2
The Monuments and Their Setting

by Mark Corney and Andrew Payne

The sites examined provide a representative regional sample of those sites traditionally classified as hillforts in the Wessex region. The range of sizes, from small univallate enclosures such as Alfred's Castle and Oliver's Camp, to fully developed multivallate hillforts like Castle Ditches, encompasses the full spectrum of regional morphology. A substantial majority (12 out the 18 sites surveyed) of the hillforts are highly visible monuments located on or close to the limits of chalk, on escarpment with extensive views across 'off-chalk' vales. This locational trend underscores at least one key aspect of many hillforts as centres that, however their function changed through time, appear designed to be seen from a considerable distance and to exploit a range of topographic, economic and social systems.

The sites examined display a wide range of distinctive morphological features. The results of the study are presented below on a site by site basis arranged by County with individual sections on the visible surface characteristics of each site, the landscape setting and the sub-surface evidence derived from geophysical survey. The entry for each site is preceded by a summary of the main site attributes. Broader discussion of all the sites examined at a regional level will be found below on pp 131–43.

Berkshire

Perborough Castle: Cow Down, Compton; NGR SU 520 780

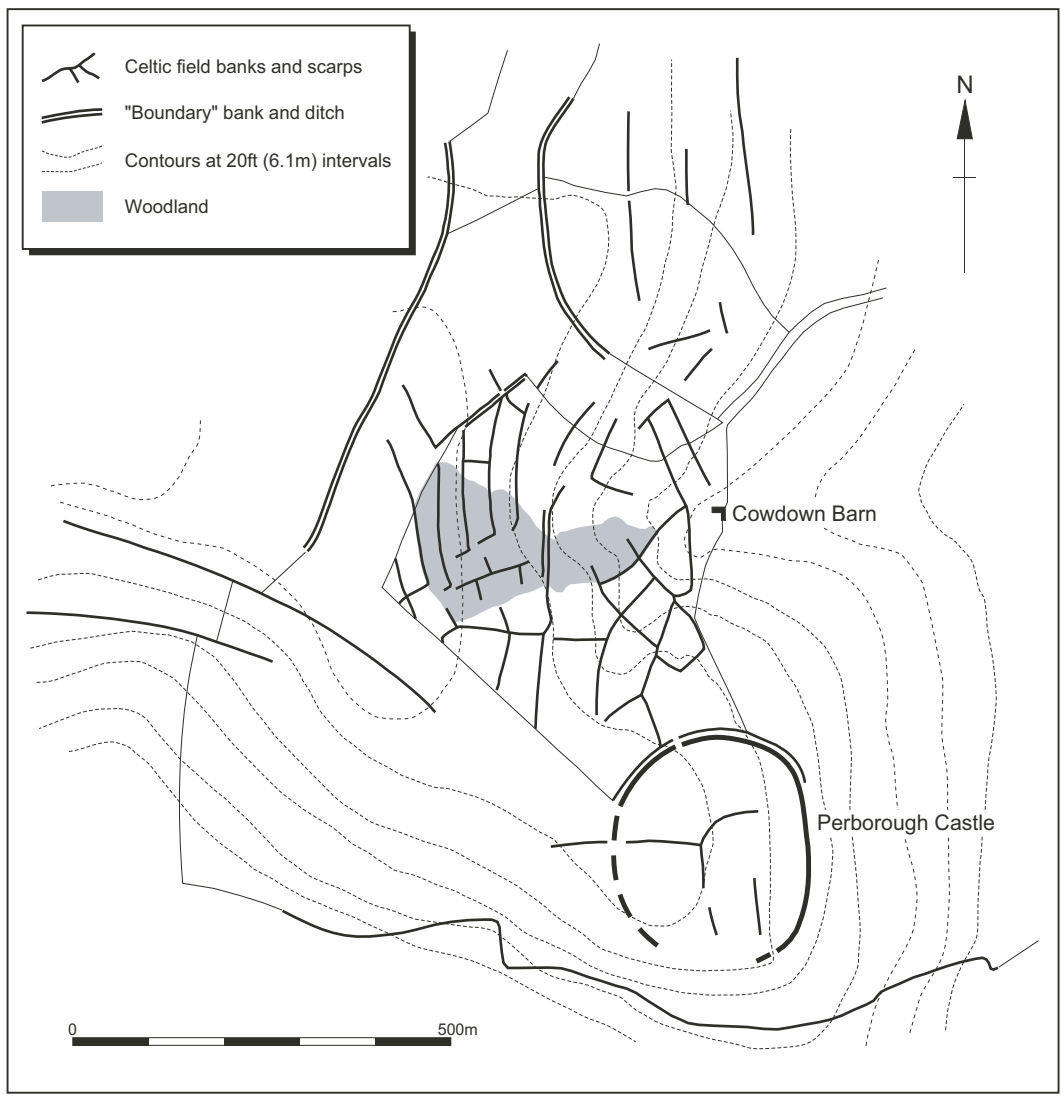
Summary
Date of survey:
23 July to 2 August 1996
Landuse at time of survey:
Rough grassland/set-a-side
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk (soft white chalk with many flint nodules)
Soil Association:
343h – Andover 1 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk on slopes and crests. Striped soil patterns locally.
Approximate area enclosed:
6 hectares (15 acres)
Planform:
Oval
Form of ramparts:
Around most of the circuit the defences consist of a simple scarp sloping down from the interior. The defences are more pronounced or survive better along the northern side of the site where they cross the more level neck of the promontory. Here they consist of a bank, ditch and counterscarp (or secondary outer bank). The defences around the southern and western sides of the site have been largely ploughed out.
Entrance features:
There is a single entrance on the northern side of the fort in the form of a simple gap in the banks and a causeway across the ditch. Other entrances may not be recognisable because of the destruction of two-thirds of the perimeter earthworks by ploughing.
Previous finds:
32 sherds of Early Iron Age pottery (hand made dull red paste containing medium calcined flints, jars with rounded shoulders and finger tip impressions – type identified by Cotton as 'Southern Second A culture'), two fragments of a possible Middle Iron Age ('Southern Second B culture') saucepan pot, Roman pottery (type not identified)
Previous recorded excavation:
c 1839 by 'Matthews'; field observations, Hewett 1844; field survey Wood and Hardy 1962
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
Berkshire 121
County SMR No.:
01026. 01. 000
Project site code:
WHSP Site 1

Morphology and setting

Perborough Castle (Fig 2.1) is a univallate enclosure of approximately 6ha (15 acres) located on a south-east facing spur overlooking the upper reaches of the River Pang.

Immediately north of the hillfort are the extensive remains of a field system, remmnants of which still survive as slight earthworks in unploughed grassland. Air photography and limited field survey (Wood and Hardy 1962) suggests that this field system pre-dates the hillfort and that it covered an area of at least 70ha (Bradley and Richards 1978, fig 7.6; Richards 1978). The remains consist of regular lynchets running with the contours and cross-contour banks. The fragmentary outlines of about 40 fields each about an acre (0.4ha) in extent and short-oblong in shape are apparent (Fig 2.2). To the north the block of fields appears to be constrained by a series of major linear earthworks in the form of banks bounded by ditches or a ditch between banks. These works may mark the boundary of the field system.

Fig 2.1
Aerial view of Perborough Castle from the east. The field system on Cow Down is visible in the background and the centre right of the photograph (NMRC; NMR 15580/23, SU 5278/14, 1996).



After Wood and Hardy 1962

Fig 2.2
Plan of Perborough Castle and the adjacent field system on Cow Down that partially underlies the hillfort (from Wood and Hardy 1962).

Despite the recent damage to the monument the rampart can be seen to belong to the class of hillfort that is constructed in a series of straight lengths with markedly angular changes of alignment. In the case of Perborough this may be influenced by the presence of the earlier field system (*see below*, page pp 138). On a number of air photographs the remains of a field lynchet within the hillfort can be seen in the interior, set at approximately 90° to a major rampart alignment change on the west side of the circuit (cf NMR SU 5277/2; 15580/24).

Despite the well-preserved nature of the archaeological landscape surrounding Perborough Castle, the hillfort itself is in a very poor condition, the defences having been erased by ploughing around much of the circuit of the enclosure. The defensive circuit is best preserved on the northern side of the site where it runs through an isolated area of unploughed pasture. The interior of the earthwork was deep ploughed in the Second World War and was continuously cultivated until quite recently (Wood and Hardy 1962). Antiquarian records state that prior to the modern ploughing, the interior had contained earthworks suggesting settlement and related features (Hewett 1844). Some caution should be exercised in accepting the 19th-century interpretation, as some of the earthworks are most likely vestiges of the earlier field system that underlies the hillfort. Additionally it must be noted that the magnetometer survey suggests little intensive settlement within the hillfort. It was not possible at the time of the geophysical survey to confirm whether these minor earthwork features are still extant within the fort because of tall vegetation cover, but they might remain observable in more favourable ground conditions. Five large circular hollows visible on the ground inside the hillfort are probably marl pits. Similar hollows occur elsewhere in the locality and are therefore unlikely to be directly associated with the original use of the hillfort.

Pottery recovered from field survey (Wood and Hardy 1962) includes material that would be comfortable in a 6th–5th century BC bracket with little material of later Iron Age date. This would suggest that Perborough Castle falls into the category of an Early Iron Age univallate fort that passed from use by the Middle Iron Age – a trend confirmed by the lack of evidence for intensive settlement in the interior. Romano-British settlement remains and stray finds of this period (including a 4th-century AD coin hoard) are known from Cow Down, 400m north of Perborough Castle (Peake 1931; Richards 1978).

Geophysical Survey (Figs 2.3–2.4)

i) Objectives.

Perborough Castle would appear to represent an example of a simple, medium sized, univallate hillfort of a type commonly constructed in Wessex during the Early Iron Age. The purpose of the magnetometer survey was to attempt to characterise the nature of any internal activity, test for characteristics in common with other neighbouring hillforts in the Ridgeway group of hillforts and identify any recurring patterns of internal spatial organisation associated with such univallate forts. The site is not easily accessible to the public, being privately owned, and therefore possesses little scope for geophysics to contribute to improving visitor interpretation. There were, however, strong arguments for including the site in the survey programme on management grounds because of the long history of ploughing that has contributed to the current degraded state of the monument.

ii) Results.

Across large areas of the site, the magnetic signal is subdued and undisturbed suggesting an absence of archaeological features, but some possible archaeological activity in the form of loose clusters of pit-type features has been detected with a particular concentration around the western to southern periphery of the enclosed area. The central part of the site is distinguished by a relative absence of magnetic anomalies. This may be an indication that a greater amount of agricultural erosion of archaeological layers has taken place in the central area compared to the extremities of the site, but could also be a genuine reflection of the original pattern of occupation. The activity at Perborough is defined by around 100 localised positive anomalies, most of which are likely to represent pits and short lengths of ditch or gully. As at many of the hillfort sites surveyed, some of the pits are clustered tightly together in groups with intervening larger gaps between other pit groups. The density and clustering of pits is quite similar to the patterning seen at other hillforts where occupation was largely restricted to the Early Iron Age and short-lived, such as Uffington Castle and Woolbury. Another similarity with Uffington is the possible presence of some four-poster type

structures mapped at several locations inside Perborough. Other examples of such structures may have been truncated by ploughing resulting in a low detection rate. The tendency for the pits at Perborough to concentrate towards the periphery of the enclosure is reminiscent of the magnetometer survey results obtained from Norsebury Ring (this volume), where the central area of the hillfort was likewise largely left free of pits. There is no geophysical evidence for the presence of a ditched enclosure in the south-east corner of Perborough Castle as suggested by Wood and Hardy (1962), although there is a concentration of anomalous magnetic activity within this area.

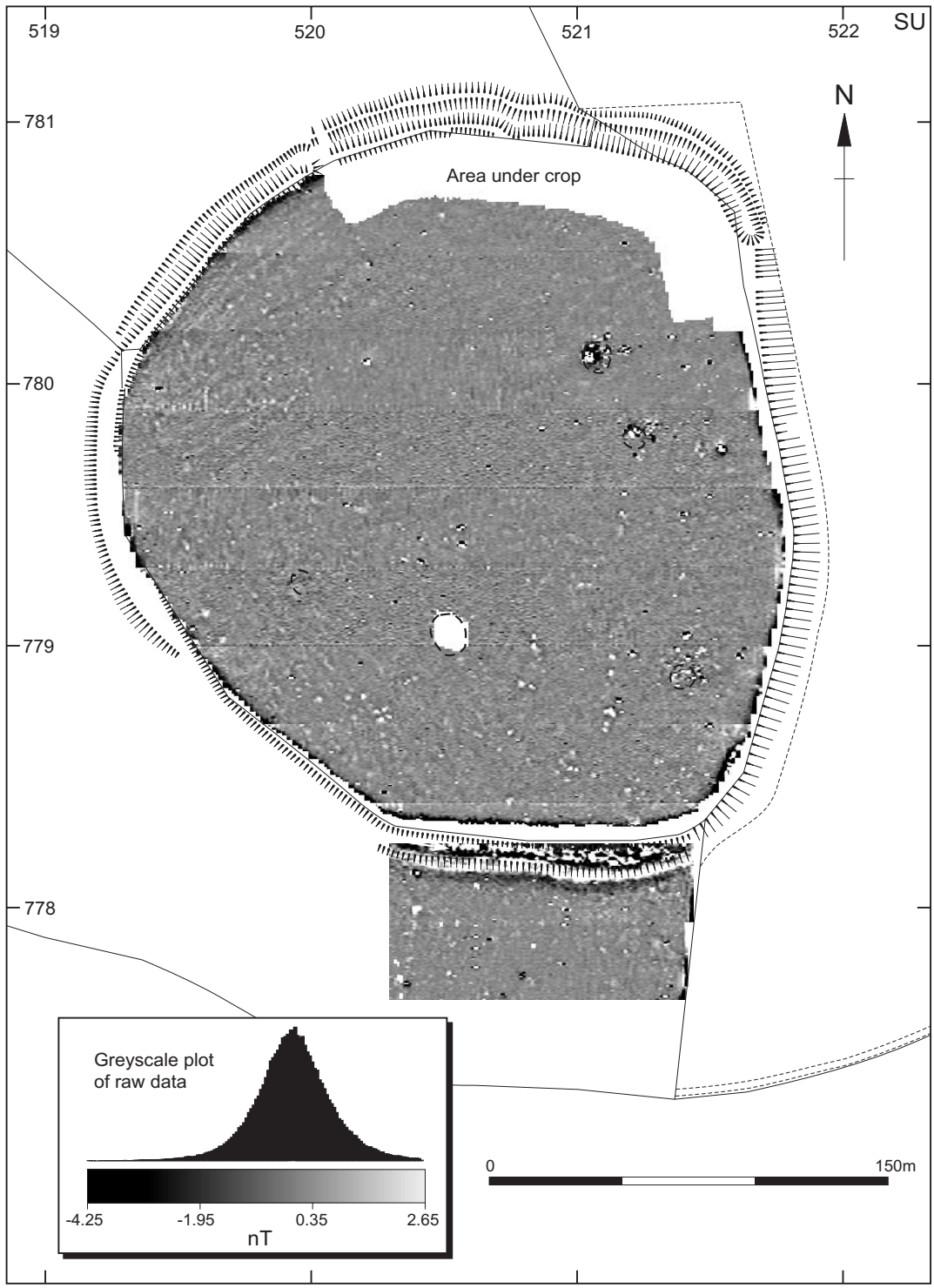


Fig 2.3
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Perborough Castle shown in relation to the plan of the hillfort earthworks.

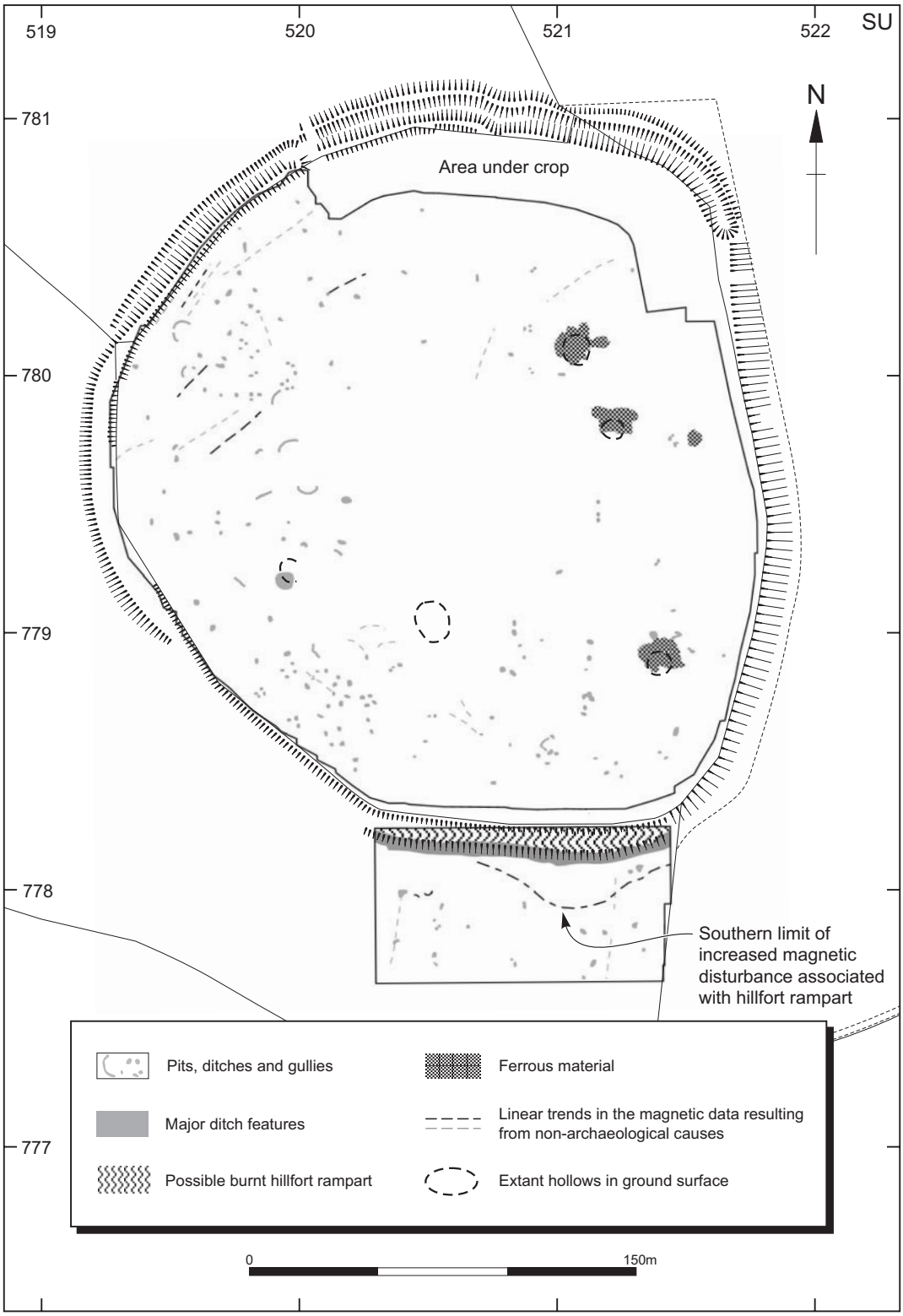


Fig 2.4
Interpretation of the magnetometer data from Perborough Castle.

The northernmost part of the hillfort interior had to be excluded from the magnetometer survey due to crop cover. The omission of this area inside the hillfort enabled some additional survey to be carried out immediately outside the hillfort to the south in order to test for the presence of external features (suggested by aerial photographic evidence; for example NMR 7093 929, source: Ashmolean Museum) and to

examine a section of the degraded defences. The magnetic signal from the bank and ditch of the hillfort is much higher than would be expected from a chalk or earth built rampart suggesting the presence of considerable quantities of burnt material in the make up of the bank and the fill of the ditch. The positive magnetic signal from the bank ranges from 25–50 nanotesla (nT) bracketed by a negative trough of up to –15nT. The positive component of the anomaly is generally double-peaked, suggestive of discrete parallel structures within the rampart. The anomaly from the adjacent ditch averages at about a 16nT positive deviation from background readings, again unusually pronounced for a chalk cut ditch with a typical infill of weathered material. A possible interpretation of these results is that the defences of the hillfort may have been fired and subjected to intense heating at some time in the past – perhaps in antiquity. The extremely pronounced and variable response over the rampart certainly suggests an element of thermo-remanent magnetisation acquired during an episode of intense heating. An area of generalised magnetic disturbance extends for a distance of up to 20m south from the hillfort ditch, suggesting the incorporation of redeposited burnt material from the rampart and ditch into the topsoil in the field beyond the rampart by ploughing. This hypothetical burning of the defences would merit further investigation by magnetic susceptibility and perhaps archaeomagnetic measurements. The presence of a possible burnt rampart has also recently been recognised at the hillfort of Cissbury Ring in West Sussex, also based on evidence provided by a magnetometer survey (Payne 2001). Crickley Hill provides an excavated example of a fired rampart in Southern Britain (Dixon 1994). The new evidence from Perborough Castle raises the possibility that burnt ramparts are more common in this area than has previously been appreciated.

