8. SOUTH-WESTERN COUNTIES

By JOHN P. SALVATORE

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

(1) **Cirencester**, *The Steadings* (SP 021 001): an excavation 1.5 km to the southwest of the centre of the Roman city of *Corinium Dobunorum* identified two foci of activity, both of which correspond with remains known from a preceding evaluation, but with a greater density than anticipated. The first focus of activity was located on a rise in the topography in the north-east of the site, and centred on a trackway formed of two parallel ditches. The ditches entered the northern edge of the site on a broadly east–west alignment before turning to the south. Limited archaeological evidence was noted to the west of the trackway, but to the east a number of boundary ditches defined small enclosures and field boundaries. The best defined of these enclosed an area of approximately 1000 m^2 with the enclosure itself measuring *c.* 35 m by 30 m. Only limited evidence for discrete features survived within the enclosure. An inhumation burial and 12 cremation burials were located by the southern end of one of the enclosure ditches. Artefactual evidence was fairly sparse, but pottery of Roman date, animal bone and iron objects (mainly nails) were recovered.

The second focus of activity was located in the western part of the excavation area. As with the activity in the north-east, ditches forming enclosures were the predominant archaeological features. The level of preservation was considerably greater in this area and the enclosures were much better defined, with four probable phases of activity present, although this interpretation is subject to change as post-excavation analysis progresses. The earliest enclosure was broadly rectangular on a north-east–south-west/north-west–south-east alignment, with visible dimensions of 35 m by 45 m, but extending beyond the southern limit of excavation. The enclosure appeared to have been expanded on two occasions with later ditches mirroring the same arrangement, with each enclosing a successively larger area. Short breaks in the enclosure ditches probably indicated entrance ways. During the final phase of activity one of the earlier enclosures was re-utilised as a cemetery comprising 18 inhumation burials. All but one of the graves were aligned broadly east–west, and approximately half were buried in an extended prone position, with the remainder being in an extended supine position. Burial practice also varied with clear evidence of several burials being interred in coffins and other burials placed within stone-lined graves. Grave goods were sparse, but a glass vessel was recovered from one of the graves. When the enclosure was reused as a cemetery, a stone revetment was added to the external ditch, which survived as a course of stones within the upper ditch fills.[107]

(2) **Newnham**, *Ruddle Court Farm* (SO 68150 10580): an excavation produced evidence of a Roman agricultural site consisting of a small-scale enclosure/field system, dating to the second–third centuries A.D., with evidence of associated activity including a stone-lined water-tank and culvert possibly related to malting. A gold coin (*aureus*) of Vespasian, dating to the first century A.D., was a significant find and may represent the deposition of a curated item. A number of Roman features contained iron-smelting slag, indicating that iron production had taken place in the near vicinity. Remains of Roman burial activity were confined to the south of the site, evidenced by a small cremation cemetery that probably spanned the second century A.D. This comprised a group of six burials, four of which were in urns. A notably rich burial included a glass cinerary urn placed within an amphora and probably represents the remains of a wealthy individual. One late Roman cremation burial was also found north of the cemetery.

[107] Excavation by John Boothroyd of Oxford Archaeology for Bathurst Development Ltd. K. Smith sent information.

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The next phase of activity comprised a charcoal-rich pit or hearth in the south of the site, radiocarbon dated to the eighth–ninth centuries cal. A.D. This lay close to two large heaps of iron-smelting slag; further analysis will determine whether these heaps were associated with the Roman or early medieval phases of activity.[108]

(3) **Twigworth**, *Area 2 south of the Orchard Park retirement village and 200 m east of the A38* (SO 8490 2195): an excavation revealed settlement evidence dated to the middle to late Iron Age, including at least 12 roundhouse gullies and a small square enclosure. The Iron Age settlement was replaced during the early Roman period by two large square enclosures associated with trackways and wells or water-holes; one of the trackways represents the continuation of a feature previously excavated in Area 1 to the northwest.[109] These were replaced in turn during the second century A.D. by two further enclosures. In addition, three discrete inhumation burials were found, one of which cut into a roundhouse gully. None of the burials produced any dating evidence, though it is likely that all belong to the later Iron Age and/or Roman period. No evidence for activity dating after the second century A.D. was found, apart from two sets of ridge-and-furrow cultivation, likely to be of medieval or early post-medieval date.

