Summary. It has recently been demonstrated that a number of roundhouses of the early first millennium BC in southern England show a concentration of finds in the southern half of the building. It has thus been argued that this area was used for domestic activities such as food preparation, an idea which has formed the basis for discussion of later prehistoric ‘cosmologies’. However, reconsideration of the evidence suggests that this finds patterning does not relate to the everyday use of the buildings, being more likely to derive from a particular set of house abandonment practices. Furthermore, evidence can be identified for the location of domestic activities within contemporary roundhouses that appears to contradict the established model.

INTRODUCTION

Substantial timber-built roundhouses are a characteristic feature of the early first millennium BC in southern England. It has recently been noted that several of these houses show a marked concentration of artefacts in their right-hand side, viewed when facing out of the building (normally the southern side, as most roundhouses face east or south-east). As a result, it has been argued that this area of the house was used for everyday activities such as food preparation. This has formed the basis of a general model for domestic space in Iron Age Britain which has gained wide acceptance in recent years. Critical examination of the theory has been limited, however. This paper reassesses the evidence from the houses in question, and puts forward an alternative interpretation of the manner in which these buildings were used and subsequently abandoned.

PREVIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

Evidence for a recurring pattern in artefact distributions within Early Iron Age roundhouses first came to light in the mid-1990s, with the publication of structures from Longbridge Deverill Cow Down, Wiltshire (Chadwick Hawkes 1994), and Dunston Park, Thatcham, Berkshire (Fitzpatrick 1994; Fitzpatrick et al. 1995). The published house at Longbridge Deverill (House 3) had burnt down, and although no trace of the original floor surface survived, the distribution of artefacts from the post-holes and other ‘cut’ features was
striking. A significant concentration of burnt pottery and other finds was present in the post-holes of the entrance porch area and the right (southern) half of the building, while the left half was almost devoid of finds (Fig. 2). This was taken to imply that ‘the south and west sides, and of course the porch of the house, were the areas of major domestic activity, whereas the northern and eastern side of the house interior was given over to other activities, such as sleeping’ (Chadwick Hawkes 1994, 67).

A very similar distribution of finds could also be seen in the house from Dunston Park (Fig. 3). Fitzpatrick et al. recognized that interpretation of this patterning may not be straightforward, as ‘the disposal of material when a house was abandoned may . . . have been different from when it was in use’ (1995, 87). However, these caveats are set aside in the final analysis, where ‘for the purposes of discussion the distribution of finds is taken . . . to relate to the ways in which the house was used’ (ibid., 87). Again, the concentration of finds in the right-side and porch post-holes was taken to reflect the use of these areas for ‘daytime activities’ such as food preparation, while the general absence of finds from the left side was thought to indicate use as a sleeping area. There was also a slight suggestion that decorated pottery was restricted to the front part of the right side, hinting that the serving and consumption of food occurred in that area. The similarity with Longbridge Deverill Cow Down was noted, and it was also observed that another substantial Early Iron Age roundhouse – from Pimperne, Dorset – again shows a concentration of finds in the right side (Harding et al. 1993). Fitzpatrick goes on to argue that the internal arrangement of this group of Early Iron Age roundhouses incorporated cosmological referents. The prevailing entrance orientation towards the east or south-east – and thus towards sunrise – helped to define the left/right distinction, which was not only a spatial division but a temporal one. The association of the right side with daytime activities and the left side with night mirrored the clockwise progression of the sun (Fig. 1; Fitzpatrick 1994; 1997).

