure and this possible annex would have required bridging. In the area to the east of the entrance to Roundhouse 4 a shallow gully was excavated, although this had been badly



6. Enderby, Enclosure II Phase 2.

truncated by later ploughing. If projected this gully would link with the outer gully in front of the entrance to the building, and also project towards the enclosure ditch to the east. The comparative shallowness of this gully with that externally circuiting the building would mean that if they are indeed contemporary and interconnecting features, this gully would have acted as an overflow for the eaves drip.

The second structure, Roundhouse 2, was slightly smaller, at *c.*7.7m in diameter. The remains of the structure consisted of two concentric ring gullies, although in this

case no central post hole was present. The internal ring gully also suggested that it was built as a bedding trench for wall panels, which terminated at either side of the entrance in post holes for the doorway. The external gully of this structure projected out from the entrance of the building to form a 'Y' shape at which point a drainage gully ran out into the enclosure ditch. A radiocarbon date (Wk-8241; see table) was obtained from charcoal in the fill of this gully. Potentially the shallow gully projecting from Roundhouse 4 would have also connected with this drainage gully.

The original evaluation in 1990 revealed a cremation in a pottery vessel in the area between the entrance to the structure and the 'Y'-shape of the outer drainage gully. Although the vessel was initially dated to the Anglo-Saxon period (Elsdon 1991), an Iron Age date is now suggested (below p.14).

Structural Phase 2 (illus. 6)

The second main phase of activity within the enclosure is represented by the construction of Roundhouses 1 and 3, again both with east-facing entrances. Both structures cut Roundhouse 4, although there was no direct relationship with Roundhouse 2.

The remains of Roundhouse 1 were two concentric ring gullies around a large central post hole. The internal ring gully was a shallow feature, probably a setting for a ground beam from which the walls of the structure were built, measuring *c.*10.2m in diameter. The gully is terminated on the northern side of the entrance with post hole settings; on the southern side later truncation from ploughing had removed the continuation of the shallow internal ring gully in the area adjacent to the entrance. The post hole settings would suggest the presence of a covered porch projecting from the entrance. A later ring of post holes cutting this internal ring gully, probably indicate repairs. The outer ring is presumed to have been a fairly shallow eaves drip gully, which also terminated on either side of the structure's entrance, and had been again removed by later truncation from ploughing in the area adjacent to the south of the entrance. A third concentric arcing gully was also present on the southern side of the entrance to the building, of a more substantial depth. This feature contained considerable amounts of pottery and charcoal from which a radiocarbon date (Wk-8243; see table) was obtained.

Projecting from the entrance to the building was a linear gully which curved away from the building and exited through the centre of the enclosure entrance. It is presumed that this feature is also associated with drainage and its relationship with the external eaves drip gully has been lost due to plough truncation. The entire length of this feature must logically have been covered to allow it to be safely crossed.

Roundhouse 3 also comprises a pair of shallow concentric ring gullies. These had been considerably truncated by later plough activity, highlighting their insubstantial nature in comparison to the ring gullies of the earlier structural phase. The internal ring gully was again presumed to be a structural beam slot or bedding trench from which the walls were built, which measured *c.* 9.5m in diameter. The terminals of the inner ring gully at the entrance to the structure were badly truncated, and no evidence for post holes was revealed. The external ring is thought to have been an eaves drip gully, although it seemed very insubstantial. No directly associated drainage features were revealed for this structure although a possible linear gully did protrude from the southern side of the house entrance, in an area that had been affected by later plough truncation, perhaps having removed any relationship. Within the footprint of the building was a large oval pit which contained Iron Age pottery.

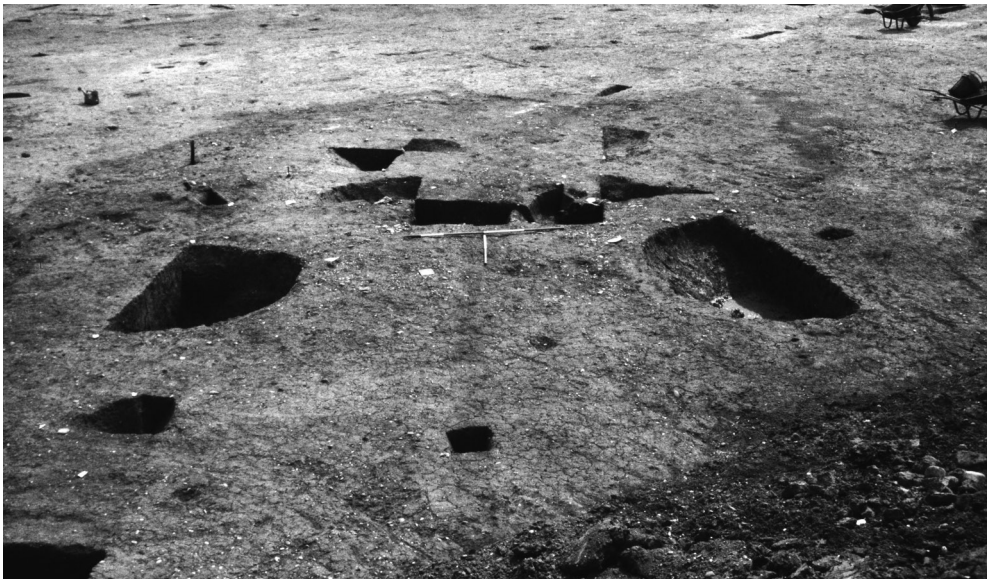
Table of radiocarbon dates calibrated following Stuiver et al (1993).

Lab code	Context/Sample material	Years BP	dC13
WK-8241	Charcoal rich fill of butt end of outer gully at the entrance to Roundhouse 2. Context 1670 - very silty clay fill with abundant charcoal	2150 +/– 60	–26.3
WK-8242	Fill of post pit at the entrance to the enclosure, containing a large amount of charcoal. Potentially remnant of the post. Context 1313 – very silty clay fill	2100 +/– 60	–25.1
WK-8243	Charcoal rich fill from the extra outer gully of Roundhouse 1 on the southern side of the entrance. Context 12 – very silty clay fill	2130 +/– 60	–26.0

Lab code	Years BP	1 Sigma	2 Sigma
WK-8241	2150 +/– 60	Cal BC 350BC–320BC (9.2%) Cal BC 230–BC 220 (1.6%) Cal BC 210–BC 50 (57.4%)	Cal BC 370–10 AD
WK-8242	2100 +/– 60	Cal BC 200–BC 40	Cal BC 260–BC 280 (9.9%) Cal BC 260–30 AD (85.5%)
WK-8243	2130 +/– 60	Cal BC 360–BC 290 (20.4%) Cal BC 240–BC 90 (47.8%)	Cal BC 380 – BC 40

The Enclosure

The enclosure ditch must have been present during both structural phases of occupation although there may also have been earlier pre-enclosure occupation (above p.6). It is evident that in Phase 1 Roundhouse 2 has an indirect relationship with the enclosure ditch, as the drainage gully appears to project from the structure and runs into the ditch. In Phase 2 the drainage ditch projecting from Roundhouse 1 curves in



7. Post holes of the enclosure entrance at Enderby Enclosure II.

order to exit through the very centre of the enclosure entrance. At least one phase of recutting of the enclosure ditch was evident from the excavated sections through the ditch.

The enclosure ditch terminated in butt ends on either side of the northeast facing entrance. Between the two terminals was an area of gravel which had been badly truncated but presumably represented the remains of a trackway into the enclosure. On the inside of the ditch terminals were two large post pits that presumably formed part of a gateway into the enclosure (illus. 7). Charcoal from the post pipe of the most southeastern post setting provided a radiocarbon date (Wk-8242; see table).

The size of the ditches and the other features would suggest an imposing entrance. The excavated post pits potentially showed evidence of repairs or rebuilding of the entrance gateway. Although there was no direct relationship between the two structural phases and the entrance features, it is likely that there would have been a similar gateway structure for each phase.

The numerous post holes scattered around within the enclosure may represent other structures such as fences lines, four post structures and also a possible rectangular structure. These cannot be confidently attributable to any phase, although their preclusion from either phase 1 and 2 can be discerned where post holes/features lie within the footprints of buildings to which they are unlikely to be associated.