In the sample of the field to the south of the hillfort defences, a number of localised positive magnetic anomalies are present. Those to the south form an alignment suggesting a response to a former field boundary but overall there is not any coherent pattern. The majority of the anomalies could indicate more pits cut into the subsoil but could equally represent natural pockets of clay within a chalky matrix. The density of the anomalies in the area outside the hillfort defences is not significantly lower than inside the hillfort, and if they do represent archaeological activity might indicate a spread of occupation not constrained to the hillfort and possibly pre-dating the construction of the hillfort defences. Pre-hillfort phases of unenclosed occupation activity have already been recognised at St Catherine's Hill and to a lesser extent at Danebury.

Conclusions

The magnetometer survey has produced clear evidence of occupation within the fort, although judging from the density of the features mapped this does not appear to have been particularly intense or prolonged. This would fit with the pottery evidence which suggests that the main episode of occupation was limited to the Early Iron Age with perhaps more sporadic use in later periods. This interpretation is supported by the smaller quantities of later Iron Age and Roman material recovered from the site and the probable presence of Romano-British settlement on the adjacent area of Cow Down to the north of the hillfort.

Walbury Camp: Coombe/Inkpen; NGR SU 375 618

Summary
Date of survey:
18 to 29 August 1997
Landuse at time of survey:
Rough grassland/set-a-side.
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk (soft white chalk with many flint nodules).
Soil association:
343h – Andover 1 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk on slopes and crests. Striped soil patterns locally.
Approximate area enclosed:
33 hectares (82 acres).
Planform:
Of roughly trapezoid form.
Form of ramparts:
A slight bank not much higher than the level of the interior but with a steep outward facing scarp fronted by a slight outer ditch on the north-east, east and south-east sections of the defences. On the north the distance from the top of the rampart to the bottom of the ditch measures up to 5m.
Entrance features:
Two entrances that can be regarded as original breach the circuit on the north-west and south-east sides of the fort. There are four other breaks in the defences (all quite close together) in the north-eastern section of the defences.

Previous finds:
Mesolithic to Roman but including an assemblage of Neolithic worked flint, a Deverel Rimbury globular urn and eight Anglo Saxon sceatta coins
Previous recorded excavation:
Crawford 1907 (schoolboy excavation)
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
Berkshire 17
County SMR No.:
01055. 01. 000
Project site code:
WHSP Site 13

Morphology and setting

Walbury (Fig 2.5) is the largest of the hillforts examined by the project with the univallate defences enclosing an area of approximately 33ha (82 acres). Set on the east–west ridge marking the edge of the north-facing escarpment of the Hampshire chalk massif, and on the highest point reached by the chalk formation in Britain, the site has extensive views in all directions, especially to the north across the Kennet Valley and onto the Berkshire Downs beyond. From the highest point of the interior, at 297m (974ft) OD, the neighbouring hillforts of Fosbury, Beacon Hill and Ladle Hill are all clearly visible. Farther afield, both Danebury and Quarley Hill are visible to the south and on the northern horizon Uffington Castle, Rams Hill and Segsbury can be made out in clear weather. The site has been classified, like Martinsell Hill in Wiltshire, as an 'Early Hill-top Enclosure' (Cunliffe 1984b), characterised by the large area enclosed, the relative slightness of the defences in relation to the area enclosed, and the general paucity of evidence for intensive activity. On the latter point the results of the geophysical survey would tend to confirm Cunliffe's observations.

Williams-Freeman (1915) stated that the site was generally considered to be 'late Celtic' on account of the huge area enclosed by the defences and the large population that would be needed to man them. However, Williams-Freeman himself considered that Walbury was 'among the earlier camps' based on the nearby concentrations of Bronze Age round barrows. Middle Bronze Age material has been found in the area more recently (*see above*). The site has never been formally excavated, although Crawford excavated two pits near the north-west entrance as a schoolboy in 1907 and recorded finds of bone, cow teeth and charcoal (Berkshire County Sites and Monuments Record entry 01055.01.400, 1988). Unfortunately nothing diagnostic of a date for occupation of the hillfort was found.

The enclosure circuit is univallate except on the north-east side where a slight outer bank cuts across a spur. On this spur, some 200m beyond the hillfort is a small earthwork enclosure of unknown date. Two entrances that can be regarded as original breach the circuit. These are on the south-east corner and north-west corner. Another breach at the north-east corner may be relatively recent, although the outer bank at this point is breached by a gap with slightly offset terminals that indicate an earlier origin. The north-west entrance (*see* Fig 2.7) displays evidence of a relatively complex sequence. Projecting from the ditch terminals are a pair of low banks forming 'barbican'-like features. This is best seen north of the entrance where later disturbance has caused less damage than on the south side. In form these relatively slight outworks are very close to other examples in Wessex, in particular the south-east entrance at Figsbury, Wiltshire (Guido and Smith 1982), the southern entrance to Beacon Hill, Hampshire (*below*, p 49; Eagles 1991) and the blocked entrance at Danebury, Hampshire (Cunliffe and Poole 1991). Beyond this, to the west, another length of bank and ditch, visible for a distance of 120m, has the appearance of a cross-ridge dyke and may pre-date the construction of the hillfort. The south-east entrance appears to be a simple, slightly offset gap through the rampart

Fig 2.5
Aerial view of the large hilltop enclosure of Walbury Hill Camp from the north-west (Copyright reserved Cambridge University Collection of Air Photographs, BWJ 019, 1976).

Fig 2.6
Aerial photograph showing traces of field systems to the west and south of Walbury (NMRC; NMR 4553/53, SU 3761/35, 1989).

although there has been severe disturbance from the passage of a modern track. Within the south-west quadrant, pits and other surface irregularities have been suggested as neolithic flint mines and casual finds of neolithic flint artefacts may lend some support to this. A Neolithic long barrow still survives as a prominent earthwork some 500m west of the western entrance.

Beyond Walbury, especially on the slopes to the west and south, there are extensive traces of prehistoric field system (Fig 2.6). This forms part of a very regular block of fields that cover an area of at least 5km sq. Earthwork and air photographic evidence also indicates that this field system has been further divided by components of a linear ditch system, although none of these can be directly related to the hillfort.

Mention has already been made of a slight enclosure 200m to the north-east of the hillfort. Approximately 700m south-east, air photographs show a pair of conjoined ditched rectangular enclosures and 500m north-west of the monument, at the foot of the escarpment, is another sub-square enclosure of 1ha.

Williams-Freeman (1915) notes that the chalk at Walbury is overlain with a considerable capping of clay and that the ground is very flinty. Throughout most of the 1980s the site is reported as being under arable cultivation (Berkshire SMR: 01055.01.000, 1984) but this had been discontinued by the time geophysical survey took place in 1997. Several structures on concrete bases appear to have stood in the recent past at the highest point of the site in the central southern area of the hillfort possibly linked to communications, signaling or air defence. A disused access track links the site of these former structures with the main trackway that runs diagonally through the camp from east to west between the hillfort entrances. A triangulation pillar and an elderly disused circular water cistern are also present in the southern part of the fort.

Magnetometer Survey (Fig 2.7)

The purpose of the ambitious survey coverage at Walbury was to assess the internal character of one notable example of a 'hill-top enclosure' together with the similar site surveyed at Martinsell Hill (this volume) and identify any distinctive patterns of internal activity possibly associated with these large enclosures.

Magnetic anomalies within Walbury Camp are plentiful and widespread but the majority have a form only suggestive of geological features and probably reflect the natural local variability in the geology referred to by the Soil Survey of England and Wales as 'striped soil patterns' (*see* "soil association" in summary section above). Bands of anomalies can be seen in the southern part of the fort following a curving trend from the south-east to the west and a second pattern following a north-east to south-west trend is present in the north-east part of the fort. Similar anomalies are again present in the north-western part of the site. The site is fringed by deposits of Clay with Flints and Tertiary Debris overlying the chalk and Eocene Reading Beds (Geological Survey of Great Britain 1959) and therefore probably has a more complex geology than the geological mapping suggests. Similar striped and swirling patterns of positive magnetic anomalies that can vary in direction between different areas of the site have also been mapped at Bury Hill and Fosbury, both in north Hampshire, and at Martinsell Hill Camp in north Wiltshire. These are again likely to reflect variable drift geology.

The response from the geological features at Walbury is complex and variable and the anomalies are quite accentuated in places. Clay features within chalk that are known from excavation occur at the hillforts of Uffington Castle and Segsbury farther

north, on the Lambourn Downs, and are known to produce substantial magnetic anomalies. The anomalies at Walbury are the most extreme examples of this type encountered anywhere in the project area. The only anomalies of certain human origin at Walbury relate to modern features including former standing structures of recent date and the trackways that cross through the enclosure.

Discussion

A substantial sample of the interior of Walbury was surveyed by the project but the results unfortunately present major problems for the reliable identification of archaeological features. The difficulty lies in detecting what may well be fairly ephemeral traces of minor structures against an overriding response to variation in the natural geology. The recognition of anomalies of archaeological significance is problematic in such conditions where the magnetic results are so obviously strongly influenced by features of geological origin. The presence of archaeological features at Walbury is likely only to be determined by intrusive techniques that can more easily distinguish natural features from those constructed in the past by human agency. Despite the confusing response there are no obvious archaeological features such as ring-gullies or regular groupings or clusters of pits revealed as magnetic anomalies inside the camp. On this basis it can tentatively be suggested that Walbury contains only a low level of archaeological activity but this claim cannot be confirmed without further supporting evidence.

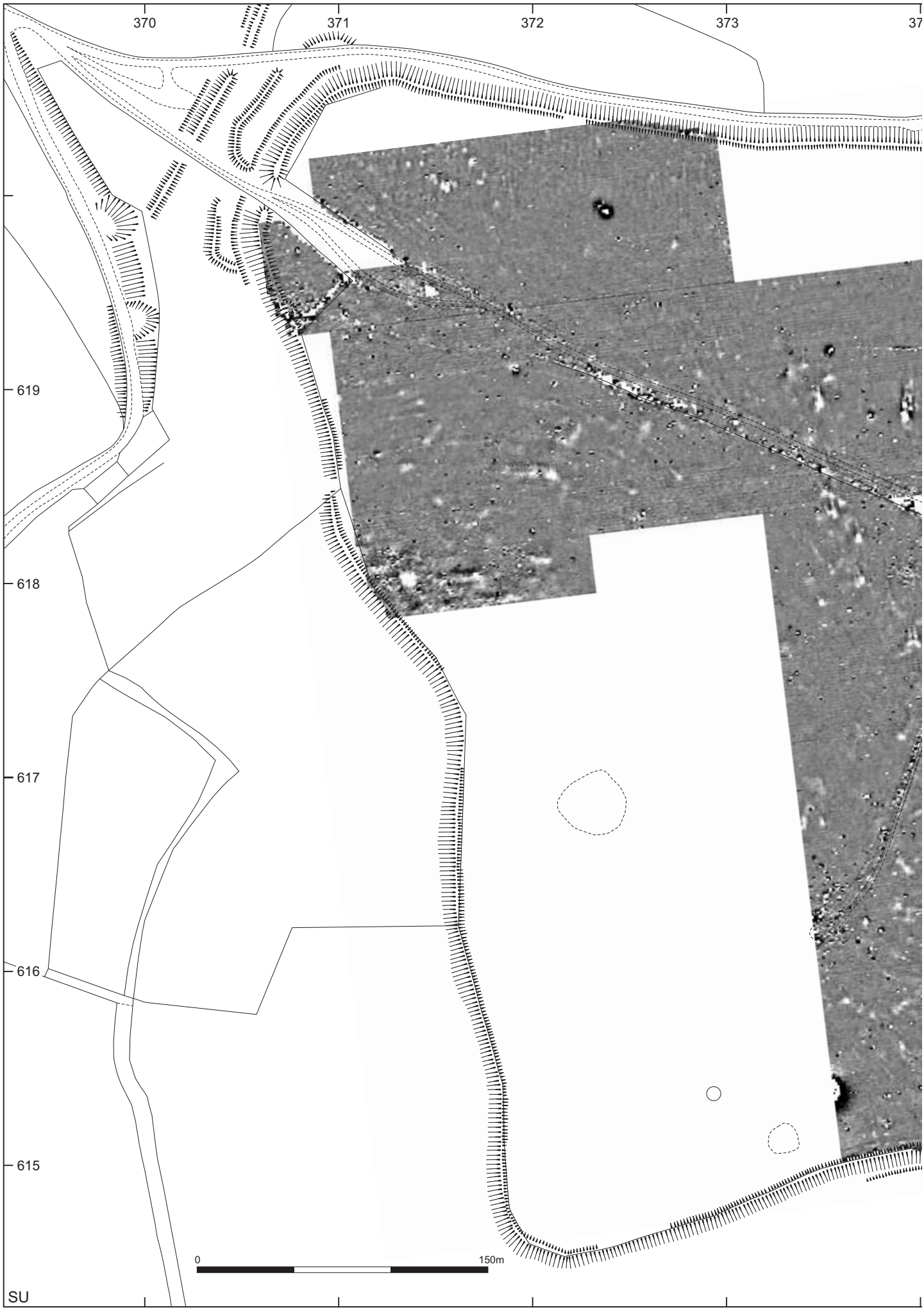
The results from Walbury display a measure of consistency with those from the other possible example of a large hilltop enclosure investigated by the Wessex Hillforts Survey at Martinsell Hill Camp, Wiltshire. Both sites appear to contain magnetic anomalies mainly of superficial geological origin and few responses consistent with large numbers of archaeological features. The combined results suggest that Walbury and Martinsell may both indeed belong to a common class of early enclosures characterised partly by a low level of internal activity. Unfortunately this conclusion can only be tentative because of the possibly that the magnetometer is failing to detect traces of small archaeological features such as post-hole structures. It is highly possible that such features may have been widespread in these earliest hillforts as suggested by the evidence from Danebury and Balksbury (Cunliffe 2000) and Harting Beacon (Bedwin 1978). The sites in this group nevertheless display a relative paucity of internal activity compared to later smaller and more intensively used hillforts which should be distinguishable by magnetometer survey.

Hampshire

Beacon Hill Camp: Burghclere; NGR SU 458 572

Summary

Date of survey:
2 to 9 October 1997.
Landuse at time of survey:
Grassland with some thin scrub
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk.
Soil Association:
342a – Upton 1 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk.
Approximate area enclosed:
3.8 hectares (9.5 acres).
Planform:
Roughly hourglass shaped.
Form of ramparts:
Ditch set between two banks with quarry features along the inward facing side of the inner rampart.
Entrance features:
Entrance at the south–south-east corner elaborated by additional outworks projecting from the main rampart and in-turns of the rampart in the interior extending the length of the entrance corridor. A blocked entrance is present on the north-west side.
Previous finds:
Half a dozen sherds of probable pre-Roman Iron Age pottery (type not identified), several sherds of possible Neolithic pottery. Rim, body and base sherds of a type 1 Globular Urn of the Middle Bronze Age period with five other body sherds of similar date. Also a post-medieval brick fireplace, tobacco pipes, iron objects, pottery and building materials from a pit excavated by Woolley in 1912 and reused for a shelter probably associated with the use of the site for a beacon (source : Hampshire SMR entry).
Previous recorded excavation:
1912 (Sir) Leonard Woolley, with the Fifth Earl of Carnarvon, dug into four features – one hut circle and three pits (Woolley 1913). A small amount of possible Bronze Age pottery was recovered.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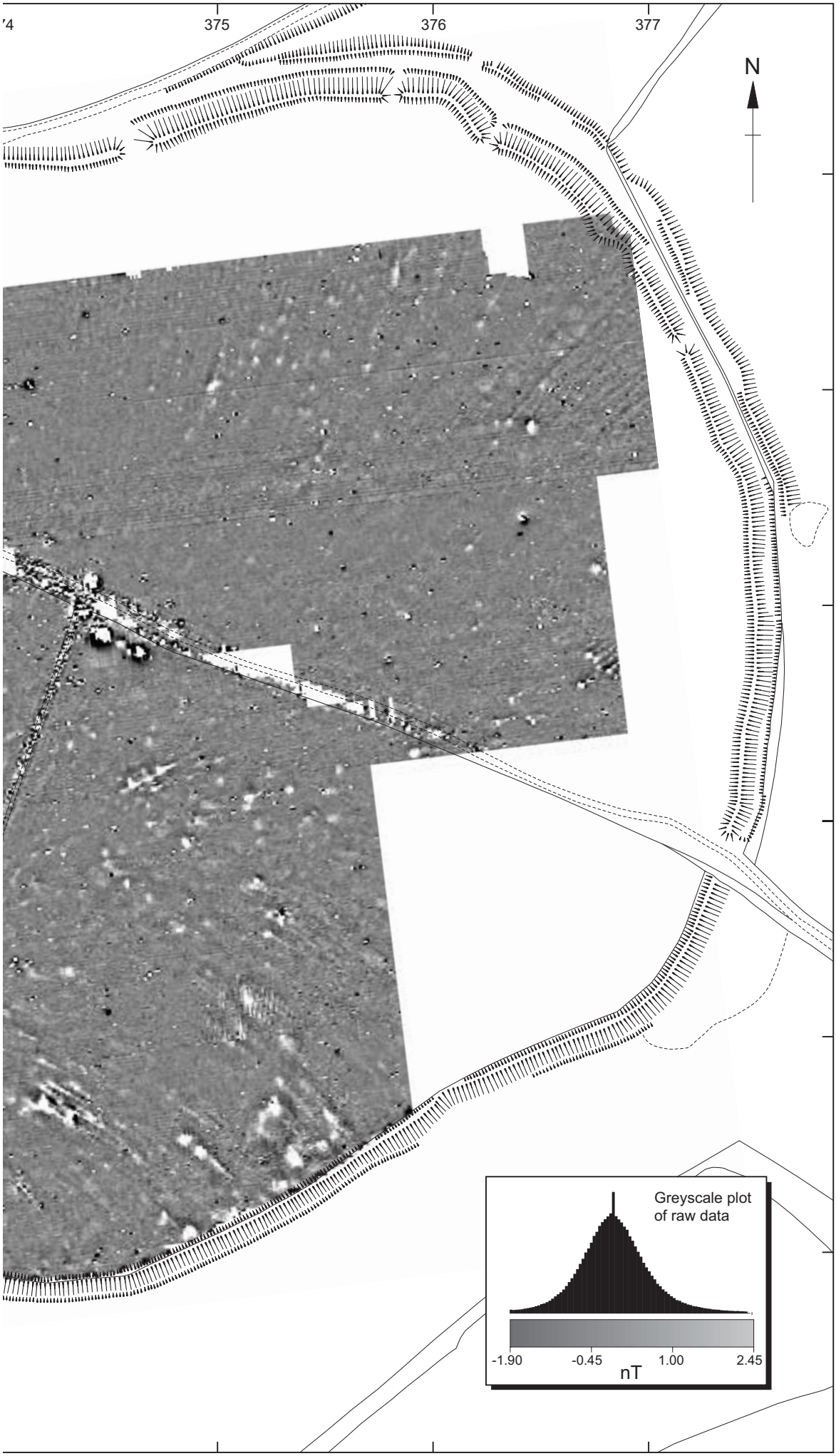


Fig 2.7
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Walbury shown in relation to the plan of the hillfort earthworks.

Scheduled Ancient Monument:
24318 (previously Hampshire 65).
County SMR No.:
SU45NE 48 A.
Project site code:
WHSP Site 18.

