

Cambourne New Settlement

Iron Age and Romano-British settlement
on the clay uplands of west Cambridgeshire

Volume 2: Specialist Appendices

Web Report 7

Worked bone, by Matt Leivers



Cambourne New Settlement

Iron Age and Romano-British Settlement on the Clay Uplands of West Cambridgeshire

By
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with contributions from
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Jacqueline I. McKinley, Robert Scaife, Nicholas A. Wells and Sarah F. Wyles

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Volume 2: Specialist Appendices
Part 1. Artefacts
Part 2. Ecofacts

Wessex Archaeology Report No. 23

Wessex Archaeology 2009

Published 2009 by Wessex Archaeology Ltd
Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, SP4 6EB

<http://www.wessexarch.co.uk>

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ISBN 978-1-874350-49-1

Project website

<http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/projects/cambridgeshire/cambourne>

WA reports web pages

<http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/projects/cambridgeshire/cambourne/reports>

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Worked Bone

By Matt Leivers

Fragments of eleven worked bone items were recovered, most from Romano-British layers and ditches.

Combs

Two very fragmented combs were recovered. The first (Obj. no. 470; recovered from spoil) is a composite one-sided example. Fragments of both rectangular connecting plates survive; these have stepped concave marginal mouldings with the outer edge of both levels bearing an incised line. One rivet hole survives on the comb itself. The longest surviving tooth is 20 mm long and the teeth are on average 1 mm apart.

The second (Obj. no. 366) is a composite double-sided example. The fragments of rectangular connecting plate which survive have a stepped concave marginal moulding with the outer edge bearing short incised transverse lines. The central area of the plate is decorated with ring-and-dot decoration. Three copper alloy rivets are still in place in the comb. Teeth are on average 1 mm apart and over 12 mm long.

Plaque

A sub-rectangular plaque (Obj. no. 501) was 42 mm long, 38 mm wide and 3 mm thick (**Fig. 42**). Both ends have a circular perforation. Both surfaces are abraded, but one has an incised line around the edge and traces of a more complex pattern within. The piece is probably a casing for a wooden box or casket.

Spindles/pin beaters

Two pointed objects are probably spindles or pin-beaters. One (Obj. no. 52) is complete in two pieces, measuring 94 mm long and 9 mm maximum diameter. The second (Obj. no. 123) is incomplete and in poor condition, recovered from spoil. The surviving length is 82 mm, and the maximum diameter 9 mm. This example has been cut and possibly perforated at the point where it has subsequently snapped, and may be a pin rather than a spindle.

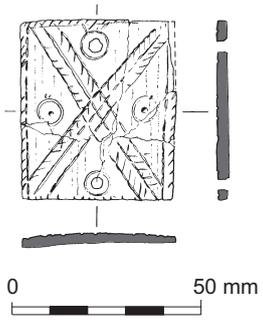
Needle, awl and pin

A single needle (Obj. no. 712) was recovered from a Middle Iron Age ditch at Lower Cambourne, an awl (Obj. no. 1060) came from a Middle Iron Age ditch at Knapwell Plantation, and a pin (Obj. no. 81156) was recovered from a Romano-British ditch at Jeavons Lane.

Miscellaneous objects

A small highly polished fragment (Obj. no. 585) has incised line and a single small ring motif. It may be a fragment of a comb plate or box casing.

Fragments of a bone (Obj. no. 564) with a smoothed surface and two holes drilled through the thickness cannot be identified.



Twelve excavations were carried out by Wessex Archaeology within the Cambourne Development Area. Situated on the clay uplands west of Cambridge, which have seen little previous archaeological investigation, the results presented here are important in demonstrating the ebb and flow of occupation according to population or agricultural pressure.

Short-lived Bronze Age occupation was followed in the Middle Iron Age by small farming communities with an economy based on stock-raising and some arable cultivation. The Late Iron Age seems to have seen a recession, perhaps partly due to increased waterlogging making farming less viable.

From the mid-1st century AD new settlements began to emerge, possibly partly stimulated by the presence of Ermine Street, and within a century the area was relatively densely occupied. Several farmsteads were remodelled in the later Romano-British period, though none seems to have been very prosperous.

Dispersed occupation may have continued into the early 5th century at least, followed by a hiatus until the 12th/13th century when the entire area was taken into arable cultivation, leaving the ubiquitous traces of medieval ridge and furrow agriculture.

ISBN 978-1-874350-49-1



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