In general the enclosure dates from the later Iron Age, and may have been in use for a period of less than 100 years, being abandoned prior to the Roman conquest with the settlement possibly moving further to the north on to higher, and presumably drier ground. A sequence of occupation can be suggested as follows:

1. Occasional flint finds suggest possible pre-Iron Age activity, although the recovered material was in insufficient quantity convincingly to suggest settlement. One of the most interesting pre-Iron Age finds from the site was a fragment of the butt end of a Neolithic battle-axe. A Group I Cornish Epidionite stone axe or chisel had been found associated with Enclosure I (Clay 1992, 54, Fig.30.8). Some pre-Iron Age clearance of woodland in the area is likely.

2. A number of shallow arcing gullies were recorded in the area of Roundhouse 4 that suggest earlier structures were present on the site. These features have no direct relationship with the enclosure ditch but may indicate pre-enclosure occupation.

3. The first main phase of activity associated with the enclosure occurs with the construction of the two structures within the D-shaped enclosure. The remains of both roundhouses (2 and 4) share similar characteristics, by which they have been associated. The structures have fairly deep cut internal/structural gullies, and also deep cut external drainage gullies. The external gully of Roundhouse 2 leads from the entrance of the structure and runs into the enclosure ditch. It is thought likely that the larger structure Roundhouse 4 was for domestic use while Roundhouse 2 may have functioned as a workshop or kitchen. A similar interpretation was put forward for Enderby Enclosure I Phase 2.1 (Clay 1992, 29). However, whilst this building was associated with concentrations of butchered bone and cereal remains there was no clear differentiation in distributions of cereal remains between the buildings in Enclosure II (illus. 8). A possible four-post structure may also be associated with this phase, located within the later footprint of Roundhouse 1. A cremation was also recovered on the site in the area in the entrance to Roundhouse 2. The vessel within which the cremation had been placed is of unusual form. When

first analysed it was dated as Anglo-Saxon, due to its form and fabric, although further analysis and the location of the vessel now suggests it may be of Iron Age date (see below, p.14).

4. The second main phase of activity is also represented by two structures located within the enclosure ditch. Roundhouse 1 is the larger, which again is likely to be for occupation, with the smaller Roundhouse 3 perhaps being a kitchen or workshop. Both structures were stratigraphically later than Roundhouse 4, but have no direct relationship with Roundhouse 2. Both structures are characterised by a double ring of gullies, which are all notably shallower than those of the earlier phase, presumably indicating a different construction technique. A possible drainage gully was recorded at the entrance to Roundhouse 1, which projected in a curve to exit through the enclosure entrance. A second concentric arc was seen around Roundhouse 1 on the southern side of the entrance.

5. The enclosure ditch which was substantial, demonstrated at least one phase of re-cutting. The northeast facing entrance would appear to have had an elaborate entrance, with two large post pits lying just within the enclosure, the centres spaced some 2.6m apart (illus. 7). The size of the ditch would suggest that there would have been a sizeable bank created from the excavated material. Such enclosures often have an internal bank, although at Enderby this is thrown into some doubt, as both Roundhouse 2 and the later Roundhouse 3 lie too close to the ditch for a bank to have been present, unless the structures were partially built into the bank to provide more shelter, possibly because of their function (both structures are interpreted to be kitchens or workshops). The external gully of Roundhouse 2 drains into the ditch, which could again be seen to suggest either no or an intermittent internal bank was present, or that the bank was bridged over the drain.

6. There is no evidence for occupation of the site in the Roman period. A number of sherds of late Roman pottery were recovered from the upper fills of the enclosure ditch, demonstrating that the enclosure ditch had either silted up or been backfilled by this time. Perhaps the abundance of drainage features seen on the site might suggest that water was becoming a problem in this location with the settlement being eventually abandoned and moved up hill to Enclosure 1 on higher, and presumably drier, ground.

The Iron Age and Roman Pottery *Patrick Marsden, Elaine L. Morris*

In terms of fabric there are discernible trends between the first (Roundhouses 2 and 4) and the second (Roundhouses 1 and 3) structural phases of the enclosure. It is apparent that both local mudstone fabrics and local sandy wares are more in evidence in the later phase. The granitic fabrics, possibly from the Charnwood area, show less significant differences between the phases. The evidence suggests that there is a substantial increase in the use of local pottery in the second structural phase.

Only two large concentrations of pottery were recovered (illus. 8). The first deposit was recovered from the second arcing outer ring gully of Roundhouse 1 that contained the remains of several different vessels. Similar concentrations have been found at Iron Age sites, including locally at Enderby Enclosure I (Elsdon 1992a) and Elms Farm, Humberstone (Marsden 2000). In this case it is thought that the deposit represents domestic discard relating to the second structural phase, rather than being ‘structured

deposits' as has been interpreted for other sites (Hill 1995; Marsden 1998a). The second concentration was recovered from the large pit located in the footprint of Roundhouse 3, which contained abraded and fragmented pottery, again probably representing domestic debris. This is also thought to be part of the second structural phase and potentially associated with the use of the building, although its association is questionable.

The pottery assemblage recovered from this enclosure is similar to that from Enderby Enclosure I (Elsdon 1992a). Parallels can also be drawn with other Leicestershire and East Midlands assemblages, most of the pottery being of a typical East Midlands scored ware type assemblage of the middle to late Iron Age, corresponding to Knight's Group 2 (Knight 1984, 40).

In terms of trading networks the granitic fabrics suggest that pottery was being brought in from the Charnwood Forest area to the north. This fabric forms the major part of the pottery assemblage (*c.* 93%) from the first structural phase (1094g), and less than half of that of the second (*c.* 40% – 2589g). This means the Charnwood area was part of a trading network in Iron Age, and earlier prehistoric pottery to sites in Leicestershire and the East Midlands region. The majority of pottery from the second structural phase is of local mudstone fabrics (*c.* 54% – 3490g), whereas these form only a minute part of the first phase (*c.* 0.02% – 25g). The shell-tempered group may show links with social groups in a broadly eastwards direction in southeast Leicestershire, Rutland or Northamptonshire.

Three body sherds of Cheshire briquetage were also identified. Briquetage vessels were hand made from distinctively gritted, very sandy fabrics, shaped as truncated cones or vases with open, flared rims and were used to dry and transport salt (Morris 1985, fig. 8). The discovery of these sherds at this site and at Enclosure I (Elsdon 1992a), is a major expansion of the distribution of Cheshire salt in ceramic drying and transportation vessels from what was the known distribution in the mid-1980s (Morris 1985, figs. 9–10). It is now quite clear that the salt transported in these special and visually distinct containers, or salt packs, must have been well-prized to be traded such distances, particularly when salt could have been obtained from the Fenland region which is nearer than Cheshire. Briquetage has also been found at Huncote (below p.25), Kirby Muxloe (Cooper 1994) and at Coventry Road, Hinckley (Chapman this volume).

Only a small assemblage of Roman pottery was recovered from the site, all grey ware fabrics. These include a necked jar with a 'double-bead' rim from the upper most fill of the enclosure ditch, such forms are paralleled in the East Midlands burnished ware tradition. A 4th century date is probable.

The Cremation

An almost-complete vessel, containing calcined bones, was also found in a fragmented state outside the entrance of Roundhouse 2 (illus. 8). The form is globular with an everted rounded rim, concave neck and rounded base. Elsewhere the vessel has been published as Anglo-Saxon and paralleled at the Pagan Saxon cemetery at Millgate, Newark and conventionally dated from the earlier 5th to the earlier 7th centuries AD (Kinsley 1989; Elsdon 1991, 10–11 and fig.9). However definite dating is problematic as although the base has a rounded form, which is not characteristic of Iron Age pottery, whereas rounded bases are known during the early Anglo-Saxon period (e.g Kinsley 1989, fig.75 no.327), when the base is excluded, typologically the vessel's

globular form and everted rounded rim does fit in with the tradition of middle to late Iron Age pottery. The fabric of the vessel corresponds to a known Iron Age fabric, but it is not directly comparable to any of the Anglo-Saxon fabrics so far known from Leicestershire at, for example, Causeway Lane, Leicester, (Blinkhorn 1999) or Eye Kettleby, Melton Mowbray (Cooper forthcoming). Furthermore, Anglo-Saxon vessels from the region often display a smoother finish resulting from burnishing on external and internal surfaces which here is absent. Although urned cremations are rare in the Iron Age and more characteristic of the early Anglo-Saxon period they are not completely unknown in the county, for example one has been found at Market Harborough (Liddle 1982, 27). In summary, this is a good example of the difficulties which can occur in dating hand-made pottery even when large amounts of the vessel are present. Whether Anglo-Saxon or Iron Age the urn would appear to be atypical of either period.