Morphology and setting

The univallate enclosure of Beacon Hill (Fig 2.8) is set on the highest point (260m) of a prominent tongue of the Upper Chalk projecting from the north-facing escarpment of the Hampshire downs. It is the best preserved of the 6 hillforts forming the North Hampshire Escarpment Group (*below*, p 133) and is 9km east of Walbury (*above* pp 44–7) and 2km west of the unfinished hillfort of Ladle Hill (*below*, pp 62–5). The site has extensive views across the Kennet Valley and onto the Berkshire Downs and overlooks (with Ladle Hill) a deep dry valley that gives easy access from the chalk massif of central Wessex into the Kennet Valley, a natural north–south route used today by the A34. The distinctive 'hourglass' shape of the hillfort is dictated by the topography of the

Fig 2.8
Aerial view of Beacon Hill from the east showing well preserved earthwork evidence of occupation within the fort including numerous circular habitation structures (NMRC, NMR 18695/05, SU 4557/107, 2000).

hilltop with the circuit following the contours and enclosing 3.8ha (9.5 acres). A single rampart and ditch with a substantial counterscarp define the enclosure circuit. There is one entrance, on the south-east, flanked by parallel inturned banks approximately 12m in length. This entrance has hornworks forming a semicircular projection of very similar form to that at Figsbury, Wiltshire (Guido and Smith 1982) and the blocked south-west entrance at Danebury (Cunliffe and Poole 1991). In a recent, detailed earthwork survey of the site for the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, Eagles (1991) notes that the counterscarp bank is markedly reduced at the junction with the arms of the hornworks. This might indicate that the hornworks were a subsequent addition to the original circuit and entrance. On the western side of the circuit, overlooking a precipitous slope, the earthworks strongly suggest the presence of a second, now blocked, entrance. The main rampart still retains distinct signs of slight inturning, 8m apart, with a noticeably lower bank between the original terminals. The corresponding point in the counterscarp is conspicuously higher, probably as a result of infilling using material derived from a quarried-out causeway across the ditch.

The interior of the site has never been cultivated and there are extensive and well-preserved earthworks indicating circular structures, pits and a series of internal quarry scoops behind the rampart (Eagles 1991, fig 1). The density of the structures and pits is similar to that recorded at a number of other Wessex hillforts such as Hambledon Hill and Hod Hill (RCHM 1970c), although, as Eagles notes (ibid), the structures lack the annexes so evident at the latter site. The earthworks indicate a complex sequence of occupation. A number of circular structures survive as earthworks within the silted quarry scoops (*see* terrain model, Figs 2.11 and 2.12) and at other points structures are so close that contemporaneity is unlikely. In addition to the surface features, geophysical survey also recorded other anomalies of an archaeological character.

The features within the hillfort, recorded following surface observation and analytical earthwork survey by the RCHME during 1978–9, can be grouped into the following five categories:

1. Pennanular banks approximately 11m in diameter surrounded by an external ditch up to 15m in diameter, often appearing to have gaps on the east, representing east-facing entrances. There are eight or nine examples of this type 1 structure visible inside the hillfort.
2. Smaller rings approximately 9m in diameter defined by slight banks but with no clear ditch.
3. Circular or sub-circular platforms cut into the slope and partly surrounded by a bank and ditch.
4. Platforms without banks. These latter features are most well represented on the eastern slopes of the hill and in the areas of the quarry ditches on the far eastern and northern edges of the site.
5. Pits visible as surface depressions (approximately 60 occurrences of this type of feature were recorded by the RCHME).

The RCHME investigation observed that there is distinct clustering of huts of similar form in some areas of the hillfort (for example features 2.10–2.12 on the RCHME plan in Eagles, 1991). The apparent proportion of pits to buildings is very low indeed, which may mean a relatively short occupation. In all there are at least 30 clear hut sites and another 30 which could be either hut sites or working platforms. The distribution of round building foundations and stances within the fort suggests a general avoidance of the exposed valley-head southern slopes. Around the highest point of the domed interior two short lengths of bank and ditch (RCHME features 2.24E and 2.24W) give the appearance of a possible earlier sequence of enclosure.

Within the south-west corner of the hillfort is the grave of the Fifth Earl of Carnarvon, sponsor of the Tutankhamun excavation. At Beacon Hill in 1912 the Earl and (Sir) Leonard Woolley investigated one probable hut and three pits, recovering 'bronze age' pottery (Woolley 1913). One pit was found to have been reused as a shelter linked to the beacon situated on the hill in medieval and post-medieval times, and produced numerous finds of medieval date. During the earthwork survey of the site, pottery was found on the surface. This, and earlier surface finds, have been identified as ranging in date from the Neolithic, Bronze Age (including a Middle Bronze Age Type 1 Globular Urn) and Iron Age (Eagles 1991). Beyond the hillfort there are extensive, but fragmentary, traces of field-systems. These are visible both on air photographs and the ground south and west of the monument but do not approach the immediate vicinity

of the hillfort. On the end of the spur beyond the north-western corner of the hillfort there is an undated cross-ridge dyke with a round barrow beside it. North of Beacon Hill, on the middle and lower chalk, there are few traces of the prehistoric landscape visible and much of this area is now under woodland forming part of the Highclere Castle estate. Across the valley to the east, on Great Litchfield Down and Ladle Hill, air photography reveals more blocks of fields and linear features associated with an unfinished hillfort (*below*, pp 62–5).

Beacon Hill Camp is currently managed as a public open space by Hampshire County Council. Various archaeological features within the hillfort lie on or close to footpaths worn into the grassland turf (*see* Fig 2.8) and are therefore vulnerable to erosion by the constant wear and tear of passing walkers.

Magnetometer survey (Figs 2.9, 2.10 and 2.12)

Magnetometer survey of the internal area of the fort, excluding the fenced area containing the tomb of Lord Carnarvon, was carried out in October 1997. The site was selected for survey to provide information to support the future management of the site and secondly to test the response of the magnetometer over a hillfort containing unusually well preserved evidence of former occupation in the form of earthwork remains.

In spite of the recognised presence of numerous archaeological features within the interior of Beacon Hill Camp surviving as slight earthworks, the magnetic response from these structures is very weak and is limited to the most substantial examples

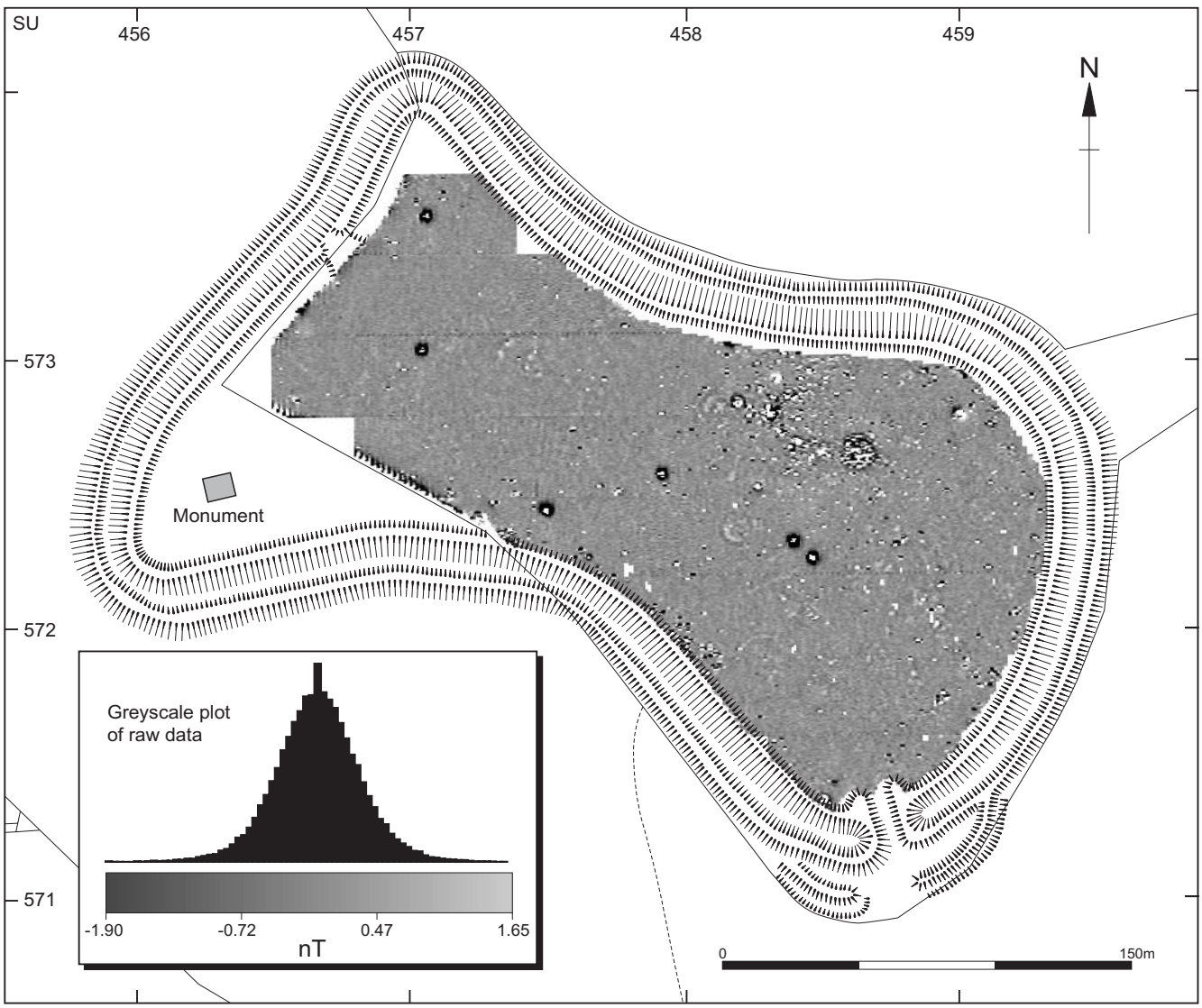


Fig 2.9
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Beacon Hill in relation to the plan of the hillfort earthworks.

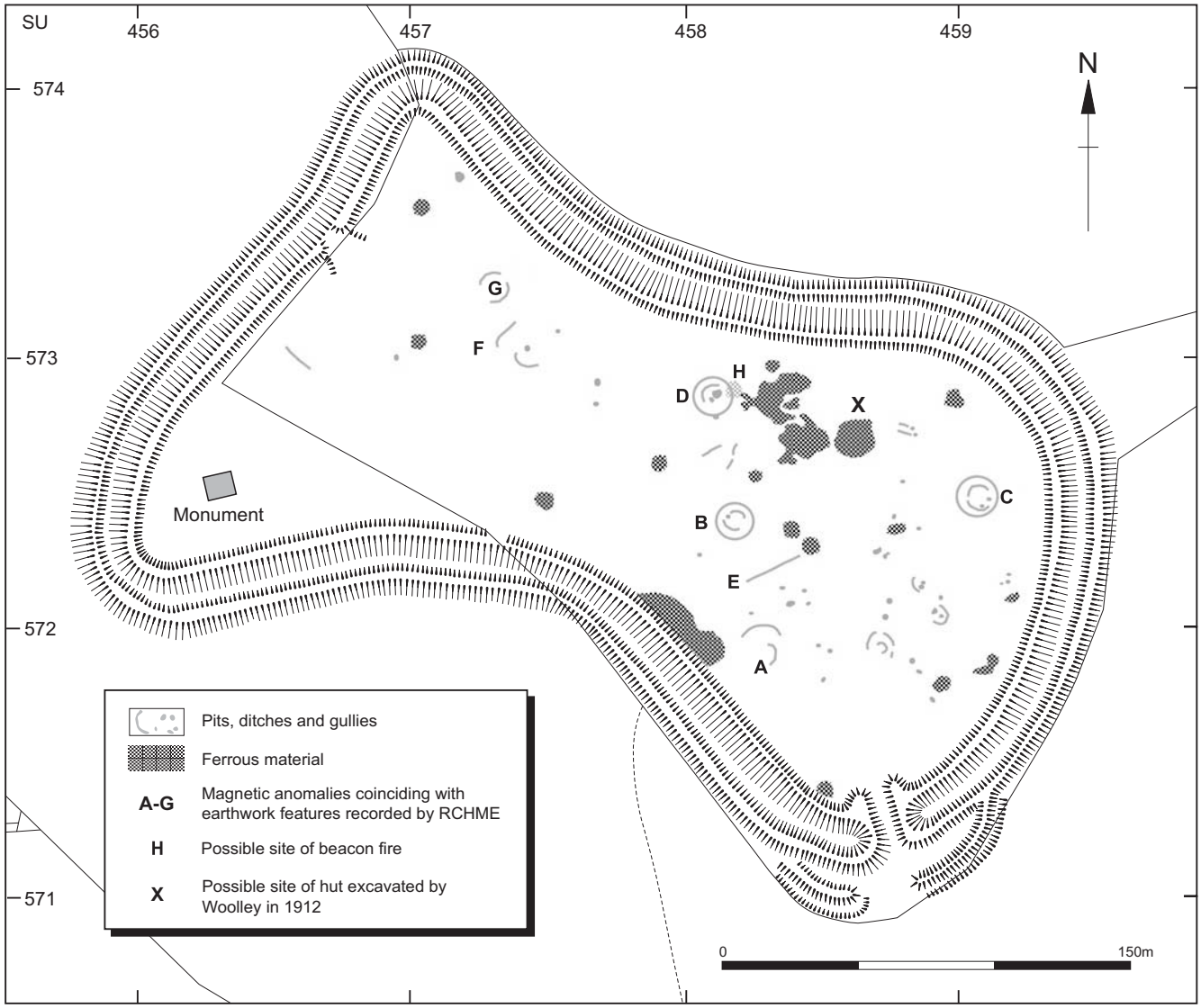


Fig 2.10 Interpretation of the magnetometer data from Beacon Hill.

(those defined by ditches such as the hut circles with a wide diameter and a surrounding ditch) and the pit-type features. The density of archaeological features in the hillfort interior therefore appears far lower in the magnetometer survey compared to the earthwork survey – which mapped a wider range of features – and the magnetic evidence gives the hillfort a much emptier appearance, which probably under represents the true density of occupation activity. The reason for this is that the magnetometer is selective in the type of feature it detects. (For features to be detectable it is usually necessary for them to contain a filling of more magnetic soil or silting, for them to be heavily burnt or made of a contrasting magnetic material from the surrounding soil.) Because many of the features survive in the form of upstanding earthworks or surface depressions it is likely that some of the above requirements have not been met, thus explaining the marginal response of the magnetometer to the majority of the features recorded by the RCHME. The few features that have produced distinct anomalies are generally those that will have been partially in-filled with magnetically enhanced material such as pits and the slight ditches surrounding the larger house sites. Significant infilling is also less likely to have taken place in an unploughed environment and the magnetic signal from these features is still extremely weak in relation to comparable plough flattened sites (*see* Segsbury and Castle Ditches for example; this volume). Their distribution in the magnetic data is in broad agreement with the RCHME plan of the hillfort (Eagles 1991).

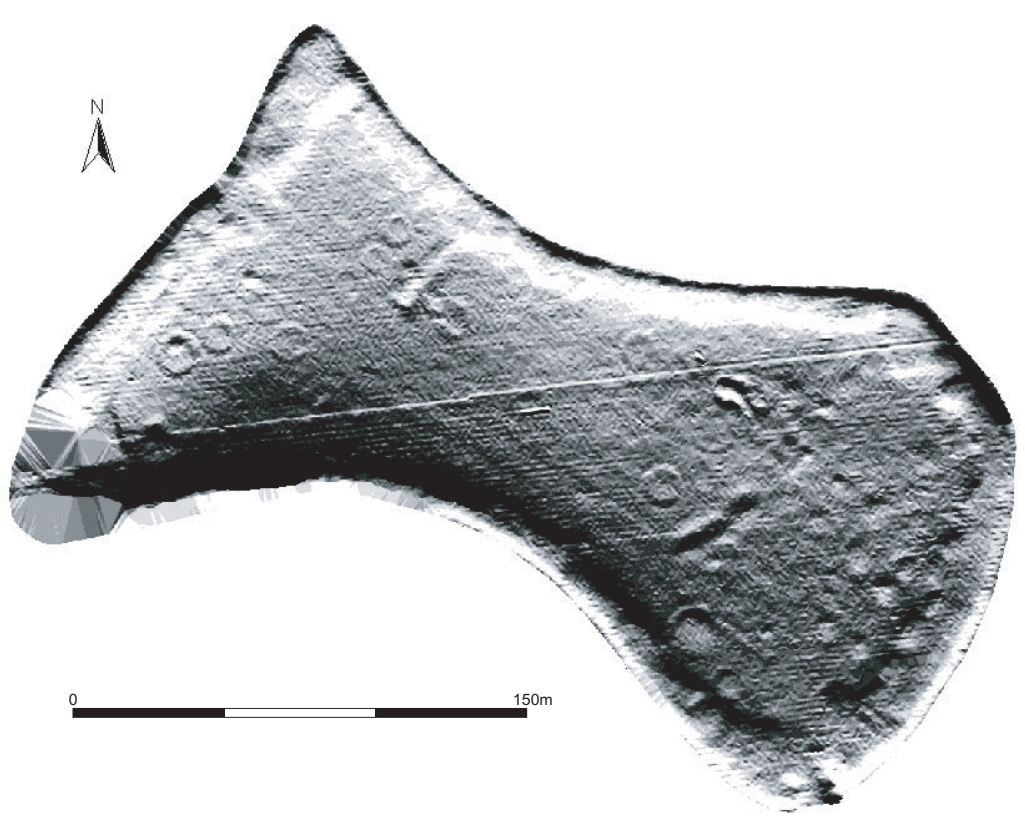
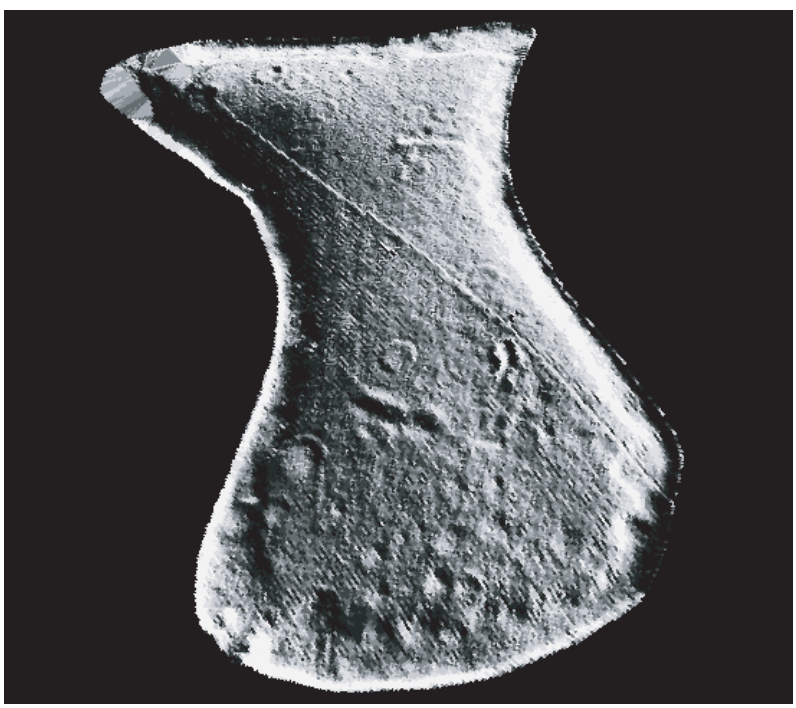


Fig 2.11
High resolution digital terrain model of the interior of Beacon Hill produced using Leica Geosystems 530 GPS equipment with a 1m reading density. The data is presented from a vertical viewpoint and also an oblique view facing towards the west (from EH, Centre for Archaeology).



The clearest anomalies in the magnetic data – of which there are five or six examples – are annular in form and correspond to the pennanular bank and ditch features (of type 1) recorded by the RCHME in at least nine places. These are interpreted as the remains of more substantial dwellings or buildings, possibly with cob-built walls, now surviving as low banks of annular plan broken by possible entrances generally facing east. These structures occur more rarely than the simpler earthworks of types 2–4 described by the RCHME, representing smaller and less complex structures within the fort. The magnetometer survey has largely failed to respond to these more numerous but ephemeral shallow scoops and platforms terraced into the hillside. The survey has likewise failed to respond to the irregular quarry ditches running along the inside of the rampart (again these are still present as clear depressions in the topography and would therefore not necessarily be expected to produce a robust magnetic anomaly due to a lack of infilling or silting up with more magnetic sediment). In addition to the annular features the magnetometer survey has detected the presence of at least 45 individual pit-type features; a lower number than that estimated by the RCHME. The RCHME evidence suggests a very thin scatter of pits throughout the majority of the hillfort. The geophysical evidence suggests a greater concentration of pits on the east-facing slopes of the interior, north of the imposing entrance into the fort, where occupation activity is particularly dense on the basis of

the number of hut sites of embanked or scooped form visible in the RCHME and topographical survey (Fig 2.11).