A large quantity of finds was collected, particularly Roman pottery and animal bone, together with personal items such as brooches and several querns and millstones. It is probable that the evidence dating to the Iron Age related to a domestic settlement. In contrast, the Roman-period activity had more of an agricultural focus. Well-preserved plant and insect remains were recovered from the wells or water-holes.[110]

NORTH SOMERSET

(1) **Weston-super-Mare**, *Oldmixon Road* (ST 33972 59039): excavation on a wetland fringe site, occupied during the Iron Age and Roman period, demonstrated the existence of a series of terraces created by infilling and reclaiming the wetland fringe during the Roman era. Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation was focused primarily on the highest ground, with a small Roman building and adjoining cobbled yard located on the lowest identified terrace. Four inhumation burials were also excavated on the site.[111]

SOMERSET

(1) **Banwell**, *Locking Parklands* (ST 37423 60978): evaluation is ongoing on a large archaeological project over this *c.* 82 ha site. To date it has demonstrated multi-phased occupation on the former wetland fringe, mostly from the Iron Age and Roman periods. The remains encountered to date include a small Roman stone building, ovens, working areas and clear demonstration of the reclamation of ground on the wetland fringe to create dryer terraces for working and living. The upslope parts of the site have in contrast very little surviving archaeology, presumably demonstrating the heavy later agricultural use; while the wetland fringe is rich in surviving Roman and Iron Age occupation and use.[112]

(2) **Hinkley Point**, *Hinkley Point C Connection Project*, *Church Lane* (ST 45922 71456): there were nine intercutting Roman buildings recorded in excavation. The precise chronology and

[108] Excavation work undertaken in 2019 by Gerry Thacker and written up by Martyn Allen and Charlotte Howsam of Oxford Archaeology for RPS Group on behalf of ARC Farming Ltd. K. Smith sent information.
[109] K. Smith, *Area 1, Twigworth, Gloucestershire, Archaeological Excavation Report*, Oxford Archaeology (2019).
[110] Excavation written up by Steve Teague and Edward Biddulph of Oxford Archaeology for Bovis Homes Western. K. Smith sent information.
[111] Work by South West Archaeology. S. Walls sent information.
[112] Work by South West Archaeology. S. Walls sent information.

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duration of each of the buildings is unclear, but the artefactual evidence suggests a date range from the second to fourth centuries A.D., with an emphasis on the late Roman period. The buildings may have been constructed using a combination of stone and timber, with the stone elements providing the foundation for the timber elements. The function of the buildings is unclear, in part hampered by the truncated nature of the remains. It is possible that these buildings may have served a variety of agricultural functions, perhaps being used on a seasonal basis. One phase of the site is associated with small-scale iron-working. Large quantities of industrial waste were recorded from two of the buildings, one of which was associated with a probable bowl furnace. An east–west ditch that appears to be contemporary could suggest the division of the area west of the boundary ditch into smaller plots. The identified buildings could define part of a wider complex of Roman buildings extending beyond the limit of excavation. Alongside the structural remains a series of ditches were recorded. These include the L-shaped section of ditch which could reflect the remains of a small pen or enclosure. Other small ditches may represent shallow drainage gullies.[113]

DEVON

(1) **Kingsteignton**, *land east of Penn's Mount* (SX 87715 72792): excavation revealed parts of a Roman enclosure occupying a plateau overlooking the Teign estuary. The southern extent of the enclosure had previously been excavated and contained a crop-processing oven.[114] The enclosure was rectangular, with right-angle corners, and was defined by two concentric steeply cut V-shaped ditches. Pottery from the ditch fills dates to the second to fourth centuries. The form of the enclosure is not consistent with a Roman military site, and it was probably a farmstead. Internal features within the northern part of the enclosure were restricted to a well and two possible pits.[115]

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

For supplementary material for this article please visit https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X22000459

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9.1. SOUTHERN COUNTIES (WEST)

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SWINDON

(1) **Foxbridge**, *Wanborough Road* (SU 1982 8447): an evaluation saw 31 trial trenches located in the northern half of a proposed mixed development area.[116] Five trenches were targeted on geophysical anomalies interpreted as the continuation of *Durocornovium* Roman small town, a scheduled ancient monument located to the north of the site.[117] The remains comprised rectilinear enclosures, pits and post-holes but no *in situ* structural remains were identified. The

[113] Work by L. Hayes and P. James of Headland Archaeology UK Ltd. L. James sent information.
[114] AC Archaeology, *Land at Penns Mount, Kingsteignton, Devon*: AC report ACD907/2/0 (2016).
[115] Work by Cotswold Archaeology. J. Hart sent information.
[116] Evaluation works took place in 2019.
[117] National Heritage List entry 1004684.

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