The cremation vessel is located close to the entrance of Roundhouse 2. Burials in similar locations adjacent to structure entrances have been recorded at other Iron Age sites such as at Whissendine where an inhumation was located, adjacent to the entrance to a structure (J. Browning pers. comm.). On the basis of the fabric of the cremation vessel and the location of its deposition an Iron Age date is suggested.

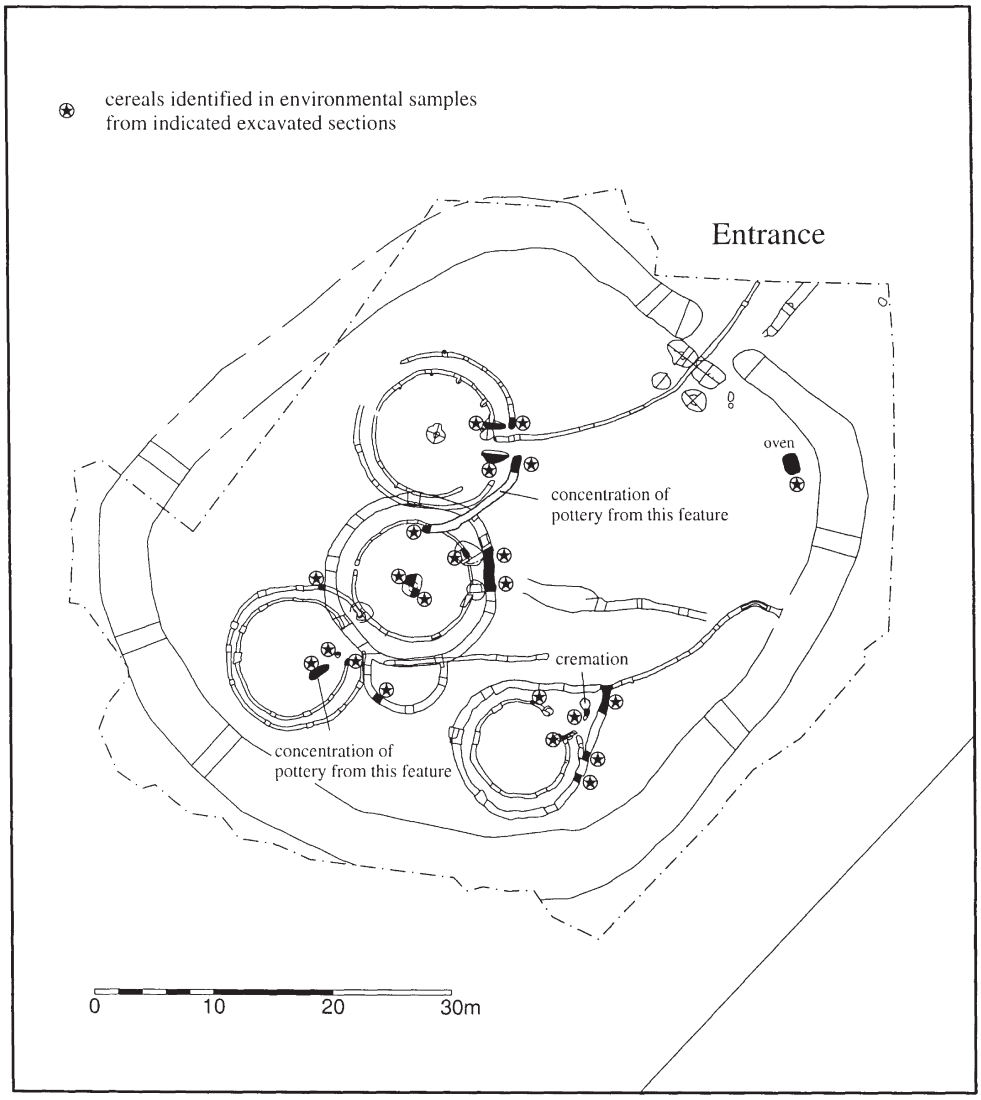
The cremated remains *Simon Chapman*

The results obtained from the analysis of this cremated bone has been sufficient to suggest that the body of at least one human being was cremated and given a secondary 'urned' burial. The remains of the bones displayed considerable warping which suggests that the cremation was that of a body 'in the flesh' rather than of excarnated dry bones which rarely become misshapen in this manner (Baby 1954, 5). The bone fragments were heavily calcined and fragmented suggesting that a high temperature was maintained during the cremation of the body of the individual, leading to the almost total combustion of the organic bone constituents. As so few bones survived, and these were in a very fragmentary state, no reliable information pertaining to the age and sex of the cremated individual could be retrieved.

Animal Bone *Jennifer Browning*

A total of 626 animal bone fragments was recovered from deposits excavated during evaluation, excavation, and watching brief at the Iron Age site at Enderby. A report on the bone from the 1990 evaluation has been published (Baxter 1991). Most of the bone was recovered from roundhouse gullies and associated features (totalling 41%), whilst only 8% of the material was recovered from the enclosure ditches; unfortunately, it was generally in a very poor state of preservation. There were no complete bones in the assemblage and the majority of fragments were small and abraded. Most of the identified elements were teeth.

The remains of cattle, sheep/goat, pig, and horse were identified in the assemblage. The poor quality of the recovered assemblage precludes a detailed statistical analysis. The nearby site of Grove Farm in contrast produced almost 1000 identified fragments,



8. Distribution of pottery concentrations and cereal evidence.

whereas only 157 specimens (25% of total) were identified from the present site. However, as at Grove Farm (Gouldwell 1992), cattle dominate the assemblage and probably contributed the most to the diet. There were 132 calcined fragments, comprising 21% of the total assemblage. It may be safely assumed that the presence of cattle, sheep/goat and pig at the site is evidence for the diet of the inhabitants, and this conclusion is supported by the, albeit scant, butchery evidence. All of the marks observed were fine knife cuts, these were also noted on pig, cattle and sheep-sized bones around articulations such as the proximal ulna, mandible and also on ribs. This

is fairly typical of Iron Age assemblages, where the use of knives carefully to disarticulate, rather than heavy chopping, is a common feature (Grant 1987, 55). In the absence of butchery marks, horses are usually presumed to be kept for riding or traction, rather than being a significant contribution to the diet.

Charred plant remains *Angela Monckton*

Charred plant remains were found in very low concentrations at the Enderby Enclosure II site. In 34 of the 55 samples (846 litres) only 19 chaff fragments, 46 cereal grains and 81 seeds were recovered by wet-sieving. Spelt wheat was found together with cultivated hulled barley and gathered food plants were represented by hazel nutshell and possibly sloe and hawthorn. This may be waste from food preparation introduced as a scatter of domestic rubbish cleaned from hearths and found mainly in the gully terminals at the entrances to all four roundhouses (illus.8). The very small numbers of remains suggests the cleaning of cereals for consumption on the site. Weed seeds included arable weeds typical of Iron Age sites in the region. Although the cereals could have been brought from other sites in the locality it is likely that the food plants were grown as part of the site's economy and formed part of the diet of the inhabitants.

The few weed seeds may give some indications about the cultivation of the crops. Cleavers is an arable weed of clay soils usually associated with autumn sown crops (Salisbury 1961) suggesting the cereals may have been grown on soils in the area of the site. Other weeds include heath grass which is thought to be an arable weed of ard cultivation (Hillman 1982). This is further suggested by the presence of tubers of onion couch grass also thought to have been perennial weeds of cultivation before the use of the mould-board plough (van der Veen 1992). Brome grass (*Bromus* sp) was also present. This large grass is often found with charred grain and it has been suggested that it would have been used as part of the crop (Jones 1981). Vetch or vetchling (*Vicia/Lathyrus*) was also present, a nitrogen-fixing legume which is more numerous in late Iron Age phases at other sites (Jones 1985). The charred seeds are of weeds commonly found in Iron Age deposits.

The five most productive samples only had a density of around one item per litre of deposit. Similar low densities of remains have been found locally on other Iron Age sites (Monckton, forthcoming) including Enclosure I at Enderby (Monckton 1992), Kirby Muxloe (Cooper 1994) and Normanton le Heath (Monckton 1994), although others have produced more remains for example, Huncote (below p.26) Wanlip (Monckton 1998), Tixover (Beamish 1992), Rushey Mead (Monckton 2001) and Humberstone (Pelling 2000). With the exception of Huncote chaff is generally scarce on these sites. The small quantities of remains may have resulted from cereal waste being used as fodder, chicken food or compost rather than being burnt as fuel or waste (e.g van der Veen 1999) or reflect the loss of deposits through truncation. However the less-productive sites do appear to be on low-lying claylands with the sparse cereal evidence being explained by a bias towards pastoral rather than an arable economies (Monckton forthcoming).