The concentration of pits revealed by the magnetometer in the eastern and south-eastern areas of the hillfort north of the entrance correspond to the highest incidence of the largest round gullies of type 1. This continues a trend already observed at Segsbury and at Liddington Castle (*see below*) where pit groupings appear to be closely associated with circular gullies. The Beacon Hill pits are often arranged in clusters or closely spaced pairs as found at Uffington Castle (Payne 2003a). The density of pits falls off dramatically towards the centre of the hillfort and only a thin scatter of pits is present in the western more exposed part of the fort. This lack of evidence for occupation at the centre of the site is mirrored at other hillfort sites included in the project sample including Perborough Castle and Norsebury Ring. At other sites such as St Catherine's Hill and Segsbury the opposite appears to hold true.

The discrepancy between the density and distribution of pits recorded by the two different survey methods is probably a result of several factors. Firstly it is possible that some buried pits could no longer be apparent as depressions in the topography depending on the extent to which they have been infilled or have naturally silted up in the past. Secondly the ability of the magnetometer to detect the pit type features would depend on them containing a magnetically enhanced fill which would not necessarily apply for all of the pits. A pit largely filled in with chalk rubble would be unlikely to register an appreciable magnetic contrast with the surrounding soil.

The short stretches of bank and ditch east and west of the summit recorded in the RCHME survey (features 2.24E and 2.24W; Eagles 1991) are replicated in the magnetic data, although as would be expected in the case of the magnetic evidence, the survey has only defined the ditches. There is no evidence in the magnetic data for the continuation of these ditch features beyond those known from the surviving topographical features. This brings into doubt the possibility touched upon in Eagles (1991) that they may be traces of a possible earlier causewayed enclosure of Neolithic date. Having said this, there is no reason why these features could not still be of Neolithic date even though they appear not to represent a full scale enclosure. Given that these features are overlain and cut by later hut-site occupation and the linear quarries, a Bronze Age origin could also be a possibility.

An area of intense magnetic disturbance is present in the northern part of the hillfort near the modern triangulation pillar. This disturbance derives from a concentration of ferrous and burnt material in the soil associated with the former use of this area as the site of a beacon and ground disturbance linked to the excavations carried out in the early 20th century by Woolley in the area previously utilised for the beacon. It is possible that the roughly circular area of intense magnetic disturbance at (**X**) on the interpretation of the magnetometer survey (Fig 2.10, corresponding to 3.26 on the RCHME plan) could represent the single hut-site documented as having been dug into by Woolley in 1912.

In summary the magnetometer data from Beacon Hill, while inferior to the topographical plan of the site produced by the RCHME, has nevertheless revealed evidence of occupation consisting of circular structures representing buildings and a moderate density of pits with a higher concentration towards the eastern side of the fort. Precise dating evidence is obviously lacking for much of this occupation at the present time, and is largely reliant on the surface finds of pottery that are occasionally recovered from the site.

Discussion

Ploughing has the effect of levelling out sites and filling in pits and depressions with magnetically enhanced material derived from the topsoil. On a site in un-ploughed grassland this does not happen so that although the archaeological features are still clearly visible on the surface in the form of earthworks, they produce a much weaker response in a magnetometer survey compared to in-filled features.

The results from Beacon Hill suggest that the efficacy of magnetometer survey is more limited on sites with well preserved earthwork evidence in their interiors compared to plough levelled sites. This conclusion is borne out by surveys of similar sites such as Old Winchester Hill (*see* Chapter 1, this volume) and Cissbury Ring (Payne 2001) where again the results were not of particularly high quality. This should not normally be a problem because where these conditions exist and magnetometer survey fails to be informative, analytical earthwork or

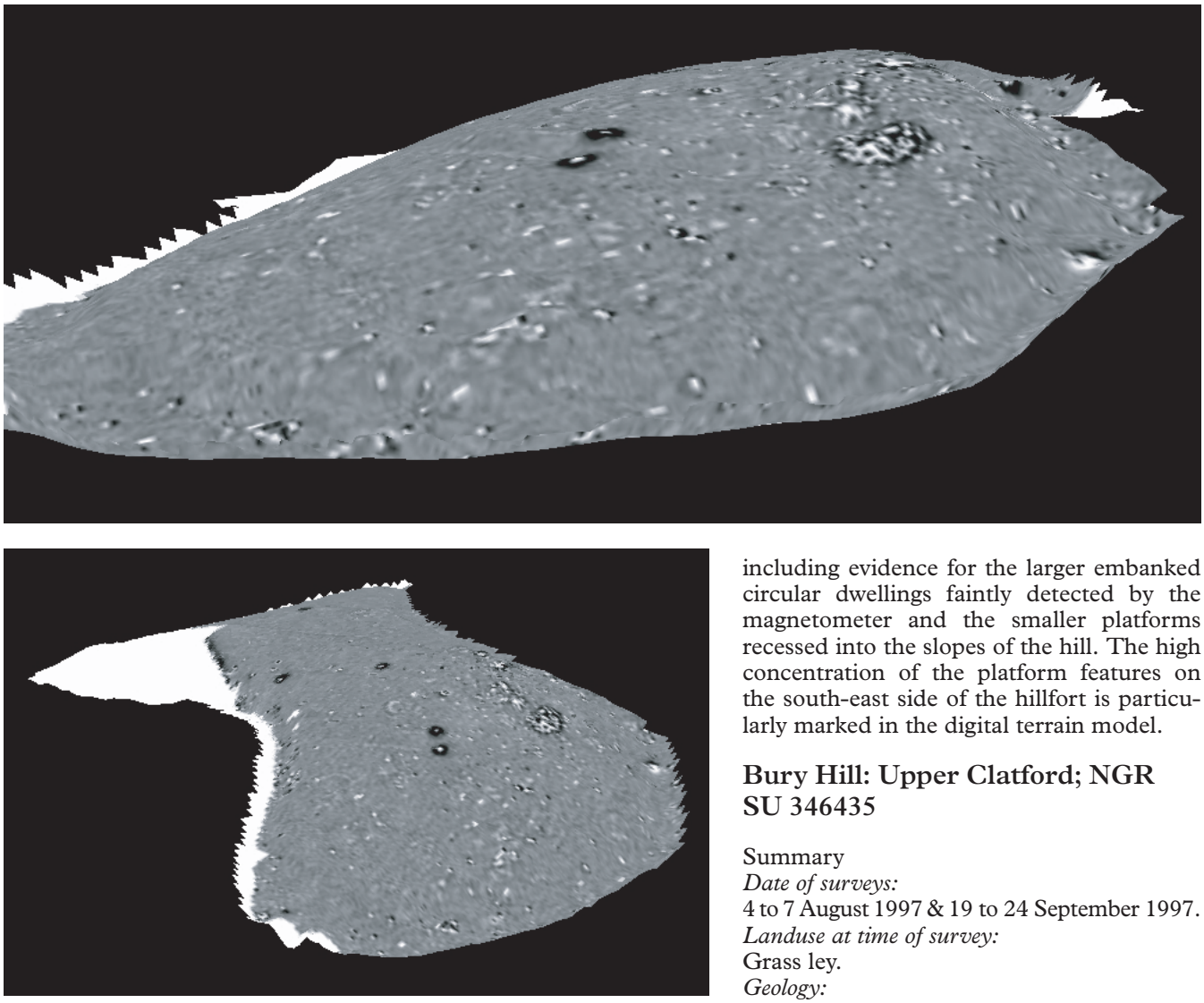


Fig 2.12
The magnetometer data from Beacon Hill draped on the surface model of the hillfort interior i) upper image – close low level view of the draped magnetometer data viewed from the eastern side of the site; ii) lower image: distant higher view of the draped magnetometer data looking from the south-east (from EH, Centre for Archaeology).

topographical survey should be by far the more effective technique and should result in the provision of a more detailed and complete picture. Magnetometer survey is of greater value on such sites where sub-surface features belonging to earlier phases of activity (for example of Neolithic or Bronze Age date) are overlain by earthwork evidence relating to more recent phases of occupation (for example of Middle Iron Age or Romano-British date).

The digital terrain model produced by the Central Archaeology Service in 1997 (Figs 2.11 and 2.12) does not add any significant new information to the earlier RCHME analytical earthwork survey (Eagles 1991) but the two forms of survey replicate each other extremely well in the level of detail of the surface topography of the hillfort interior that they provide including evidence for the larger embanked circular dwellings faintly detected by the magnetometer and the smaller platforms recessed into the slopes of the hill. The high concentration of the platform features on the south-east side of the hillfort is particularly marked in the digital terrain model.

Bury Hill: Upper Clatford; NGR SU 346435

Summary
Date of surveys:
4 to 7 August 1997 & 19 to 24 September 1997.
Landuse at time of survey:
Grass ley.
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk.
Soil Association:
343i – Andover 2 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk.
Approximate area enclosed:
Earlier univallate fort (Bury Hill I) enclosing 10ha (24 acres) and a second bivallate earthwork (Bury Hill II) enclosing 4.7ha (11.5 acres) superimposed on the south and east sections of the earlier defences.
Planform:
Bury Hill I – egg-shaped, Bury Hill II – approximately circular.
Form of ramparts:
Bury Hill I – single timber revetted chalk bank and external ditch surviving now only as a scarp, Bury Hill II – massive ditch flanked inside and out by a bank.
Entrance features:
Bury Hill II has an entrance on the south-east consisting of a simple break in

the ramparts. A second possible entrance may exist on the north-west. The entrances of the earlier fort are uncertain.
Previous finds:
Small amount of Mesolithic worked flint, large finds assemblage from two excavations (*see below*). Haematite coated ware was associated with the earlier enclosure and the pottery assemblage associated with the later defences was dominated by saucepan pots of 2nd to 1st century BC date (Hawkes 1940).
Previous recorded excavation:
Limited excavations by Hawkes 1939 (Hawkes 1940). Other sample excavations were carried out in both forts by the Danebury Environs Project in 1990 – fully reported in Cunliffe and Poole (2000(b)).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
Hampshire 57.
County SMR No.:
SU34SW 20A.
Project site codes:
WHSP Sites 12 and 16.

Morphology and setting

Bury Hill (Fig 2.13) is a multi-phase hillfort of unusual form located on a gentle hill overlooking the confluence of the River Anton and the Pillhill Brook, being tributaries of the River Test. Less than 1km to the north, on the other side of the Pillhill Brook, is Balksbury, a univallate enclosure of 18ha (44 acres) constructed perhaps as early as *c* 1000 BC and occupied intermittently until the early post-Roman period (Wainwright and Davies 1995).

Bury Hill is of two principal phases, the earlier, known as Bury Hill I and dated to the Early Iron Age, is marked by a univallate enclosure of 10ha (24 acres) with a massive timber revetted rampart (Hawkes 1940; Cunliffe and Poole 2000(b)). The available excavated evidence suggests that there was little, if any, permanent settlement inside Bury Hill I. In the late 2nd or early 1st century BC a new earthwork – Bury Hill II, set within Bury Hill I, was constructed. This enclosed 4.7ha (11.5 acres) and is of unusual form in being nearly circular (although straight sections are discernible in plan) and having an outer bank that is, in many places, higher than the inner rampart (Cunliffe and Poole 2000(b), fig 2.3; p 11). This latter feature is rarely encountered in Wessex.

The only entrance now visible is that on the south-eastern side of the circuit where the ramparts of Bury Hill I and II are coincident. The configuration of the earthworks and the results of the geophysical survey (*see below*) strongly suggest that Bury Hill II originally had another entrance on the north-west, subsequently blocked (*contra* Hawkes 1940). Whether Bury Hill I also originally had a second entrance here is less certain and the earthworks at this point are too degraded to allow a confident interpretation.

The interior of Bury Hill II is densely packed with pits except for a broad zone, up to 12m wide, running between the south-east entrance and the now probable

Fig 2.13
Aerial photograph of Bury Hill Camp and its environs. The enclosure in the field adjacent to the hillfort (WHSP Site 16) is in the bottom right of the photograph (NMRC; NMR 4586/14, SU 3443/18, 1990).

north-west entrance. The nature of the material recovered from these pits in the recent excavations (Cunliffe and Poole 2000(b)) is remarkable for the lack of carbonised grain and human remains such as those recovered from Danebury, and the emphasis on horse harness and related trappings (Cunliffe 1996; Cunliffe and Poole 2000(b), 79–81). Furthermore the very high percentage of horse remains (48.2%), when taken with the metalwork, strongly suggests a highly specialised focus within, and probably beyond, Bury Hill II.

Air photography, supplemented by geophysical survey, has located a remarkable cluster of features some 150m beyond the eastern entrance of Bury Hill II (Fig 2.13; NMR 4586/14, SU 3443/18, 1990). Here an oval enclosure of approximately 1.6ha (4 acres) is visible. There are a number of gaps in this circuit, the largest being on the west, facing towards Bury Hill. On the east side there appears to be a pair of 'antennae' ditches leading out from the enclosure but no break in the enclosure ditch is visible, possibly suggesting a realignment of the main approach to the site. Along the south side of the enclosure is a substantial linear ditch, or perhaps a trackway, possibly partially impinged upon by the settlement. Additional ditches to the east show that activity was extensive and features beyond the enclosure suggest a number of phases and a complex sequence. The occurrence of enclosures and other possible settlement features in close proximity to hillfort entrances is discussed in greater detail below (pp 139–41). It should be noted that Hawkes encountered evidence of late 1st century BC and early 1st century AD activity around the eastern entrance to Bury Hill II (Hawkes 1940) and it is quite possible that at least some of the features mentioned here may be part of this very Late Iron Age focus. The 'antennae' ditches, however, are far more typical of developed Early to Middle Iron Age enclosures such as Gussage All Saints and Little Woodbury, and a long sequence should be assumed until proven otherwise.

Beyond the immediate environs of Bury Hill the most striking feature of the landscape is the lack of evidence for field systems or other settlement forms (Palmer 1984). The linear ditch along the south side of the extra-mural enclosure can be traced for a distance of 500m to the south-east of Bury Hill while another complex of ditches is known to the south-west (ibid). The nearest large blocks of field system, however, are nearly 3km south and south-west, in the environs of Danebury. It is tempting to compare this apparent large tract of open land to the pattern observed by Bowen in the environs of Gussage All Saints in Dorset (Bowen 1979). Evidence of Late Iron Age production of horse related equipment here led to the suggestion of a highly specialised economy and landscape based on horse rearing. If this were also the case at Bury Hill it would, on our current understanding of the date of linear ditch systems in Wessex, imply a very long special use for the landscape, predating the Late Iron Age date for the metalworking at Bury Hill II by a considerable length of time. The landscape around Bury Hill is in many respects similar to that around Norsebury in that we appear to be seeing significant differences when compared to many of the other Wessex hillforts examined during this project. The evidence for date is in most cases slim, but if the Late Iron Age dates suggested here are correct we must ask just how far back these more 'specialised' landscapes can be taken.

Current understanding of the development of Bury Hill relative to the neighbouring hillforts in the region including Danebury (6km to the south) and Balksbury (1km to the north on the opposite side of the valley of the River Anna) is fully described in Chapter 1.

Magnetometer survey (Figs 2.14 and 2.15)

Sample magnetometer surveys of both enclosures were carried out in advance of limited excavations by the Danebury Environs Project in 1990 (Cunliffe and Poole 2000(b); Payne 2000c) in order to assess the internal character of the successive hillforts and reveal any significant differences between them. The subsequent excavations opened up areas within the early enclosure outside the later defences and within the later fort to assess the character of the archaeological activity present and provide evidence of the dating, structure and condition of the ramparts defining the two enclosures.

Initially fluxgate magnetometer survey was carried out over slightly under half of the main inner fort (Bury Hill II) and a more limited area of the outer camp or earlier enclosure (Bury Hill I). Further survey was undertaken by the Wessex Hillforts Survey during 1997 to complete the coverage as far as possible of the two hillfort interiors.

The primary aim of the surveys was to attempt to demonstrate the relative intensity of occupation in each of the forts by surveying sufficiently large areas to show contrasting or recurring patterns of activity. The clearly differing character of occupation in the two forts could be easily recognised in the first set of results obtained in 1990. These suggested that the early fort was largely devoid of significant features in sharp contrast with the later fort, which appeared to contain a high density of pits scattered evenly across the area surveyed. These initial conclusions were subsequently confirmed and reinforced by the excavation and the subsequent extended magnetometer coverage.

In the area excavated inside the earlier hillfort, the only archaeological features discovered were three small postholes. This absence of structures is entirely consistent with the results of the magnetometer survey, which suggested that the area surveyed was barren of significant soil disturbance except for bands of closely spaced weak linear positive magnetic anomalies produced by striped soil patterns of periglacial origin. These features are aligned north–south in the northernmost part of the outer enclosure changing to an east–west alignment on the western side of the outer enclosure and appear to be absent from the eastern part. They also appear to extend into the northern part of the area occupied by the later fort where they are visible as parallel bands of increased magnetic response orientated south–west to north–east. Striped soil patterns were also present within the excavated site of Balksbury located a kilometre to the north across the valley of the River Anna. Here they were described by the excavators as 'sandier deposits' (Wainwright and Davies 1995).

Excavation in the later fort showed that the general picture of regular pits presented by the magnetometer survey was largely correct. Of the features found in the excavation, the larger pits of beehive profile were the most clearly resolved in the magnetometer survey but shallow gully complexes and the concentrations of smaller features inside them in the southern part of the excavation were generally not detected by the magnetometer. One small pit (P49) in the excavated area gave rise to a pronounced positive magnetic anomaly of 13 nanotesla (nT) magnitude, accounted for by the presence of burnt daub in the pit filling. On the western side of the excavated area a narrow strip of more deeply stratified deposits in the lee of the rampart had survived the effects of cultivation, which had removed most of the archaeological levels in the majority of the hillfort interior. Significantly the magnetometer survey has clearly defined this zone of better preserved deposits around the perimeter of the later fort due to the stronger magnetic signal generated by the build-up of soil against the inner face of the rampart. The survey evidence suggests that the zone of stratified deposits is present around the majority of the defensive circuit. Future management will be able to take this variable preservation of archaeological deposits in the hillfort into account and thus avoid damage to the sensitive areas bordering the ramparts.

It was not until the full coverage of the interior of Bury Hill II was completed in 1997 that a wide road corridor became apparent – indicated by a linear zone largely free of magnetic anomalies – running through the centre of the interior between the opposed entrances on the south-east and north-west sides of the fort. The presence of this roadway suggests that both gaps in the perimeter earthworks are original features contemporary with the main occupation of the fort. This evidence conflicts with the earlier view of Hawkes (1940) that originally there was only a single entrance into the main fort on the south-east side. It is possible that the entrance on the north-west was blocked and the causeway across the ditch removed at a later stage once the roadway had become an established feature, influencing the layout and distribution of settlement within the hillfort but no longer used as a route for passing through the enclosure. Several other features of potential interest are indicated by the magnetometer in the later fort. These include:

i) A narrow, slightly curving length of ditch indicated by a positive linear magnetic anomaly in the southern part of Bury Hill II running approximately north-north-west to south-south-east. It seems to run straight into the main rampart and therefore may represent an earlier pre-rampart boundary feature. The ditch may be related to the external enclosed settlement identified to the south-east of the hillfort and may even represent an extension of the major linear feature that runs along the southern side of this complex on a south-east to north-west heading towards the south-east boundary of the hillfort.

