



## **A Research Strategy for the Later Iron Age and Roman periods in the New Forest National Park and surrounding areas.**

**The results of a seminar held at Lyndhurst, on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

### **1. Introduction**

#### ***Scope and area***

- 1.1 The area under consideration encompasses the whole of the New Forest National Park, including the Wiltshire portion, along with the entirety of the New Forest District Council area (see attached map). A seminar was held at the New Forest Community Centre on January 29, 2016, and a list of the participants and their affiliations is included at the end of this paper.
- 1.2 The following discussion themes were detailed in a briefing paper prepared by Cotswold Archaeology, and seminar contributions were made by:

Prof. Tony King, Prof. Michael Fulford, Peter Murphy, Jane Timby, Lawrence Shaw, Frank Green, Lawrence Shaw, James Brown, Richard Massey.

#### ***Discussion Themes***

- 1.3 The seminar was based around seven basic discussion themes which addressed different aspects of the Roman and later prehistoric archaeology of the New Forest:
  - 1 How distinctive is the New Forest in the Late Iron Age and Roman Periods ?
  - 2 How much do we know about Middle and Late Iron Age activity within the New Forest, and how much continuity appears to exist between the Iron Age and Roman periods ?
  - 3 How diverse was economic activity in the Roman period ?
  - 4 What is the potential for coastal, inter-tidal and marine evidence to contribute to understandings of the Late Iron Age and Roman periods

in the New Forest ?

- 5 What is the further research potential of the New Forest Pottery Industry ?
- 6 To what extent does the Roman material and settlement record in the New Forest contribute to understandings of social status and identity?
- 7 How much has our knowledge of the late Prehistoric and Roman periods in the New Forest changed in the light of recent work and the NFNP Lidar survey?

***What is the point of a Roman Research Strategy for the New Forest?***

1.4 The Late Iron Age and Roman Research Strategy for the New Forest will fulfil the following objectives:

- It will provide a timely and high-level review of the existing knowledge base and research priorities;
- It will provide a guide for the voluntary sector, and will enable active groups to channel their energies into useful fields of enquiry;
- It will assist commercial organisations in meeting the requirements of planning conditions and related work; and
- It will enable academic institutions to prioritise their own research programmes, and to gain necessary approvals for work within the Forest from land managers and Government agencies.

***Some general considerations in formulating a research strategy for the New Forest***

1.5 It is widely recognised that the archaeology of the New Forest has historically been under-researched. This partly reflects the fact that over half the area of the National Park, comprising the Crown Land of open commonage and inclosures, has not historically been subject to development. Consequently, the limited knowledge base derived from commercial development since 1990, i.e. from new housing, industrial development and infrastructure schemes, has been largely restricted to the enclosed landscapes and peripheral parts of the New Forest District Council area, thus resulting in significant geographical bias in existing data sets.

1.6 The archaeological character of the New Forest, and the distribution of sites within it, displays certain similarities with the adjacent Dorset Heathlands and, more distantly,

with the Weald of Kent and East Sussex. This is partly a reflection of comparable topography and geologies, although there is a notably sharp contrast in archaeological character between the New Forest and surrounding areas of chalk downland to the north and west.

- 1.7 Potentially important economic relationships may have existed between the coast and hinterland of the New Forest, which are likely to have been partly articulated through the access corridors provided by north/south river valleys. Consideration of coast-hinterland relationships should feature strongly in developing research strategies, as should possible maritime links with adjoining areas, including the Isle of Wight.
  
- 1.8 A number of common issues arose across the selected themes discussed during the course of the Research Strategy Seminar. These should assist in addressing a range of more detailed research questions within those themes, including:
  - the need to establish the range and distribution of drift geologies and soil types throughout the New Forest, through acquisition of the National Soil Data 1:250,000 Scale mapping;
  
  - the need to establish and understand any relationships between soil type, landscape character, and the distribution of known archaeological sites. The HCC Archaeological Atlas has indicated a number of important correlations between site types and landscape character, thus providing a useful basis for understanding overall distribution patterns and for the predictive modelling of different site types.
  