Discussion

The excavated enclosure ditch of Enderby II is of a width comparable to the final phase of Enclosure I, although encompassing an area roughly a third of the size. The

ditch is substantial, being twice as wide as that excavated at Huncote (below p.20), measuring *c.*3.5m in width and *c.*1.45m in depth. As is detailed above, there is no clear evidence for a bank to have been present at Enclosure II making it unlikely that any internal bank would have been a continuous earthwork. An elaborate entrance to the enclosure on the northeastern side is suggested, marked by two large butt ends of the ditch with an area of deposited gravels between and large post pits adjacent to these internally, indicating the presence of a gateway. For any gateway to be functional at this point, there must have been some boundary between the ditch and the posts, perhaps a partial internal bank just at the entrance. There was no surviving evidence to suggest the presence of fence lines here.

The size of the enclosure ditch and the elaborate entrance is similar to the 'Wooton Hill' type Iron Age enclosures which have been identified in Northamptonshire (Jackson 1989; Dix and Jackson 1989; e.g. at Wooton Hill, Draughton, Doddington), which are now dated to the 2nd and 1st centuries BC (J. Taylor pers. comm.). The width of the ditches is similar, although many of the Northamptonshire examples are deeper. This style of enclosure also has similar arrangements of features with roughly symmetrical post pit arrangements on the inside of the entrances, such as at Aldwinkle, Wakerley, Weekley and Wooton Hill in Northamptonshire (Jackson 1989, 19; Dix and Jackson 1989), 'Wooton' style enclosures are thought to demonstrate the need for defended settlements at this time; there is however no clear evidence from Enclosure II that the ditch and entrance were anything more than a visual statement, an indication perhaps of the perception of the inhabitants of their own status. The range of radiocarbon dates obtained from Enclosure II does not discount this enclosure being contemporary with the Northamptonshire examples.

The circular structures within the enclosure not only appear to represent two distinct structural phases, but also two structural techniques. The first phase is characterised by deep concentric ring gullies, with the internal ring of Roundhouse 4 being a steep-sided trench probably created to take pre-constructed wall panels or numerous vertical wooden posts. A steep sided trench along the internal ring was not as evident in Roundhouse 2. The later structural phase was characterised by far shallower concentric ring gullies, perhaps used as a setting for a ground beam as a base for the walls. The two larger houses of each structural phase had central post holes, perhaps indicating that the larger size of these structures required an additional support. The larger structures are also both likely to have been domestic structures for either a single or extended family. The smaller structures are thought to be more likely to be for ancillary purposes, such as workshops or kitchens, although there is no conclusive evidence to clarify this.

The evidence from Enderby Enclosure II suggests that there were two main structural phases associated with the enclosure. If it is presumed that the maximum life-span for a timber roundhouse may be about 50 years, assuming some element of repair and rebuild, then it is possible that Enclosure II was only in use for domestic purposes for *c.* 100 years, perhaps serving as home to successive generations of a single family, perhaps of some elevated status. In view of its low-lying position the abandonment of the enclosure for domestic purposes may eventually have occurred due to continual problems with water-logging, as suggested by the drainage gully elements. Enclosure I at Enderby is a larger enclosure, seemingly of later date than Enclosure II, the phasing of which included smaller elements, that was then enlarged to enclose an area almost three times the size of Enclosure II (Clay 1992, 24). It is possible that Enclosure I, located to the north on higher ground presumably with fewer problems of drainage,

replaced Enclosure II. A number of other circular structures were recorded during the watching brief in the areas around Enclosure I during groundworks for the Grove Park development that may represent the enlargement of the Iron Age settlement (illus. 2). However the nature of this watching brief work was such that no stratigraphical or dating evidence was recovered to confirm this.

A distinctive characteristic of the structures within the Enderby II enclosure is the requirement for drainage gullies leading off from the main external eaves drip. This is very clear in Roundhouse 2 of the earlier phase and Roundhouse 1 of the later, but is less definite in Roundhouse 4 and 3 (earlier and later phases respectively). The implication would be that water accumulation was a problem, perhaps due to the low-lying nature of the site and the poor drainage capabilities of the clay subsoil. The positioning of the gully leading from Roundhouse 1 through the centre of the entranceway of the enclosure is curious. There appears to have been a deliberate attempt to avoid linking this gully with the enclosure ditch, and for it to project out of the entrance. It could be seen to suggest that whatever went into the gully was not wanted either around the house or in the surrounding enclosure ditch, which could be as simple as removing rain water/waste products from the site or for a more symbolic/spiritual purpose. A similar arrangement of a gully exiting through the centre of an enclosure entrance has been recorded at Draughton in Northamptonshire (Knight 1984, fig. 30).

Iron Age rectilinear buildings are known from Leicestershire at Normanton le Heath (Thorpe *et al*, 1994), Rearsby (M. Beamish pers.comm.) and Wanlip (Beamish 1994). A common feature of Iron Age settlements are four-post structures, often interpreted as granaries, examples of which have been recorded at, for example, Enderby, Enclosure I (Clay 1992), Kirby Muxloe (Cooper 1994) and Wanlip (Beamish 1998a). Two and three post structures have also been recorded on Iron Age sites, such as the entrance features within Enclosure II. Many other post holes were recorded within Enclosure II and although some of these may represent structural elements to the roundhouses, it is likely that others formed structures in their own right. Just to the south of centre of Roundhouse 1 is a group of post holes that form a square, which may be part of a rectangular structure pre-dating the circular building (illus. 3). Other rectilinear gullies to the west of this roundhouse may also represent the remains of another structure (illus. 3).

Both animal bone and environmental evidence were not recovered in any great quantities from the Enderby Enclosure II site, which will be partly due to the nature of the clay soils not being conducive to the survival of such remains and the comparatively small area examined. However a mixed economy perhaps with an emphasis on pasture land can be postulated similar to that found at other Iron Age sites in Leicestershire, including Enderby, Enclosure I, Wanlip, Kirby Muxloe, and Normanton le Heath (Monkton 1995 and forthcoming).

To the north of Enclosure II a series of cropmarks were noted on the aerial photographs from 1989 that suggest the presence of larger, but far less substantially ditched enclosures connected to the main excavated area (illus. 2). An attempt was made to record these features during the 1990 evaluation, but very little evidence was found, although this may have been due to the very dry weather conditions before and during the evaluation masking the features or their patterning only surviving in the topsoil. It is possible that these features were small ditched boundaries possibly marking out field enclosures for livestock. If correct this may again suggest that there was a bias towards pastoral agriculture at the site.

