

BROOM (Bedfordshire)

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The archaeological site at Broom, in Bedfordshire, lies on the Lower Greensand within the Ivel and Ouse Valley (Cooper and Edmonds 2007, 9, 11). Investigations and excavations commenced at Broom by Cambridge Archaeological Unit as part of an academic study into the area to explore the character of occupation over time (Cooper and Edmonds 2007, 11). Investigations covered up to 240 ha from a number of areas: Hill Lane, King's Hill, Toll House, Toll House E, Moat Field South, Moat Field, Gypsy Lane, Brookland Farm, Ash Convent and Ash Convent South (Cooper and Edmonds 2007, 18-34). Human activity from these areas spans from the Mesolithic into the Medieval period (Cooper and Edmonds 2007). Of the aforementioned areas, Gypsy Lane, Brookland Farm, Toll House and Hill Lane yielded skeletal deposits from the Late Bronze Age to the Middle Iron Age. Toll House dates to the Late Bronze Age and excavations uncovered two cremation deposits. One of the cremation deposits was set in a pit and the other in a possible posthole (Cooper and Edmonds 2007, 107, 111). The posthole containing the one of the cremations was part of an entrance into a roundhouse (Rh/Str 2) and '...likely it was incorporated into the void created by the decaying post following the occupation of the roundhouse' (Cooper and Edmonds 2007, 108). At Brookland Farms, excavations unearthed Late Bronze Age pits holding cremated human bone (Cooper and Edmonds 2007, 92). Furthermore, settlement activity during the Early and Middle Iron Age is evident, but sporadic, at Gypsy Lane (Cooper and Edmonds 2007, 149). Large settlement enclosures were constructed at Gypsy Lane in the Early Iron Age with occupation evidence lasting into the Middle Iron Age (Cooper and Edmonds 2007, 149). Excavations in this area unearthed a single disarticulated bone deposit within a pit (F710) just outside one of the enclosures (Enclosure 2) (Cooper and Edmonds 2007, 165). Lastly, evidence of both settlement and funerary activity is present at Hill Lane. At this area, there is a number of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age cremation deposits within the upper fill of an earlier Bronze Age ring ditch as well as an inhumation in the centre of the ring ditch (Cooper and Edmonds 2007, 122; Dodwell 2007b, 275). Natasha Dodwell conducted the osteological analysis (2007b).