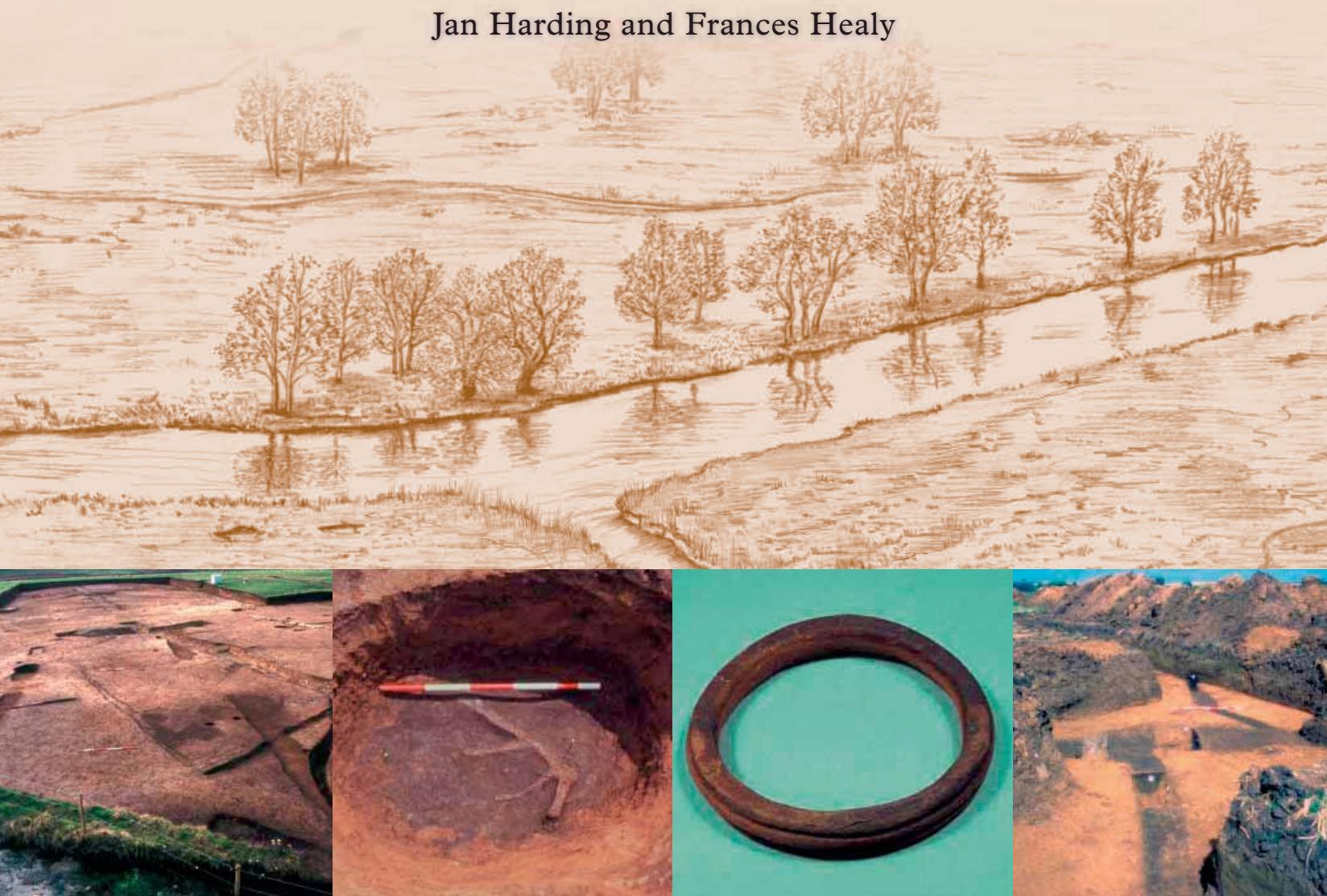


The Raunds Area Project
A Neolithic and Bronze Age Landscape
in Northamptonshire

Volume 2 Supplementary Studies
Jan Harding and Frances Healy



ENGLISH HERITAGE

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Volume 2 Supplementary Studies

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Frontispiece A reconstruction by Judith Dobie of the primary features of the
Long Barrow. The opium poppies in the foreground were represented by
seeds preserved in the waterlogged fills of the ditches that flanked the mound
subsequently built over these features.

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Preface

The Raunds Area Project was one of the major fieldwork initiatives of the 1980s. Although prompted by the need for large-scale rescue excavations, it broke new ground by linking these to an integrated investigation of local landscape history, which incorporated fieldwalking, earthwork and geophysical survey, environmental investigations and documentary research. Partnership between English Heritage and the Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit brought the benefits of complementary expertise and resources. The initial emphasis of the project was on landscape development from the late Iron Age onwards, in keeping with what was then known of the archaeology. But the progressive discovery of Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments concealed and preserved beneath a blanket of alluvium covering the floor of the Nene valley transformed perceptions of the area's prehistory. It is this pre-Iron Age evidence that is presented here.

Human presence at Raunds spans the transition from the hunter gatherer lifeways of the 5th millennium BC to the livestock-rearing and monument-building of the early 4th millennium. Importantly, the earliest monuments were, with one exception, not the long barrows and causewayed enclosures already well known from the same period. Rather, they were of diverse form, unimposing, and almost devoid of human remains, deliberately placed artefacts, or animal remains. This emphasises the extent to which valley-floor locations can expand our understanding of the period, and the extent to which contemporary use of different topographies may have been complementary rather than uniform. Much later, at the turn of the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC, the evidence highlights the complexity of funerary practice and associated activities. Raunds also makes a unique contribution to the understanding of early Bronze Age society and its funerary rites, in the form of a barrow mound piled high with the skulls of almost two hundred cattle.

This publication brings these and many other threads of evidence together. It also explores one of the directions that archaeological publication can now take, as it both synthesises a large body of evidence and makes it accessible in digital form, putting the reader in a position to analyse and reinterpret the data.