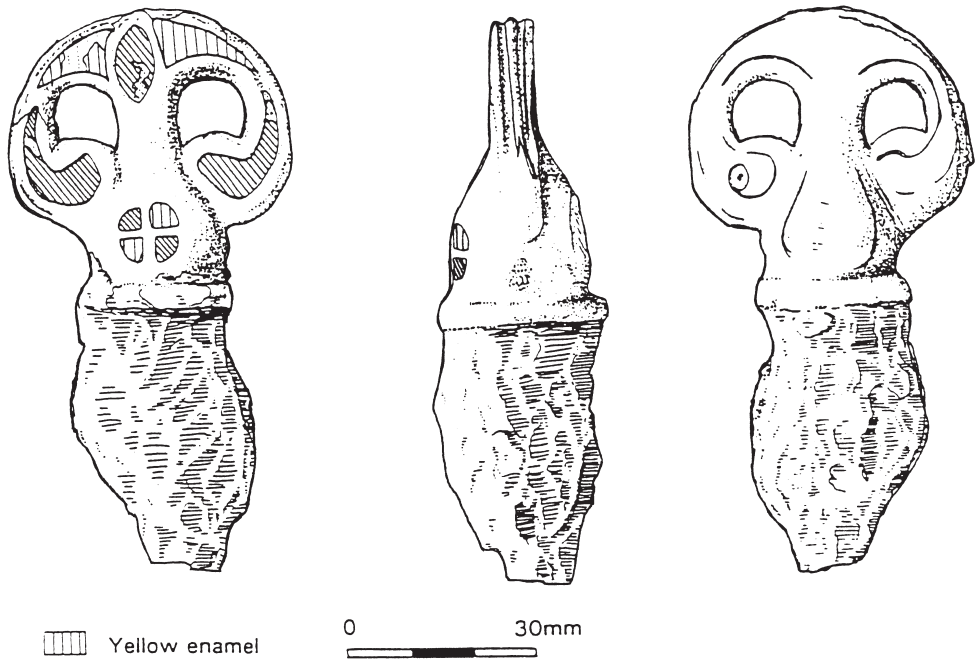
Huncote

Patrick Clay, Martin Shore

The site at Huncote lies 1 km north of the village on Forest Road (illus.1). An application for an extension to Huncote Quarry covering a *c.*7.5ha area southeast of the original quarry was submitted by Acresford Sand and Gravel Co. It was within an area of archaeological potential as it lies close to locations of prehistoric, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and medieval remains. Of particular note was the discovery of the upper part of a late Iron Age decorated linch pin within the application area by Michael Morris, a local metal detector user (illus. 9). A phased series of archaeological work was undertaken to assess the area including a desk based assessment (Sturgess 1997), geophysical survey (GSB 1997), fieldwalking and metal detecting surveys, (Browning 1997) and an open area archaeological evaluation (Beamish 1998b). No archaeological remains were located other than a small fragment of copper alloy, with a *Celtic* style of decoration, found in disturbed soils, with a metal detector and a few faint geophysical anomalies which may have archaeological origins.

However during a subsequent watching brief part of an enclosure ditch associated with Iron Age pottery was located. Following metal detector survey the remaining disturbed subsoils were removed using a JCB 3C with a toothless ditching bucket and under constant archaeological supervision to establish the extent of the archaeological deposits. An excavation was then undertaken by ULAS, directed by Martin Shore (2001). The archaeological deposits located were hand cleaned and planned following which sample sections were hand excavated and recorded.

Following the completion of the work by ULAS, the local amateur archaeological



9. Late Iron Age linch pin from Huncote (drawn by R. Knox). Scale 2/3.

group, Huncote Heritage, excavated more of the southern area of the enclosure ditch with the permission of Acresford Sand and Gravel Co., the results of which are included in the report.

Results

The excavation revealed an enclosure of 55m x 47m and covering *c.* 0.19ha (illus. 10–12). This included evidence for two circular structures, a series of gullies, and several post holes and pits. Outside the southwestern corner of the enclosure ditch, a series of pits and a gully was also located. Iron Age pottery and charcoal deposits were present within the drip gully in the northernmost building located in the northeastern area of the enclosure. In contrast although the deposits associated with the southernmost building were less truncated they produced fewer pottery sherds and charcoal. Iron Age pottery was also present in some of the gullies within the enclosure whilst a single sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery in one of the gullies is presumably intrusive (below p.25).

The Enclosure Ditch

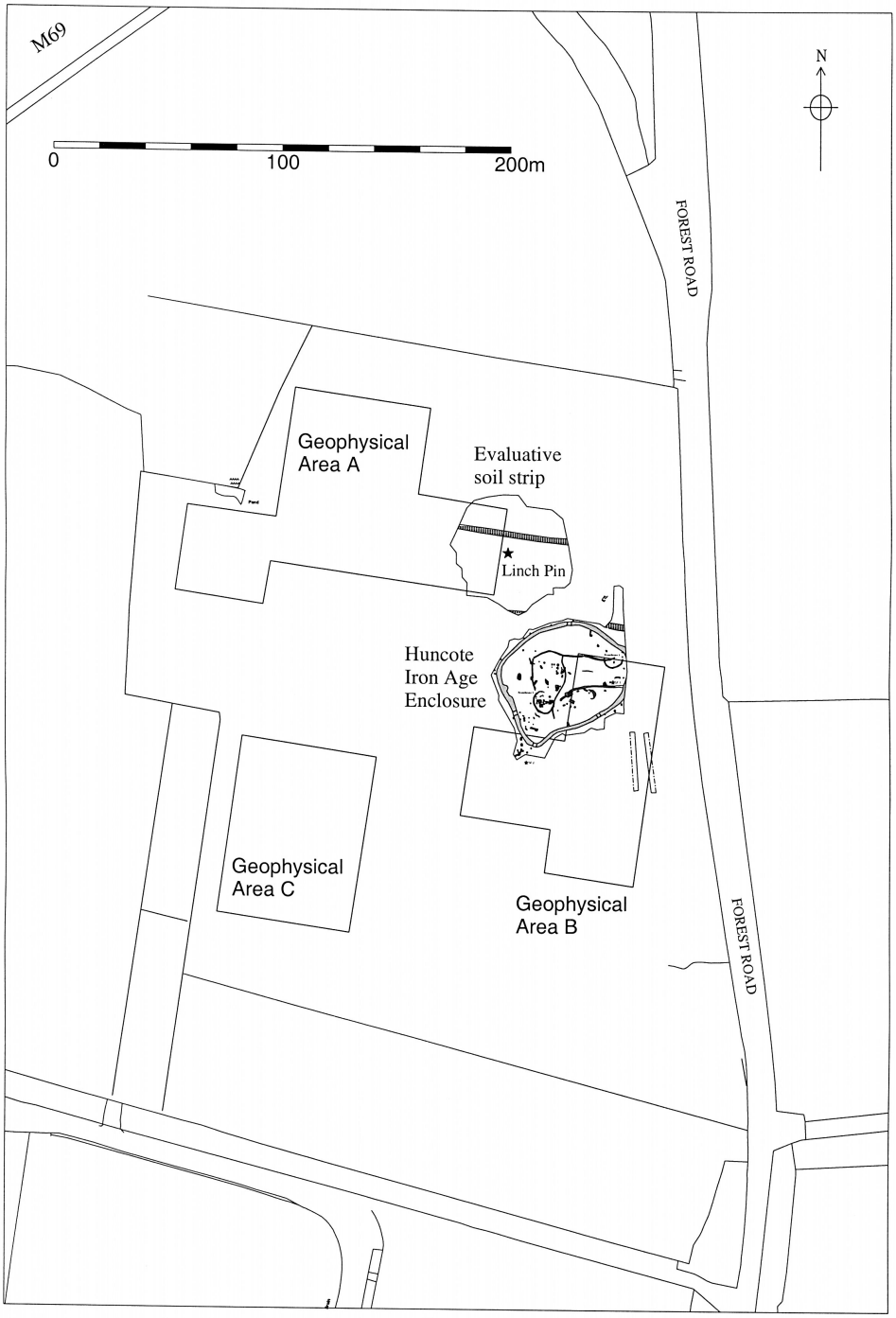
The main enclosure ditch was 'D'-shaped in plan, *c.* 1 m in width with a slight loop protruding at its south-western corner. An entrance may have been at the far eastern side. This was unfortunately covered by a large bund to denote the boundary of the future sand extractions. The ditch sections revealed a rounded 'V' shaped profile, with sides sloping at angles between 45°–80°, whilst the primary fills comprised mid-greyish silty clays with various brown orange sandy clays in the re-cuts.

The enclosure ditch showed evidence of having been re-cut This was most evident on the southern side where nearly all the pottery and fragmented animal bone was present. In addition to Iron Age pottery an early Roman vessel was also present; this may indicate continuation of use into the 1st–2nd centuries. The upper fill of the ditch appeared to contain the remains of recent plough soils, which suggests that the enclosure may have been visible as an earthwork until post-medieval times.

