

2 BEHAVIOUR

2.1 Catalogue of special deposits from Late Iron Age contexts

Pits

F793 Tr 4 L180740 Late Iron Age Pit (cylindrical)

Fill cycle: 2d

B° (16) Special deposits placed on the base of the pit against the south wall included a daub triangular oven brick (R44) against the wall, a large block of quern (R45) beside it on the west and a pounding stone beside it on the inside to the north. To the west of the quern was a scatter of large sherds of pottery (R51). These were sealed by a deliberate tip of light brown clayey silt soil mixed with chalky marl and containing a moderate–high density of chalk blocks up to 50 mm. It forms a level even layer on the pit base (D03).

(15)/(16) Special deposits placed at the interface of the two layers or possibly within 16, included fragments of daub (?R44) peripherally on south-west and to the north-west of these a large number of potsherds (R51) plus a long bone (R71). Against the west wall was a bone spindle whorl (R59) set on edge with the perforation pointing to the pit centre. Against the north-west wall was another group of broken pot (R51), together with pieces of burnt chalk, snail shells and rodent bones. Against the north wall was a bone with a cut end. In a central position slightly to the west were some long bones, possibly originally articulated (R71/R36) and to the east of these a group of potsherds (R51).

1° (14) Fragments from an animal skull were placed against the east wall within a series of deliberate tips of loose chalk blocks up to 70 mm in small rounded chalk and grit with a dark brown silty soil matrix, rare small flints and charcoal fragments (D03, R38).

(13)/(14) At the interface of the two layers was a deliberate deposit of a scatter of large flint nodules 150–250 mm, burnt chalk blocks and scattered large potsherds including a base sherd laid against the south-west side (D10, R51).

(10a) A special deposit of a broken pierced whetstone placed 0.26 m from the north wall lay inclined at the same angle as the fill at the top of layer 10 (R58).

(9) Eroded chalk rubble formed a loosely packed wedge against the north wall becoming more compacted towards pit centre (N23). An animal long bone was placed parallel and close to the north wall at the top of layer (R71).

2° (12) Deliberate tip of dark brown soil containing a high density of charcoal and ash and sparse small chalk sloping down north side (D13).

(12a) Special deposit of horse mandible and rib carefully placed against lower edge of mandible laid flat slightly off-centre to the east and aligned north–south (R39).

(11) Dark brown silty soil mixed with very high density of grey ash, frequent charcoal fragments, rare flint, small chalk and grit (D11). Within the layer an animal long bone was placed in the pit centre aligned north–south (R71).

(11a) A special deposit of an animal jaw bone and scapula were placed against the south wall of the pit and packed around with flints (R39, R72, R53).

(8) A deliberate tip (D11) of dark brown/grey silty soil with high density of ash, frequent charcoal, scattered fired clay, infrequent chalk grit and rare flints contained several special deposits: an animal skull fragment against south-west wall and long bone below it (R38, R71); a mandible fragment placed centre east (R39); a split long bone aligned east–west in intermediate position in east sector (Q71); a cut bone with a flint nodule alongside it against south wall (Q53).

(7) Special deposits of blocks of daub (R52) and pottery (R51) were placed against

south wall towards the base of a layer of dark brown/grey silty soil with very high density of ash, frequent charcoal, much burnt flint *c.*30 mm; infrequent chalk and flint up to 50 mm (D11).

(7b) Special deposits were placed in the pit centre at the top of layer 7 consisting of a small articulated animal (R35), a cut long bone (R71) and a piece of daub (Q44); off-centre to the east was a flattened area covered with much pottery (R60/51).

F826 Tr 4 L030790 Late Iron Age Pit (cylindrical)

Fill cycle: 2d

B° (12) On the pit base was a thick level layer of dark grey ash with charcoal fragments (D11). Within in this layer close 10–20 mm above the pit base was a scatter of animal bone, including several long bones, some potsherds, broken flint nodules, some burnt and pebbles (R54).