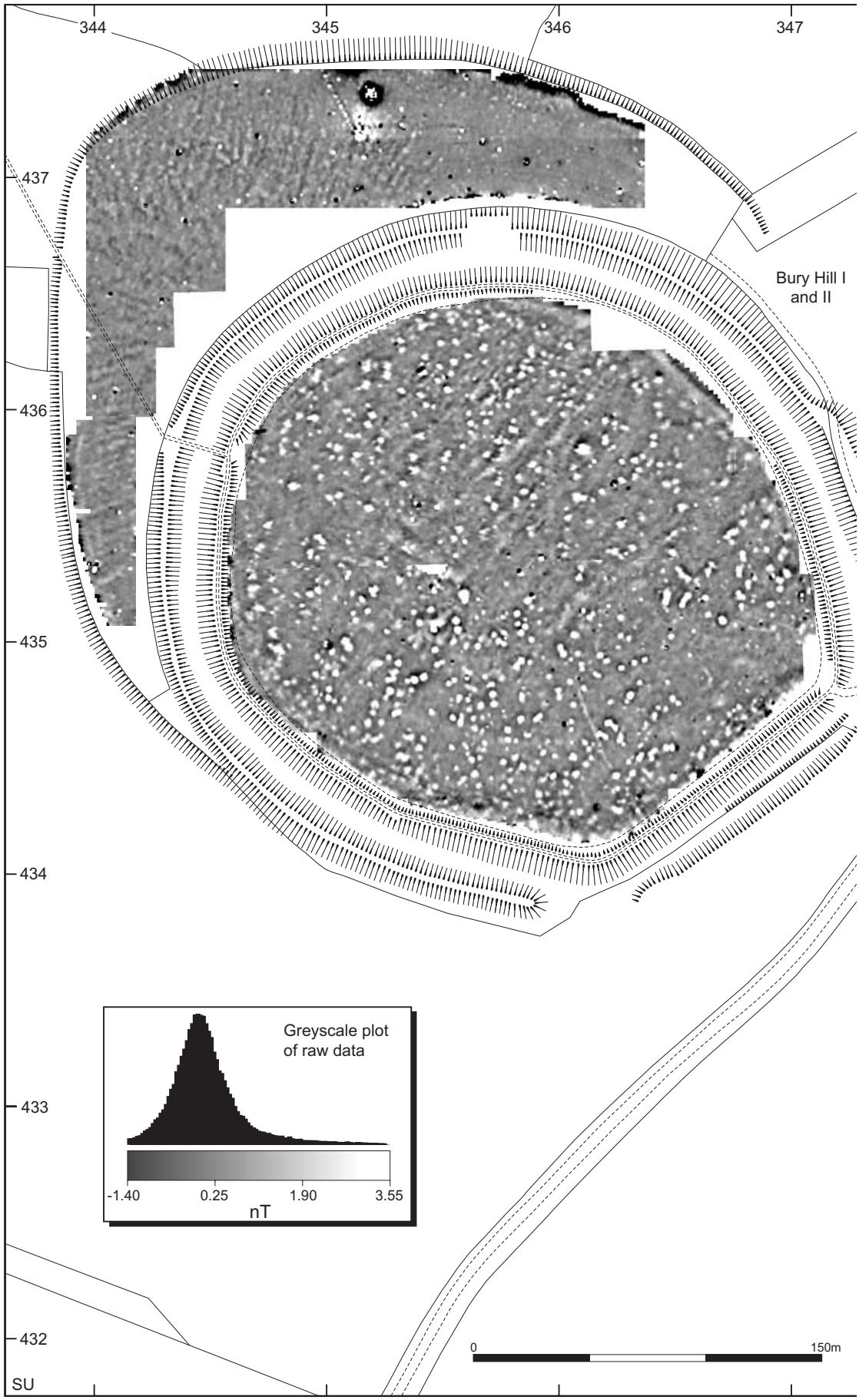
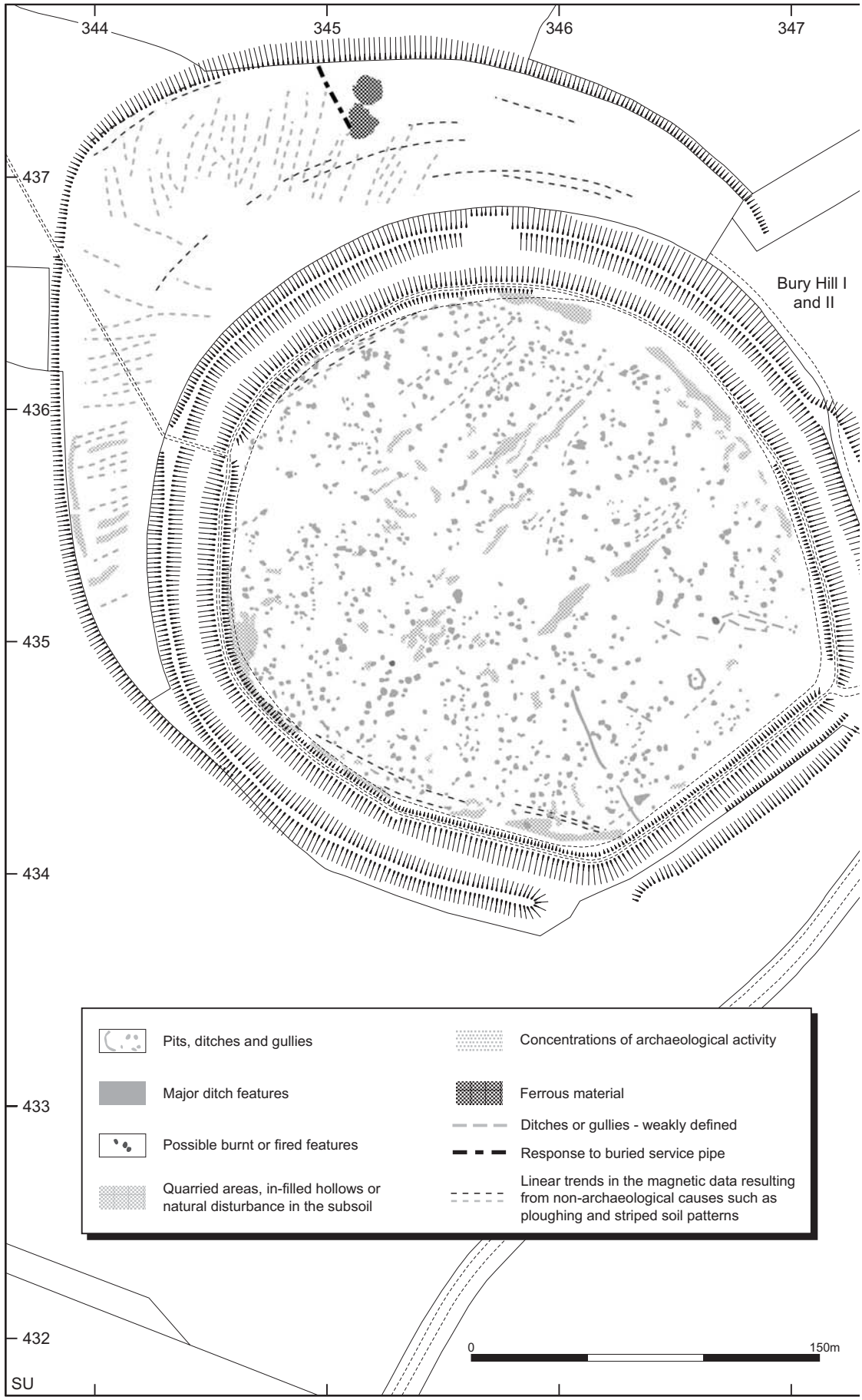

344
345
346
347
437
436
435
434
433
432
SU
Bury Hill I
and II
Greyscale plot
of raw data
-1.40
0.25
1.90
3.55
nT
0
150m

Fig 2.14
Greyscale plots of the magnetometer data from Bury Hill (Camps I and II) and the external settlement to the south-east relative to the plan of the earthworks of the multiple hillforts.


344
345
346
347
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436
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SU
Bury Hill I and II
Pits, ditches and gullies
Major ditch features
Possible burnt or fired features
Quarried areas, in-filled hollows or natural disturbance in the subsoil
Concentrations of archaeological activity
Ferrous material
Ditches or gullies - weakly defined
Response to buried service pipe
Linear trends in the magnetic data resulting from non-archaeological causes such as ploughing and striped soil patterns
0
150m

Fig 2.15
Interpretations of the magnetometer surveys at Bury Hill.

ii) A series of weakly defined linear anomalies on the line of the eastern entrance extending into the hillfort on the northern side of the possible roadway. These may represent foundation slots for supporting a timber-lined entrance passage.
iii) On the south side of the possible road, set back a little into the fort from the eastern entrance, an anomaly suggestive of a sub-circular gully 8.0m long and 6.0m wide with a possible central internal feature is present. This may tentatively be interpreted as a structure such as a look out or guard-post.

The external settlement

After the completion of the survey coverage inside the hillforts in 1997, the opportunity was taken to conduct an additional magnetometer survey over the site of an apparent ditched enclosure partially visible from the air in the arable field immediately to the south-east of the fort at NGR SU 349433. The settlement is only 200m south-east of the south-east entrance of Bury Hill on an easterly continuation of the same area of level high ground occupied by the hillfort. At least one possible entrance of the enclosure appears to be aligned towards the fort.

The results of the magnetometer survey revealed an enclosure of irregular plan defined by ditches interrupted by several possible entrances and with several ditches radiating out from the main enclosure ditch. Antenna-like ditches project outwards from the main boundary of the Bury Hill enclosure on the eastern side and on the south side there is an entrance formed by the ditches of the southern boundary curving in towards one another. A possible wider entrance with flanking ditches may be present on the north-west side facing the hillfort, parallel with the wide linear that runs immediately south of the enclosure on a heading towards the hillfort. Within the enclosure there are signs of intensive occupation in the form of large numbers of pits most of which appear to respect the boundary of the enclosure. The pits appear less substantial in form compared with those in the neighbouring hillfort. Broader and weaker anomalies within and around the enclosure are likely to represent quarrying activity. The core settlement extends over an area of some 2–3ha and appears to be situated alongside a linear ditch or trackway (visible as a broad linear positive magnetic anomaly) possibly linking it to the nearby hillfort.

The possible phasing of this newly planned enclosed settlement in relation to the nearby hillfort is considered in more detail in the preceding section.

Danebury: Nether Wallop; NGR SU 324 377

Summary
Date of survey:
28 July to 1 August 1997.
Landuse at time of survey:
Managed open woodland with clearings.
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk.
Soil Association:
343h – Andover 1 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk on slopes and crests. Striped soil patterns locally.
Approximate area enclosed:
5 hectares (12 acres) enclosed by innermost defensive earthwork.
Planform:
Approximately oval.
Form of ramparts:
Main inner earthwork constructed in several phases initially timber-framed but consisting in its later phases of a dump constructed rampart the front face of which continued downward into a deep ditch of V-profile with an external counterscarp bank (correctly a bank formed from periodic clearing-out of the ditch). Middle earthwork consisting of a smaller dump-constructed rampart fronted by a V-shaped ditch defining an elongated enclosure between the earthworks of the two entrances. Outer earthwork consisting of a shallow ditch with a slight external bank running around the contour of the hill outside the main hillfort earthworks (known as the Outer Enclosure) and continuing as a linear earthwork (the Danebury Linear) to the south-east. The defences are not multivallate in the normal use of the term (closely set multiple ramparts present at sites such as Maiden Castle, Hambledon Hill, Battlesbury etc).
Entrance features:
Two elaborate entrances on the east and south-west sides of the fort. The south-west entrance was blocked in the 4th century BC. The main eastern entrance, continuously remodelled and reconstructed in seven main phases, started as a simple gate in a gap in the inner rampart but in its developed form (in Period 5) was augmented by the addition of a hornwork projecting from the inner rampart and two more projecting outworks that meet to form an outer entrance creating

a long winding corridor approach commanded by the inner hornwork.
Previous finds:
See Cunliffe and Poole 1991: *Danebury. An Iron Age Hillfort in Hampshire. Vol.5, The Excavations 1979-1988: The finds* (CBA Res. Rep. 73: London).
Previous recorded excavation:
The hillfort of Danebury was the subject of an extended campaign of excavation spanning 20 field-work seasons from 1969–1988. 57% of the main enclosed area was excavated and the defences and gates examined (Cunliffe 1984a, 1995; Cunliffe and Poole 1991).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
Hampshire 53.
County SMR No.:
SU33NW 93 A.
Project site code:
WHSP Site 11.

Danebury (Fig 2.16) is so well known from the literature arising from the excavations, 1969–1988, and subsequent aerial survey and detailed study of the surrounding landscape that no further description of the morphology or setting is necessary here (Cunliffe 1984a, 1995; Cunliffe and Poole 1991; Cunliffe 2000; Palmer 1984). Discussion is here focussed on the new geophysical evidence.

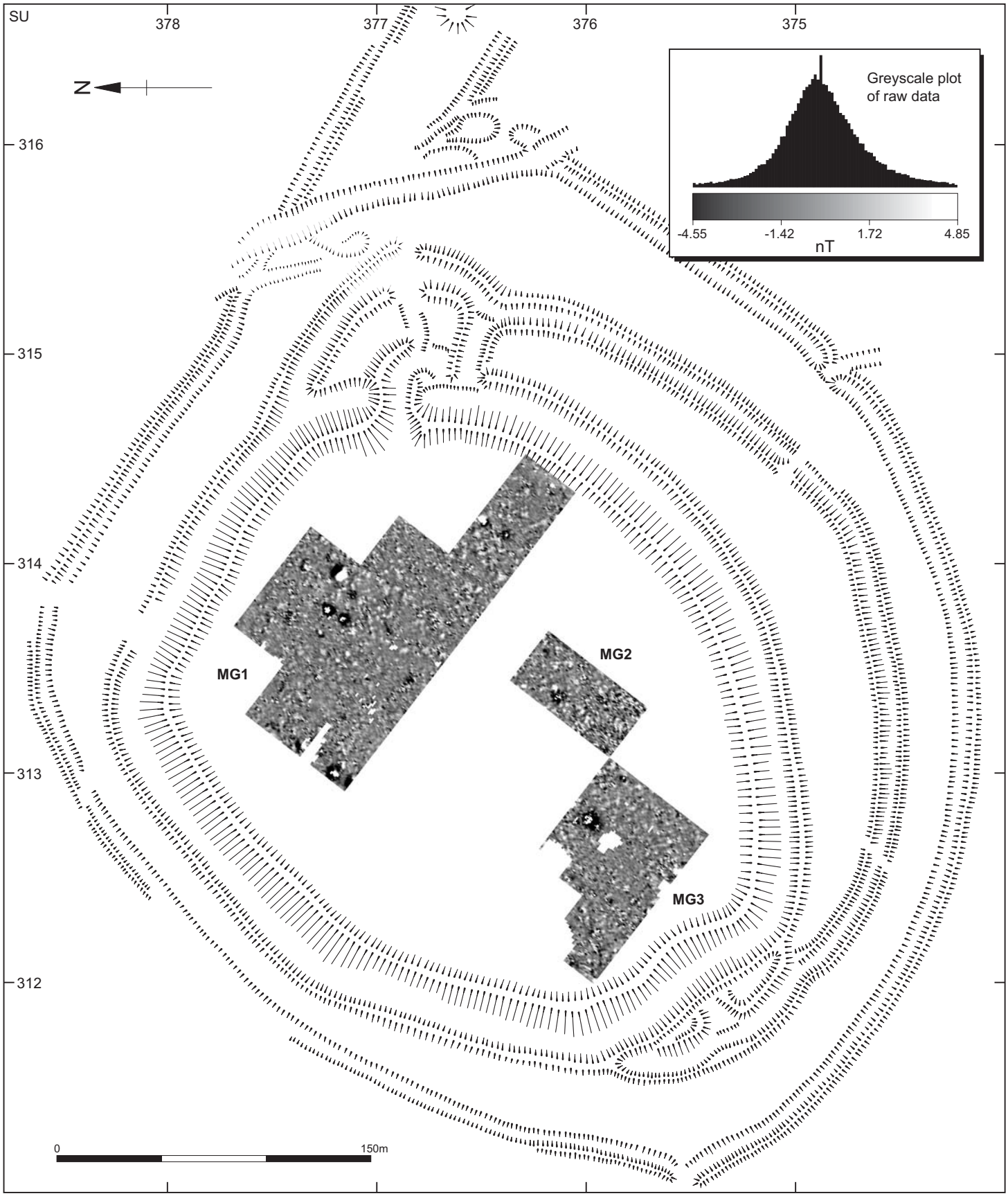
Magnetometer survey (Figs 2.17, 2.18).

In 1997 a limited magnetometer survey was carried out retrospectively at Danebury nearly ten years after excavation ceased. The purpose of the survey was to collect a magnetometer data-set that could be evaluated against the actual evidence beneath the ground at Danebury so well known from many years of excavation on the site (Cunliffe 1984a, 1995; Cunliffe and Poole 1991). It was hoped that a magnetometer data-set from a chalkland hillfort such as Danebury, with well understood archaeological deposits in the interior, would serve as a control method for enabling the likely effectiveness and possible limitations of magnetic survey on other unexplored Wessex hillforts to be more reliably judged.

The control data was collected from three sample areas set out within the hillfort on an approximation to the original site grid employed during excavation (Fig 2.17). The location of these areas was influenced largely by the distribution of trees and ground vegetation in the fort in the summer of 1997. Practical considerations dictate that areas too overgrown with vegetation or obstructed by trees are not suitable for magnetometer survey, especially when the purpose is to gain a control sample as part of a wider study.

The largest area of survey (MG1) was in the north-east half of the fort, west of the eastern entrance. A more limited second area (MG2) was set out south-east of the centre of the fort and the third area (MG3) was set back by a distance of about 30m from the blocked entrance on the south-west. An attempt was made to lay out the survey areas approximately on the line of the original site grid so that it would be possible to relate the magnetometer surveys to areas that had previously been excavated (Cunliffe 1995, fig 1) and also cover areas previously untouched by excavation. Area MG1 coincides with an area of the site (N4; Cunliffe 1995, figs 7 and 8) left largely undisturbed, flanked by roadways 1 and 5 to the south and north. The lines of Road 1 and Road 4 (which branches off the former) should pass through the lower half of the magnetometer survey at MG1. Large numbers of storage pits (primarily dating from the early period of Danebury) were present in the excavated areas immediately to the east and west of the sample magnetometer survey MG1 and were expected to extend into the survey area (Cunliffe 1995, figs 8 and 9). Area MG2 was positioned to explore an unexcavated part of the site designated S3 (Cunliffe 1995, fig 7). This area should have a lower density of pits but also contains remains of square timber (four-post) structures. Finally area MG3 should contain the continuation of Road 1 running towards the blocked western entrance of Danebury and a combination of pits and four-post structures.

Fig 2.16
Aerial photograph of Danebury hillfort showing the complex earthworks at the eastern entrance visible in the middle foreground (NMRC; NMR 15740/25, SU 3237/95, 1997).