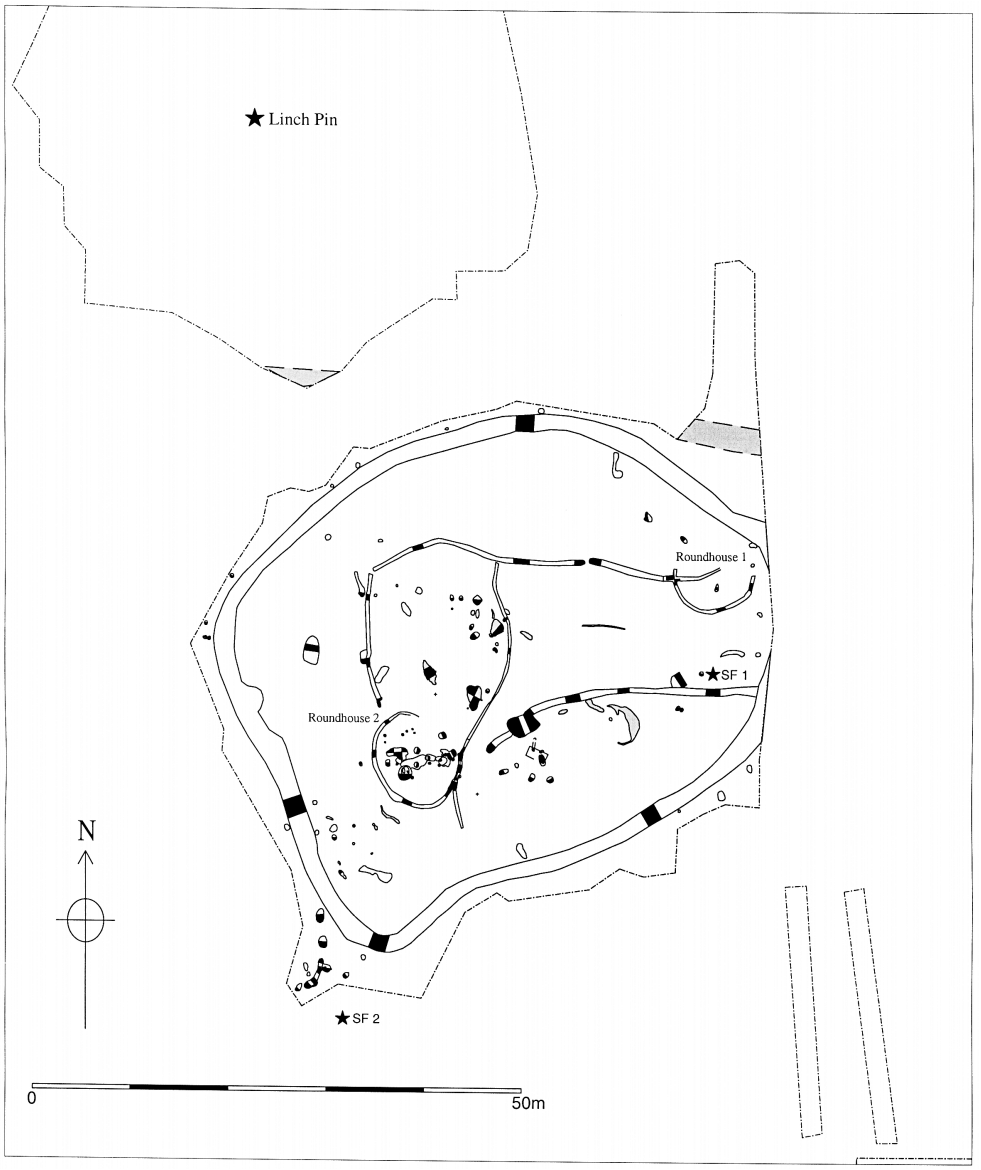
The circular buildings

A circular building (illus. 11; Roundhouse 1) was situated within the far northeastern extent of the enclosure and appears to have been truncated by ploughing on its northern side. An eaves drip gully was present, forming a semi-circular area 8.25m across; the northern half may have been truncated by ploughing. The fill of dark greyish brown silty sandy clay contained a large number of late Iron Age pottery sherds, heat cracked stones, and charcoal. Two post holes to the northeast may indicate an entrance.

To the south a second sub-circular building (illus. 11 Roundhouse 2) was situated within the southwestern area of the enclosure; it measured 10.35m north to south and 8.25 west to east. This was in a better state of preservation than Roundhouse 1, with the majority of the eaves drip gully surviving with an entrance to the northeast, denoted by two large post pits 1.35m apart. The eaves drip gully which had a pale grey



10. The location of the linch pin, evaluation and excavated enclosure at Huncote.



11. Enclosure at Huncote showing internal features and roundhouse areas.

brown silty clay fill contained fewer finds than Roundhouse 1. The internal features included several post holes and pits, some of which may not have related to the structure, the only post configuration conforming to any structural layout, being three of the post holes which formed a triangle at the centre of the roundhouse. The southern area within the structure appeared to have no features. Here the natural

ground was a red sandy clay which had seen some plough and land drain truncation, but the drip gully survival was better than that on the northern side of the structure. Along the northwestern side of the interior were two groups of stake holes (two groups of four holes and two groups of two holes) which may relate to internal structures. A post pit, post hole and two pits with stake holes in their bases were located within the southwestern quarter of Roundhouse 2.

Other features (illus. 11)

There were two main linear gullies within the enclosure on east–west alignments joining the enclosure ditch to the east. They had fills of dark grey-brown silty sandy clays and contained frequent Iron Age pottery sherds, heat cracked stones, and charcoal deposits. (An Anglo-Saxon sherd in the northernmost gully is likely to be intrusive). The northernmost gully cut the location of Roundhouse 1. In the western area of the enclosure, were two parallel north–south aligned gullies the easternmost of which cut the eaves drip gully surrounding Roundhouse 2.

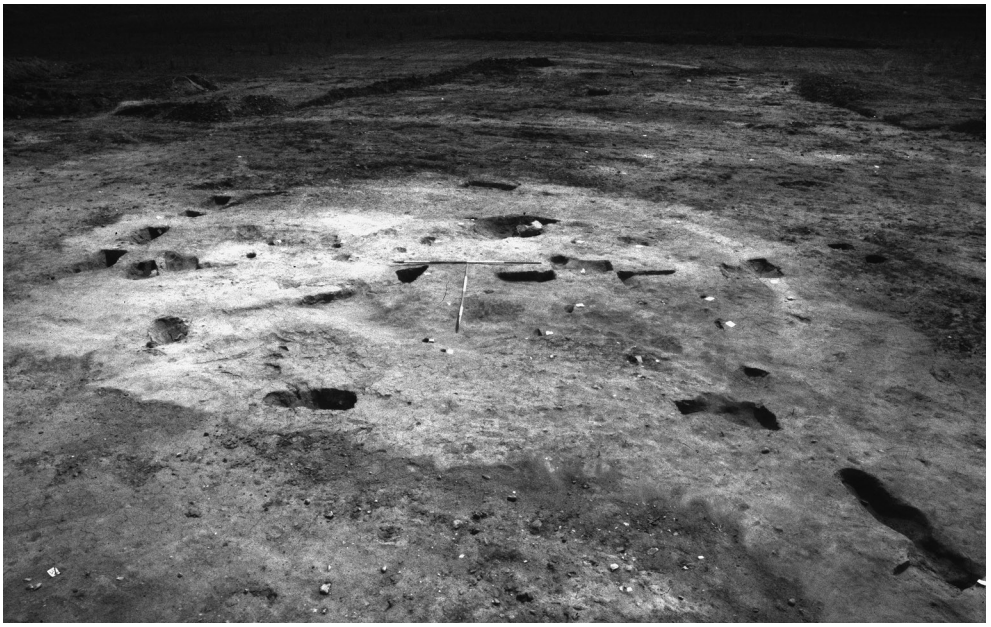
Outside the enclosure to the south-west was an area containing five large pits, a gully which cut two of the pits, and six post holes, two of which cut the fills of the gully. No finds were associated with these features. Tree-throw pits were identified inside and outside the enclosure some of which were cut by the Iron Age features.

Phasing

An absence of lithics was noted during the evaluation and excavation suggesting that little activity preceded the Iron Age occupation. The only earlier objects found were a fragment of a Bronze Age rapier, located from the metal detector survey (below p.25), and two flint flakes from the excavation.

In view of the lack of stratigraphic relationships, along with the difficulty of closely dating undiagnostic Late Iron Age pottery, it is difficult to provide a clear sequence of activity associated with the enclosure. However a possible sequence can be suggested as follows:

1. Some activity during the Later Bronze Age is suggested from the presence of the rapier fragment. It is possible that woodland clearance denoted by the presence of possible treethrow pits also took place during this period.
2. Two circular structures were constructed. It is unclear whether these were contemporary. If they were it is possible that one of the buildings was for a dwelling and the other served as a workshop or kitchen building. A similar situation has been interpreted for two nearby settlements at Enderby (above p.17; Clay 1992).
3. The enclosure ditch appears to have post-dated Roundhouse 1 and possibly both circular buildings. Drainage gullies and fence lines were constructed within the enclosure. The enclosure ditch was re-cut at least once and may have continued to be used as a stock enclosure into the early Roman period subsequent to the abandonment of the farmstead as a settlement.
4. A single sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery would seem to indicate activity on the site



12. Excavations in progress at Huncote.

from that period, (perhaps the excavation of some gullies). A more likely explanation is that the sherd was introduced through manuring. From the presence of plough soils in the upper fills of the enclosure ditch it is possible that the enclosure survived as a visible earthwork into the post-medieval period.