While Fitzpatrick’s model specifically focuses on Early Iron Age sites in Wessex and the Thames Valley, the argument has been broadened in scope by Mike Parker Pearson and
colleagues (Giles and Parker Pearson 1999; Parker Pearson 1999; Parker Pearson and Sharples 1999), who note that the finds distributions at Dunston Park and Longbridge Deverill are mirrored in a further large Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age roundhouse from Bancroft, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 4; Williams and Zeepvat 1994). More strikingly, a parallel is drawn...
Figure 3
Figure 4
between these southern English roundhouses and the wheelhouses of northern and western Scotland (a form of substantial stone-built roundhouse dating to the early centuries AD), some of which have preserved floor deposits. These often seem to show a concentration of finds on the right side of the floor relating to corn grinding, weaving, potting and cooking, while the left side is cleaner. Again, it is argued that there was a functional division of space within the house between daytime activities and sleeping, a division which mirrored the daily cycle of the sun. The perceived similarity in artefact distributions between wheelhouses and Early Iron Age roundhouses from southern England seems to be taken to imply that a general model for the use of domestic space has been discovered, which can be applied anywhere in Iron Age Britain. Thus in a discussion of Iron Age East Yorkshire, the same pattern is taken to apply, despite the fact that the nearest examples of this pattern come from sites around 200 km away: ‘The house plans [from East Yorkshire] conform in shape and orientation to those from elsewhere yet the absence of preserved house floor surfaces permits us only to surmise that they followed the sunwise path’ (Parker Pearson 1999, 51). Parker Pearson goes on to argue that the roundhouse acted as a microcosm. Its orientation and internal arrangement were expressions of wider traditions – also seen in the overall ordering of settlements and the treatment of the dead – in which the east–west axis and the sunwise path of movement were key to understanding the world and one’s place within it. This ‘cosmological’ scheme would have been subject to differing local and contextual interpretations, it is argued, but it was nonetheless very long lasting and pervasive throughout the British Iron Age.

The extensive influence of the ‘sunwise’ model of roundhouse space is shown by the fact that it is now routinely cited in publications of Iron Age settlements. However, there has been little critical examination of the theory. In particular, the contention that the identified finds patterning from the southern English roundhouses relates to their everyday use has never been argued through with reference to the detailed stratigraphic evidence from the relevant buildings, or to questions of site formation processes. This issue will be addressed below.

INVESTIGATING THE DEPOSITIONAL HISTORIES OF LATE BRONZE AGE–EARLY IRON AGE ROUNDHOUSES

As we have seen, four roundhouses from southern England have been cited as examples of the ‘sunwise’ model, namely those from Longbridge Deverill Cow Down (House 3), Dunston Park, Pimperne and Bancroft. However, a survey of the literature can produce further examples of architecturally similar roundhouses that show an analogous distribution of finds. These include two further roundhouses from Longbridge Deverill Cow Down (Houses 1 and 2: Chadwick Hawkes unpublished) along with structures from Broom, Bedfordshire (McFadyen and Mortimer 1999; Cooper and Edmonds forthcoming), Broomfield, Essex (Atkinson 1995) and Houghton Down, Hampshire (Cunliffe and Poole 2000). There are thus a total of nine buildings to be considered (Table 1 and Fig. 2–9). Unfortunately, no trace of the original floor surface survived in any of these buildings, as a result of later truncation. In each case, however, substantial quantities of pottery and other artefacts were recovered from the post-holes and other ‘cut’ features in the right side of the house and the area around the entrance.

These nine roundhouses share a number of characteristics. All date to the Late Bronze Age or (in most cases) the Early Iron Age. While they are found on both open and enclosed settlements, the majority were not associated with other potentially coeval roundhouses. The three houses from Longbridge Deverill are thought to have succeeded one another rather than
being contemporary. Architecturally, the houses tended to be unusually large and robustly constructed. All except the house from Broomfield (8 m diameter) can be interpreted as double- or multi-ring structures (Guilbert 1981) with diameters of between 11 m and 18 m. In several cases the entrances were emphasized by porches, which in some cases took on monumental proportions. Thus at Longbridge Deverill, the porch of House 3 was 3.4 m wide and may have stood up to 5.5 m high (Chadwick Hawkes 1994). A further unusual architectural quirk of all of the houses (except at Houghton Down, where the house was only partially excavated) is the presence of a pair of circular or oval features placed close together within the right side of the building. At some of the sites these paired features were interpreted as pits, but clear evidence of posts was found within the examples at Bancroft, Longbridge Deverill and Pimperne. They may thus have formed part of an internal fixture of some kind.

