

The sites

Although Melbourn cannot boast of any major archaeological sites or valuable finds, there are at least fifty sites giving us evidence of life dating back to Neolithic times. These can still be seen today as ring ditches, mostly visible from aerial photography as crop marks. Many have been well recorded, especially the sites of Bran Ditch and the Saxon cemeteries of Back Lane and Water Lane. Others have revealed little information or have yet to be excavated.



Five Hill Field

Just south west of Heath Farm lies a cemetery containing five Bronze Age round barrows, an Iron Age square barrow and a cross dyke. Situated in a prominent position on a steep hill the cemetery overlooks the course of the Icknield Way. Four of the barrows are no longer visible as mounds due to ploughing.

The cemetery and cross dyke (a prehistoric earthwork which probably served as a boundary marker) was first recorded in 1847. The dyke, which runs parallel to the A505, forms the edge of the

A skeleton found in the driftway near the Shant in November 1931. At the time it was thought he was possibly Mercian and was of great interest as he had been decapitated. A male of great height (1m 80cm) he was possibly a chieftain. It is known that a fierce battle was fought in the neighbourhood around the year AD 655.



A collection of cinerary vases and 'incense cup' from Five Hill Field, Heath Farm.

From the left: a ceramic vessel with a very irregular overhanging-rim and a few vertical incisions. This pot was incomplete with a broken rim and loose sherds inside and has been reconstructed.

A small ceramic vessel made of coarse fabric with a flat base and rim. Although incomplete, it has been glued together. This pot was sometimes called an 'accessory cup' or 'pygmy cup'.

This ceramic 'incense cup' is pierced with 7 small holes in the walls, flat-topped and decorated with incised lines.

A ceramic vessel with an overhanging-rim, about half was missing, and the rest has been reconstructed. There are a series of vertical incised chevrons on the shoulder.