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Archaeological Features of the Iron Age in Southern Britain

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES OF
THE IRON AGE IN SOUTHERN BRITAIN

An Honors Independent Study
Project Submitted By
Karen V. Wallace
To The Honors Council
Of Ouachita Baptist University

May 4, 1982

I. INTRODUCTION

An OBU Honors Special Studies Grant, matched by a donation from a private source, enabled me to spend five weeks during the summer of 1981 studying British archaeology, particularly that of the Iron Age, at Christ College, Cambridge. After one week of extensive lectures at the college and one week of touring major archaeological sites of the area, five other American students and I spent two and one-half weeks at the Claydon Pike excavation near Fairford, Gloucestershire. During our stay at the dig the excavation director, Dr. David Miles, and the assistant director, Simon Palmer, both of Oxford University and the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, delivered several lectures on the Iron Age, Claydon Pike, and other excavations in the area that dated from the same period. They also took us on field trips to area museums and other Iron Age sites, including Uffington Castle, the site of a large Celtic hillfort and the oldest chalk hillside figure in England, the Uffington White Horse.

In this paper I will draw from last summer's experience and from the research I have done since then in an attempt to present an accurate general picture of how archaeologists are able to reconstruct the Iron Age from the evidence found in their excavations. I choose to

discuss the Iron Age because of my interest in the Celts and my familiarity with the period. Also, much interesting work has been done in attempts to rebuild Iron Age settlements from archaeological evidence and thereby gain a greater understanding of how the Celts really lived. I choose to concentrate my studies in southern Britain for several reasons. The only attempted reconstructions of Iron Age communities have been in southern Britain. The center of population during the Iron Age seems to have been in the southern part of the country. The culture and civic structure was more advanced there because of the more favorable climate and better soil, along with the opportunity for trade with the Mediterranean countries. This was the part of Britain most easily conquered by the Romans, and they left records of their observations which have helped archaeologists and which, in return, the archaeologists have been able to confirm.¹ Finally, since my studies occurred in southern Britain, I am more familiar with the archaeological characteristics of this region than with those of any other.

There is not an abundance of material on Iron Age archaeology in Arkansas libraries. Therefore I must use a limited number of sources in my discussion of the various types of archaeological sites. However, in

¹David Miles, lecture on Iron Age settlements in southern Britain, Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, Oxford, England, 16 July 1981.

preparation for my study of British Iron Age archaeology, I consulted a number of general works on Celtic society, pre-Roman Britain, and British archaeology. In addition I read several articles and field reports on specific sites to get a feel for the types of features and artifacts normally discovered at an Iron Age site.

II. THE CELTS AND THE IRON AGE

The Celts were a barbarian race that inhabited most of Europe during the age of the Greeks and Romans. At the height of their glory they controlled most of the land from Ireland to Anatolia. Though remnants of their stories were preserved by Irish monks in the Dark Ages, the Celts had no written language, and consequently almost everything that was known about their civilization died with them.

For centuries all that was known of the Celts came from the writings of Greek and Roman historians. Although the "noble savage" image was projected occasionally, historians generally were very critical of the Celts. Their typical attitude towards the Celtic tribes is best summed up by Tacitus, who includes in an explanation of the uncertainty of their origins the phrase, "one must remember we are dealing with barbarians."²

A composite of classical descriptions portrays the average Celt as a long-haired, quick-tempered, flashy, drunken braggart who wore breeches in peacetime but who ran naked into battle with his body painted with blue dyes and his hair pulled back in spikes and whitened with

²Tacitus, Agricola, 2., quoted in Barry W. Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities in Britain, 2d ed. (London, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. v.

lime. Roman legionaries, who were a minimum of 5'7½" tall, dreaded battling with the Celts, whom they described as tall, big, and fearsome.³

While their writings are obviously colored by their feelings of the superiority of their own civilizations, both Greek and Roman historians were in awe of the courage and bellicosity of the Celts. Strabo wrote that

"The whole race...is madly fond of war..." and that "...at any time or place and on whatever pretext you stir them up you will have them ready to face danger, even if they have nothing on their side but their own strength and courage."⁴

Aristotle used the Celt as an example in a discussion of the nature of bravery.⁵ And Diodorus Siculus, writing in the first century B.C., describes them as "terrifying in appearance, with deep-sounding and very harsh voices."⁶

Yet there was another, more civilized side to the Celts. Diodorus Siculus described their apparent wittiness, their fondness of riddles and satire, and the elevated position in society enjoyed by bards.⁷ They had a very

³Miles, lecture on Iron Age settlements, 16 July 1981.