  - the acknowledged paucity of archaeological data for the Iron Age and Roman periods across the New Forest. Within the limited data sets available, it cannot be assumed that absence of evidence necessarily represents evidence of absence. Each intervention that produces late Iron Age or Roman material, or environmental evidence, has the potential to make a significant contribution to existing knowledge; and
  
  - the significant geographical bias in data collection across the New Forest, which results from the wide imbalance between the level of developer-funded investigation undertaken within the southern coastal

strip, and that within the heart of the Forest. Within the latter area, recent archaeological work has been largely restricted to restoration schemes and HLF-funded projects under the *Past of our Future* Landscape Partnership. Any investigative work within the Forest hinterland has otherwise been undertaken by supervised community groups, or through occasional academic research and student projects.

## **2. Discussion Theme 1: *How distinctive is the New Forest in the Late Iron Age and Roman Periods ?***

- 2.1 The evidential base for the New Forest during these periods is very slight, and offers no basis for making definitive statements. However, there are clear indications that the New Forest has a distinctive archaeological signature compared with that of surrounding areas. It compares in terms of historic landscape character with surrounding areas of East Dorset and the Hampshire Basin, and evidence from a number of complementary non-chalk locations adjacent to the Forest (i.e. Hengistbury), to say nothing of the numerous kiln sites, certainly indicates that this landscape was not empty in the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. Recent developer-funded investigation has provided increasing evidence of Late Iron Age and Roman settlement and economic specialism within the Hampshire Basin, and there is no reason why this emerging level of activity should not apply equally to parts of the New Forest.
- 2.2 There is a recognised need to identify any significant differences between the New Forest and adjoining areas of the Hampshire Basin/Dorset Heaths, in terms of the type and density/distribution of sites. Again, it is necessary to consider the extent to which our current level of understanding may simply reflect biases in the data. The New Forest appears to be regionally distinctive in terms of its apparent lack of: (a) settlement density, and (b), a developed settlement hierarchy (i.e. there are no known Villas). Distribution maps for these periods invariably depict a conspicuous gap in settlement distribution, which bears comparison with other, apparently sparsely settled areas of southern Britain, including Salisbury Plain and the Weald of Kent. The work of the Roman Rural Settlement Project appears to indicate that the New Forest did have a distinctive character in this respect. There is, however, a concentration of Roman material indicating settlement activity (possibly even a villa) around Stone Farm on the New Forest Coast associated with a road link to the sea

and the site of Wight. Increasingly there is evidence from Boldre of settlement activity, stray finds, a recent coin hoard and scatters of Roman pottery on field surfaces indicative of manuring.

- 2.3 There is an acknowledged need for more, and securely dated, palaeo-environmental evidence for these periods, i.e more evidence of woodland management and charcoal assemblages. There is also an urgent need to collate and assess existing palaeo-environmental and palaeo-ecological data sets for the Iron Age and Roman periods. This will be essential for any reconstruction of the *appearance* and landscape character of the New Forest in these periods, and for any understanding of patterns of land use, tree and vegetation cover and modes of agriculture. The assessment of geotechnical and borehole data, particularly in relation to estuarine or alluvial deposits, may provide important evidence of agricultural or land clearance horizons.
- 2.4 The use of the Forest as an extensive hunting preserve and Royal Forest in the later Saxon and medieval periods, should not colour our interpretations of later prehistoric and Roman land use. However, there is no reason why parts of the Forest could not also have provided prime hunting grounds in earlier periods, and this may have implications for understanding patterns of land-holding and activity centred on Villas within the periphery of the Forest.
- 2.5 Much of our knowledge of Roman-period activity within the New Forest centres on the pottery industry, and very little assessment has been made of other potential forms of economic activity. On the basis of available evidence, the pottery industry did not appear to relate to any discernible associated settlement hierarchy, and may therefore have been controlled from outside the Forest, possibly by those (i.e surrounding Villa owners) who may have regarded the pottery industry as a speculative investment. Such a model suggests no need for permanent settlement, and is likely to have included a range of ancillary industrial outputs, including timber products and charcoal, in addition to pottery. Exploitation of forest resources is therefore likely to have been both seasonal and specific in terms of produce and commodities, and may also have involved the semi-transhumant movement of populations and livestock.
- 2.6 The mapping of field systems from Lidar data may provide some indication of the extent of ancient cultivation within the New Forest, although there is currently very

little dating evidence for such systems, and there are a number of obvious methodological problems associated with dating. More Lidar evidence needs to be validated by walk-over survey, and further mapping of field systems undertaken.

