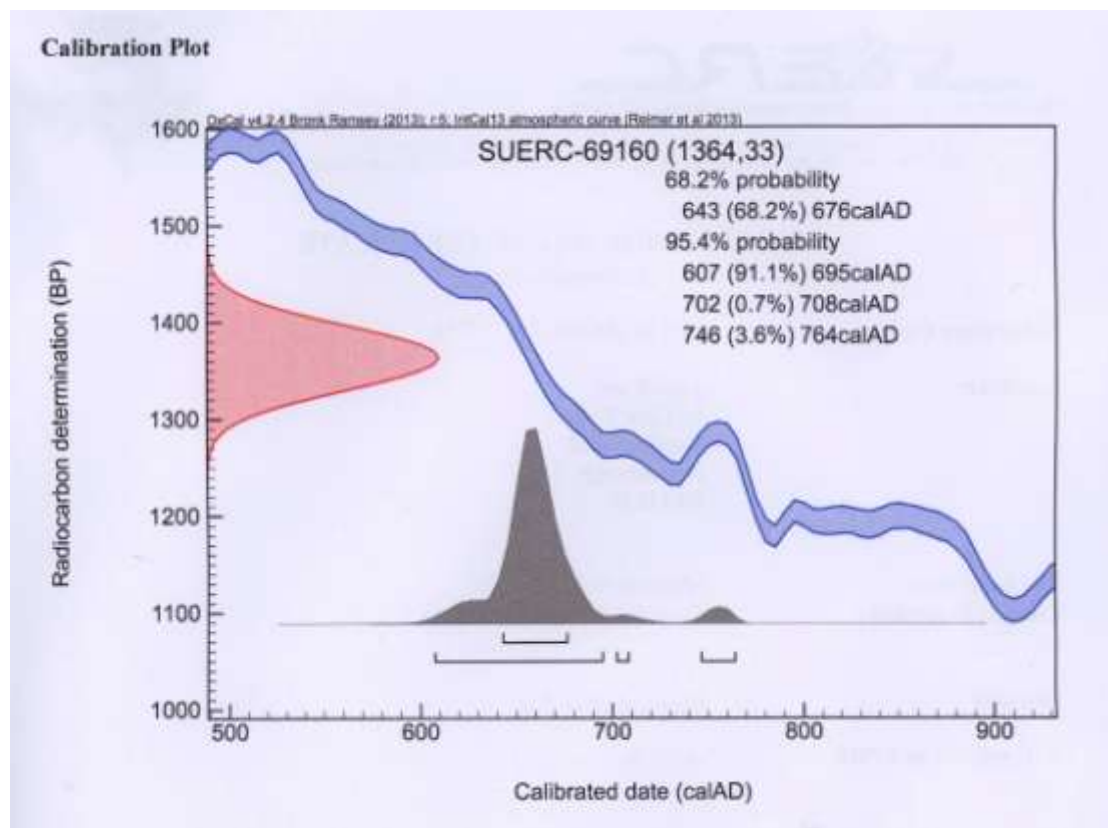


Site 7: Charcoal Deposit

The charcoal assemblage from Site 7 was indicative of the collection of domestic hearth fuel from local mixed deciduous woodland. Alder, birch, holly (*Ilex*) and especially hazel and oak round wood were recorded, together with an extensive cereal assemblage that included cultivated/black oats (*Avena sativa/strigosa*) but especially hulled six-row barley (*Hordeum vulgare var vulgare*). Oats and barley are both cereals that cope well with poor weather or marginal land, unlike the less tolerant wheats that require autumn planting on good soil followed by a fairly good summer (Miller 2002). Hulled barley has been the primary cereal in Scotland since the Iron Age (Dickson & Dickson 2000). The combination of oats and hulled barley is frequently indicative of sites of either later prehistoric or medieval periods, the former reflecting the move towards a warmer, wetter climate and the latter reflecting the need to feed the increasing impoverished urban population that could not afford expensive wheat. The presence at this site also of small numbers of spelt (*Triticum spelta*) and emmer (*Triticum dicoccum*), both early (glumed) wheats, would suggest that a later prehistoric date for this feature cannot be excluded. Grains of spelt wheat would imply Iron Age occupation or later. They may have been relicts within the crop or residual from a separate processing event.



Circa 650 cal AD.