SU
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377
376
375
N
316
315
314
313
312
Greyscale plot
of raw data
-4.55
-1.42
1.72
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MG1
MG2
MG3
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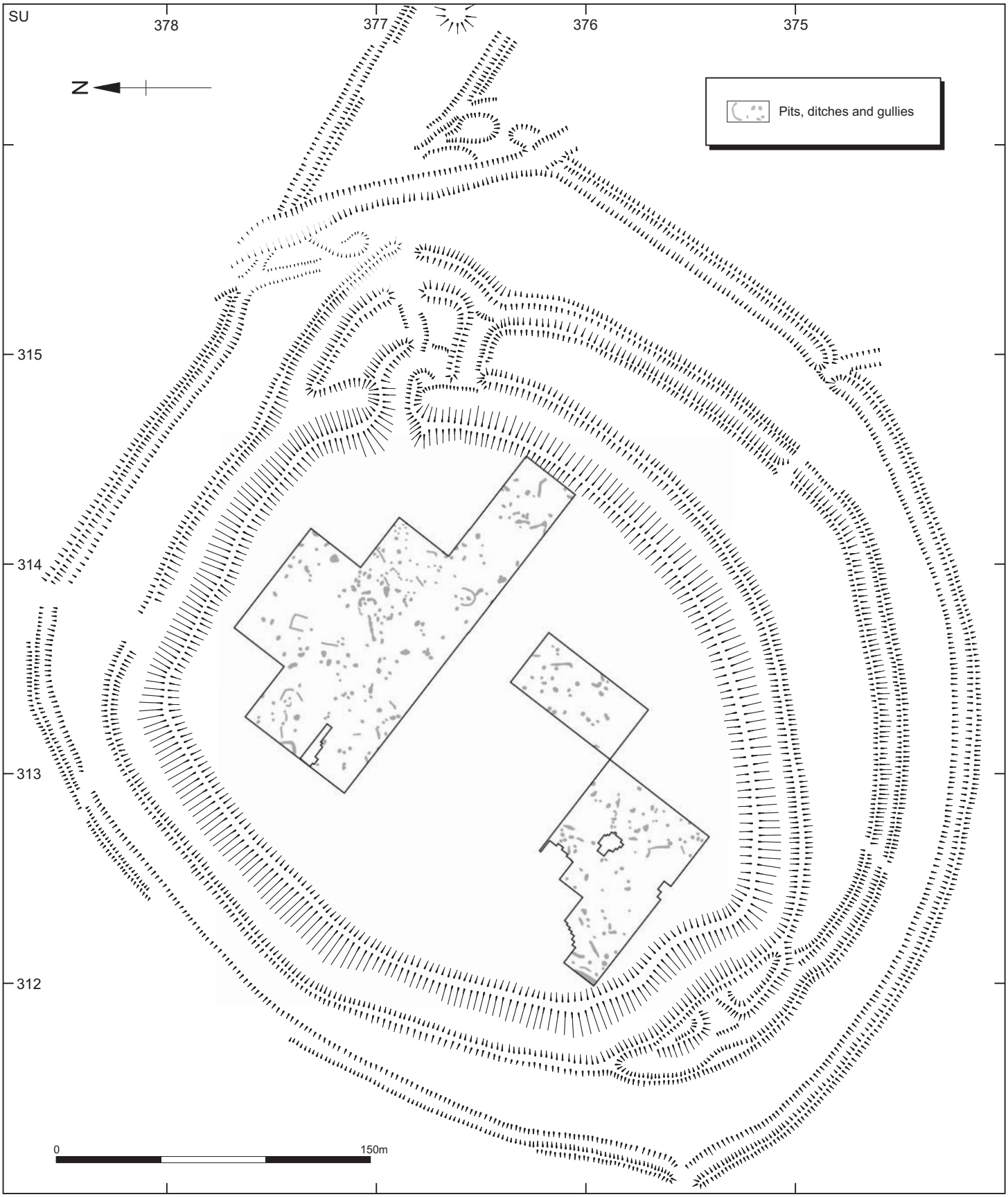
SU
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377
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Pits, ditches and gullies
315
314
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312
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150m

Fig 2.17 (page 60) Greyscale plots of the magnetometer data collected from the sample areas inside Danebury relative to the plan of the hillfort.

Fig 2.18 (page 61) Simplified interpretation of the magnetometer data from Danebury.

The survey results

The areas surveyed inside Danebury generally display a very disturbed magnetic response within which it is difficult to isolate responses to individual features. At other excavated sites, such as Alfred's Castle (Lock and Gosden 1999) and Maiden Castle (Sharples 1991; Payne 1996), this has been shown to be indicative of a great profusion of archaeological features so densely distributed that their individual magnetic signals blend together into an almost continuous sea of anomalies. The interpretation of the magnetometer data in Fig 2.18 only shows the most obvious discrete anomalies that stand out visibly from the general 'noisy' magnetic response across the site. This has the slightly misleading effect of under-representing the true density of anomalous activity inside Danebury. The results from Danebury, despite being difficult to interpret, are therefore totally in keeping with the known density, character and form of archaeological features at the site. The widespread anomalous activity is probably indicative of large numbers of closely packed pits and other inter-cutting features and is comparable with the magnetic activity newly mapped inside Barbury Castle, Wiltshire (this volume).

The data from Danebury demonstrates that fluxgate magnetometry can only provide a coarse picture of the form and layout of archaeological features at a hillfort site with dense internal occupation, compared to what can be obtained by excavation. This has to be expected, but the technique is nevertheless sufficient to show the general character of the site. Although lacking fine detail, the magnetometer survey of Danebury can be regarded as a truthful reflection of the intensive occupation known to have taken place on the site.

The widespread occurrence of anomalies produced by ferrous material in the Danebury data reflects recent activity on the site (including excavation, tree-felling, bonfires and visitor activity). This has contributed considerably to the already disturbed magnetic response. The reactions to modern, near-surface ferrous material have obscured the response to deeper archaeological features in many parts of the hillfort, resulting in an incomplete map of the sub-surface archaeology. Notwithstanding this problem, the majority of the remaining anomalous activity at Danebury is likely to be archaeological in origin based on the relative weakness of the magnetic signals.

Lines of roadways are faintly visible in the data as areas of reduced magnetic activity similar to the roadways previously located at Bury Hill, Segsbury and Maiden Castle. The roads at Danebury are clearest in area MG3 near the western entrance.

Ladle Hill: Great Litchfield Down, Litchfield and Woodcott; NGR SU 479 568

Summary

Date of survey:
16 to 25 July 1997.
Landuse at time of survey:
Rough grassland.
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk.
Soil Association:
343h – Andover 1 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk on slopes and crests. Striped soil patterns locally.
Approximate area enclosed:
3.5 hectares (8.6 acres).
Planform:
Oval.
Form of ramparts:
Irregular and incomplete, but the earthworks suggest univallate defences in the process of construction but left unfinished.
Entrance features:
Two probable entrances to the east and west.
Previous finds:
None documented.
Previous recorded excavation:
None, analysis of surface evidence by Piggott (1931).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
25616 (previously Hampshire 64).
County SMR No.:
SU45NE 15.
Project site code:
WHSP Site 10.

Morphology and setting

The incomplete circuit on Ladle Hill (Fig 2.19) is the best known of all the unfinished hillforts in Britain (Feacham 1971). First correctly identified as an unfinished hillfort and described in detail by Piggott (1931), the site is situated 2km east of Beacon Hill (this volume) at a height of 234m. The unfinished works give a clue to the methods employed in the creation of a univallate enclosure, presumably of earlier Iron Age date. The circuit was intended to enclose an area of approximately 3.5ha (8.6 acres) and was marked by a slight ditch (or possibly an earlier palisaded

Fig 2.19
Aerial photograph of the unfinished hillfort on Ladle Hill looking north. Note the adjacent linear earthworks and narrow "setting-out" ditch on the north-east side of the partially constructed defensive circuit (NMRC, NMR 15453/28, SU 4756/74, 1996).

enclosure). The description given by Piggott (ibid) is still valid and will not be repeated here. Of interest, however, is the unit length discernible in the unfinished stretches of rampart, discussed in greater detail below (pp 136–8). Apart from the dumps of material associated with the abandoned construction works, the interior has very few other earthworks of intelligible character.

The immediate environs of the monument contain a number of features of considerable interest. The north-western arc of the unfinished perimeter partially overlies a linear ditch that runs along the crest of the west-facing escarpment of Great Litchfield Down and Ladle Hill. This can still be traced intermittently for at least 2km, apparently terminating on a slight spur overlooking the valley floor barrow cemetery of Seven Barrows. For the kilometre or so of its known southern course, this linear forms the western boundary of an extensive field system on Great Litchfield Down (Fig 2.20). This field system does not extend northwards as far as Ladle Hill, its northern limit being approximately 850m south of the unfinished enclosure. Immediately east of the unfinished enclosure is another linear ditch. This is not overlain by the enclosure circuit and runs for a distance of at least 700m towards the head of a coombe below Hare Warren Down. To the east of this linear ditch is another extensive field system, visible both as areas of earthworks and as soilmarks and cropmarks on air photographs.

370m to the south-west of Ladle Hill two sub-square enclosures, each of approximately 0.3ha (0.7 acre), survive as earthworks. Both are undated, but Cunliffe (1991, 386) has noted the similarity

Fig 2.20
Aerial photograph of the extensive field system on Great Litchfield Down near Ladle Hill Camp (NMRC, NMR SU 4755/1, 1967).

between such enclosures, linear ditches and areas of probable grazing during the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age transition. More recently similar patterns have been observed and commented upon on the eastern side of Salisbury Plain (Bradley *et al* 1994) and between Fosbury and Walbury hillforts (Massey 1998). It is noteworthy that both the examples discussed here are well beyond the northern limit of the known field system on Great Litchfield Down and west of the fields on Hare Warren Down and Nuthanger Down. Thus the unfinished hillfort appears to be in one of the 'classic' Wessex locations, close to major linear components of the landscape and in an area whose immediate environs are devoid of field system. Elsewhere in the region sites such as Quarley Hill (Palmer 1984), Sidbury (McOmish *et al* 2002) and Yarnbury (Bowden 1999) display similar patterns.

Some 30m north of Ladle Hill lies a well preserved disc barrow and beyond this, at the apex of the spur, Piggott (1931) reported traces of platforms that may represent traces of an unenclosed settlement. This complex has never been surveyed in detail and while an open settlement is a possibility, other causes, such as localised surface quarrying, must also be considered.

Magnetometer survey (Fig 2.21)

Ladle Hill is a highly significant site and one of considerable rarity, as it appears

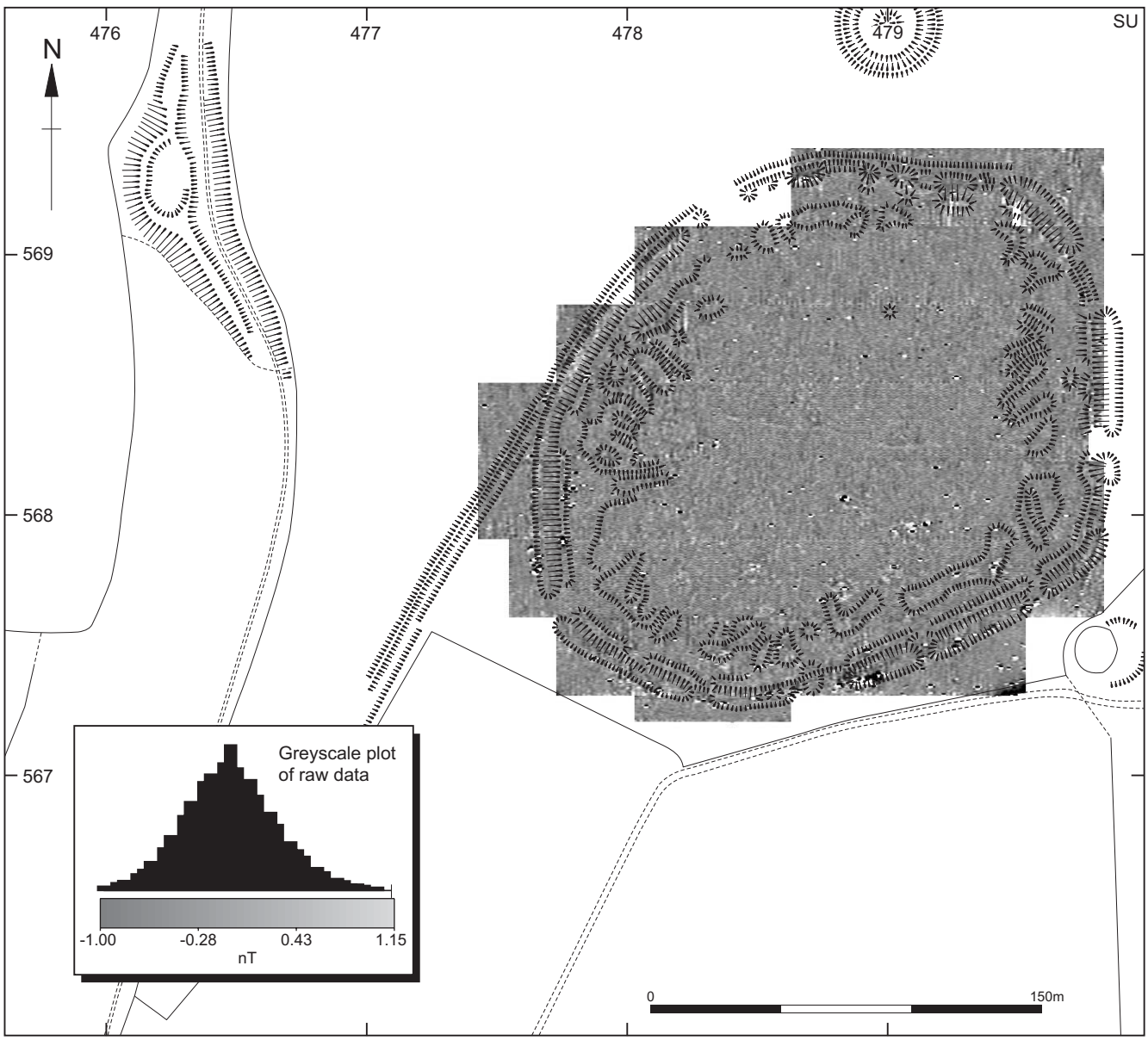


Fig 2.21
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Ladle Hill Camp in relation to the plan of the incomplete hillfort earthworks.

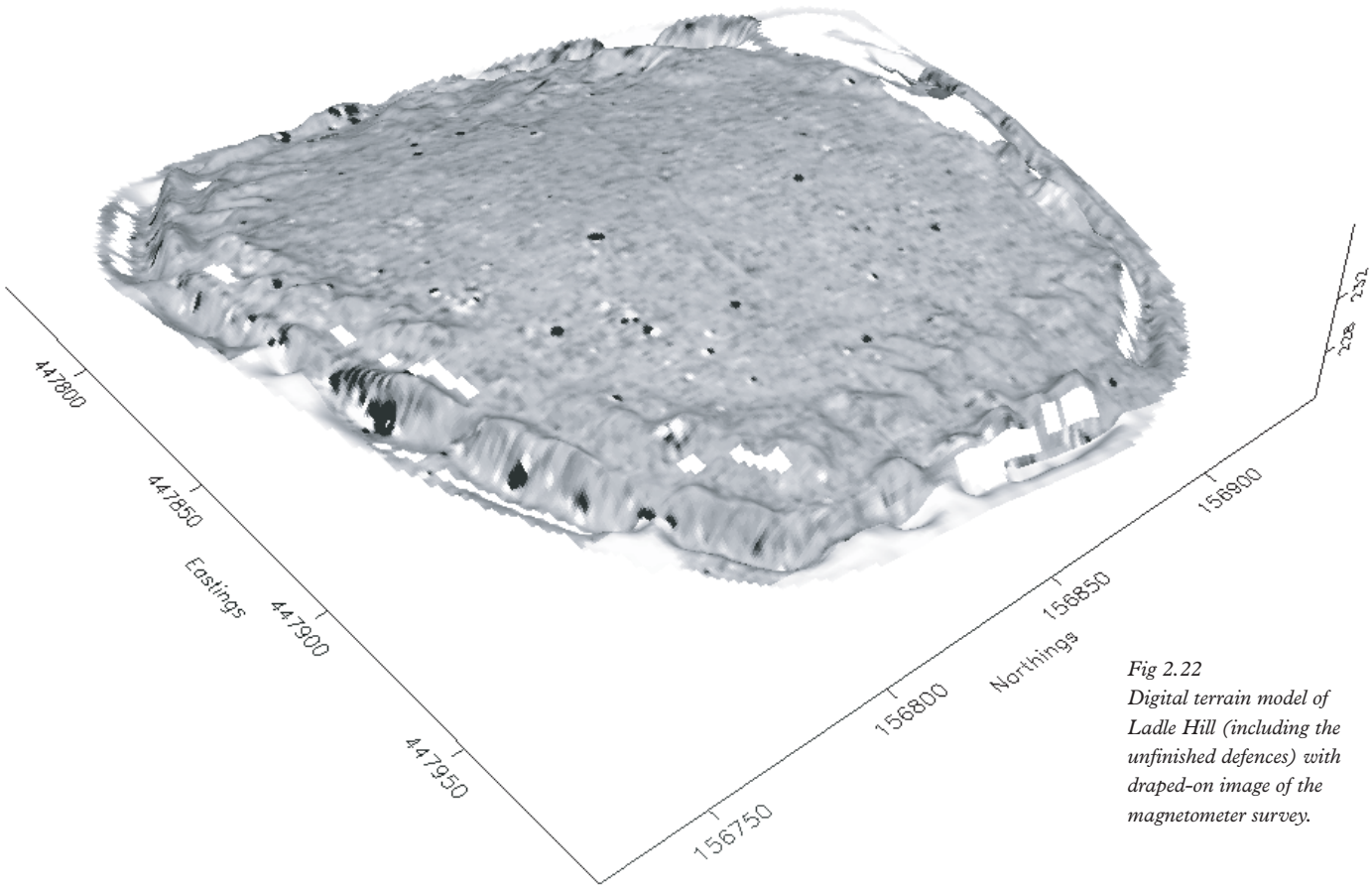


Fig 2.22
Digital terrain model of Ladle Hill (including the unfinished defences) with draped-on image of the magnetometer survey.

to represent the remains of a hillfort abandoned part of the way through the process of construction. The partially constructed state of the site reveals features that would be concealed in a completed example (including a possible setting-out ditch and piles of chalky soil initially quarried from the ditch and deposited in the interior for finishing the rampart). Ladle Hill therefore provides an insight into the methods employed in the construction of the defensive architecture of a hillfort on chalk geology.

It has long been suspected that the area demarcated by the unfinished earthworks never contained a settlement, although there is a possibility that the hillfort had been constructed over an earlier unenclosed settlement. The main purpose of the magnetometer survey at Ladle Hill Camp was to verify the suspected absence of a settlement focus in the area occupied by the partially-constructed earthwork complex, compatible with the unfinished status of the hillfort.

As predicted the magnetic signal from the site is exceptionally subdued and shows none of the variation normally associated with former occupation sites on chalk geology. This would seem to confirm that a settlement with typical Iron Age characteristics (such as storage pits) was never established within the boundary of the earthwork, in accord with the apparent early abandonment of the site before the earthworks were even completed.

The topographical model of the site produced by the Central Archaeology Service in 1996 (Fig 2.22) provides a valuable three-dimensional view of the unfinished earthworks of the hillfort defences that may serve as a useful management tool, but does not provide any significant new archaeological information.

A small, low mound, approximately 3m in diameter, thought to be a disc barrow, in the northern half of the camp did not produce any trace of a surrounding ditch in the magnetometer survey. The mound, if it still survives as a raised feature, was also unresolved in the topographical model on account of the relatively coarse 2–3m measurement-interval employed. Early aerial photographs of the site (for example SU 4756/47, CCC 8960/02160, 1929) indicate that the mound was better preserved at the time of Piggott's investigations in the first half of the 20th century.

Norsebury: Micheldever; NGR SU 490 400

Summary
Date of survey:
25 September to 1 October 1997.
Landuse at time of survey:
Arable, planted with a young crop.
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk.
Soil Association:
343h – Andover 1 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk on slopes and crests. Striped soil patterns locally.
Approximate area enclosed:
3.5 hectares (8.6 acres).
Planform:
Oval.
Form of ramparts:
Univallate defences badly damaged by ploughing and now only partially preserved on the north and west sides of the defensive circuit. The inner bank has almost gone and is now only apparent as a scarp sloping down from the interior (even this is missing on the eastern side and therefore the eastern extent of the enclosed area is unclear). The ditch survives on the north and west sides and an outer bank survives (to 1.5m) only on the north side.
Entrance features:
No longer apparent on the ground owing to the poor preservation of the enclosing earthworks.
Previous finds:
Sherds of middle and late Bronze Age pottery and Bronze Age flints were found during fieldwalking by the M3 Archaeological Committee. Roman building materials (including box-flue tile) and pottery have also been recovered in the near vicinity of the fort.

Fig 2.23
Aerial view of the partially ploughed-out remains of Norsebury Ring looking south. The hillfort ramparts survive as substantial earthworks in the wooded belt around the northern side of the large arable field containing the fort, but the east and south sections of the defences have been almost completely ploughed away. Note the absence in the aerial photograph of evidence for any occupation in the interior in contrast with the magnetometer survey results (NMRC, NMR 15705/34, SU 4940/36, 1997).

Previous recorded excavation:
None documented. Field Survey and plan by Williams-Freeman (1915).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
Hampshire 109.
County SMR No.:
SU44SE 4.
Project Site Code:
WHSP Site 17

Morphology and setting

Norsebury (Fig 2.23) is a univallate enclosure of approximately 3.5ha (8.6 acres) sited below the crest of a low hill with a south-and west-facing aspect overlooking the River Dever, a tributary of the Test. The location is to the east of the main Hampshire hillfort concentration and its situation, even before the results of the geophysical survey were known, suggested that this was a rather different form of Iron Age enclosure. Much of the circuit and all of the interior have been heavily degraded by ploughing. The southern and eastern sections of the defences have been ploughed out to such a degree that the area enclosed by the hillfort is no longer clearly visible above ground, leading to uncertainty over its exact plan and extent. The defences on the east were already much reduced when J P Williams-Freeman produced a plan of the site in the early years of the 20th century, indicating that most of the damage had already taken place by this time (Williams-Freeman 1915). Although the site continues to be ploughed, the appearance and condition of the Norsebury earthwork seems to have altered little in the intervening period up to the present day. Only on the north and west can the ditch be seen as a clear earthwork, with a counterscarp up to 1.5m high also intact. The surviving earthwork stretches of the monument do not appear to have been breached by an entrance and the original entrances could only be identified with confidence after the geophysical survey had been undertaken (*see below*).