1° (11) Mixed layer of light brown clay and small subangular chalk mostly 10–20 mm (D14). Within the layer was a distinct horizontal lens of larger stones – flints 30–40 mm and chalk blocks 40–100 mm joined by a trail of small pieces *c.*20 mm. At about this level an inverted ?sheep skull (R38) had been placed in an intermediate position in the south-east sector. Two rodent skeletons were noted against the east–south-east wall, but need not be regarded as special deposits. However they may have been attracted to the pit by organic deposits.

2° (7) A series of deliberate tips of grey–dark grey ash and charcoal (D11), interspersed with a tip of chalk rubble (D03) mostly subrounded fragments 10–20 mm with larger blocks up to 50 mm and rolled to the pit centre. A lens of red clay mixed with small chalk and flint occurred at the top of the layer.

(6)/(7) Several special deposits rested in/on the top of layer 7. The main deposit was an articulated horse leg (R36) the foot placed roughly in the pit centre with a flint against it on the south and the rest of the leg slightly flexed stretching out towards the south-west. Three large broken flint nodules lay to the south (R53). The flint by the foot rested on a mandible (R39). A bronze object occurred to the north-west of the leg (R47).

Ditches

F749/10 Tr 3 K809414–K908383–K830405 Late Iron Age Ditch
Linear

2° In cutting 10 there were well defined thin lenses of small weathered chalk and grit separated by horizons of light brown silty clay (10/4, 10/3). Probably at the base of 10/3 in one of the soily horizons had been placed a special deposit of a ?cattle mandible and pelvis (R39, R72). They had been set close together in the centre of the ditch with some blocks of chalk 50–80 mm and large potsherds packed around and between them.

3° The upper ditch fill was dominated by thick accumulations of brown or orange brown clayey silty soil containing low densities of small stones, either chalk or flint, up to 30 mm and sparse examples of charcoal or burnt flint (6/2, 8/2, 10/2). The topmost layer was generally similar but with greater concentrations of subangular stones, chalk and flint, some burnt, up to 60 mm (6/1, 8/1, 10/1). In cutting 10 at the same point as the earlier deposit in layer 3, a second special deposit of a complete dog skeleton (R35) had been placed stretched out along the south side. It had been laid on its left side with the spine to the ditch wall. The

hind legs were tightly flexed against the body and the forelegs stretched parallel with and immediately in front of the body. The skull was lying at a slightly higher level (but still articulated with the body) as though lying on a 'pillow' of soil. Superficially it appeared to lie in layer 1, but in the section drawing the skull appeared to be at the interface of layers 2 and 3 and as the body was recorded as being lower than the skull it is likely it was placed either on the sloping surface of layer 3 and covered by 2 or more probably within the partly accumulated layer 2.

F766 Tr 4 L019734–L100700 Late Iron Age Ditch Banjo enclosure

There was considerable variation along the length of the ditch in terms of fill, but cutting 3 stood out from the dense deposits placed at the top of the primary fill.

1° This was a chalky brown clayey soil (6) containing a moderate density of subangular chalk up to 50 mm, scattered angular flints 10–40 mm and rare charcoal.

2° Above this the secondary fill consisted of deliberately placed layers of brown or greyish brown silty soil with ashy lenses and prolific of charcoal together with moderate densities of small rounded chalk and grit, a few small angular flints and some red baked clay (5, 3). Within these layers had been placed a series of special deposits consisting mainly of animal mandibles (R39) and skull fragments (R38), long bones (R71) (much of it cattle/horse size) and many large sherds of broken pottery (R51), representing at least three broken pots. These deposits appeared to be confined largely to this cutting covering a length of about 1.65 m. At a lower level there were at least five mandibles, together with a number of other bones including skull fragments and a few large sherds of pottery. The mandibles appeared to be more concentrated into the east end, which was reflected in the deposits above, where three or four more pieces of mandible were concentrated together with some skull fragments. Pottery deposits were densest to the west of these and in plan may be divided into three groups. One close by the mandibles included a large fragment of base. In the centre of the cutting was a group of 16 or more large sherds and west of these slightly separated were two large rim sherds. It was noted on site that at least three individual vessels were present, which included two necked bowls and a narrow necked jar. Though the material showed no particular pattern of placement, it may represent items collected from a single event, the pottery possibly being deliberately smashed, placed *en masse* in the ditch together with the burnt debris. Debris from communal feasting could be one explanation.