- 3. Discussion Theme 2:** *How much do we know about Middle and Late Iron Age activity within the New Forest, and how much continuity appears to exist between these and the Roman period ?*
- 3.1 The evidence base for both Middle and Late Iron Age periods is very low, and does not permit any ready conclusions. The density of Iron Age defended enclosures and hillforts appears to be broadly comparable with that of surrounding parts of Hampshire, but these sites are otherwise poorly investigated and dated, and not all examples may be truly classified as hillforts. Available evidence suggests that few of these sites continued to be occupied into the Late Iron Age period.
- 3.2 The apparent paucity of evidence for the Iron Age period contrasts with that for the preceding Bronze Age, when the New Forest was associated with numerous barrow cemeteries, but apparently little evidence of contemporary settlement. This suggests an element of cultural control during this period, which may have been succeeded by the military control evident in the defended settlements of the Iron Age period, and by the legal/political control represented by Roman *civitas* boundaries.
- 3.3 The New Forest is situated within a hypothetical socio-political boundary zone, between the *civitates* of the Durotriges, to the west, and the Atrebates, to the east.
- 3.4 The exact boundary may be somewhere possibly in the Southampton area possibly as far west as the River Itchen. However, on the basis of limited coin evidence, the New Forest appears to have been predominantly under Durotrigan influence. This may reflect the relative proximity of the important centres of trade around Poole Harbour. In any case, boundaries between *civitates* are likely to have become formalised only in the Roman period, and may have been relatively ill-defined and fluid before that time.
- 3.5 The New Forest and Solent region clearly did not function as a central location in late prehistory, although the Solent was an important focus of trade and maritime communication. The apparent absence of villas within the New Forest strongly

suggests a lack of preceding late Iron Age settlement structure, with a notable absence of elite sites of this date.

- 3.6 Hengistbury, on the southern margins of Christchurch Harbour and the New Forest, was a significant centre of late Iron Age trade and industry, although little of this activity appears to have involved direct links with associated inland areas. The adjacent Avon Valley will have provided an important corridor of trade and access into the Wessex heartland. Sites comparable with Hengistbury could potentially exist within a number of suitable locations around the Solent, including a number along the New Forest shoreline. Sites such as Ampress at Lymington and at Lepe adjacent to the River Darkwater may have been associated with coastal trade.
- 3.7 Buckland Rings, close to the Lymington River, has been identified as a possible Late Iron Age entrepôt site. Excavation by Hawkes provided evidence of this date, although the function of the site has not otherwise been confirmed. Lidar survey indicates that no contextual earthwork features appear to surround Buckland Rings, suggesting that its primary focus may have been towards the tidal river. An apparently associated enclosed site at Ampress Park, situated directly on the river itself and originally investigated by Heywood Sumner, has since been destroyed by construction of an industrial park. Ampress Park and Buckland Rings may plausibly have functioned a local centre of trade and industry, and one possibly exploiting river access to the Forest hinterland.
- 3.8 Some recorded enclosure forms within, and around, the New Forest are of late prehistoric date, including that at Frankenbury, near Fordingbridge, and at Lower Exbury, a badly-eroded defensive site at the head of the Beaulieu River, which may originally have been a promontory fort.. There is an Iron Age focus at Efford earlier Bronze Age material and later Roman evidence. The Iron Age evidence of 11 round houses associated with salt production. Lidar survey has identified a number of earthwork enclosures which are potentially of Iron Age date, although these are difficult to date and characterise on the basis of morphology alone. An enclosure at Matley has been surveyed, and has a Bronze Age barrow located within it, although its date remains unknown. There are a number of earthwork enclosures for which there is very little dating evidence, but which are potentially of Iron Age date.

Potential for examination of some of these sites exists through the New Forest National Park's *Our Past our Future* Landscape Partnership Scheme.