The site has no record of any excavation, although late Bronze Age pottery and Bronze Age flint was recovered from fieldwalking by the M3 Archaeological Committee (source: Hampshire SMR).

The environs of the site are of some interest as Norsebury Ring is located in an area of the Hampshire chalk where there are significant clusters of 'banjo' and other later Iron Age enclosure types. These appear to form a focus on the upper reaches of the Dever Valley and the gentle rolling chalkland north of the River Itchen (Barrett *et al* 1991, fig 6.6;

Fasham 1987; Perry 1970, 1986). One banjo, on Hunton Down, is less than 1km north of Norsebury, with its entrance funnel facing directly towards the hillfort. Approximately 1.5km to the north-west a cropmark (NMR 2161/027) near Upper Cranbourne Farm (itself another cluster of banjo enclosures) appears to show a possible square barrow, a Late Iron Age form when encountered in Wessex (*see* Corney 1989). Approximately 500m south-east of the south-eastern entrance of Norsebury Ring air photographs show pit clusters and part of an enclosure of probable Iron Age date.

The general character of the activity in the environs of Norsebury points to a major Late Iron Age focus in the region and, as is so often the case in this part of Hampshire, there is strong evidence for continuity into the Roman period. A number of proven or probable villas are known in the vicinity, many overlying or adjacent to banjos and other later Iron Age settlement types (Fasham 1987; Perry 1970, 1986).

Fragmentary traces of field system are seen on the air cover over much of the area around Norsebury Ring, but the effects of modern ploughing now makes detailed mapping and analysis difficult. Earlier activity is also evident on the air cover with a ring-ditch complex immediately south of the River Dever only 600m from Norsebury Ring (NMR 4680/24).

Magnetometer survey (Figs 2.24–2.26)

Prior to the magnetometer survey in 1997 very little archaeological information on the site was available except for the short description and plan in Williams-Freeman (1915) and the previous limited fieldwalking by the M3 Archaeological Committee (*see above*). The site was selected for inclusion in the Wessex Hillforts Survey as it was important to assess the survival of archaeological features potentially vulnerable to erosion by ploughing in the interior, and also to assess the differences in results obtained by magnetic survey from substantially plough-levelled hillfort interiors, such as Norsebury, and well preserved hillfort interiors in unploughed grassland, such as Beacon Hill. A further site-management-related aim was to define the exact plan and full extent of the monument on the side where the defences have been levelled to help ensure that in the future the scheduled area is of the correct size to afford full protection to the monument. Norsebury was also surveyed in pursuit of one of the original goals of the project concerned with the identification of contrasting or recurrent patterns of activity in medium-sized hillforts of univallate form. These are arguably the most well-represented hillfort type in the study region.

The magnetometer survey of Norsebury proved particularly effective and the results provided a considerable amount of new information about the site. The following features were detected by the magnetometer survey:

i) The circuit of the defensive ditch where it no longer survives as a recognisable feature above ground on the degraded west, south, south-east and east sides of the enclosure. The edges of the southern section of ploughed-out ditch are very irregular and it is possible that the ditch was widened in this area by quarrying of the sides. This practice has previously been observed in the Late Iron Age phases of the Nettlebank Copse banjo settlement excavated by the Danebury Environs Project in 1993 (Cunliffe and Poole 2000d, 134). An alternative is that the main hillfort ditch cuts through an area containing earlier quarry features. Excavation would be required to determine the actual sequence.
ii) Two entrances – one on the south-west corner flanked by a deep 90° in-turn of the western hillfort ditch on the north side of the entrance passage and the other in the centre of the eastern arc of the hillfort ditch, possibly augmented by outworks consisting of symmetrical smaller ditches projecting out from the main ditch on both sides of the entrance.
iii) A series of positive linear magnetic anomalies representing narrow ditches extend into the interior of the hillfort from the newly-identified south-west entrance. The linear anomalies branch around a large oval ditched enclosure located just east of the centre of the hillfort and with a single south-east-facing entrance orientated towards the eastern entrance to the hillfort. The long axis of the oval enclosure is approximately 34m and the shorter (south-west–north-east) axis is approximately 30m. A dipolar magnetic response to a large ferrous object overrides the anomaly to the ditch on the south side of the enclosure. This might represent a ferrous object stratified in the fill of the ditch but could equally be a modern near-surface piece of iron, such as a stray plough blade. At least five large pits are present within the boundary of

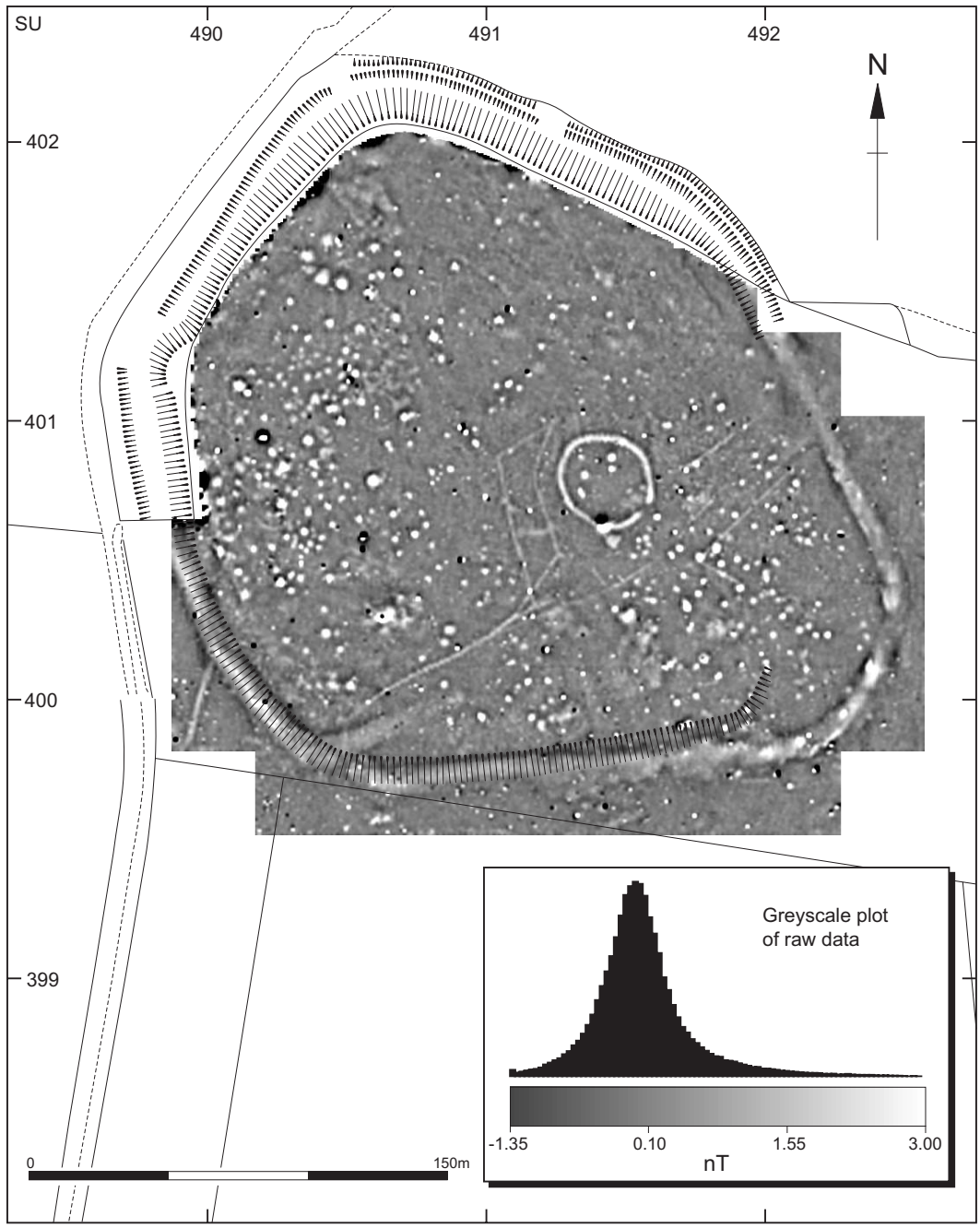


Fig 2.24
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Norsebury Ring in relation to the plan of the surviving hillfort earthworks.

the enclosure – indicated by localised positive magnetic anomalies – but these need not necessarily be contemporary with the enclosure ditch and may simply represent a continuation of the larger spread of pits in the main hillfort interior outside the enclosure to the east, which could be of earlier or later date.

iv) The eastern portion of the hillfort is very densely occupied by the above distribution of pits, ranging from one or two metres in diameter up to five metres. The pits seem to exhibit a zoned distribution with the density of pits falling off considerably towards the centre of the site in the areas immediately west and north of the oval enclosure and increasing again along the western side of the hillfort to a similar or even greater density than that on the east. Within the zones of pit disturbance a number of other larger, more amorphous areas of magnetic disturbance are visible that may represent areas of quarrying, aggregates of closely intercutting pits or 'working hollows'. Also within the zones

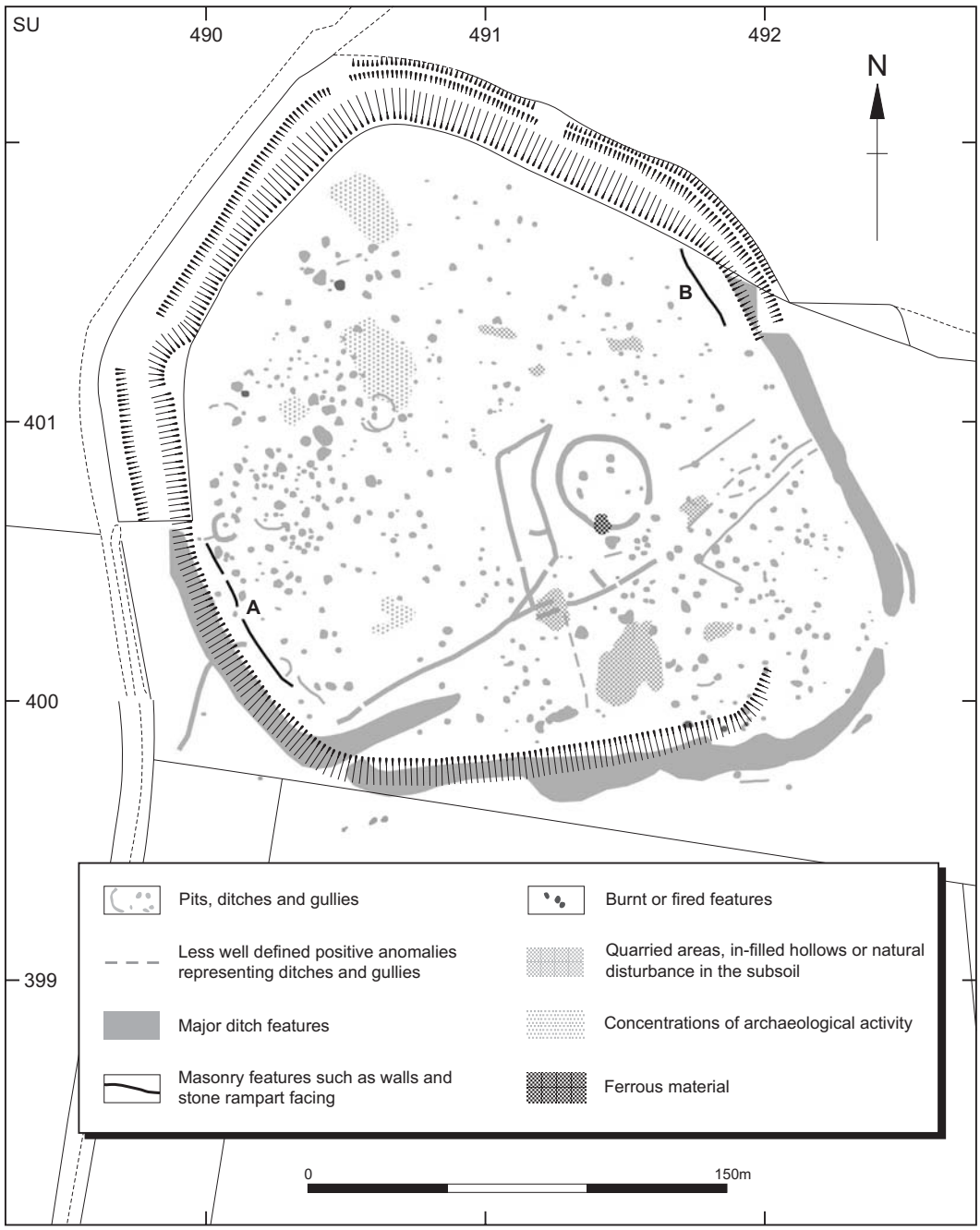


Fig 2.25
Interpretation of the magnetometer data from Norsebury.

of pitting are a number of weakly-defined narrow annular or arcing positive anomalies that may be indicative of circular gully structures or dwellings. A few strongly positive localised anomalies (again within the main pit distribution), may represent fired or industrial features such as hearths, furnaces or ovens.

v) A single linear ditch in the form of a positive linear magnetic anomaly can be seen running up to the hillfort defences on the south, but this does not seem to continue far under the defences into the enclosed area. This probably represents an earlier pre-hillfort boundary feature. No continuation of this feature was noted on the available air cover.

vi) Emptier areas immediately inside the line of the hillfort ditch where it is ploughed-out may represent the former rampart. Unlike some of the hillfort ramparts covered by the Wessex Hillforts Survey there is no evidence of burning of this structure. The presence of a possible internal masonry (or chalk rubble) rampart revetment is suggested

by narrow negative linear anomalies visible at two points along the ploughed-out defensive circuit (A and B on Fig 2.25).

Magnetic susceptibility survey

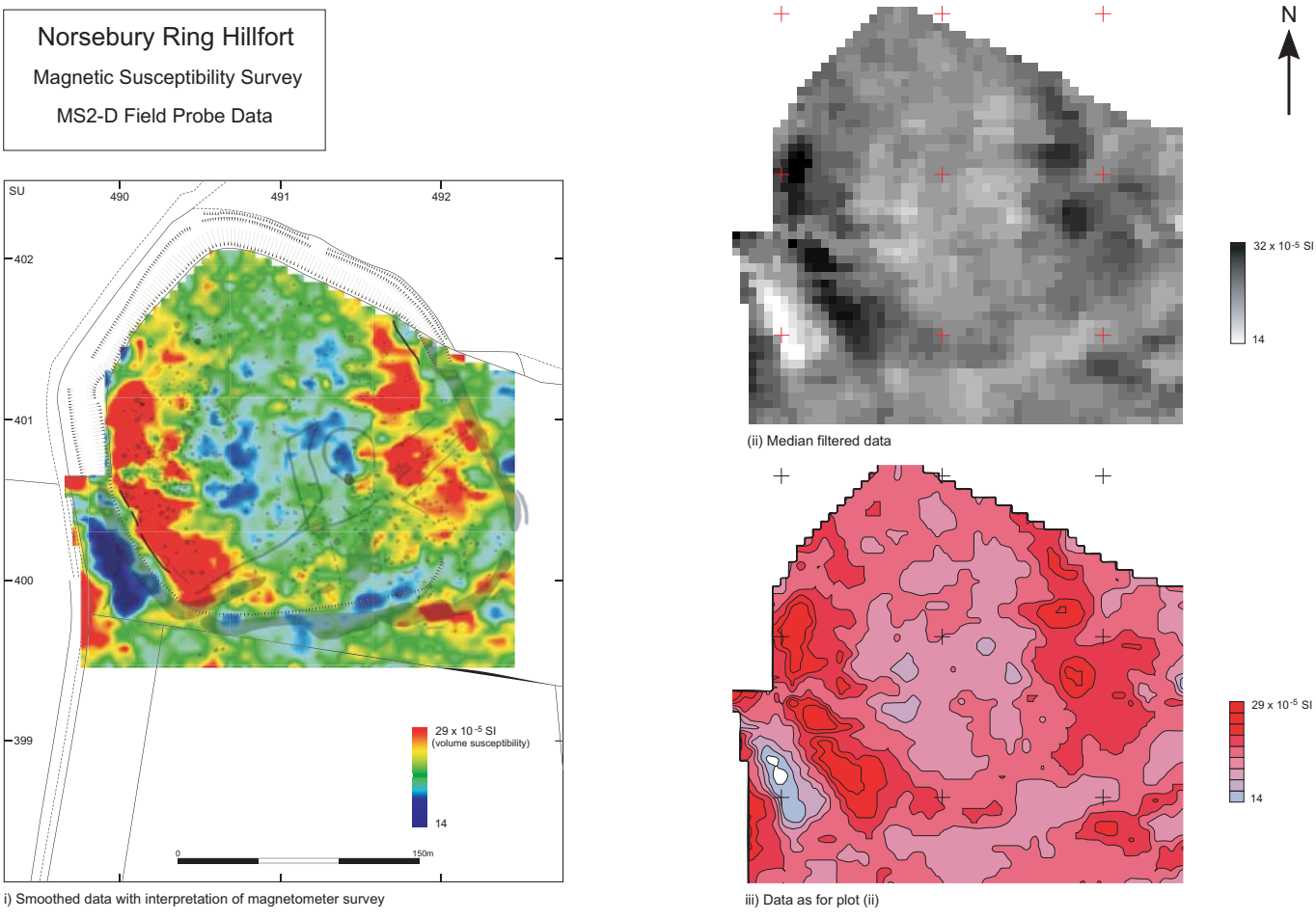
Magnetic susceptibility data (Fig 2.26) collected on a 5m grid at Norsebury in 1998 (Bartlett 1999 and Chapter 1 this volume) shows a clear relationship between areas of high susceptibility readings and increases in the concentration of silted pits (and therefore areas of occupation) mapped by the magnetometer survey. At both Norsebury and Castle Ditches (*see below*) surveyed using the same method, the susceptibility values also diminish in areas containing few magnetic anomalies.

Discussion

The newly identified entrances on the south-east and south-west corners are an unusual configuration in Wessex hillforts. That on the south-east appears as a simple gap approximately 10m wide with hints of slight outworks. On the south-west a more elaborate and unusual plan is evident with the ditch on the west side making a 90° turn into the interior for almost 60m and forming a long internal projection. The character of the ramparts at each entrance is unknown, these having long succumbed to the effects of ploughing. The internal features of the site are also of interest with clear evidence of zoning represented by dense clusters of pits, notably in the western half and south-eastern corner, and a number of linear features. The prominent oval ditched enclosure just east of the centre of the hillfort is without parallel in central Wessex hillforts. The entrance of this inner enclosure faces directly towards the south-eastern entrance of the fort suggesting a layout planned deliberately in accordance with the access and viewpoint through the main hillfort rampart.

The results from Norsebury suggest a densely occupied hillfort but with a coherent internal layout possibly indicative of one major phase of occupation within which a wide range of activities were carried out.

Fig 2.26
Magnetic susceptibility survey results from Norsebury (from Bartlett-Clark Consultancy).



The elaboration of the entrance features is typical of a later date range in the Iron Age – possibly indicative of a relatively late hillfort development such as Bury Hill 2 or an earlier hillfort that continued in occupation for a lengthier time than some of the neighbouring sites in Hampshire. Although the resemblance may be superficial, in terms of entrance configuration and internal layout, Norsebury also shares several features in common with ditched enclosures recently investigated in the Danebury area of Hampshire, such as the site at Rowbury Farm (Cunliffe 2003; Payne 2003b). The latter site was established in the Early Iron Age but was subsequently reoccupied in the Late Iron Age and continued into the Roman period, when a series of smaller internal enclosures and linear sub-divisions were established within the bounds of the original larger ditched enclosure.

The extent of the monument is greater than originally anticipated on the basis of the Ordnance Survey evidence. The new geophysical evidence shows that it is considerably more elongated to the east.

