

HIGH BARNS ROAD (SITE 2) (Bedfordshire)

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Between 2004 and 2005, Oxford Archaeology carried out excavations at nine sites in Bedfordshire in advance of construction of the Great Barford Bypass (Timby 2007, 1). The areas investigated lie along the slopes of the left bank of the River Great Ouse that are on the Oxford Clay formation and overlies glacially derived drift geology (Timby 2007, 1). One of the sites in this investigation, High Barns Road (Site 2), produced evidence of human activity spanning from the early Neolithic into the Late Iron Age (Webley 2007b, 11). There is limited evidence in the Late Bronze Age consisting mainly of a few pits and a single cremation burial (Webley 2007b, 11). Furthermore, excavations at High Barns Road covered 18405.5 square metres that revealed an extensive settlement complex that began in the Early Iron Age (Webley 2007c, 51). Inhabitants at High Barns Road practiced mainly animal husbandry with some agriculture. Interestingly, the site has two distinct areas of activity (Webley 2007c, 56). The northern area comprises of a probable residential and funerary area while the southern portion of the site has evidence of an industrial area (Webley 2007c, 56). In the northern area, Enclosure 21 (an enclosure just to the east of the domestic area) yielded a complicated deposit of human remains within its western ditch (Webley 2007c, 56). All of the human remains were deposited in the ditch at the same time; however, a radiocarbon date from one of the cranial fragments in the ditch returned an earlier date than the rest of the skeletal material (Webley 2007b, 19). 'This suggests that the cranium had been curated for a significant period prior to deposition' (Webley 2007b, 19). During the Late Iron Age, the settlement organisation switched and the domestic area moved to the southern area of the site (Webley 2007b, 24). The northern area of High Barns Road appears to have become a mortuary area based on the discovery of two inhumations uncovered there (Webley 2007c, 56). Jonny Geber (2007) conducted the osteological analysis for the site.