- 3.9 The current evidence for salterns around the New Forest coast appears to be largely of medieval date, and there is no suggestion that there was any specifically Iron Age focus for this industry. It is also possible that medieval and later saltern activity may have obscured some earlier salt-working sites. Equally, historical changes in the New Forest shoreline may have left some saltern sites of this period isolated within inland locations, whereas others may have been lost to coastal erosion.
- 3.10 As noted above, the New Forest occupies a theoretical "tribal" boundary zone, between the Durotriges to the west and the Atrebates to the east. This invites speculation as to whether the Forest functioned as buffer-zone or as a contact point in the pre-conquest period ? In this context, the proximity of the New Forest to Hengistbury, and the area of intense Late Iron Age activity around Poole Harbour, may be significant, although there appears to be very little evidence for the economic or social influence of these areas within the Forest itself. Hengistbury appears to have been a relatively self-contained entity, and to have had relatively little immediate relationship with its hinterland.
- 3.11 There is a pressing need to obtain more secure dating evidence for Iron Age activity within the New Forest, and for sites to be better characterised. In 2015, Prof. Tony King, with New Forest HAG, investigated a site at Ashley Walk, which contained a dense deposit of charcoal. Radiocarbon dating has established a Late Iron Age /Roman date for this deposit, although other finds included Neolithic and Bronze Age flint-work. The Ashley Walk site is clearly indicative of industrial activity of late Iron Age and/or Roman date, but is otherwise difficult to characterise.

#### **4. Discussion Theme 3: *How diverse was economic activity on the Roman period?***

- 4.1 It is possible that the pottery industries stand proxy for other forms of economic activity which have left little archaeologically visible evidence. Such is likely to be the case for woodland-based industries based on dressed timber and timber products, and the production of charcoal. The Late Iron Age/Roman radiocarbon date obtained from the charcoal deposit excavated at Ashley Walk has been cited above. This prompts speculation that parts of the New Forest were being actively managed for



charcoal production at this time, and, if so, begs questions regarding scales of production and the purposes for which charcoal was being produced i.e. was it used locally, or transported to urban centres?

- 4.2 There is a need to estimate the percentage of woodland cover in the late prehistoric and Roman periods, and to assess what forest resources might have been respectively available for charcoal/timber production, grazing and other activities. A priority of future research must be the acquisition and correlation of environmental data, and in particular the correlation of existing available palynology data sets and the increased use of scientific dating. This will help to provide estimates of the extent and character of woodland cover in the Iron Age and Roman periods, and inform models of the carrying capacity of the New Forest at this time. Evidence for woodland management may be provided by well-dated charcoal assemblages, and from dateable charcoal-bearing horizons within borehole sequences, particularly those from the Beaulieu and Lymington rivers, and potentially from recent coring in Southampton Water.
- 4.3 In conjunction with the above, it will also be important to assess levels of woodland cover in earlier prehistory, and to gain a clearer understanding of longer-term patterns of landscape change. Limited available evidence suggests that areas of lowland forest may not have been so dense in the Neolithic and early Bronze Age periods, and that there may consequently have been wider areas of open landscape. This may suggest the role of large herbivores in regulating forest ecologies, and the use of grazing regimes to maintain forest pastures, although the prognosis for recovering faunal assemblages from excavated sites within the New Forest is poor.
- 4.4 Comparable environments within the Weald of Kent and the Hampshire Basin, not least the availability of low-grade ores in tertiary sands and gravels, suggest some potential for evidence of iron-working within the New Forest. It is tempting to link any evidence for charcoal production with iron-working, although there is no evidence of a developed iron industry within the Forest, and any volume production of charcoal could conceivably have been transported to iron-working sites elsewhere.
- 4.5 Evidence of salt production, including briquetage, has been recovered from a landfill site at Efford, Lymington, and from Pennington, at a site c. 500 metres from the modern coast. Much evidence of salt production dates from the early Iron Age and medieval periods, although it is thought that any lack of evidence for intervening

periods may simply reflect a lack of research and the serendipitous nature of archaeology undertaken through the planning process. Salt production is likely to have been a seasonal activity, and invites the question of whether this was intended for local consumption, or for trade. If the latter, was it moved overland, or by sea, and might other products/commodities (i.e. pottery containers) have been transported along with salt?