⁴Strabo, Geographica, quoted in Barry W. Cunliffe, The Celtic World (New York: McGraw Hill, c1969), p. 28.

⁵Aristotle, writing about 330 B.C., quoted in Cunliffe, The Celtic World, p. 29.

⁶Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca historica, quoted in Cunliffe, The Celtic World, p. 6.

⁷Ibid.

complex and mysterious religion headed by druid priests who committed vast amounts of material to memory and presided over human sacrifices on holy days. Their craftsmen, who were believed to have been specially blessed by the gods, created many beautiful and intricate works of art that are still impressive today.⁸ Avid hunters and very adequate farmers, the Celts left a lasting impact on European agriculture and husbandry. They were expert ironsmiths, and had developed plowshares, scythes, and a primitive reaper by the time the Romans reached Britain. Their literary legacy includes the Arthurian legends and Tristram and Isolde.⁹

The Iron Age began in Britain around the fifth century B.C.¹⁰ The rich, heavy soil of the southern lowlands proved to be quite suitable for agriculture, and there the Celts were able to create a solid economic system by the time of the Roman invasion.¹¹ In the first

⁸John Brailsford, Early Celtic Masterpieces from Britain in the British Museum (London: British Museum Publications Limited, 1975), p. 8.

⁹"Discovering a Celtic Tut," Time, 13 November 1978, p. 80.

¹⁰For a very interesting discussion of the possibility of the iron used having actually been a form of steel, see Robert Maddin, James D. Muhly, and Tamara S. Wheeler, "How the Iron Age Began," Scientific American, October 1977, pp. 122-131.

¹¹C. Warren Hollister, The Making of England, 55 B.C. to 1399 (Lexington, Mass., Toronto: D.C. Heath & Co., 1976), pp. 5-6.

century B.C. the inhabitants of Britain were exporting corn, cattle, skins, slaves, and hunting dogs.¹² This indicates a great degree of social order and a society with production and service industries.¹³

It was also in Britain that the druid priests were trained. Celtic scholars from Europe crossed the channel to obtain the finest schooling available.¹⁴ The henge monuments left over from the Mesolithic and Neolithic cultures probably served as perfect ceremonial areas for the druids.

The Celts in Britain, as elsewhere, were divided into tribes led by different rulers who often fought among themselves. Their power is attested to by the fact that several tribal leaders were coining their own money when Julius Caesar arrived in the first century B.C.¹⁵ However there was apparently a large degree of cooperation between the groups when the need arose. In his two expeditions to Britain Caesar was "thoroughly outgeneralled and outmaneuvered" by the island warriors.¹⁶

¹²Arthur William Whatmore, Insulae Britannicae (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1913), p. 67.

¹³Peter J. Reynolds, Iron-Age Farm: The Butser Experiment (London: British Museum Publications Limited, 1979), p. 9.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Hollister, Making of England, p. 6.

¹⁶Reynolds, Iron-Age Farm, p. 9.

However, within the next few decades internal bickering made the tribal connections weaker, and the Claudian invasion of A.D. 43 was successful. In the long run it was fairly easy for the Romans to govern southern Britain because of the high degree to which its economy and social order had advanced. The more primitive and barbaric tribes of the north were never truly Romanized.¹⁷

All of the preceding summary of the Celtic activity in southern Britain during the fifth century B.C. through the first century A.D. was taken from classical sources. Though this is a good general picture of the period, there are still many questions about life during the Iron Age that can only be answered after a thorough examination of archaeological evidence and the testing of several hypotheses based on this evidence.

The main types of archaeological features found in southern Britain relating to the Iron Age include settlements, houses, animal and vegetable remains, fortifications, and burials. I will discuss all except the latter; good burial excavations are scarce, and archaeologists do not yet fully understand the implications of the evidence found to date.