It is important to note the unusualness of the artefact concentrations from these buildings. A very large number of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age roundhouses have now been excavated across southern England, and it is clear that it is not normal for there to be a particular concentration of artefacts in the right side.1 Often, in fact, only small amounts of artefactual material are recovered from the post-holes and other structural elements of the building. Even in the rare cases where preserved floors have been found, these are frequently almost entirely devoid of debris (e.g. Hingley and Miles 1984, 63; Thomas 2005), indicating that they were either kept very tidy or were carefully swept clean upon abandonment. Larger amounts of material are commonly recovered from eaves-gullies surrounding roundhouses, but here the long-recognized, recurring pattern is for finds to be concentrated at the terminal ends, either side of the entrance (Allen et al. 1984, 90; Pryor 1984, 194).

Thus within southern England, right-side artefact concentrations seem to be associated only with a particular group of roundhouses, a group restricted to the Late Bronze Age–Early

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1 For an example of a recent study of a specific site that produced no evidence for a right-side bias in finds distributions see Dawson (2006).

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# Table 1

Summary of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age roundhouses from southern England showing artefact concentrations in the right-hand side

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site/structure</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bancroft (Bucks.), Building 500</td>
<td>Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age</td>
<td>Williams and Zeepvat 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broom (Beds.), Structure 2</td>
<td>Late Bronze Age</td>
<td>McFadyen and Mortimer 1999; Cooper and Edmonds forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broomfield (Essex), Structure 1</td>
<td>c. 9th c BC</td>
<td>Atkinson 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunston Park (Berks.), Roundhouse 1128</td>
<td>7th-6th c BC</td>
<td>Fitzpatrick et al. 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houghton Down (Hants), Circular Structure 2</td>
<td>8th–early 5th c BC</td>
<td>Cunliffe and Poole 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longbridge Deverill Cow Down (Wils), House 1</td>
<td>Early Iron Age</td>
<td>Chadwick Hawkes unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longbridge Deverill Cow Down (Wils), House 2</td>
<td>Early Iron Age</td>
<td>Chadwick Hawkes unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longbridge Deverill Cow Down (Wils), House 3</td>
<td>Early Iron Age</td>
<td>Chadwick Hawkes 1994 and unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pimperne (Dorset)</td>
<td>6th–5th c BC</td>
<td>Harding et al. 1993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Iron Age and characterized by some unusual architectural features (such as the paired internal posts). This seems difficult to square with the argument that such artefact concentrations evince a way of using domestic space common to Iron Age Britain as a whole. The suspicion must be that there was something unusual about the depositional histories of these particular structures. The crucial question is: exactly how did artefacts enter the post-holes of these buildings?

Interpreting post-hole artefact distributions as a direct reflection of the everyday use of a building involves the assumption that artefacts entered the post-holes accidentally, either while the house was in use or following its abandonment. This could happen when material slumped into the hole left when a post was pulled or dug out. However, in several of the roundhouses in question, some of the post-holes that were richest in finds also contained post-pipes, indicating that the post stump had been left in situ (as at Bancroft, Broom and Longbridge Deverill). In such cases, the only remaining 'accidental' route for the material to enter the post-holes is for it to have slipped down into the voids created as the buried section of the post began to decay. It is certainly possible for artefacts to enter a post-hole in this way, as demonstrated by Peter Reynolds’ experimental reconstruction of the roundhouse from Pimperne. Dismantlement of the

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**Figure 5**
reconstructed building showed that the buried bases of the roof-supporting posts had been severely affected by rotting, creating voids into which various small objects had found their way, including beer can pulls and fragments of pottery (Reynolds 1994). However, it seems more doubtful whether this mechanism could lead to large quantities or large individual fragments of material entering a post-hole.