- 4.6 Lidar survey has revealed evidence of discrete field systems of potentially Late Iron Age or Roman date. A field system at New Copse, near Brockenhurst, may be investigated by the New Forest HAG in 2016. Previous topographical survey of surviving earthworks on this site has recorded Roman pottery from tree-throws. This is a low-lying site, which is situated close to a minor tributary of the Lymington River, and may therefore be representative of a discriminating pattern of exploitation of limited available soils within the Forest. There is a pressing need for the further collection and correlation of environmental data from within the Forest to understand the extent and character of any arable cultivation at this time, and for the closer dating of field systems. It is possible that such systems had already been abandoned by the Roman period or, conversely, that they represent an episode of Roman-period agricultural intensification and an opportunistic use of whatever suitable land was available. Increasingly, there is evidence of Roman manuring of fields in the Boldre and Lymington areas, and on the better soil types within the coastal margin of the Forest. There is also emerging evidence that some iron-pan deposits post-date Iron Age and Roman settlement activity. The assessment of carbonised plant material from investigated occupation sites may provide some indication of whether these sites were producers or consumers at this time (i.e. importing staple foods from outside the areas of the 'open forest'). The need to include the environmental and scientific analysis of securely-dated deposits will therefore be fundamental to future investigative work. This indicates the need for closer collaboration with academic departments within the region, including those at Bournemouth, Southampton, Winchester, Portsmouth and Reading Universities, to ensure that there is a continuing awareness of research potential within the New Forest, and of the scope for undergraduate and postgraduate dissertation work.
- 4.7 Current understandings of the New Forest landscape relate to vegetation cover, biodiversity and geology, and indicate that much of this 'open forest' landscape is wholly unsuited to arable cultivation unless heavily manured or, in some cases, effectively drained and layers of iron and manganese pan broken up that otherwise

inhibit drainage of surface water. This prompts speculation regarding the character of the primary landscape and degrees of ancient afforestation. (Hampshire County Council will be undertaking a review of available environmental and palaeo-ecological data contained in the HER). It is possible that the character of the modern forest landscape reflects longer-term processes of soil impoverishment since prehistory, resulting, like many moorland areas, in infertile, acidic soils. It is also probable that any prehistoric phases of land clearance will have resulted in the progressive degradation of a soil resource which was in any case of inherently low agricultural potential. Animal bone assemblages within the New Forest are rarely preserved, due to prevailing acidic soil conditions, although it is possible that assemblages from villa sites within surrounding chalkland areas have some potential for interpreting aspects of land use within the Forest, including hunting. The assemblage from Rockbourne, which could have been of particular value in this respect, is thought to have been discarded. The assessment of Portable Antiquities Scheme data could also provide evidence of the metal accoutrements of hunting.

4.8 Further knowledge of field systems and land use during the Iron Age and Roman periods will result from continuing walk-over surveys of features identified by the Lidar survey. Survey of the Crown Land areas will be completed within five years, and much of the inclosed woodland area will be surveyed through the HLF-funded New Forest Landscape Scheme.

**5. Discussion Theme 4: *What is the potential for coastal, inter-tidal and marine evidence to contribute to understandings of the Late Iron Age and Roman Periods in the New Forest ?***

5.1 The New Forest Rapid Coastal Zone Archaeological Assessment was completed by Wessex Archaeology for the New Forest National Park, and this work is being built on through current project work. Where sites are being actively eroded by wave and storm action, the National Park is working with colleagues from the MOLA CITIZAN coastal archaeology project to retrieve and record data.

5.2 A principal issue to be considered in this context is that, simply because a site is located in a coastal location, it may not necessarily have had any primary economic interest in the coast, as such. This prompts the question of whether different parts of the Forest had different foci at this time – i.e were the southern coastal strip and river valleys more clearly focussed towards the south coast and the Solent, or did they retain relationships with inland, tributary areas of the Forest ? The question of

economic relationships between the coastal strip and hinterland areas suggests the potential importance of river valleys in facilitating contact and movement between the two zones.