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The principal excavators were Andy Chapman, Tony Baker, Phil Voice, Dave Windell and Jo Woodiwiss (West Cotton); Claire Halpin (Iрthlingborough); David Neal (Stanwick); John Moore, Mark R Roberts and Graham Keevill (Redlands Farm); and Frances Blore (Stanwick 1991–2). They and their teams worked hard and long, often in difficult circumstances, to extract and record the information that has proved such a rich resource. A particular mention must be made of Dave Windell, who was the director of the West Cotton excavations throughout the fieldwork stage and was therefore responsible for keeping the excavations and the team on track, and for dealing with the complexities of the funding and politics inevitably associated with such a complex operation. Assistance with machinery and co-operation was provided by ARC Ltd (now Hanson), and many local organisations, including Raunds Town Council and Wellington Tannery, also provided assistance. Thanks are also due to the residents of Raunds and Stanwick, who showed interest and good will towards both the work and the excavators.

In post-excavation, Jon Humble, who led the project from 1991 to 1997, pushed the analysis of the Irthlingborough archive forward, infusing enthusiasm and direction into what must at times have seemed endless tasks. He has subsequently been unfailingly helpful and supportive. His assistants were initially Aidan Allan and subsequently Stéphane Rault, who accomplished the project's move to Newcastle, providing much-needed knowledge and continuity. In Newcastle, Denise Wilson, Glyn Goodrick and the entire staff of the Department of Archaeology (now part of the School of Historical Studies) have provided practical support.

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The data became manageable thanks to its integration into a single GIS-ready digital archive by Dominic Powlesland and Anthony Beck, who have given unstintingly of their time and patience in overcoming problems and making it possible to examine the area and its landscape in ways that would otherwise have been impossible.

Alex Bayliss has provided the chronological framework that underpins and shapes the whole work.

All the specialist contributors have added depth and perspective to the narrative. We appreciate the endurance of those who have stayed with the project for many years: Mark Robinson from the first, David Tomalin from 1986, and Gill Campbell from 1988. The labour of recording a lithic assemblage of over 20,000 pieces fell largely to Peter Makey. Torben Bjarke Ballin rose to the challenge of writing it up.

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Summary

In the course of the Raunds Area Project and subsequent excavations some 3.5km of the floor of the Nene valley were investigated, including more than 20 Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments, most of them previously obscured by later archaeology and by Saxon and early medieval alluvium. The record begins with a slight human presence in the early Holocene, which became progressively more marked. By around 5000 Cal BC, one spot at the confluence of the Nene and a tributary had long been a regular stopping-place, where flint was knapped and tools suitable for a whole range of domestic tasks were discarded once they were blunted and finished with. Beyond this site, there was intermittent activity all along the well-wooded valley.

Soon after 4000 Cal BC Neolithic artefacts began to be discarded at the same confluence and, within a couple of hundred years, a landmark had been built there – the Long Mound, about 135 metres long, 18 metres wide and perhaps 1.5 metres high. Its scale means that its construction could have been a communal event, bringing together perhaps 50 or a 100 people. Indeed, the pattern of stakeholes beneath it suggests that it was divided into hurdle-defined compartments, each of which could have been built by a different group. It was built of turf, cut from an area of something like 100m by 100m, which can only have been the product of grazing. In other words, livestock were being kept by about 3800 Cal BC, and had already begun to alter the vegetation. Three other monuments, the Long Barrow, the north part of the Turf Mound, and the Avenue, were also built in the first half of the 4th millennium.

The plants, insects and pollen from waterlogged bottoms of the Long Barrow ditches indicated that it stood in a lightly grazed clearing in recent cleared woodland. Opium poppy seeds expand the range of ultimately near eastern plant species introduced to Britain in the 4th millennium. Also in the ditch were clusters of woodchips and offcuts from the construction of the revetment. The flint axehead used to do the job had been left at the barrow, its battered and damaged cutting edge precisely fitting some of the cutmarks on the wood. In the narrower, lower end of the barrow was a burial chamber, built of small limestone slabs, in which were weathered fragments of a single human long bone.

By 3000 Cal BC a chain of five or six diverse monuments stretched along the river bank (the Long Mound, the Long Enclosure, the Turf Mound, the Causewayed Ring Ditch, the Avenue, perhaps the Southern Enclosure, and the Long Barrow). There is little sign that people lived here, rather that they lived nearby, possibly on the valley sides, pasturing their herds among the monuments and visiting them more formally when occasion demanded. For the next 500 years or more, both people and their animals seem to have come to the valley bottom less often. Trees grew on and around some of the monuments; late Neolithic artefacts were scarce; and the only site definitely dated to this period was the Riverside Structure, a timber platform at the edge of a channel of the Nene, into an upper layer of which cattle bones and a couple of human long bones were either washed by the river or deliberately deposited. The focus of ceremonial activity may have shifted to a little-understood monument, the Cotton ‘Henge’, which survives as two concentric ditches on the occupied valley side.

By about 2200 Cal BC the valley was more heavily grazed and less wooded than ever before. At this stage, monumentbuilding accelerated. Except for the Segmented Ditch Circle, the new monuments were round barrows – at least 20 in all, nine of which were excavated. Two of them covered post- and stake settings. Unlike the earlier monuments, almost all contained burials, some of them richly furnished. The most outstanding is a male inhumation in Barrow 1, accompanied by numerous artefacts, some of them exotic, covered first by a limestone cairn, and then by a heap of about 200 cattle skulls, which were already defleshed when brought to the grave. The barrows were progressively enlarged, as cremation gradually became the normal burial rite. The valley bottom remained uninhabited, while settlement on the valley sides became more marked and activity began to extend onto the surrounding Boulder Clay plateau. Cremations continued to be buried in and around the mounds down to about 1000 Cal BC, by which time two overlapping systems of paddocks and droveways had been laid out. The terrace began to be settled when these had gone out of use, in the early 1st millennium Cal BC.