In fact, the excavators of two of the sites in question – Longbridge Deverill and Houghton Down – have independently come to the conclusion that the quantity and disposition of artefacts from the house post-holes precludes ‘accidental’ deposition. Observations made at these sites indicate that deliberate deposition following the abandonment of the house is much more likely, and this argument can also be applied to the other buildings in question. The evidence from each site is discussed in turn below.

**Longbridge Deverill Cow Down**

Sonia Chadwick Hawkes’ unpublished draft report for Longbridge Deverill Cow Down is particularly illuminating. Chadwick Hawkes noted that the fact that the three successive houses from this site had burnt down is unlikely to be coincidental, and probably represents a form of deliberate abandonment behaviour. This immediately raises questions about the nature of the artefact assemblages from the buildings. As we have seen, much of the material from the

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*Figure 6*

post-holes of the three houses at Longbridge was burnt, and is thought to have derived from the time of the destruction of the buildings. However, Chadwick Hawkes argued that ‘the large amounts of pottery found in some post-holes, and the huge size of some individual fragments... make it most unlikely that their presence was due merely to natural processes’. Some individual post-holes from Houses 1 and 2 contained over 200 pottery sherds, while up to 60 sherds were recovered from post-holes in House 3; one post-hole from House 2 meanwhile contained a complete antler pick. Chadwick Hawkes suggested that these finds were the result of human agency during the process of abandonment. Following the fire ‘the ruins seem to have been tidied up to some extent, and the broken pottery was deliberately packed into the tops of major post-holes’. This packing into the upper part of the post-holes was reflected by the fact that during the excavation of Houses 1 and 2, ‘very often the first sign of a post-hole was the appearance, in the top of the broken chalk subsoil, of masses of pottery’ (Chadwick Hawkes unpublished).

As we have seen, Chadwick Hawkes nonetheless argued that the artefact distributions from these houses reflect their everyday use (1994, 67). This was because she took the view that after the houses had been burnt, the pottery is likely to have been packed into the nearest post-hole to where it lay (Chadwick Hawkes unpublished). However, the possibility of selective deposition of material in the right side of the house must surely be considered. An argument for this is provided by the fact that structural daub was also concentrated in the right-hand side of the
Longbridge Deverill houses, along with the other artefacts. If material was simply being packed into post-holes near where it fell, one would have to assume that only the right-hand wall of the house was daubed. It would seem more likely that a deliberate choice was made to pack material into post-holes only on the right-hand side of the building.

**Houghton Down**

The deliberate packing of material into post-holes upon the abandonment of the house has also been argued for at Houghton Down. This building was only partially excavated, with the porch, right front and left rear areas uncovered (unusually, the house faced west, so that the right side lay to the north; see Figure 8). Artefacts including pottery, daub and burnt flint were concentrated in the post-holes of the porch and the right front wall; one wall post (Ph 495) contained 119 sherds. Cunliffe and Poole (2000, 25) state that ‘detailed observation of the post-hole fills and the way in which some sherds were tightly packed leaves little doubt that the holes were deliberately filled after the posts had been removed’. Much of the pottery from...
the house had been burnt prior to deposition, and in most cases while it was still unbroken. The degree of burning, which in some cases left sherds vitrified, suggests that it was deliberate.

**Broom and Broomfield**

The houses at Broom and Broomfield are similar in that in each case, the posts in the left side of the building were deliberately removed following the abandonment of the building, while those in the right side were left intact. This observation strengthens the argument that house abandonment practices were occurring which were structured around left/right distinctions.