¹⁷Miles, lecture on Iron Age settlements, 16 July 1981.

III. SETTLEMENTS

Julius Caesar, in his description of his expeditions to Britain, reported that the southern part of the island was densely populated.¹⁸ Archaeology has confirmed this fact. Apparently Celtic settlements dotted the countryside during the Iron Age. They ranged in size from single family farmsteads to small hamlets or villages.¹⁹ Settlements were usually surrounded by ditches, gulleys, or banks with palisades or thickset hedges, depending on the specific needs of the community.

Two of the most famous ditched sites are Little Woodbury, Wiltshire, and Pimperne Down, Dorset. The ditch surrounding the Woodbury settlements was 11 feet wide and 7 feet deep. It surrounded an area of about four acres and had "antennae" ditches leading out to the surrounding fields. These ditches were probably used for driving animals between enclosures and pastures. At Pimperne there were three large ditches leading outwards from the settlements. Two of these ditches have been excavated. Both were at one time lined with upright timber posts. In the postholes of one ditch were human

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities, p. 163.

bones; in the other, animal bones. This suggests a ritual foundation offering to the gods, as well as the purpose of each ditch: one to serve as the normal entranceway for people, the other to serve as a link between pasture and animal enclosure. Entrances on the other side of the settlement led to arable land where the remains of a Celtic field system can still be seen, indicating the careful planning that went into the building of the community.²⁰

Many ditch-ringed communities were actually stockaded in their original forms. Little Woodbury is an example.²¹ Upright logs set closely together on a bank or in a gully provided protection against wild animals. Several palisaded enclosures later became hill-forts with rampart and ditch.²²

Closely related to regular ditch-ringed sites are the "banjo" enclosures. These settlements, usually one-half to one acre in area, were circled completely by V-shaped ditches 3 or 4 feet deep. A linear ditch led from the enclosure to the roadway, giving the ditches the shape of a banjo. Examples include Bramdean and

²⁰Derek William Harding, The Iron Age in Lowland Britain (London, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 23-25.

²¹Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities, p. 163.

²²Harding, Lowland Britain, p. 34.

Owslebury, both in Hampshire.²³

Some settlements, such as Beard Mill and Lynch Hill along the upper Thames, appear to have had no defensive enclosure. These "open settlements" might have been surrounded by thorn bushes or a free-standing fence made from interwoven hedges. Usually substantial amounts of their perimeter were bounded by streams, thickets, or marshes, making it unnecessary to construct an artificial barrier against the outside world.²⁴

Most of the settlement types mentioned are relatively similar. They are comprised of small house-enclosures associated with pastures for livestock and fields for growing grain. One notable exception to this general pattern occurs in Somersetshire at Glastonbury and Meare. In these lake-side villages huts were built atop mounds of clay, brushwood, and timber.²⁵

²³Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities, p. 165.

²⁴Derek William Harding, The Iron Age in the Upper Thames Basin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 14-15.

²⁵Idem, Lowland Britain, pp. 35-36.

IV. HOUSES

One classical reference from Pytheas tells us that Celtic houses were round with thatched roofs. Tacitus wrote that they were built of wood used in its natural form (Romans squared off building timbers).²⁶ Despite these valuable clues concerning the nature of Celtic homes, many archaeologists believed that Iron Age men had inhabited large pits in the ground which are numerous at any Iron Age archaeological site in Britain. As late as 1940 the distinguished archaeologist, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, defended this claim by offering as proof a continuous ring of mutton bones around the walls of a rock cut pit, which showed "how the eaters had squatted in the centre [sic] round the fire and had thrown the gnawn [sic] bones over their shoulders."²⁷ This theory died after excavations at Little Woodbury revealed the remains of a circular timber house nearly 15 meters in diameter. Since then many types of round dwellings have been unearthed, and three have been reconstructed from archaeological evidence.

Houses at Little Woodbury, Pimperne, and several other sites were constructed of two concentric circles of

²⁶Reynolds, Iron-Age Farm, pp. 30-31.