Résumé

Au cours du projet d'étude de la région de Raunds, et des excavations qui ont suivi, on a examiné quelques 3,5 km du fond de la vallée de la Nene, y compris plus de vingt monuments, datant du néolithique et de l'âge du bronze, dont la plupart était demeurée jusque là dissimulée par une archéologie postérieure et des alluvions datant de la période saxonne et du début du Moyen-Âge. Les premiers indices consistent en une légère présence humaine au début de l'Holocène, qui s'est progressivement accentuée. Dès environ 5000 ans cal av. J.-C., un endroit, à la confluence de la Nene et d'un de ses affluents, constituait depuis longtemps une halte régulière, où on débitait le silex et où on rejetait des outils, propres à toute une variété de tâches domestiques, une fois qu'ils étaient émoussés et qu'on en avait fini avec eux.

A l'extérieur de ce site, il y avait des signes d'activité intermittente tout au long de cette vallée bien boisée. Peu après 4000 ans cal av. J.-C. des objets manufacturés néolithiques commencèrent à être rejetés à cette même confluence et, en l'espace de quelques centaines d'années, on y avait construit un site remarquable, le '*Long Mound*' (Long Tertre), d'environ 135 mètres de long sur 18 mètres de large et peut-être 1,5 mètres de haut. Ses dimensions signifient qu'il se pourrait qu'il soit le résultat d'un travail collectif, rassemblant peut-être cinquante ou cent personnes. En fait, la disposition des trous de pieux que l'on a trouvés en-dessous, donne à penser qu'il était divisé en compartiments, délimités par des claires, il se pourrait que chacun de ceux-ci ait été construit par un groupe différent. L'ouvrage était construit de mottes de gazon, levées sur une aire d'environ 100 m. sur 100 m. qui ne pouvait être autre chose que le résultat de pâturage. En d'autres termes, on élevait du bétail vers environ 3800 ans cal av. J.-C., et les animaux avaient déjà commencé à modifier la végétation. Trois autres monuments, le '*Long Barrow*' (Long Tumulus), la partie nord du '*Turf Mound*' (Tertre à Mottes de Gazon) et l'*'Avenue'*, furent également construits dans la première moitié du 4^{ème} millénaire.

Les plantes, les insectes et le pollen provenant des fonds imbibés d'eau des fossés du '*Long Mound*' indiquaient qu'il se dressait dans une clairière légèrement pâturée dans un bois récemment dégagé. Des graines de pavots à opium viennent augmenter la gamme d'espèces de plantes, originaires du Proche-Orient, introduites en Grande-Bretagne au 4^{ème} millénaire. Se trouvaient également dans le fossé des amas de copeaux et de morceaux de bois rejetés, provenant de la construction du revêtement. La tête de hache en silex utilisée pour accomplir cette tâche avait été laissée sur place, son côté tranchant, bossué et endommagé, correspondant exactement à certaines des traces de coupe sur le bois. A l'extrémité plus étroite et plus basse du tertre se trouvait une chambre funéraire, construite en petites dalles de calcaire, dans laquelle

on a découvert des fragments, qui avaient été exposés aux éléments, d'un seul os long humain.

Dès 3000 ans cal av.J.-C. une chaîne de cinq ou six monuments différents s'étendait le long de la rive (le *Long Mound*, le *Long Enclosure*, le *Turf Mound*, le *Causewayed Ring Ditch*, l'*Avenue*, et peut-être le *Southern Enclosure* et le *Long Barrow*). Il n'existe que très peu de témoignages de la présence de populations à cet endroit, il est plus probable qu'elles habitaient à proximité, peut-être sur les versants de la vallée, faisant paître leurs troupeaux parmi les monuments et s'y rendant plus cérémonieusement quand les circonstances l'exigeaient. Pendant les cinq cents années qui ont suivi, voire plus, il semble que populations et animaux soient tous deux venus moins souvent au fond de la vallée. Des arbres poussèrent sur et autour de certains des monuments; les objets manufacturés de la fin du néolithique étaient rares, et le seul site qui date, sans aucun doute, de cette période était la *Riverside Structure* (Structure de Bord de Rivière), une plateforme en bois, au bord d'un chenal de la Nene, dans une couche supérieure de laquelle furent apportés par la rivière, ou déposés délibérément, des ossements de bétail et une paire d'os longs humains. Il se peut que le foyer des activités cérémonielles se soit déplacé vers un monument mal compris, le *Cotton 'Henge'*, qui a survécu sous la forme de deux fossés concentriques sur le versant occupé de la vallée.

Dès environ 2200 ans cal av. J.-C. la vallée était plus intensément pâturée et moins boisée qu'à aucune autre période de son histoire. A ce stade, la construction de monuments s'accéléra. Mis à part le *Segmented Ditch Circle* (Cercle à Fossé Interrompu), les nouveaux monuments consistaient en tumulus ronds, – au moins vingt – dont neuf furent excavés. Deux d'entre ces tumulus couvraient des emplacements à poteaux et pieux. Contrairement aux monuments plus anciens, presque tous contenaient des sépultures, dont certaines étaient accompagnées d'un riche mobilier. La plus remarquable était une sépulture mâle dans le *Barrow 1*, accompagnée de nombreux objets, certains exotiques, recouverte d'abord d'un cairn calcaire, puis d'un tas d'environ deux cents crânes de bétail, qui avaient été décharnés avant d'être apportés sur la tombe. Les tumulus furent progressivement agrandis, au fur et à mesure que l'incinération devenait le rite funéraire normal. Le fond de la vallée resta inhabité, tandis que l'occupation des flancs de la vallée devenait plus marquée et que l'activité commençait à déborder sur le plateau de Boulder Clay. On continua à enterrer les incinérations dans et autour des tertres jusqu'à environ 1000 ans cal av. J.-C., date à laquelle deux systèmes concomitants d'enclos à animaux et de chemins de passage de bétail avaient été mis en place. La terrasse commença à être occupée quand ceux-ci furent devenus caducs, au début du 1^{er} millénaire av. J.-C..