At Broom, the evidence comes from the fact that the structural post-holes on the right-hand side and in the entrance area generally had post-pipes, indicating that the posts were left *in situ*, while those on the left-hand side did not (Fig. 5). Artefacts were strongly concentrated in the parts of the building where the posts had been left. The ‘paired’ internal post-holes/pits (F. 550 and F. 557) contained the greatest quantities of pottery, including a range of vessel forms in both fine and coarse wares. In the interim report for the site, it was argued that the material from the post-holes derived from deliberate deposition following the abandonment of the structure: while the left side of the building was dismantled, the right side was deliberately heaped with domestic refuse (McFadyen and Mortimer 1999). The forthcoming publication of the site is more circumspect, however, leaving open the possibility that at least some of the material could have derived from the time of the occupation of the house (Cooper and Edmonds forthcoming).

At Broomfield, the post-holes on the left side of the house seem to have been entirely dug out following abandonment of the structure, leaving a crescent-shaped gully on that side of...
the structure (Fig. 6). Again, the paired internal post-holes/pits (2061 and 2088) were the focus for the deposition of the greatest quantity of pottery (Fig. 7). One of these contained 280 sherds of pottery, including large fragments of a range of fine and coarse ware vessels, which had clearly been deliberately placed around the edge of the cut. Both of these features also ‘contained burnt flints and stones, charcoal and daub, together with lenses of scorched earth indicating that in situ burning had taken place after the pit had passed out of use’ (Atkinson 1995, 6).

Bancroft, Dunston Park and Pimperne

For the remaining three sites, no claims of ‘structured deposition’ were made by the excavators. However, in each case the large quantities of artefacts recovered strongly suggest that they were not ‘accidentally’ deposited. The processes of post-abandonment deposition seen at the sites discussed above would better explain the available evidence.

At Bancroft, pottery and fired clay were strongly concentrated in the right-hand side of the building, although animal bone was more widely dispersed (Fig. 4). A total of 9.7 kg of pottery was recovered from the house, with up to 1.3 kg from a single structural post-hole and 2.3 kg from one of the internal paired post-holes. Much of the pottery seemed relatively fresh, although only a few sherd joins between features were noted. Several of the finds-rich post-holes contained post-pipes. There is one clear instance of deliberate deposition: a photograph of one of the right-side roof-supporting post-holes shows large, vertically-inserted sherds of pottery, interpreted as ‘post-packing’ (Williams and Zeepvat 1994, pl. 5).

At Dunston Park, a total of 4.8 kg of pottery was recovered, with up to 1.5 kg occurring in individual structural post-holes (Fig. 3). The mean sherd size was generally modest, with some abraded sherds and few conjoining fragments, although some post-holes showed a much higher mean sherd weight (up to 23 g). Other finds from the right-side post-holes included large amounts of burnt flint, a spindle whorl, a crucible and a quern fragment (Fitzpatrick et al. 1995).

At Pimperne, the quantity and overall distribution of the finds is not discussed in the published report. However, it is clear from the finds catalogues that large quantities of pottery and animal bone were recovered from the porch post-holes and particularly from the ‘paired’ internal post-holes. Some large fragments of ceramic vessels from these contexts are illustrated, which seem very unlikely to have entered the features accidentally. Other finds from structural post-holes on the right side or by the entrance included a glass bead, a copper alloy finger/toe ring, a copper alloy pin, a spindle whorl and a bone implement. An iron ‘arrowhead’ and a perforated chalk disc were rare examples of artefacts found in structural post-holes on the left side (Harding et al. 1993).

‘STRUCTURED’ HOUSE ABANDONMENT

It seems highly unlikely that the artefact concentrations seen in these houses derived from processes of ‘accidental’ deposition. Rather, it can be argued that most of the material was deliberately deposited after the buildings had gone out of use, in a form of ‘structured’ or ‘ritualized’ house abandonment behaviour. This should not be surprising, as house abandonment rituals of varying kinds are widely attested in non-industrial societies around the world (LaMotta and Schiffer 1999).

