

The total number of identifiable specimens was 210 and the species present, with the minimum number of individuals of each shown in brackets, were cattle (4), sheep (6), pig (2), horse (2), dog (3) and red deer (2). There was in addition one lower third molar which was probably from wild boar and one canid mandible which might be wolf.

Cattle

The measurable specimens were :-

Humerus - distal width 63 (1)
Radius - proximal width 64 (1)
Metacarpal - t.l. 179. p.w. 49. m.s.d. 27. d.w. 52. Ht. 107 cms. 42 ins.
Calcaneum - total length 126 (1) Tibia - distal width 47-50 (2)
Astragalus - lateral length 58-61 (3)
Prox. Phalanges - p.w. 22-28 (5)
Lower third molar - length 40

t.l. = total length p.w. = proximal width

m.s.d. = mid shaft diameter d.w. = distal width

The numbers in brackets indicate the number of specimens measured.

Measurements are in millimetres and extremities of bones are measured across articular surfaces. Shoulder height is derived by the method of Fock. (3).

These dimensions are typical of the small Iron Age cattle, (4). although the 40 mm. lower third molar is unusually large and was perhaps that of a bull.

Sheep

The measurable bones indicated small slender animals.

Humerus d.w. 25-28 (6) Radius p.w. 24-26 (5)
Tibia d.w. 20 (1)
Metacarpal t.l. 117 p.w. 19 m.s.d. 10

Pig

The total number of specimens was only twenty five and they were very fragmented. There were three lower third molars (lengths 30, 32 and 41 mm). It is possible that the 41 mm. specimen, which was very heavily worn, was from a wild boar. Bones and teeth of wild and domesticated pig are, rightly or wrongly, distinguished by size but there is considerable overlap in the dimensions. Clason, in her study of the prehistoric fauna of Holland, regards any lower third molar of more than 40 mm. as being that of wild boar. (1).

Horse

The only complete long bone, out of a total of nineteen specimens, indicates an animal of about 13 hands, about the usual size for Iron Age ponies. (4).

The measurable specimens were:

	t.l.	p.w.	m.s.d.	d.w.
Radius	306	69	33	58
	-	-	-	54
Tibia	-	-	-	50
Prox. Phalanx	79	51	31	39

Dog/Wolf

There were only three canid specimens, all mandibles.

The dimensions were:

Length of tooth-row	76	-	86
" " carnassial	23	22	25

The two smaller mandibles are similar to others from the Iron Age and are definitely of dog but the biggest was markedly larger and falls within the size range of the wolf. In the absence of the skull, large dog and wolf, particularly early dogs, many of which may well have been part wolf anyway, are not easy to distinguish. The teeth showed a slight degree of crowding which is a characteristic of the domestic dog, but as it is not known to what extent this feature is present in wolves (2) this was no help.

Red Deer provided only eight scrappy specimens.

Pathology

The proximal articular surface of a bovine metatarsal showed deep erosion and pitting and the anterior portion bulged outwards. This is a fairly common site for inflammatory lesions of this sort but in this case had possibly not been present for long because no fusion had occurred with the adjacent tarsal bone.

Discussion

The horse is often well represented on Iron Age sites and it has been suggested (4) that during this period it was not necessarily fully domesticated but at least feral and that, from time to time, round-ups took place, suitable animals being retained for training and the rest slaughtered for food.

This may be the explanation of an observation from Grimthorpe, where Jarman and his colleagues (5), expressing surprise at the prominence of the horse, noted that some were dead by 24 months of age and suggested that they were not solely draught animals. Presumably the number of such horses was more than could reasonably be explained by the bones in question being those of animals which had died a natural death, a category for which allowance must always be made especially on a farm as opposed to an urban or ritual site.

References

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5. Jarman, M., Fagg, Angela and Higgs, E. S. in Stead I.M. 1969. An Iron Age Hill Fort at Grimthorpe, Yorkshire Proc. Prehist. Soc. 34, 148.

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