Traduction: Annie Pritchard

Zusammenfassung

Im Zuge des Raunds Area Projekts und der damit verbundenen Ausgrabungsarbeiten wurden an die 3,5 km der Bodenfläche des Nene-Tales untersucht. Dazu gehörten auch mehr als 20 Grabmäler aus Neolithikum und Bronzezeit, von denen die meisten in der Zwischenzeit durch spätere archäologische Arbeiten und durch sächsische und mittelalterliche Ablagerungen verdeckt worden waren. Die Aufzeichnungen beginnen mit einer spärlichen menschlichen Präsenz im frühen Holozän, die allmählich zunahm. Um etwa 5.000 v. Chr. hatte sich eine Stelle am Zusammenlauf von Nene und einem Nebenfluss zu einer regelmäßigen Lagerstätte entwickelt, wo Feuerstein gebrochen und Werkzeuge für die verschiedensten häuslichen Zwecke weggeworfen wurden, nachdem sie stumpf und unbrauchbar geworden waren. Auch über diese Stelle hinaus sind über die gesamte Länge des bewaldeten Tales hin immer wieder Nachweise menschlicher Aktivität zu finden.

Bald nach 4.000 v. Chr. wurden am selben Zusammenfluss neolithische Artefakte entsorgt und es entstand im Lauf einiger Jahrhunderte eine Wall-Graben-Anlage, Long Mound genannt, mit einer Länge von ca. 135 Metern, einer Breite von 18 Metern und einer Höhe von etwa 1,5 Metern. Aufgrund ihrer Größe ist anzunehmen, dass es sich dabei um ein Gemeinschaftsprojekt gehandelt hat, an dem an die funfzig bis hundert Menschen beteiligt waren. Die tiefliegenden Pfahllöcher lassen darauf schließen, dass der Wall-Graben in durch Flechtwerk getrennte Abteilungen unterteilt war, von denen eine jede möglicherweise von einer anderen Gruppe gebaut worden war. Errichtet wurde der Wall-Graben auf einer Rasenfläche, die aus einem etwa 100m x 100m großen Areal geschnitten wurde, bei dem es sich zweifelsohne um Weideland gehandelt haben muss. Das bedeutet in anderen Worten, dass die Menschen um 3.800 v. Chr. bereits Vieh gehalten haben, das zu diesem Zeitpunkt begonnen hatte, die Vegetation zu verändern. Drei weitere Grabmäler, Long Barrow, der nördliche Teil von Turf Mound und Avenue, wurden ebenfalls in der ersten Hälfte des vierten Jahrtausends errichtet.

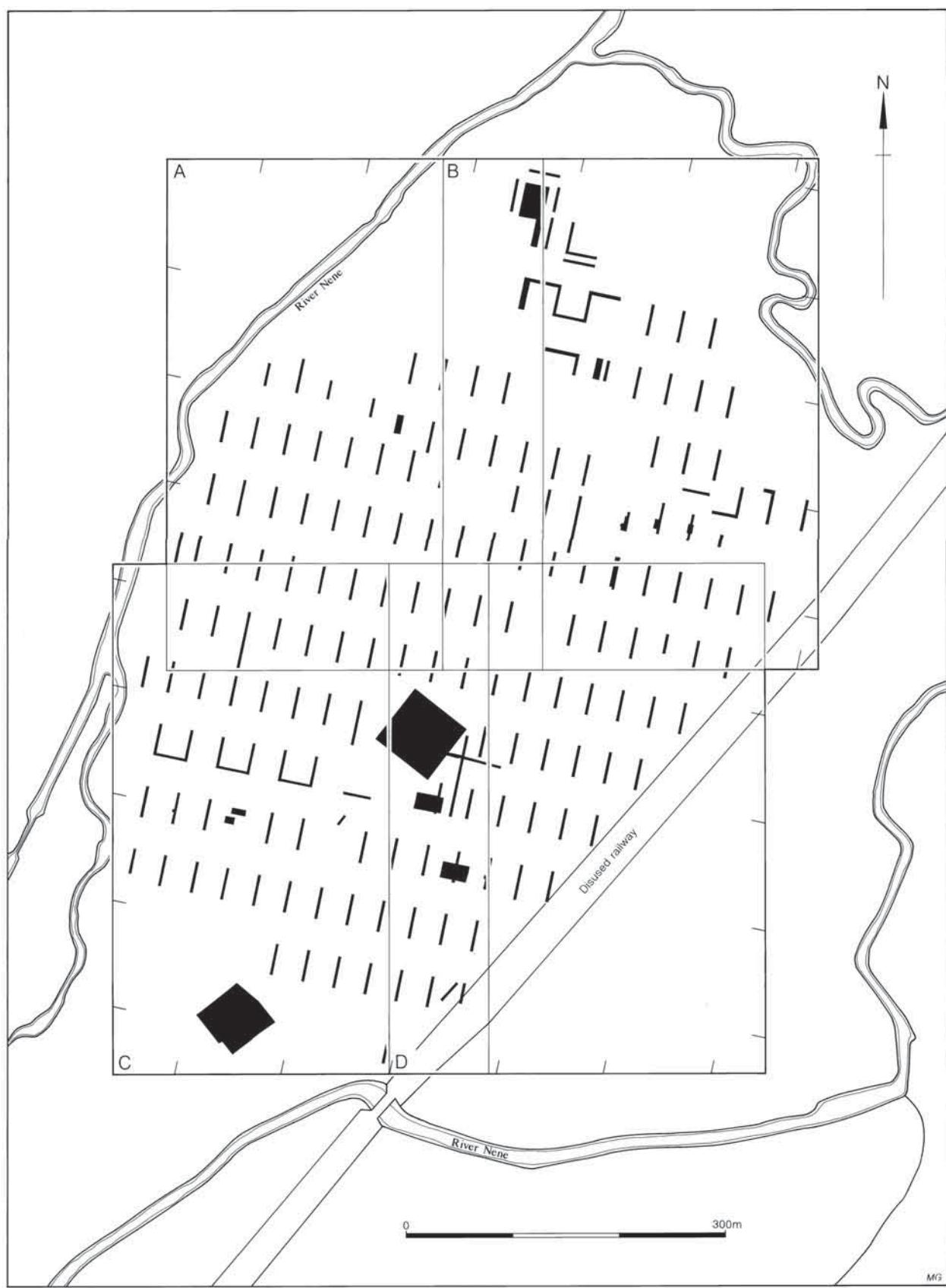
Pflanzen, Insekten und Pollen im wasserdurchtränkten Boden der Gräben des Long Barrow weisen darauf hin, dass das Hugelgrab auf der leicht abgegrasten Lichtung einer jungst abgeholt Waldung stand. Mit den Samen des Opiummohns wird das Spektrum der nahöstlichen Pflanzenarten, die im vierten Jahrtausend auf den britischen Inseln eingeführt wurden, noch erweitert. Im Graben befanden sich außerdem Holzteilchen und Schnittabfälle vom Bau der Auskleidungen. Eine zu diesem Zweck verwendete Flintaxt war im Hugelgrab zurückgeblieben. Ihre abgenutzte und lädierte Schnittkante passt genau in einige der Schnitte im Holz. Das schmälere, niedrigere Ende des Hugelgrabes war eine aus kleinen Kalksteinplatten gefugte Grabkammer, in der die verwitterten