The Iron Age and Roman pottery *Patrick Marsden*

The pottery from the site consists of fabrics, forms, and decoration typical of scored wares found elsewhere in the Soar Valley. They include fabrics with inclusions of igneous rock which may have come from outcrops of syenite situated locally including one only *c.*1.5 km to the south at Croft Hill. Similar pottery fabrics have been found from the two Enderby enclosures (Elsdon 1992a; Meek 1997; above p.12) *c.* 4km to the north-east. The pottery, including the remaining fabric groups, is likely to be of local origin. Although scored wares have a broad date range, from the 4th or 5th century BC to the 1st century AD, a vessel recovered from the fill of the enclosure ditch is a necked bowl of late 1st century BC to mid 1st century AD (Thompson 1982). This is a Belgic form which is rare on rural sites in Leicestershire, although examples are known from Leicester (Pollard 1994, fig.54 no.42) and Elms Farm, Humberstone (Marsden 2000, fig.51 no.32). The remainder of the pottery from Huncote, consists mainly of scored wares, although part of a single grey ware vessel was found by the Huncote Heritage Group in the enclosure ditch, dating to the 1st or early 2nd century AD, suggesting activity continuing into, the early Roman period. However, as scored

wares may have continued to be produced into the 1st century AD (Elsdon 1992b), it is possible the whole site was occupied during the 1st century AD; this may explain the presence of native scored wares alongside Belgic style and Roman grey ware vessels. In contrast to other Iron Age sites, for example Wanlip and Humberstone (Beamish 1998a; Charles *et al* 2000), no deliberate deposition of finds was identified from the site.

Three sherds of briquetage from the Nantwich area of Cheshire were located. Briquetage which was used to dry and transport salt, provides evidence of long-distance trade during the Iron Age. Huncote is situated within the southern distribution of Cheshire briquetage although it has now been found at Crick, Northamptonshire (BUFAU 1998).

Early Anglo-Saxon pottery *Nicholas J.Cooper*

A single sherd of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery weighing 40g was present in the northernmost drainage gully. The sherd is from the upper profile of a globular vessel with an upright rim. The vessel is handmade and the form, the smoothed external finish, and the fabric, support an Early Anglo-Saxon attribution.

The fabric contains fragments of crushed granite (granodiorite) from the igneous outcrops of the Charnwood district and is paralleled by material both from Leicester (Blinkhorn 1999, 165 fabric 4 of coarse granite) and elsewhere in the County such as Eye Kettleby, Melton (Cooper forthcoming). In all cases the fabric is the most common within the assemblage and would appear to belong to a broad fabric group known as Charnwood ware, recognised throughout the East Midlands (Williams and Vince 1997).

The metalwork *Patrick Clay and Martin Shore*

A metal detector survey located a damaged silver Iron Age *Corieltauvian* quarter stater of early 1st century AD date (illus. 10 SF1; Seaby 1984, 4.30). This was from topsoil within the eastern half of the enclosure south of Roundhouse 1 (illus. 10. SF 1). A Bronze Age copper alloy Rapier blade tip of the *Taunton Phase*, *c.*1300 BC was located in topsoil to the south of the excavated area (illus. 10. SF2).

The fragment of linch pin (illus. 9), first discovered by metal detecting by Mick Morris, to the north of the enclosure (illus. 10), is a crescentic headed type, having surviving red and orange enamel with unique distinctive 'demon' eyes formed by a central dividing bar. A similar pin but without the central bar is known from the Middleton/Enthorpe area of east Yorkshire (MacGregor 1976, 135). *Circa* 60 Iron Age linch pins have been found in Britain usually as part of the surviving remains of chariot or cart burials notably from East Yorkshire and date from *c.* 100BC–AD50. The relationship between the linch pin and the settlement is still uncertain although its proximity suggests that the object may have come from a cart or chariot associated with the settlement. Although these objects are often found with cart/chariot burials this example may have come from a working vehicle. Whatever its origin the object provides a rare insight of the skill and artistic creativity of the Late Iron Age people living in the years just before the Roman conquest.

The animal bone *Jennifer Browning*

A total of 126 bone fragments was recovered from the fill of the enclosure ditch. They are generally in a poor condition, brittle and highly fragmented and as a consequence, very little of the bone was identifiable. However, it was possible to identify the remains of cattle, horse and sheep/goat in the assemblage. Cattle bones were by far the most frequently represented. The presence of some burnt bone was noted, although the fragments were too small and not diagnostic enough to identify. Teeth are the most common skeletal element recovered. The condition of the rest of the bone suggests that this might be due to the soil conditions. Teeth have a denser structure than other types of bone, increasing their chances of survival.

Charred plant remains *Wayne Jarvis*

The charred plant remains provide evidence for cereals in the form of spelt wheat, and a little emmer, the latter perhaps being an accidental part of the crop. Spelt typically predominates on sites of this period, although barley is also frequently present (Greig 1991). Eight of the 16 samples (110 Litres) produced a total of 242 chaff fragments, 23 cereal grins and 118 seeds. Most of the samples represent a thin scatter (<1.6 items per litre of deposit) of re-deposited material from crop cleaning processes carried out nearby. Three samples, however, two from the eaves drip gulley around Roundhouse 1, and one from the enclosure ditch, have much higher densities of material (14.3 to 19 items per litre of deposit), and are also dominated by crop processing waste by-products (cereal chaff and weed seeds). These densities are considerably higher than other Iron Age sites in the county, for example the two enclosures at Enderby and Kirby Muxloe (Monckton 1995). This might suggest a greater emphasis on cereals in the site economy, but it may be that the waste by-product was used for other purposes (e.g. fodder) and is therefore less likely to have survived (above p.16).

In productive samples, it is possible to compare the relative proportions of carbonised plant material to infer agricultural practices. This is because crop preparation leaves behind differing residues dependant on the crop processing stage involved (Hillman 1981, 1984; Jones 1985). With the glume wheats (i.e. emmer and spelt), threshing leaves the grain still held firmly within the chaff (glumes), at which stage the cereal can be traded and/or stored as spikelets. Storage as spikelets may have taken place as the chaff protects the grain from damp and pests. To use the grain for food requires a further stage of parching and pounding to free off these glumes, followed by fine sieving to separate the chaff and weed seeds from the grain. The rich samples from Huncote represent this fine sieving by-product, indicating that crop processing, and by inference consumption, occurred on site. However, the grain may have been brought onto site as spikelets (and perhaps produced elsewhere). Unfortunately it is difficult to prove a site was involved in crop production as the evidence for the early crop processing stages (light chaff, straw) is rarely preserved, with straw being a valuable product in its own right. Large grain rich deposits as found on sites in the south might suggest a 'producer' site (Jones 1985), but these are rare in the region for this period, even though cereal evidence is usually present (Moffett 1991, Monckton 1992a, 1995). Population differences may in part explain this contrast. At Humberstone, one of the few sites in Leicestershire to have produced

grain rich samples, the evidence was associated with a four-post structure which was interpreted as a grain store, with the crop being processed nearby and as needed (Pelling 2000). It is likely that assemblages with a thin spread of waste material reflect small-scale 'domestic' production and consumption, with stored grain being processed as required, rather than in bulk. The Huncote samples probably reflect the waste from this sort of processing, with a concentration in the vicinity of roundhouse 1.

The weed seeds are predominantly those of the flora of disturbed ground, and commonly occur as weeds in ancient and recent arable assemblages (Jones 1988). The occurrence of grass seeds is common in archaeobotanical assemblages and reflects the more diverse ecology of ancient arable fields. Additionally, the relatively large seeds of brome grass and fat hen are often found with cereal grain, and may have therefore been tiresome to pick out (Jones 1981). The presence of hazel nutshell, sloe, and wild cherry/plum fruit stones in the sample from Roundhouse 1 suggests the exploitation of 'wild' food resources from scrub/woodland margin, or possibly hedgerow. This evidence suggests wild plant resources supplemented the cereal diet.