- 5.3 It will be important to consider issues of coastal deposition and erosion along the New Forest shoreline; how much of the maritime archaeology of this period has been obscured or lost, and can we construct predictive models for the location and survival of coastal sites of this period? The site at Stone Point, Lepe, demonstrates that parts of the New Forest have an eroding coastline, with the likelihood that port infrastructures and associated evidence have been lost. Conversely, other parts of the New Forest coastline are known to have been historically subject to reclamation, particularly in association with the creation of medieval and post-medieval salterns. Consequently, the Roman coastline has receded inland in some locations, and is buried beneath later deposits elsewhere.
- 5.4 There are a number of potential ports or trading sites along the New Forest coast, although, with the possible exceptions of Lower Exbury and Stone Point, Lepe, there is currently no evidence for their use in the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. Evidence for ports generally remains elusive and speculative. The known Iron Age site at Lower Exbury, near the Exbury/Beaulieu River, is a low-lying site, where no systematic investigation has taken place. However, it is intended that this site will be investigated through the CITiZAN initiative, and the National Park's HLF-funded *Our Past Our Future* Landscape Project. It is suggested that a predictive approach to research, based on the topography and aspect of potential port sites, could be productive. Evidence for ports may be present in Keyhaven, and comparable small harbour locations, but likely to be obscured beneath modern developments.
- 5.5 There is important evidence of cross-Solent traffic in the Roman period, with a wide distribution of New Forest pottery recorded across the Isle of Wight. It is possible that pottery will be representative of wider patterns of trading activity in this case, and that considerable potential exists for researching the distribution patterns of other tradable commodities, both on the island itself and along the south coast. There are a number of interesting possible geographical linkages with the New Forest – particularly in the case of the Roman road towards Lepe, which lies directly across the Solent from the eroded Roman site at Gurnard, and suggests a direct maritime connection.

- 5.6 While inter-tidal survey on the Isle of Wight (i.e the Wootton-Quarr survey) has highlighted the potential for extending our knowledge base of late prehistoric/Roman maritime activity, comparable work on the New Forest coast (RCZA) has so far added relatively little information. This may reflect the extent of post-medieval industrial activity, including salterns, brick and ironworks, together with the boat building, agricultural and other improvement works undertaken by the large coastal estates in the 18th century, and later.
- 5.7 There is no confirmed evidence within the Solent of wreck sites of these periods. The few Roman examples recorded nationally are from estuarine deposits, including the River Thames at London, and timber ship structures would not otherwise be expected to survive in offshore conditions. Enhanced levels of preservation might therefore be expected within inter-tidal muds, including those within tidal rivers and estuaries such as the Lymington and Beaulieu Rivers. Repeat inspections should be carried out within such locations, particularly after storm events. There is a corresponding need for the co-ordination, and more extensive use, of maritime sonar data to identify possible wreck sites and evidence of trading activity. Here it may be possible to re-visit the methodologies used by David Tomalin to assess 17th-century evidence around the Isle of Wight.
- 5.8 Inorganic evidence of cargoes would be far more likely to survive in offshore conditions than timbers, and there is a need to re-assess the data obtained from dredging and fishing activities, which could be representative of lost cargoes or anchorage scatters. There is therefore an acknowledged need to co-ordinate data collection from such sources, and to maximise research potential. Recent interest in offshore renewable energy schemes involving tidal power or wind farms, including the neighbouring Navitus Bay scheme, will have resulted in the collection and assessment of considerable bodies of maritime data, and some of this will be of direct relevance to Roman and Late Iron Age maritime activity relating to the New Forest and the Solent area generally.
- 5.9 Future research should make more effective use of developer-funded opportunities, particularly any proposals relating to inshore and inter-tidal areas, such as Marinas, which will have particularly high potential for the survival of remains of this type. Future developer-funded investigations will also have considerable potential for identifying Roman-period sites within those onshore areas of the coastal strip, where there exists a body of recorded evidence of Iron Age and Roman settlement and

industrial activity, including kiln sites. A number of recent applications for solar farms within this area have been the subject of archaeological evaluation.