Fragmente eines einzigen menschlichen Röhrenknochens gefunden wurden.

Um 3.000 v. Chr. erstreckte sich bereits eine Reihe von fünf bis sechs verschiedenen Grabmälern entlang dem Flussufer (Long Mound, Long Enclosure, Turf Mound, Causewayed Ring Ditch, Avenue, möglicherweise Southern Enclosure und Long Barrow). Es gibt kaum Anzeichen dafür, dass Menschen hier gelebt haben. Wahrscheinlicher ist, dass sie sich in der Nähe, möglicherweise an den Talseiten, ansiedelt hatten und ihre Herden zwischen den Grabmälern weiden ließen. Die Grabmäler besuchten sie dann zu den jeweils dafür bestimmten Anlässen. Es hat den Anschein, dass Mensch und Vieh während der nachfolgenden fünf Jahrhunderte und auch etwas später, den Talboden weniger oft aufsuchten. Um die Grabmäler herum und auf diesen wuchsen Bäume, und Artefakte aus spät-neolithischer Zeit sind selten. Die einzige Stätte, die auf diese Zeit zurückgeht, ist die Riverside Structure, eine hölzerne Plattform am Ufer eines Kanals der Nene, wo in einer oberen Lage Rinderknochen und etliche menschliche Röhrenknochen gefunden wurden, die entweder vom Flusswasser angeschwemmt oder absichtlich dorthin verbracht wurden. Das Zentrum der zeremoniellen Aktivitäten hatte sich möglicherweise auf ein bisher noch wenig verstandenes Monument, das Cotton 'Henge', verlagert, das auf der bewohnten Talseite als zwei konzentrische Gräben überdauert hat.

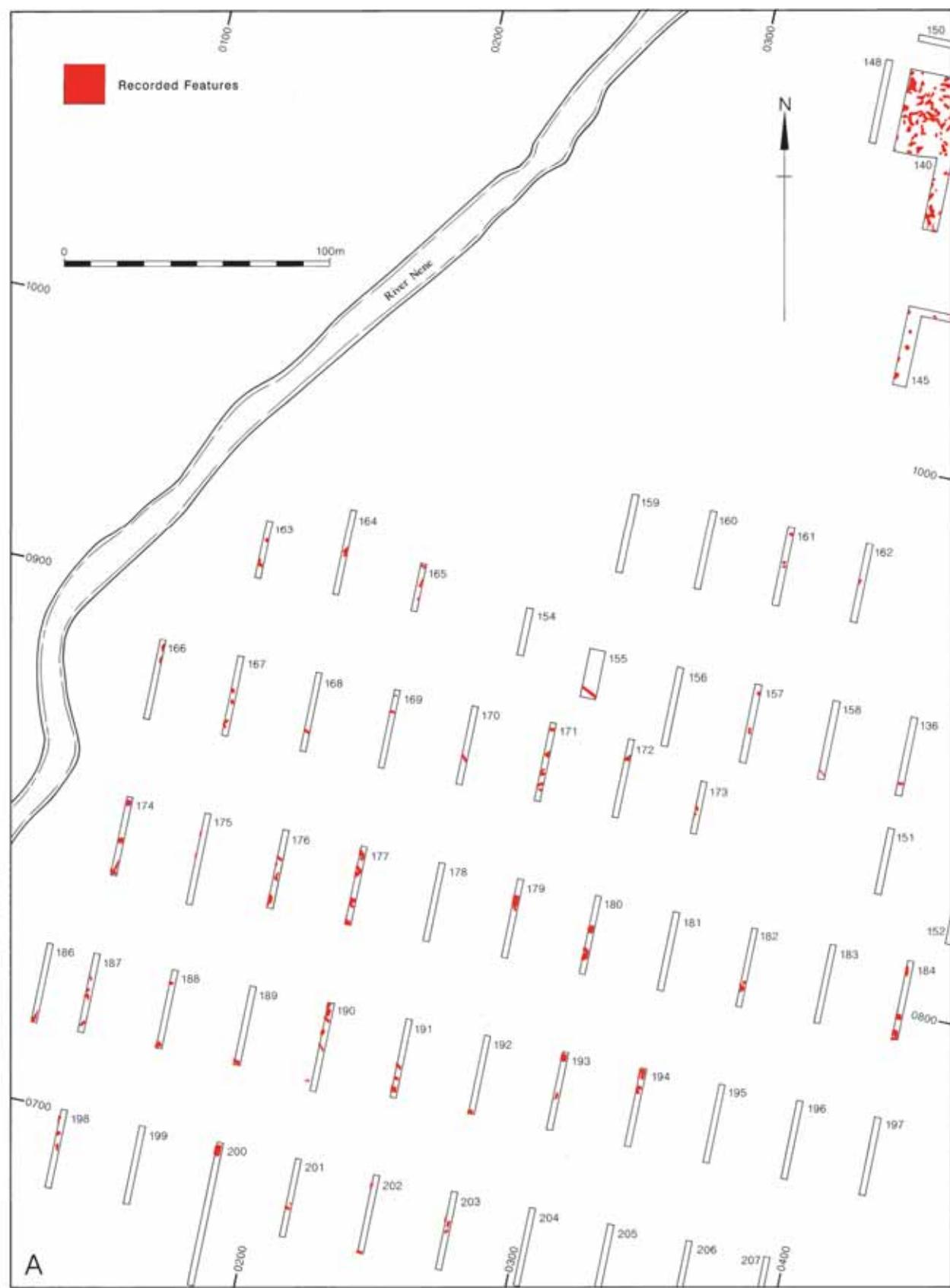
Um etwa 2.000 v. Chr. war das Tal bereits stärker abgegrast und weniger bewaldet als früher. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt nahm der Bau von Grabmälern zu. Außer dem Segmented Ditch Circle handelte es sich bei den neuen Monumenten um runde Hugelgräber, von denen mindestens 29 ausgegraben wurden. Zwei davon hatten einen Pfeilerunterbau. Im Gegensatz zu den früheren Grabmälern enthielten fast alle Grabüberreste, von denen einige reich ausgestattet waren. Vorrangig darunter ist eine männliche Hockerbestattung in Barrow 1, umgeben von zahlreichen Artefakten, einige davon recht exotischer Art, die zuerst von einem Hügel aus Kalksteinen und dann von einem Haufen von etwa 200 Rinderschädeln abgedeckt war, wobei die Schädel bereits abgefleischt waren, bevor sie in das Grab kamen. Als die Leichenverbrennung zum üblichen Beisetzungsritus geworden war, wurden die Hugelgräber nach und nach vergrößert. Der Talboden blieb weiterhin unbewohnt, während die Siedlungen an den Talseiten zunahmen und sich schließlich auch auf das umliegende Tillitplateau ausbreiteten. Bis etwa 1.000 v. Chr. wurden die Feuerbestattungen in den oder um die Grabhügel herum beigesetzt, und zu diesem Zeitpunkt waren auch bereits zwei einander überschneidende Systeme von Gehegen und Viehpfaden angelegt worden. Die Terrasse wurde im ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr. allmählich besiedelt, nachdem diese Systeme nicht mehr genutzt wurden.