Discussion

The Iron Age site at Huncote includes two small sub-circular buildings. On the basis of the eaves drip diameters, the Roundhouse 1 may have been slightly smaller than its southern counterpart, Roundhouse 2. Pottery and charred plant remains were more abundant from the eaves drip gullies surrounding Roundhouse 1 and this may suggest that this was used as a kitchen or workshop with Roundhouse 2 serving as living quarters, a situation perhaps paralleled at the two Enderby enclosure (above p.17).

The settlement appears to have been originally unenclosed with an enclosure ditch added later. A similar sequence has been interpreted for Enderby Enclosure I and possibly Enclosure II (above p.17). Even allowing for plough erosion the enclosure ditch is far less substantial than that at Enderby Enclosure II (below p.28).

The excavation at Huncote, therefore, has revealed evidence of a settlement dating from the late Iron Age. The presence of the Belgic style pottery and the Corieltauvian coin may indicate a later date than that at Enderby Enclosure II with occupation continuing into the 1st century AD – a similar date range suggested for Enderby Enclosure I (Clay 1992). Charred cereal remains including spelt and emmer wheat and animal bone including cattle and sheep/goat were recovered suggesting a small-scale mixed economy, possibly for an extended family group. Although the settlement appears to have gone out of use during the late Iron Age the presence of early Roman pottery in the enclosure ditch suggests that the enclosure was still used into the Roman period, perhaps for stock control. Re-use of the enclosure may also have also occurred during the Anglo-Saxon period. Medieval strip field systems as part of Huncote's open fields were evident although traces of the earthwork may have survived until the post-medieval period and only been finally eroded during ploughing since the fields were enclosed.

Discussion

Small settlements such as those examined at Enderby and Huncote are relatively common in the Late Iron Age of the East Midlands. Similar sites can be interpreted from cropmarks (Pickering and Hartley 1985; Hartley 1989) together with earthwork,

artefact scatter (querns and pottery) and excavated data. Over 220 locations of Late Iron Age occupation are included in the Leicestershire and Rutland Sites and Monuments Record. From analysis of well-surveyed areas including Medbourne, Oakham and Misterton a density of one Late Iron Age site per 1.8–2 sq km can be extrapolated (Clay 2002, 81).

Whilst the majority of Late Iron Age settlements are farmsteads similar to those at Enderby and Huncote consisting of family or extended family groups at the same time larger settlements are now known to have been developing in the area, at for example Leicester and Humberstone (Clay 1985; 2001; Charles et al 2000; Thomas 2003). These are likely to have served as centres of trade for the smaller farmsteads such as Enderby and Huncote which would still have continued to practice an essentially self sufficient subsistence economy based around family units.

The enclosures at Enderby and Huncote are of very similar size, covering *c.* 0.19ha. Both enclosures appear to contain a pair of roundhouses at any one time. Huncote had certainly suffered more damage from plough erosion than Enderby and this may be the reason why the remains of the structures at Huncote are comparatively slight. At Enderby differences in truncation from ploughing were evident with the remains of Roundhouse 3 being very slight and some areas of both Roundhouse 3 and Roundhouse 1 having been totally removed.

The width of the enclosure ditch at Enderby was almost twice that at Huncote and much deeper. Even taking into account the increased plough erosion across the Huncote site the Enderby enclosure would still have been far more substantial. This may in part be because Enderby Enclosure II was lower lying and likely to be more prone to waterlogging. The enclosure at Enderby also had a very distinct entrance way whereas none was located at Huncote although it could have been outside the excavated area to the east. The entrance to the Enderby enclosure would appear to have been made to be seen.

Circular buildings similar to those at Enderby and Huncote are amongst the most common structures on Late Iron Age sites and examples have been located on various sites in Leicestershire and Rutland including, Breedon on the Hill (Wacher 1977), Castle Donington (Coward and Ripper 1998), Enderby (above p.18; Clay 1992), Humberstone (Charles *et al* 2000; Thomas 2002), Normanton le Heath (Thorpe *et al* 1994), Tixover (Beamish 1992) and Leicester (Clay and Pollard 1994). Two of the buildings at Enderby Enclosure II are different from many others in the region in having central posts. The Phase 2.2 building at Enderby Enclosure I at *c.* 13.5m diameter and Enclosure II Roundhouses 1 and 4 at *c.* 10.2m diameter are amongst the largest circular buildings known from the East Midlands.

Both farmsteads show evidence of paired buildings, perhaps separating different functions, which was also evident at Enderby Enclosure I (Clay 1992). This occurrence of paired buildings has also been noted at Aylesby, South Humberside (Steedman and Foreman 1995) and Bancroft, Buckinghamshire, although the latter is believed to be of earlier, broadly 'Middle Iron Age', date (Williams and Zeepvat 1994). However the internal layout of the two enclosures is different. The eaves drip gullies surrounding the roundhouses at Huncote suggests structures of between 7–9m in diameter. The two larger roundhouses of each structural phase at Enderby are more substantial buildings the internal diameters of each measuring *c.*10.2m. In each phase the pairs of houses are in positions where they would have dominated the interior of the enclosure. Although some animals may have been housed within the enclosure, the presence of the drainage gullies and other features such as the oven in the northeastern corner

would not have been practical if numerous animals were kept within the enclosure. It is likely that Enclosure II was constructed as an enclosed settlement for a family group, and possibly one of some status. The entrance way, size of the ditches and also the main structures within would suggest that visual impact was important to the inhabitants.

The evidence from the charred plant remains also shows a difference between the two Enderby enclosures and Huncote. At Enderby there is a low frequency of cereals typical of many other similar Iron Age sites in the region (Monckton 1995, 35 and forthcoming). Whilst mixed agricultural economies can be interpreted for Enderby there may have been a greater emphasis on a pastoral base, with cattle predominant. In contrast the evidence from Huncote, where there is a higher concentration of cereal remains and chaff survival, suggests perhaps a greater emphasis on arable farming.

From the pottery at Enderby Enclosure I and Huncote it appears that Enclosure I is later than and may have replaced Enclosure II (above p.17), and it is also possible that it and Huncote were contemporary. Situated only 4km apart they are likely to have been in contact with each other and may have shared outfield pasturing areas. Their use as settlements appears to have ceased at around the time of the Roman conquest although the presence of Roman pottery may indicate that the areas remained in agricultural use.

Conclusion

The two excavations have highlighted both the potential and problems in Iron Age studies in the East Midlands. Chronology has been identified as a difficulty within the Iron Age due to several factors, including the conservatism of regional pottery traditions, the rarity of datable metalwork finds, and the variations within radiocarbon calibration curve (Haselgrove *et al* 2001; Willis 2001). At Enderby Enclosure II in particular diagnostic pottery and metalwork is absent and when calibrated the radiocarbon dates provide a wide date range. However it does appear to be earlier than either Enderby Enclosure I or Huncote. Although having no suitable material for radiocarbon dating, diagnostic pottery, which could be dated to the early 1st century AD was present at Huncote. Whilst datable metalwork is present this was not in stratified contexts. However it is highly probable that Huncote and Enderby Enclosure I were occupied at the same time.

Special deposition of artefacts has been identified on several Iron Age sites (Hill 1995) although interpretation of these should be treated with caution. While a combination of different artefacts showing evidence of having been deliberately placed has been noted at various sites (e.g locally at Wanlip; Beamish 1998a) the interpretation of concentrations of pottery around entrances as deliberate and structured might occasionally be open to question as these areas can equally be interpreted as favoured locations for rubbish disposal (cf. Gwilt 1997; Charles *et al*. 2000, Illus. 42). There is also evidence that enclosure ditches were also a focus for votive and structured deposits during the Iron Age (cf. Hingley 1990). At Enderby and Huncote there is no clear evidence of structured deposition although the two concentrations of pottery at Enderby Enclosure II may reflect this phenomenon, and, if the cremation (above p. 13) is of Iron Age date this would appear to have been deliberately placed immediately to the left of the entrance to roundhouse 2 (illus. 8).

The two projects also highlight the problems of visibility for clayland Iron Age settlements (Clay 2002, 9). Whilst the enclosures at Enderby were identified by aerial

photography and recording was concentrated in these areas, occupation southeast of Enclosure I (illus. 2) was only identified during a watching brief with consequent limited recording opportunities (Ripper and Beamish 1997). At Huncote fieldwalking, geophysical survey and evaluation failed to locate the enclosure which again was only revealed during a watching brief. Despite these problems the excavations have indicated that superficially similar sites do have their own complexities and variations. Even small farmsteads, typical of this period, can inform about the everyday life and times of the Iron Age and have their own particular distinctiveness.

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