The process of ‘structured’ abandonment can be summarized as follows. In some cases at least, partial or total destruction of the building was carried out. The three houses at
Longbridge Deverill were burnt down, surely deliberately. At both Broom and Broomfield, the posts on the left side of the house appear to have been pulled or dug out, while those on the right side and at the entrance were left intact. The other houses might also have been partially dismantled, although in many cases post-pipes indicate that the bases of the posts were not removed. Substantial quantities of artefacts were then deposited in the right-hand side of the building. Sometimes material seems to have been actually pushed down into the post-holes, either into the voids left when posts were pulled out, or simply into the cavities and soft rotten material that would have been produced through decay of the buried post-base (Reynolds 1994). In some cases, large conjoining fragments of pottery were deposited, suggestive of a ‘set’ of vessels (as at Broomfield and Longbridge Deverill). This may suggest that the consumption of food and drink played a role in the abandonment ritual. In other cases, the artefacts were more fragmentary and partly abraded, perhaps indicating that midden material was deposited within the house. The character of these deposits can be linked to arguments made elsewhere that the conspicuous consumption of food and drink and the creation of middens were important vehicles for display and social discourse during the early first millennium BC (Parker Pearson 1996; McOmish 1996).

These practices indicate a concern with transforming the nature of the house as a place, once the phase of occupation had come to an end. The emphasis on marking this transformation is not a general feature of domestic structures of the period. Indeed, it has recently been argued that British Iron Age roundhouses typically show ‘little or no distinction between [deposits] associated with the creation of the building and those marking its demise’ (Bradley 2005, 175). Even within southern England during the early first millennium BC, only a small minority of roundhouses appear to have been subject to the abandonment practices outlined above. The fact that several of the buildings in question were monumental in their dimensions and spatially isolated from other houses is likely to be related to the special treatment given to them upon abandonment. It is notable that the apparent cessation of the ‘structured’ house abandonment tradition during the latter stages of the Early Iron Age coincides with the disappearance of such monumental buildings. Across most of southern England, roundhouses from around the fifth-fourth century BC onwards were constructed using slighter timbers, and rarely reached the great sizes seen before (Fitzpatrick 1994, 72).

The origin of the tradition might have lain at least partly in earlier practices, as various forms of ‘structured’ roundhouse abandonment are attested from a number of Middle Bronze Age sites in southern England. Such practices could involve partial or total dismantlement of the building, the back-filling or blocking of post-holes, hearths and pits, and the deposition of artefactual material in the form of dumped layers or selected ‘placed’ objects (Bradley 2005, 52–3; Brück 1999; 2001; Ladle and Woodward 2004; Nowakowski 2001). These Middle Bronze Age buildings do not show any consistent left–right patterning in the placement of the abandonment deposits, so there need not have been any direct connection with the practices of the early first millennium BC. Nevertheless, a shared emphasis on marking the end of the use-life

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2 It has been argued that the ‘great’ houses of the Early Iron Age were the homes of an elite (Chadwick Hawkes 1994), and this could explain their special treatment upon abandonment. However, it is possible that the monumentality of these buildings was not (just) an expression of the prestige of their inhabitants, but reflected the significance of these structures to a wider community. Ethnographic evidence attests that in many societies a house can serve not just as a dwelling, but also as a venue for assembly or ritual for a wider community, thus combining ‘private’ and ‘public’ functions (e.g. Waterson 1990).
of the house seems clear. Notably, this emphasis contrasts with practices followed in the longhouse-using regions of northern continental Europe during the Iron Age. Here, all stages of the life history of the house – construction, use and abandonment – could be marked by ‘structured’ deposits, most of which were modest in scale (Gerritsen 1999; Webley 2002; forthcoming).

A distinction between the right- and left-hand sides of the building seems to have been an important principle underlying the abandonment practices discussed above. The question therefore arises: what relationship might this have had to the use of internal space while the building was occupied?