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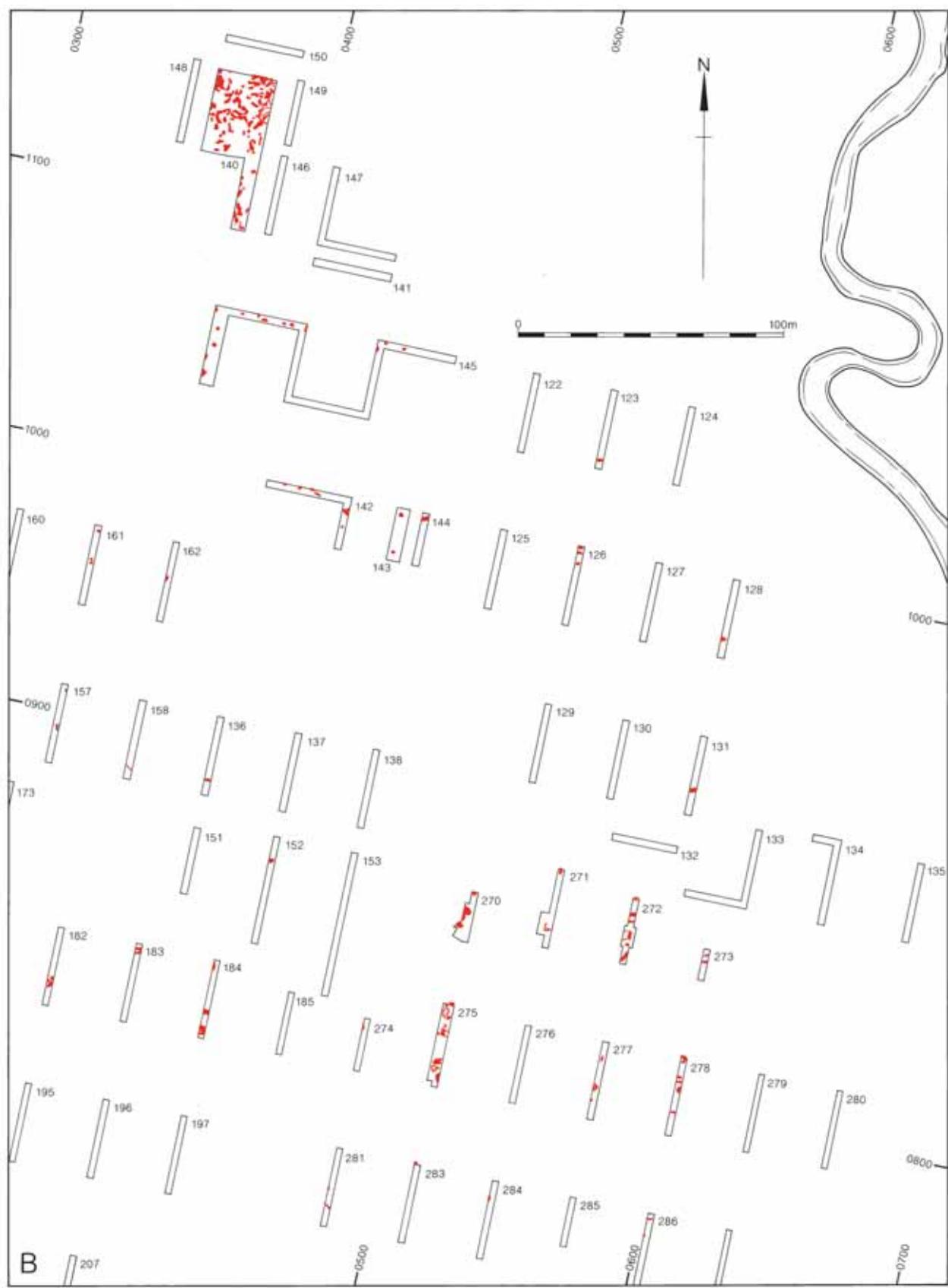


