

Britain's 'Pompeii' reveals new clues about life during the Bronze Age

January 12 2016, by Bob Yirka



(Phys.org)—A team of archeologists working at a dig site in Cambridgeshire in Britain has found what they are describing as Britain's 'Pompeii'—evidence of everyday life in an ancient society, covered by mud—and the best preserved Bronze Age dwelling ever found in that country. The find consists of two circular wooden houses that once stood atop stilts over a river—when the houses caught fire, they collapsed into the river and were covered by silt, which preserved everyday items

inside, such as tables and chairs and jewelry, and even food in bowls.

The site was first discovered back in 2006, but it was only recently that excavations began—a joint effort between the University of Cambridge and Historic England. Items from the houses which sit approximately two meters below ground level, have been dated to approximately 1000-800 BC, which puts them near the end of the Bronze Age—a time dominated by tools and weapons made by mixing copper and tin, from roughly 2500, to 1000 BC. In Britain, the Bronze Age has been extended to approximately 800 BC—it ended when visitors from overseas introduced implements made of iron. Because of the arrangement, the researchers believe the houses were abandoned very quickly, likely due to the fire, which allowed for the preservation of objects as they existed in the everyday lives of people during that time period.

Thus far, workers digging at the site have uncovered pots and pans of varying sizes, spears and daggers, exotic glass beads and even textiles that had been fashioned from tree bark. They have also uncovered the charred remains of the timbers that once served as stilts, allowing those living in the house to exist as if on their own tiny island. A human skull has also been found near one entrance, but it has not yet been studied in detail, thus it is not known if it might have belonged to one of the inhabitants of the house. The team has also identified footprints in the sediment.



Close up of stilts and collapsed roof timbers.



Glass beads thought to have been from a necklace.

Thought the site is no longer situated on a river, it is quite wet, which is helping to preserve artifacts. The researchers plan to remove them all because it is believed the water level in the areas is likely to fall, removing their natural protective blanket.



Late Iron Age baldric ring with La Tène style decoration, probably part of a shoulder belt for carrying a sword.



Detail on a 6.3m oak logboat.



Close up of charred wooden bucket base.



Bronze Age textile made from plant fibres.

More information: [Press release](#)

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