## **6. Discussion Theme 5: The New Forest Pottery Industry**

*What is the further research potential of the New Forest pottery industry ?*

- 6.1 There is a considerable body of unpublished work relating to the New Forest pottery industry which needs to be reviewed and, where appropriate, published. This includes the work of the late Vivienne Swan, currently being prepared by Wessex Archaeology. More recent developer-funded work needs to be published. This indicates a need, following Fulford's original corpus of 1975, for an updated assessment of the industry, including a characterisation of the earliest pottery record.
- 6.2 Speculation on the range of other goods and commodities which could have been traded alongside New Forest pottery has been noted above. To date, there is no evidence to suggest the existence of a contemporary tile industry which could have exploited convenient sources of clay and timber fuel, and existed in conjunction with pottery production. It is possible that the high cost of transport of low-value tile to urban centres will have rendered such an industry uneconomic, although the potential for hitherto undiscovered tile kilns should not be discounted.
- 6.3 The full geographical extent of the NF pottery industry, and the levels of specialism within it, remains imperfectly understood. Pottery is a highly visible aspect of the Roman economy of the New Forest, and therefore contrasts with those other economic activities which are likely to be very much less so. There is a need to understand the relative chronologies between different pottery production centres, and the relationships between them. Did the industry arise from a pattern of single ownership, or from numerous competing rival centres?
- 6.4 Investigative work to date has focussed almost exclusively on the kilns themselves, and there remains very little information regarding their context i.e. the associated waster dumps, clay pits, route-ways, ancillary buildings, settlements etc. Lidar data suggest that there now exists considerable potential for mapping and understanding contextual features around a number of known kiln sites. It is important to understand how the kiln sites relate to the New Forest landscape, and to related settlements and sources of raw materials.

- 6.5 Much more needs to be known about the early history and distribution of the New Forest pottery output, and this indicates the need for an assessment and re-assessment of assemblages from sites across southern Britain. Given the known distribution-range of New Forest products, an important research objective will be to define the point at which the products of the New Forest pottery industry began to supply markets beyond the confines of the Forest itself. The best reference collections are held at the British Museum, Winchester and Salisbury Museums and the Hampshire Heritage Trust collection, Chilcomb House, Winchester.
- 6.6 An important aspect of research interest will concern the relationship between respective New Forest coarseware and fineware outputs, and the ways in which these outputs reflect different production specialisms and marketing strategies beyond the New Forest. Was the distribution range of finewares and coarsewares complementary, or did coarsewares have a more localised range ?
- 6.7 What were the determinants of the New Forest pottery distribution within southern Britain, and to what extent was this distribution reliant on particular routes and agencies? How far did roads within the Forest facilitate access to urban markets, and what part may have been played by river and sea transport?
- 6.8 There is a need for targeted geophysical survey on, and around, kiln sites, to identify associated settlements, and any features related to pottery production. Kilns themselves are very rarely found as isolated structures. Certainly the kiln structures located at Stone Farm, Lepe, appear to be associated with domestic activity, and are of a completely different character to those recorded from within the Crownland areas of the New Forest.

## **7. Discussion Theme 6 – Material Culture and Identity**

- 7.1 Our knowledge base relating to material culture is unsatisfactorily sparse, and shows a heavy bias towards coin and pottery evidence, with few other classes of material culture recorded. Far too few sites have been investigated on anything approaching a sufficient scale for any firm conclusions to be reached.
- 7.2 In contrast with surrounding areas, the New Forest data provide no indication of differential settlement status or hierarchy, although evidence from most of the Roman

settlement sites investigated suggests some degree of continuity from the Late Iron Age.

- 7.3 Five late Roman coin hoards have been recorded from the New Forest, although there is otherwise no evidence of anything that could be interpreted as a votive deposit. Similarly, no confirmed religious or ritual sites are known from within the New Forest. A rectangular ditched enclosure, strongly suggesting a Roman *temenos*, overlooking the sea at Park Farm, Beaulieu, and excavated by NFNPA, failed to produce any evidence which allowed it to be dated or characterised.
- 7.4 The available evidence suggests little change in material culture and settlement type throughout the Roman period. Settlement and material culture throughout the Forest at this time are identified as being of generic character, and typical of low-status rural sites.
- 7.5 Evidence of regional and continental imports within the New Forest is relatively low, suggesting limited economic linkage with areas outside the Forest, although there is also possible evidence for cross-channel trade, including from Brittany and Normandy, which may emphasise the influence of maritime links.
- 7.6 There is a growing body of Portable Antiquities Scheme data from the New Forest, which is in need of assessment. Given that metal detecting is contrary to the Crownland Bylaws, little, if any, finds from nearly half the National Park area are not reported, even though illicit detector activity takes place.

