

HOUGHTON DOWN (Hampshire)

SU 341 361

Excavations at Houghton Down commenced in 1994 as part of the Danebury Environs Programme. The aim for the archaeological investigation was to investigate the ‘continuity and discontinuity’ of the site during the Iron Age-Roman transition (Cunliffe and Poole 2000b, 11). Houghton Down lies on Chatgrove Hill that overlooks the valley of the River Test in Stockbridge Hampshire (Cunliffe and Poole 2000b, 131). Occupation at the site began in the Early Iron Age (about 800 BC) to well into the Roman period, with a brief hiatus between 270 BC to 100 BC (Cunliffe and Poole 2000b, 40). The settlement’s layout consists of a large single-ditch enclosure and the excavated material indicates the prehistoric inhabitants sustained themselves on a mixed farming regime, with a high reliance on spelt wheat (Cunliffe and Poole 2000b, 156), cattle and sheep (Hamilton 2000b, 145). The interior of the enclosure reveals an interesting spatial organisation pattern with curvilinear structures favouring the eastern area, and the four-post structures (granaries) residing in towards the west (Cunliffe and Poole 2000b, 155). There were four occurrences of disarticulated remains, each within a different pit context from Houghton Down. One deposit, a skull fragment (X(2)) from pit P349, is of considerable interest for it has evidence of post-mortem fragmentation prior to deposition (Hooper 2000b, 14:E4 [microfiche]). Bari Hooper (2000b) prepared the osteological report and conducted the skeletal analysis.