As none of the roundhouses discussed above had preserved floor layers, our only evidence comes from features cut to a level below the floor surface that may represent internal fixtures. The problem here, of course, is discerning which features were actually contemporary with the building. However, parallels from other sites enable us to be reasonably certain in the case of one small pit (F. 555) found within the house at Broom (Fig. 5). The pit – placed to the left of the centre of the building – showed traces of clay lining and was filled with burnt sandstone cobbles. Similar clay-lined pits are frequently found at sites of the Late Bronze Age to the Middle Iron Age across southern England, particularly to the north of the Thames. Although the pits very often contain burnt or heat-cracked stones, the clay lining itself is never burnt. As a result, these features are thought to have been used for heating water or boiling food (Williams 1993). It has been shown elsewhere (Webley et al. forthcoming) that, when found inside roundhouses, these ‘cooking’ pits are almost always located in the left side of the building, as at Broom. In fact, of 29 examples from ten different sites, there are only two cases (from Gravelly Guy) where such pits are found elsewhere in the building (Table 2 and Fig. 9). The strength of this pattern strongly suggests that the clay-lined pits were internal fixtures of the

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**TABLE 2**

Roundhouses containing clay-lined ‘cooking’ pits from southern England. Some houses contain more than one cooking pit. * = less certain example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. of houses</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broom (Beds.)</td>
<td>LBA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cooper and Edmonds forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield Park, Stotfold (Beds.)</td>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>1–2</td>
<td>Webley et al. forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bancroft (Bucks.)</td>
<td>E–MIA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Williams and Zeevat 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennylane (Bucks.)</td>
<td>MIA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Williams 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King’s Dyke West, Whittlesey (Cambs.)</td>
<td>LBA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knight 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldons Seat, Encombe (Dorset)*</td>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cunliffe and Phillipson 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Waltham (Essex)</td>
<td>MIA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Drury 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claydon Pike, Lechlade (Gloucs.)</td>
<td>MIA</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Miles et al. forthcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekley (Northants.)</td>
<td>MIA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jackson and Dix 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravelly Guy, Stanton Harcourt (Oxon.)</td>
<td>E–MIA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lambrick and Allen 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 It should be noted, however, that hearths of more standard type are sometimes found in the same buildings as these pits.
houses, even though there is no stratigraphic evidence to demonstrate the contemporaneity of building and pit in any single case. It would thus seem that in many communities in Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age southern England, certain kinds of cooking activities took place in the left-hand side of the roundhouse. While it should not be assumed that all contemporary roundhouses in the region were used in this way, the tradition does seem to have been long-lasting and widespread.

We therefore have some evidence for left/right patterning in the everyday use of space, which may have been referenced by the left/right structuring of house abandonment practices. However, this seems to have involved the placing of abandonment deposits in the opposite side of the house to that in which food preparation traditionally took place. In effect, this turns the ‘sunwise’ model for roundhouse space on its head.

CONCLUSION

It would seem that the influential ‘sunwise’ model of domestic space cannot be sustained, at least in relation to southern England. While a number of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age roundhouses from this region show a concentration of finds in the right-hand side of the building, this is unlikely to have resulted from domestic activity while the building was in use. Rather, it can be argued that the bulk of the material derives from a particular form of ‘ritualized’ house abandonment behaviour. The limited evidence that does exist for the everyday use of roundhouses during this period suggests that some cooking activities were typically carried out in the left side of the building, contradicting the ‘sunwise’ model.

It should be stressed that the specific ways of using and abandoning roundhouses explored in this paper seem, on current evidence, to be limited to certain parts of southern England and to the earlier stages of the first millennium BC. Therefore, it may well be the case that the majority of communities in later prehistoric Britain treated their roundhouses in quite different ways. Given the recent explosion in excavation data from British later prehistoric settlements, exploring the varying ways in which the common architectural form of the roundhouse was interpreted in different times, places and contexts is a promising area for future research.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Helena Hamerow and Lisa Brown for kindly allowing me to refer to the Longbridge Deverill archive. Anwen Cooper, Mark Edmonds and Lesley McFadyen are also thanked for providing information on the site at Broom ahead of publication.

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