## **8. Discussion Theme 7 - Outcomes from NFNP Lidar Survey**

- 8.1 Field systems comprise a major component of Lidar data for this period. Where possible, these are plotted through the current HLS (Higher Level Stewardship scheme) -funded work on the Crownland, but they require to be securely dated.
- 8.2 A number of previously-known kiln sites have been revealed in better detail by Lidar survey, including evidence of waster-dumps, clay pits etc. These sites are a priority for walk-over surveys within the HLS-funded scheme, and more detailed topographic survey, and characterisation needs to be undertaken.



- 8.3 Lidar may provide further evidence of Roman roads within the New Forest, together with other possible later prehistoric/Roman routes, including track-ways, hollow ways etc. It may prove difficult to date these, and distinguish them from later route-ways and desire lines.
- 8.4 Lidar data may permit some modelling of land-use during this period, including possible evidence for managed woodland and open heath. Where possible, assumed patterns of land use should be tested by evidence from soil profiles and environmental data from borehole sampling.

## **9. Overall Research Aims**

- 9.1 It is recognised that the existing database is weak, and consequently there is a clearly-recognised need to enhance current databases through a review of the archaeological evidence, and for the re-assessment of existing studies and data sets (including those relating to the New Forest pottery industry, and environmental data) in the light of more recent work.
- 9.2 Further to the above, there is an identified need for a comprehensive assessment of the archaeological resource for this period. As a possible stand-alone project, this would require considerable planning and would have important funding implications.
- 9.3 Improved circulation and availability of reports will be needed in the future, a case in point being the recent publication on the New Forest History and Archaeology Group survey of Beaulieu Heath, which was only circulated within select NFHAG members. A perennial problem has been access to the database compiled by the New Forest section of the Hampshire Field Club, which has not been digitised, and has not otherwise been made available for archaeological research. Wherever possible, currently inaccessible databases held by volunteer archaeology groups within New Forest should be brought into the public realm and integrated with established databases and HER data.
- 9.4 There is a need to optimise the quantity and range of data accruing from developer-funded investigations, by encouraging developers and contracting organisations to adopt approaches to excavation and sampling which reflect the research priorities

expressed within this emerging research strategy. As indicated above, much future development work is likely to take place within locations peripheral to the National Park area, with little taking place within central parts of the Forest. The provision of informative mapping, comparable with the 'alert maps' provided by Hampshire County Council, would be great assistance to curators and developers alike, and could provide early predictions of archaeological potential together with any associated research priorities.

- 9.5 There is a need to set up a "finds inventory" for NF, possibly as a volunteer project, to inform a review of the material record of the Forest for these periods.
- 9.6 There is a need to maintain good working relationships with relevant University departments, and to encourage research interest within the New Forest. Much useful research can be undertaken at postgraduate level, and it should be possible to provide universities with a "dissertations list", to encourage Masters' and PhD research projects which are in accordance with the research strategy for these periods.
- 9.7 Within the current funding climate, co-ordinated and well-organised volunteer/community projects will offer the most cost-effective way of building on current databases, and of maximising the results of the Lidar survey. Much of this work is likely to include targeted survey and small-scale investigation. The HLF-funded New Forest Landscape Scheme has funding in place for the next four years, and offers considerable further potential for projects involving community and volunteer work. It is likely that HLF-funded work will have more potential for data collection and dissemination than previous, conservation-based HLS projects.
- 9.8 A series of digital initiatives, such as an E-Museum, will encourage further public engagement with NF archaeology, and help create a well-informed and motivated volunteer base.

## **10. Seminar Participants**

Neil Holbrook	Chief Executive, Cotswold Archaeology
Richard Massey	Senior Heritage Consultant, Cotswold Archaeology
David Hopkins	Principal archaeologist, Hampshire County Council

Katie Hinds	Portable Antiquities Scheme FLO for Hampshire
James Brown	New Forest National Park Authority
Lawrence Shaw	New Forest National Park Authority
Dan Miles	Historic England, Research Strategies and Agendas
Prof. Tony King	Winchester University
Prof. Michael Fulford	Reading University
Rachel Seager Smith	Wessex Archaeology
Peter Murphy	Formerly English Heritage/Historic England
Tim Yarnell	Forestry Commission
Jane Timby	Freelance Pottery specialist and Reading University

Apologies were received from Tracy Matthews, Winchester City Council; Jane Corcoran, Historic England; Mark Dunkley, Historic England; Andy Russel, Southampton City Council, and Martyn Allen, Reading University.

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