²⁷Harding, Lowland Britain, pp. 37-38.

posts, one the outer wall and the other an inner weight-bearing circle that supported the roof. A wide tunnel-like porch with two small doors on either side and another door located further inside afforded access to the interior. This made it possible for one to close the outer door before opening the inner door, thus avoiding creating a draft that might send sparks from the fire flying into the thatched roof.²⁸

The Pimperne house was reconstructed in 1976 at the Butser Ancient Farm demonstration area located near Queen Elizabeth Park in Petersfield, Hampshire. Using a photograph of the actual postholes, along with an analysis of the types of wood remains found in the holes, the Butser staff first built the outer wall of stakes, weaving hazel rods between them for added strength. The inner ring of freestanding posts was surmounted by a continuous lintel about 3 meters above the ground. Joinery was modelled on Neolithic and Bronze Age evidence of mortice and tenon joints, scarf joints, and wooden pegs. The construction of the inner ring was modelled after that of Stonehenge. Six large elm rafters were positioned around the house with the butt ends resting on the ground and the points joining in the center of the roof at a 45 degree angle, the perfect pitch for a thatched roof. An inner horizontal

²⁸Ibid., pp. 38-39.

wooden ring, positioned one-third down the slant length of the rafters, supported several smaller rafters. Hazel rods were interwoven into the rafters, thatch was anchored to them to form the roof, and the sides of the house were covered with daub made of clay, earth, straw, animal hair, and other vegetable matter.²⁹

The implications of the reconstruction are phenomenal. Only two persons were required to build the house. Over two hundred trees were used, fifty of them straight oak trees over forty years old. Large elms and ashes over nine meters in length were also required. This suggests that the Celts may have carefully managed and controlled the woodlands from generation to generation in an attempt to ensure adequate supplies of lumber for construction. It is likely that there was a professional thatcher in the community, for the roof thatching took six weeks to complete and required four tons of wheat straw, the product of at least 1.6 hectares of arable land. The builders were also probably professionals.³⁰

Although a bit of guesswork was certainly involved in the reconstruction of the Pimperne house, the volume and atmosphere of the house is likely to be correct. A modern house with every convenience could be fitted inside

²⁹Reynolds, Iron-Age Farm, pp. 34, 93-100.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 100-101.

the structure.³¹ The founder of the Butser Ancient Farm, Dr. Peter Reynolds, boasts that, with periodic rethatchings of the roof, this house will stand for 150 years before it becomes necessary to rebuild.³² This house, along with two other reconstructed Iron Age houses at the farm, has stood hurricane force winds and torrential rains.³³

Many smaller, less elaborate round houses also existed during the Iron Age. The larger houses such as the Pimperne house seem to have been constructed during periods of social and economic stability. This explains the availability of skilled labor and supplies for such an undertaking, as well as the fact that large houses were often rebuilt on the same site.³⁴

It is possible that rectangular houses could have existed in southern Britain during the Iron Age. However, since the walls of a rectangular house could have been built entirely above ground without leaving the telltale circle of postholes characteristic of the round houses, it archaeologists may have overlooked several sites of rectangular houses. The majority of Iron Age structures on the continent were rectangular and left very little evidence

³¹Ibid., p. 101.

³²Peter Reynolds, lecture on Butser Ancient Farm project, Butser Ancient Farm, Petersfield, Hampshire, 29 June 1981;

³³Reynolds, Iron-Age Farm, p. 27.

³⁴Harding, Lowland Britain, pp. 44-45.

of their presence. All that might be left could be a roughly rectangular, packed area containing pottery and bone fragments. Such features have been noted at several British excavations, but archaeologists have only recently begun exploring the possibility of rectangular housing.³⁵

³⁵Idem, Thames Basin, pp. 34-35.

V. CROPS, ANIMALS, AND CRAFTS

The farmstead was the basic economic unit of Celtic society. Agriculture, livestock raising, and craftwork were carried on efficiently and to a surprisingly advanced degree.