3° They had been covered by the tertiary fill, which began with a fairly thin layer of chalk grit and light brown marl (4) containing a few larger pieces of chalk and flint *c.*20 mm and scattered charcoal. This could represent erosion from the ditch sides or possibly herald the start of quarrying with waste debris dumped in the partly filled ditch. Where the ditch had not been truncated by quarrying the remainder was filled with a thick layer of greyish brown soil (1) containing a moderate density of chalk up to 30 mm plus occasional burnt chalk, small flints and charcoal flecks.

2.2 Human burials in Roman pit, F764

F764 Tr 3 K827547 C3–4AD Pit (rectangular)

Length: 1.60 x 1.07 m Base: 0.84 x 0.56 m Depth: 0.87 m Volume: 0.81 cu m
Isolated

Subrectangular pit with flat base and vertical sides, which splay out slightly at the top, probably indicative of slight erosion of the upper lip. This feature could be regarded as a grave, but the arrangement of the body is atypical of a normal Roman burial. Moreover the primary erosion in the fill indicates a lapse of time between the pit being left empty and the deposition of the body. The nature of the deposits is more akin to special deposits in Iron Age pits and it is therefore preferable to regard this pit as primarily some form of storage pit, with the fill representing secondary activity.

Fill cycle: 2a

1° (3) [Eroded weathered chalk rubble] Angular chalk blocks *c.*30 mm in light brown silty soil with chalk grit (N24).

2° (2) A special deposit of adult human body (R32) was placed above layer 3. The skeleton lay prone with the torso and thighs aligned with the long axis of the pit. The right arm was folded across in front of the chest and the left arm tightly bent so both hands were under the chest (?tied). The upper back and neck bent to the left so that the head faced into the north-east corner of the pit with the head pulled back so the skull was sitting upright looking at the pit wall. The knees were tightly bent and the lower legs crossed and inclined so the left foot lay on the south side of the pit and the right foot on the north at a higher level than the rest of the skeleton. The pit was about 1.2 m long at this point and clearly too short for an adult body. The arrangement of the body does not resemble a normal Roman inhumation and bears comparison with Iron Age structured deposits.

(2a) The body was covered by a deliberate tip of light brown silty soil containing moderate–high density of small chalk *c.*10–20 mm and grit very evenly distributed throughout the layer (D14). This layer was 0.3 m thick, fairly level and only just covered the skeleton. In excavation it was not differentiated from 2b.

(2) [Special deposit of infant] Resting on the surface of layer 2a (at a depth of 0.52 m) was a second human deposit of fragments of neonatal cranium (possibly two individuals) (R31 x ?2). They had been placed in the centre of the pit above the pelvis of the adult.

[Special deposit of animal mandible] At a slightly higher level (50 mm above) and just to the north of the skull fragments, an animal mandible had been placed lying flat (R39).

3° (2) [Special deposit of metal work] SF2313: Fe object with mineralized wood, 2343: Fe object, 2367: Fe sheet, 2388: Fe fragments, 2409: 3 Fe nails, 2503–7: 2 Fe staples, 1 Fe joinery dog, 2 Fe objects. A large quantity of Fe metal work (R47), mainly attachments, which occurred scattered throughout layers 2 and 1, may have represented a deliberately placed object, possibly something made in timber and broken up.

(2) [Deliberate tip] Light brown silty soil containing a high density of chalk grit and moderate density of larger lumps 10–50 mm, generally fairly rounded (D15). Some chalk appeared to form diffuse lenses or tip lines. Also occasional flints up to 70 mm, lumps of daub and flecks of charcoal.

(1) A wedge-shaped tip infilling the pit top on west side consisted of greyish brown silty soil containing a moderate density of subangular chalk 5–20 mm and rare angular flints *c.*15 mm (D01). It contained further iron objects possibly associated with those in layer 2; SF2314–19: 5 Fe fittings (?staples), 1 Fe sheet with rivet, SF2408: 5 Fe nails.