SS1.1 Irthlingborough Island. Key to trench plans

A NEOLITHIC AND BRONZE AGE LANDSCAPE IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

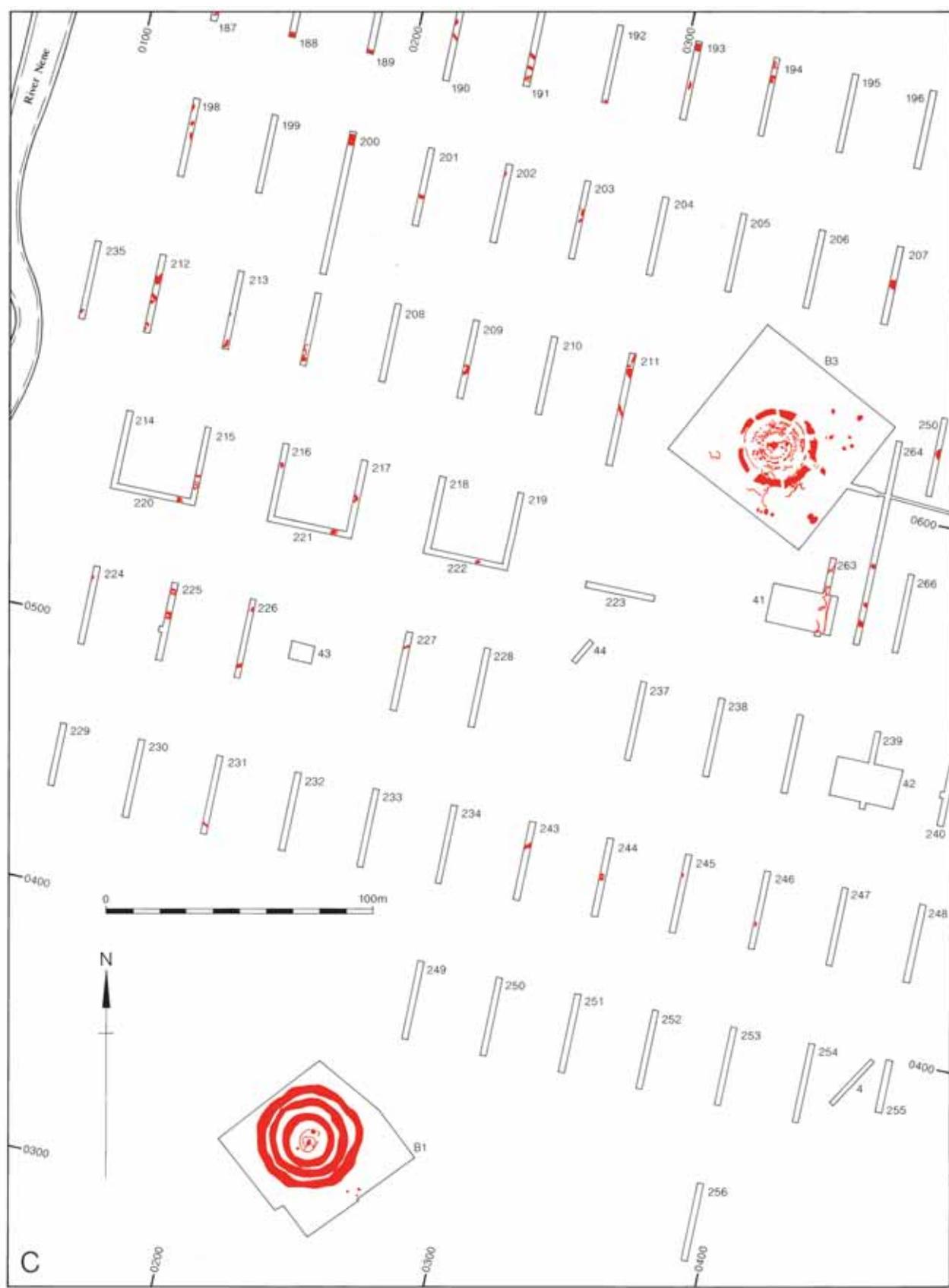


SS1.2 Irthingborough Island. Trenches in north-west

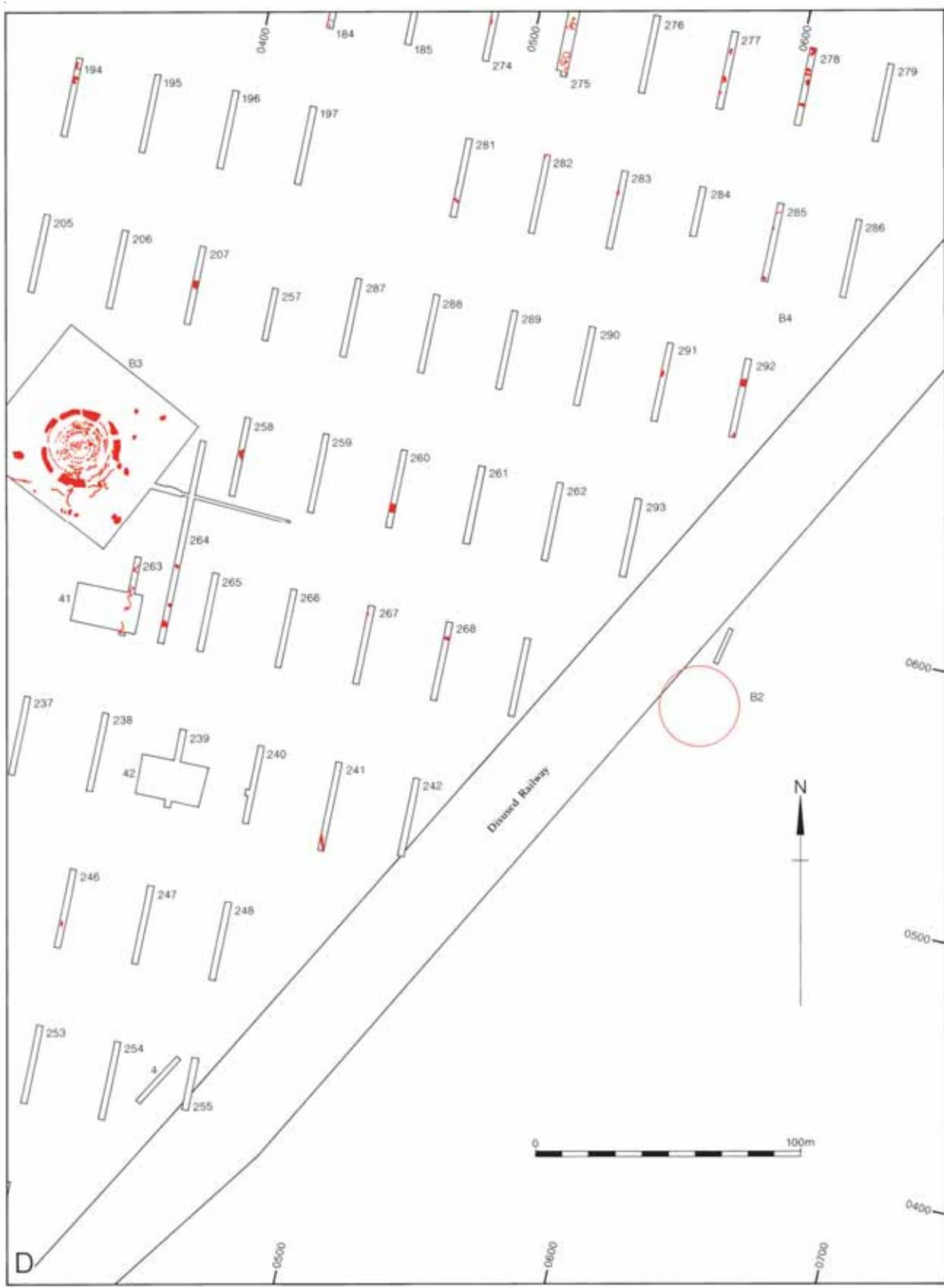


SS1.3 Irthlingborough Island. Trenches in north-east

A NEOLITHIC AND BRONZE AGE LANDSCAPE IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



SS1.4 Irthingborough Island. Trenches in south-west



SS1.5 Irthingborough Island. Trenches in south-east

A note on radiocarbon dates

Simple calibrations, which relate the radiocarbon measurements directly to the calendrical time scale, have been calculated using the dataset published by Stuiver *et al* (1998) and the computer program Oxcal version 3.5 (Bronk Ramsey 1995; 1998; forthcoming). The calibrated date ranges cited in normal type have been calculated according to maximum intercept method of Stuiver and Reimer (1986). They are quoted at 95% confidence in the form recommended by Mook (1986), with end points rounded outwards to ten years. The estimated date ranges quoted in italics are derived from the mathematical modelling of the archaeological chronology and are posterior density estimates (SS6). Laboratory numbers are quoted in italics where they refer to posterior density estimates, and in normal type where they refer to samples or to simple calibrated date ranges. Weighted means have been taken from replicate measurements before calibration (Ward and Wilson 1978).

Note sur la datation à radiocarbone

De simples calibrations, qui font correspondre les mesures au radiocarbone directement à l'échelle calendaire, ont été calculées avec l'aide de données publiées par Stuiver et al (1998) et du programme informatique Oxcal version 3.5 (Bronk Ramsey, 1995; 1998; à paraître). Les gammes de dates calibrées données en caractères normaux ont été calculées suivant la méthode d'inclusion maximum de Stuiver et Reimer (1986). Elles sont citées avec un taux de confiance de 95% sous la forme recommandée par Mook (1986), les extrémités étant