In the last thirty years, major advances have been made in paleobotany, the study of carbonized organic materials.³⁶ From carbonized seed found in storage pits, as well as from the impressions left by grain on fragments of pottery, experts can determine what types of crops were grown in the Iron Age.³⁷

The most common crops were spelt and emmer, two types of hearty wheats still used by health food industries that contain almost twice the protein of our modern bread wheats. Experiments at the Butser Ancient Farm have shown that these varieties can be grown successfully with very little trouble and amazing crop yields averaging 2 tons per hectare.³⁸ Other grains included barley, einkorn wheat, rye, and oats.³⁹

³⁶Reynolds, Iron-Age Farm, p. 57.

³⁷Harding, Thames Basin, p. 36.

³⁸Reynolds, Iron-Age Farm, pp. 58-64 passim.

³⁹Harding, Thames Basin, p. 36.

The ears of the grain were probably picked by hand⁴⁰ must before they ripened so that the straw fed to livestock would have a greater nutritional value.⁴¹ They were then dried, either on racks near hearths or over heated flint rocks. After the grain was dried and parched it could be threshed more easily.⁴²

In Germania, 16, 4, Tacitus tells of the German Celtic practice of excavating pits for storing produce.⁴³ This seemed unlikely to archaeologists at first because of Britain's moist climate, but experiments at Butser have shown that grain can be stored in clay-lined or basket-lined pits successfully for long periods of time as long as air-tightness is maintained, preventing the growth of bacteria. The loss in germination is less than in most modern storage systems. Even in an unlined pit the physical loss of grain is only two percent. Pits could be reused time and time again. The Only reasons for stored grain to go bad were bad sealing, rodent infestation, or excessive rainfall. But no matter what the reason for failure, the farmer probably abandoned the pit, filled it with rubble or refuse, and moved on to another pit in hopes of better luck.⁴⁴

⁴¹Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities, p. 184.

⁴²Harding, Lowland Britain, p. 77.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Reynolds, Iron-Age Farm, pp. 74-76.

Once a pit was unsealed the grain had to be used quickly, so it is probable that the grain was shared communally. Grain intended for short-term use was stored in large clay jars.⁴⁵ Before being used the grain was ground by hand with a large grinding stone.⁴⁶

Other Celtic crops were vegetables such as beans, lentils, and peas. Wild fruits, particularly apples, were probably gathered. Flax was grown in some areas for textile fibers and the oil-bearing seeds. Corn, hay, straw, and leaves provided winter fodder for the livestock.⁴⁷

One of the principle animals on the Celtic farmstead was the sheep. Sheep were used for their wool, which was woven into cloth, and for their manure, which was a necessity in fertilizing fields. The sheep also provided meat for the Celtic diet. This meat could be salted and stored in pits.⁴⁸ At first archaeologists were unsure whether the bones recovered from excavations belonged to sheep or goats. However, careful study has shown that the remains bear a remarkable resemblance to the skeletal structure of the Soay breed, which has survived in a practically pure strain for two thousand years on the St.

⁴⁵Harding, Lowland Britain, pp. 77-78.

⁴⁶Idem, Thames Basin, p. 40.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities, p. 184.

Kilda Islands off the northwest coast of Scotland. These sheep look like goats, run like deer, and jump over 1.8 meters from a standing start. Their wool is plucked rather than sheared, and they deliver larger lambs in proportion to body size than any other breed of sheep.⁴⁹

Cattle were also a mainstay for the Celtic farmer. Although they were more difficult to care for than the sheep, cattle provided more meat, in addition to milk and leather. They were also used in plowing.⁵⁰ The breed used by the Iron Age farmer was the Celtic shorthorn, a "small undeveloped rangy animal."⁵¹ It is now extinct. At the Butser Ancient Farm Dexter cattle are used. A direct descendent of the shorthorn, the Dexter can live off very poor pasture, gives enough milk to support a family, and has a good temperament. The Butser cattle have been trained to pull a primitive plow, and they have adjusted very well to life on the farmstead.⁵²

Other animals associated with Iron Age farming are oxen, goats, pigs, and small horses similar to the modern Exmoor pony. Dogs were used for hunting and probably were tame pets. Their prey included deer and

⁴⁹Reynolds, Iron-Age Farm, pp. 53-54.

⁵⁰Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities, p. 184.

