
6 Discussion

The physical location of the site suggests an area of some potential importance during the Iron Age. This is supported by the presence of an enclosed settlement or fort (Bruce's Camp named after a supposed medieval re-use) on the summit of the area of high ground, at Hill of Crichtie, approximately 1km north-west of the Thainstone site. This has currently not been excavated but may have been in use during the Iron Age.

A late 19th-century find of an Iron Age hoard on the Hill of Crichtie in the vicinity of Bruce's Camp (exact findspot not recorded) also emphasizes the importance of the area in the period (Hunter 1997, 126). The hoard consisted of a bronze terret, a bronze ferrule for the butt of a spear shaft and 13 shale globular pinheads which had originally had iron pin shafts. The objects were found together 'under a large stone'. These are very high status objects, dating from the early centuries AD (Ralston & Inglis 1984, 57–8), the terrets often being regarded as of local manufacture.

In this context, the presence of the glass bead, and of the crucible fragment and its implication of bronzeworking on the site, suggest that, in the first–second centuries AD, the Thainstone site was either itself part of a settlement of some status, or perhaps related or peripheral to a high status settlement. The reconstructed diameter of the roundhouse would be in accordance with such an interpretation. However, due to the intensive cultivation of the field, it is impossible to know if there had originally been other buildings nearby, or if this was an isolated building, possibly related to a settlement higher on the Hill of Crichtie.

In light of the evidence of peaceful Roman interaction with the natives of the high status Iron Age native site of Birnie, Morayshire (Hunter 2002b), it is intriguing to speculate that the Thainstone site may possibly have been another settlement which continued in existence alongside the Roman presence.