arrondies vers l'extérieur à la dizaine d'années. Les gammes de dates estimées citées en italiques sont dérivées d'un modèle mathématique de chronologie archéologique et sont des estimations de densité postérieure (SS6). Les nombres du laboratoire sont cités en italiques quand ils renvoient à des estimations de densité postérieure, et en caractères normaux quand ils renvoient à des échantillons ou à de simples gammes de dates calibrées. Les moyennes pondérées proviennent de mesures répliquées avant calibration (Ward et Wilson 1978).

Traduction: Annie Pritchard

Anmerkungen zur Radiocarbondatierung

Einfache Kalibrierungen, die einen direkten Zusammenhang zwischen den Radiocarbon-Messungen und der kalendarischen Zeitmessung herstellen, wurden anhand des von Stuiver u. a. (1998) veröffentlichten Datensatzes und des Oxcal Computerprogramms Version 3.5 (Bronk Ramsey 1995; 1998; erscheint demnächst) errechnet. Die in Normalschrift angegebenen kalibrierten Datenspannen wurden gemäß der Maximum Intercept Methode von Stuiver und Reimer (1986) errechnet. Sie werden mit einer statistischen Sicherheit von 95 % in der von Mook (1986) empfohlenen Form angegeben, wobei die Endpunkte auf die nachfolgenden zehn Jahre aufgerundet wurden. Die in Kursivschrift gegebenen Datenschätzungen wurden der mathematischen Modellierung der archäologischen Chronologie abgeleitet und sind a-posteriori-Schätzungen (SS6). Labornummern erscheinen kursiv, sofern sie sich auf a-posteriori-Schätzungen beziehen, und in Normalschrift, wenn es sich um Momentwerte oder einfache kalibrierte Datenbereiche handelt. Gewichtete Mittel wurden vor der Kalibrierung von Wiederholungsmaßen errechnet (Ward and Wilson 1978).

Übersetzung: Ingrid Price-Gschlössl
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	Loam
	Silt
	Clay
	Sand
	Gravel
	Mound Material
	Later Disturbance
	Projected feature
	Bone (in sections)
	Pottery (in sections)
	Carbonised timber
	Site grid point 355 620
	Position of section
	Limit of excavation

SS1.6 Principal plan and section conventions

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