⁵¹Reynolds, Iron-Age Farm, p. 49.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 49-50.

gamebirds.⁵³ Bees were kept for their wax and honey. Whey, curds, and cheese were probably produced from the milk of cows and goats.⁵⁴

Archaeologists assume that several domestic crafts were practiced by the Celts. Weaving, leather tanning, carpentry, basketry, ship-building, thatching, and hurdling are but a few for which there is evidence.⁵⁵ The Celts were also master brewers.⁵⁶ The production of pottery and metalwork were two major crafts that were elevated to the level of arts. However, I do not have the space or the expertise to go into a lengthy discussion of pottery typology or the multitude of different metal masterpieces produced by the British Celts.

⁵³Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities, p. 185.

⁵⁴Harding, Thames Basin, p. 43.

⁵⁵Idem, Lowland Britain, pp. 88-95 passim; Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities, p. 185.

⁵⁶Harding, Thames Basin, pp. 42-43.

VI. HILLFORTS AND OPPIDA

Tribal warfare and invasions from the continent made it necessary for the Celts to build hillforts. Ranging in size from small defended enclosures of 1 to 4 acres to massive structures covering 60 acres or more, hillforts dotted the countryside at strategic points.⁵⁷

There were two principle types of ramparts associated with these fortifications. The first was the dump-rampart. Rubble from a ditch ringing the settlement was heaped into a pile near the ditch, forming the rampart. The second was the box-rampart. In this case the rubble was piled between two vertical faces of stone or timber, forming a wall that gave the defenders a tactical advantage over the enemy. Other fortification features found at various forts include guard rooms, banked timber and metalled entrances, and timber-reinforced walls.⁵⁸

Local topography greatly influenced the site chosen for the hillfort. As the term "hillfort" implies, they were usually located at the highest point in a region. Also, each major fort was situated near both well-watered pastures for cattle and uplands suitable for sheep.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities, p. 268.

⁵⁸Harding, Lowland Britain, pp. 56-68 passim.

⁵⁹Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities, p. 276.

Inside the hillforts excavators have found evidence that they were densely populated. Postholes indicate the presence of rectangular, as well as the usual circular, housing. Religious shrines, later reused by the Romans, were centrally located. Regularly-cut stone weights found in the ruins, along with containers for salt, indicate that the forts were redistribution, if not commercial, centers. The full range of domestic activities, similar to those carried out on the farmstead, were practised at forts. There is also evidence for crafts such as iron and bronze smelting, pottery-making, and jewelry-making.⁶⁰

There is ample evidence that the Celts used chariots in war. Caesar wrote of their proficiency at charioteering in his account of his invasion of Britain. He marvelled at their ability to control the horses at full gallop down very steep slopes and to maneuver them quickly into action.⁶¹ This suggests that hillforts may have been chariot bases. With this machine of war the inhabitants of a fort could control the surrounding territory.

Assuming that the camp did serve as a military base, it seems likely that during actual combat the majority of its inhabitants were women, children, and old men. If the

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 273.

⁶¹Harding, Lowland Britain, p. 72.

outer defense force fell in battle, the fort itself was probably fairly easy game for its attackers.⁶²

During the first century B.C. in southeast Britain many hillforts were replaced by Oppida, cities situated near valleys and often at major river crossings. Some were associated with earthwork defenses. Others may have been totally open and undefended.⁶³ These oppida were probably centers for commerce and communication. Excavations at several oppida have yielded evidence of extensive trade with areas both within and outside of Britain.⁶⁴

⁶²Ibid., p. 72.

⁶³Cunliffe, Iron Age Communities, pp. 285-286.

⁶⁴Miles, lecture on Iron Age settlements, 16 July 1981.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this paper I have attempted to acquaint the reader with some of the things that archaeologists have discovered about life in the Iron Age in southern Britain. Again I must stress the fact that this is not a complete in-depth study of archaeological features associated with the island Celts. It is merely a scratch on the surface. Becoming familiar enough with more technical archaeological language and techniques to study the subject further requires commitment and persistence; field reports are neither easy nor fun to read. But the information gained from such an effort reveals a fascinating culture from a time when much important social change was taking place. To me it worth that extra effort to catch a glimpse of man's prehistory.

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