St Catherine's Hill: Winchester; NGR SU 484 276

Summary
Date of survey:
13 to 17 October 1997.
Landuse at time of survey:
Grassland with some trees and scrub.
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk.
Soil Association:
343h – Andover 1 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk.
Approximate area enclosed:
7.6 hectares (18.8 acres).
Planform:
Oval.
Form of ramparts:
Univallate defences encircling St Catherine's Hill, consisting of a rampart and outer ditch and a non-continuous counterscarp bank.
Entrance features:
Original clearly defined in-turned entrance at the north-east excavated in 1927–8.
Previous finds:
Finds assemblage from excavation (*see below*) spanning the Early Iron Age to Medieval periods.
Previous recorded excavation:
The site was partially excavated in 1927–8 by Hawkes, Myres and Stevens (Hawkes *et al* 1930, Hawkes 1976).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
Hampshire 28.
County SMR No.:
SU42NE 5 A.
Project site code:
WHSP Site 19.

Morphology and setting

The hillfort on St Catherine's Hill (Fig 2.27) is situated on a spur of chalk overlooking the valley of the River Itchen on the west and a narrow dry valley cutting through Twyford Down to the south and east. The site is now more isolated from the surrounding chalk downland by the deep cutting through Twyford Down containing the modern extension of the M3 motorway. The A33T road, which the new motorway replaced, formerly ran immediately below the line of the western defences (Fig 2.27). Despite the proximity of the new motorway and the busy centre of Winchester, the site remains a tranquil island and forms part of a nature reserve managed by the Hampshire Wildlife Trust. Visitor erosion to the ramparts and rabbit disturbance are problems. Scrub clearing helps to deter rabbits and in 1996 paths were cut through the grass inside to disperse visitors and reduce erosion.

The land enclosed by the hillfort consists of a flattish summit area beyond which the ground slopes down towards the ramparts, particularly steeply on the western side overlooking the Itchen Valley. The defences consist of a main rampart of simple dump (or *glacis*) type construction fronted by an external ditch and a counterscarp bank is present along the northern and western sections of the defences where the natural slope is least severe. The rampart seems to have been built from the start as a dump (as is also the case at Woolbury and Quarley Hill) and was apparently not preceded by a timber constructed box rampart as at some Wessex hillforts (Hawkes 1976; Cunliffe 1991, Chapter 14, 322). Heightening and thorough rebuilding of the rampart, and simultaneous re-modelling of the entrance, took place during the earlier part of the Middle Iron Age around 400–300 BC, associated with saucepan forms of pottery of the St Catherine's Hill group. The site appears to have been abandoned relatively soon after this (Hawkes 1976).

The north-eastern arc of the defences is broken by a single entrance of inturned type, facing the most moderate gradients leading up to the hillfort and therefore the

Fig 2.27
Aerial photograph of St Catherine's Hill near Winchester and the A33T (now grassed over), before construction of the M3 (on opposite side of hill). (Note placement of ramparts well down-slope from crown of hill and beech clump shrouding remains of late Norman chapel) (NMRC, NMR 3184/25, SU 4827/51, 1987).

most accessible approach to the site. The side containing the entrance is further augmented by the counterscarp banks already mentioned, presumably to strengthen the most vulnerable section of the defences.

The layout of the defences conforms to the brow of the hill, so as to command the steeper slopes beneath them, and the hillfort interior therefore includes some steeply-sloping areas unsuitable for occupation without prior levelling or terracing – primarily the western side of the enclosed area. The downslope siting of the ramparts in this fashion is repeated at numerous other hillforts in the south of England, including Old Winchester Hill (Hampshire); Sinodun Hill Camp (Oxfordshire); Chalbury (Dorset) and The Caburn (East Sussex) (*see* Figs 1.8 and 1.17). This would have allowed the interiors of the sites to be clearly viewed from afar. Hamilton and Manley (1997) have commented on the possible symbolic or territorial aspects of this form of rampart construction in relation to the hillforts on the Sussex Downs (*see* Chapter 1).

A late Norman style chapel (cruciform with a central tower, destroyed circa 1538–40) was erected in the fort before the mid-12th century. A large mound, shrouded in a grove of beech trees in the centre-north of the fort, is all that now remains of this building. A dwelling was present at the east end of the chapel and boundary ditches to the west, probably enclosing a cemetery. Medieval chalk pits and rubbish pits associated with the chapel were excavated by Hawkes, Myres and Stevens in the 1920s (*see below*). A 15th-century boundary ditch forms a wide arc 80ft (24m) west of the chapel and between the chapel site and the original entrance to the hillfort is a maze consisting of a narrow channel cut in the turf at ground level. The maze is believed to have first been cut between 1647 and 1710 and was recut in the period 1830–40 (English Heritage documentation).

The 1927–8 excavations

St Catherine's Hill was the first of a series of Hampshire hillforts (the others being Buckland Rings, Bury Hill and Quarley Hill) excavated on a small scale by C F C Hawkes in the late 1920s and 1930s (*see* Chapter 1, Introduction). St Catherine's was excavated over the course of two seasons by the team of C F C Hawkes, J N L Myres and C G Stevens during 1927 and 1928 (Hawkes *et al* 1930) following two previous seasons of excavation on the site of the medieval chapel described above. As was common archaeological practice at the time (*see* Chapter 1), Hawkes and his team undertook only very limited excavation inside the hillfort, preferring to place more emphasis on the careful excavation of the original entrance on the north-east side of the hillfort and sections through the defences in two places. The main objective was to arrive at an understanding of the chronological development of the hillfort through identification of the main structural phases of the defences and entrance. Hawkes recognised that the original entrance to a hillfort is so often the area where the number of phases of activity associated with the use of a hillfort site can be best understood, because it is the area most sensitive to modification and reconstruction over time. Our present understanding of the chronological development of the hillfort is still largely based on these important excavations, which were reassessed in the light of more recent fieldwork at sites such as Danebury, in a paper published by Hawkes in 1976.

Extensive stripping of internal areas was largely unknown at the time Hawkes was excavating, and with the exception of the area containing the remains of the medieval chapel, the 1928–9 excavations were limited to small key-hole test areas, opened up to examine individual pit-type features suspected on the basis of small depressions in the ground surface. The scale and quantity of these trenches was inadequate to give a clear idea of the overall density and layout of features inside the hillfort, but did shed important light on the history of occupation of the hilltop.

In total 13 pits were excavated, spanning the whole range of occupation of the site from the end of the Bronze Age to the medieval period. Finds included Iron Age pottery of Early to Middle Iron Age date (the earlier material being more abundant), worked stone, a saddle quern stone, worked bone, bronze and iron objects, two whetstones, clay spindle whorls, burnt flint, faunal remains of Celtic shorthorn ox, sheep or goat, pig, horse, red-deer and dog and charcoal remains of ash and oak. Finds of Roman date included 1st–3rd century AD pottery types, a bronze fibula (late 1st century AD) and a bronze coin of Carausius (AD 286–93). Finds of stratified pottery essentially of a final Bronze Age type and date (coarsely gritted haematite coated wares belonging to the All Cannings Cross tradition), obtained from the base of one of the pits (Pit A) in the south-eastern part of the fort, indicated an earlier pre-hillfort phase of occupation on the site in the Early Iron Age, possibly beginning around 600 BC.

South of St Catherine's Hill itself, in an area now largely destroyed by the building of the M3, was an extensive area of field systems and a small Late Iron Age/Romano-British settlement centred at Arethusa's Clump, excavated by J D M Stuart and J M Birkbeck in 1933–4 (Stuart and Birkbeck 1936). Leading east along the ridge was a major multiple linear earthwork, combining a trackway with elements of field and possible territorial boundaries. This led to a second block of regular sub-rectangular fields approximately 1km east, similar in size and shape to those around Arethusa's Clump. Situated approximately midway between these two blocks of fields, in an area occupied by the Hockley Golf Course, is an earthwork enclosure similar in size and shape to Late Iron Age enclosures, but recorded as a Romano- British farmstead due to the presence of Roman pottery and

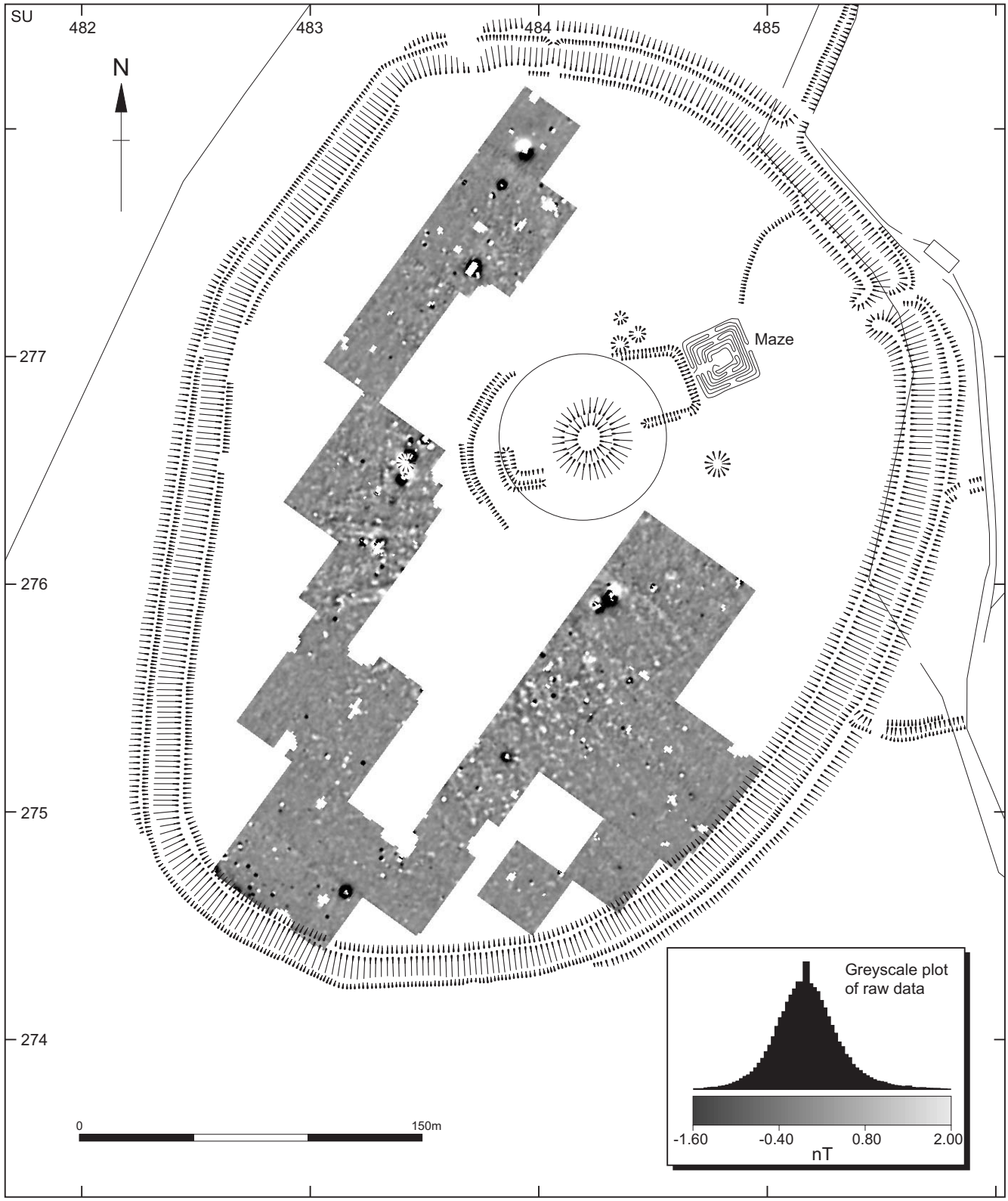


Fig 2.28
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer survey of a sample of the interior of St Catherine's Hill Camp in relation to the plan of the hillfort.

tile found in an excavation by Winchester College Archaeological Society. This is an important area in terms of British archaeology with the presence of a hillfort and associated farmstead settlements and field systems, which may suggest a successive process of settlement from the hillfort to the farmsteads to the Roman city at Winchester.

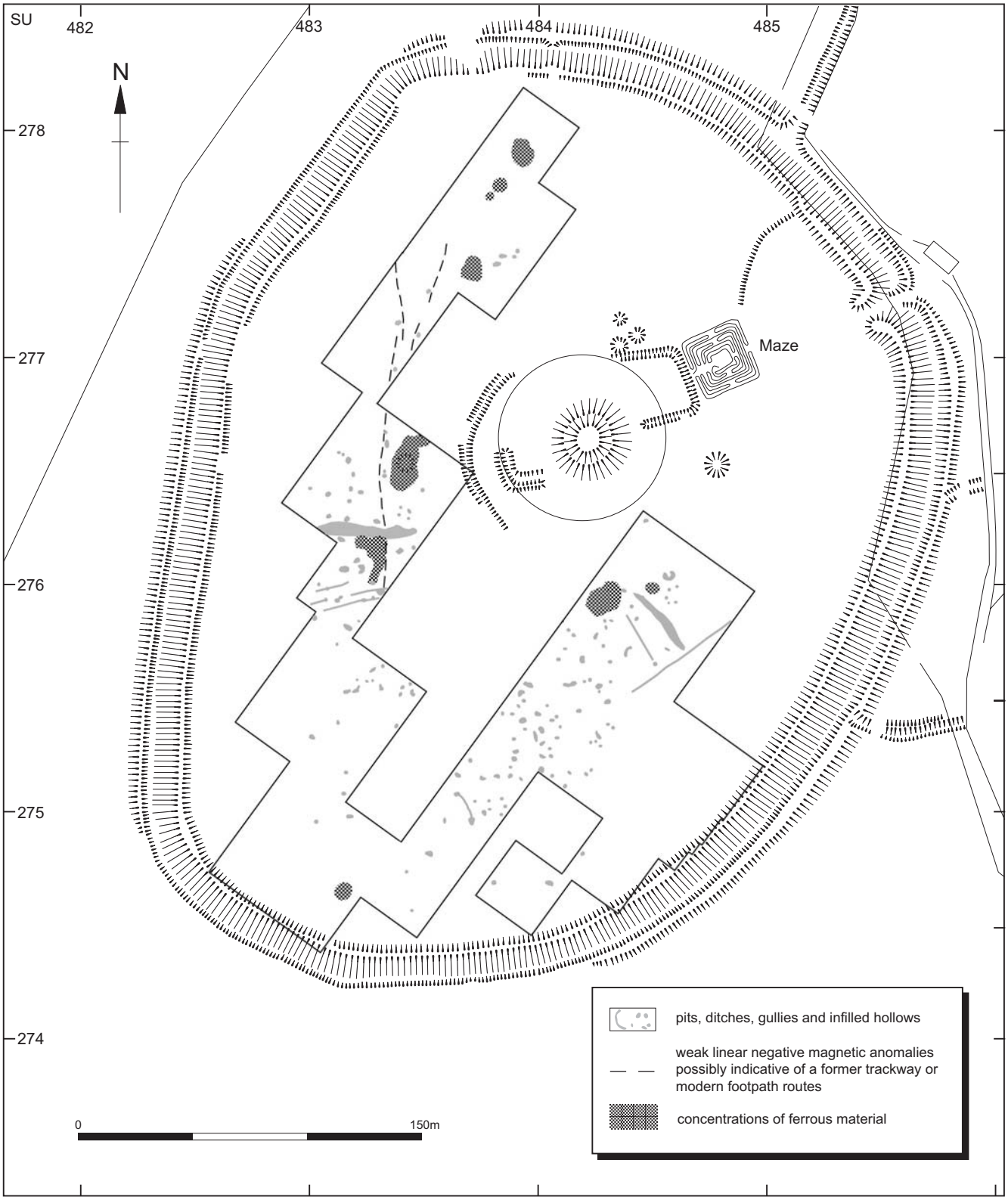


Fig 2.29
Interpretation of the magnetometer data from St Catherine's Hill Camp.

Magnetometer Survey (Figs 2.28 and 2.29)
St Catherine's Hill was included in the sample of sites investigated by the Wessex Hillforts Project on management and academic grounds. The popularity of the site as a recreational area close to the city of Winchester means that it is at risk from erosion on visitor route-ways but at the same time

considerable scope exists for raising public awareness and understanding of the archaeological importance of the monument. Because the site is managed primarily as a nature reserve, it is important to understand the archaeology it contains in order to prevent any management conflicts between conserving wild-life habitats and preservation of the archaeology. Although the chronology of the site is reasonably well understood as a result of the limited excavations described above, the overall character of the internal utilisation of the site is less well understood because of the small-scale nature of the excavations in the interior.

Magnetometer survey was only possible over a sample of the hillfort interior in areas where vegetation cover was sufficiently open to allow unobstructed survey. The central area of the site had to be excluded from the survey owing to the dense tree cover around the site of the medieval chapel, which extends to the south-west along the crown of the hill. The western part of the site was omitted because of the steep gradient of the slope, as was the north-west sector, because this was trial trenched by Hawkes in the 1920s and was therefore a low priority for survey. It was hoped that the survey coverage over the remaining areas of the site would be sufficient to be able to recognise the general pattern and character of occupation across the fort interior. Slightly less than 50% of the interior (comprising 37m × 30m grid squares – 3.3ha in total) was covered by the survey.

The survey results reveal a high concentration of archaeological activity immediately south and south-west of the chapel site, situated on the highest ground. The middle of this zone of activity is unfortunately obscured by the tree cover. The activity appears to decrease down-slope towards the ramparts forming the south-east, south and south-west sides of the hillfort. The anomalies mapped by the survey are indicative of a moderately high distribution of pits and several ditches. A possible trackway may be present on the western flank of the hill running towards a break in the ramparts on the northern perimeter of the fort. On the evidence of Hawkes' limited excavations, the magnetic anomalies probably reflect a combination of Early Iron Age and medieval activity but this cannot be determined with certainty without excavation. Pits and ditches belonging to both periods were shown by Hawkes to be present on the hilltop and there is no reliable way of differentiating between the two in a magnetometer survey. If the majority of pits are in fact Early Iron Age, St Catherine's Hill would be comparable in its layout to Danebury hillfort in its earlier phases in the 5th–4th centuries BC.

Woolbury: Little Somborne/ Stockbridge; NGR SU 381 353

Summary

Date of survey:
1 to 5 September 1997.

Landuse at time of survey:
Arable.

Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk capped in parts by clay-with-flints plateau drift.

Soil Association:
343h – Andover 1 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk on slopes and crests. Striped soil patterns locally.

Approximate area enclosed:
7 hectares (17 acres).

Planform:
Roughly pear-shaped (decreasing in width from west to east).

Form of ramparts:
A simple dump-constructed rampart reaching a maximum height above the interior of 2.7m sloping down to a ditch. An external counterscarp bank is present along the north and south-west sections of the circumference. The north-east and eastern sections of the defences have been entirely levelled by ploughing but the course followed by the missing section of the defences was recovered by excavation in 1989.

Entrance features:
A simple gap through the rampart and ditch is present on the south-west side of the hillfort providing access to Stockbridge Down along the line of the ridge on which the fort is situated. A second entrance was probably present on the opposite (east) side of the hillfort in the now ploughed-out section of the defensive circuit.

Previous finds:
Flint scatters (including Mesolithic material). Beaker burials and collared urn cremations and associated bronze objects on nearby Stockbridge Down (Stone and Hill 1940, Stone 1948).

Previous recorded excavation:
Sample area excavation was undertaken by the Danebury Environs Project in the north-east area of the hillfort in 1989 (Cunliffe and Poole 2000a). As well as sampling the deposits in the hillfort interior, the excavation extended across the plough levelled section of the hillfort defences.

Scheduled Ancient Monument:
HA 52
County SMR number:
SU33NE 24
Project site code:
WHSP Site 14

Morphology and setting

Woolbury (Fig 2.30), a univallate enclosure with an internal area of 7ha (17 acres), is located on Stockbridge Down 2km east of the valley of the River Test and 6km east south-east of Danebury. The location is remarkable for the Hampshire chalk, in that much of the area south of the hillfort remains undisturbed downland with extensive earthwork remains of field system, linear ditches and barrow groups (Crawford and Keiller 1928; Eagles 1989). The hillfort itself, though, has suffered severe damage from cultivation, with the whole interior under plough and the easternmost part of the defences having been completely levelled. Where best preserved, largely on the north and west, the defences display good evidence of 'unit length' construction with stretches averaging 35m in length visible. A simple break in the rampart and ditch at the south-west corner is most likely an original entrance and another might have existed on the north-east corner, now plough-levelled.

Recent excavation by the Danebury Environs Programme has established a mid 1st-millennium BC date for the construction of the hillfort, although evidence of intensive use was sparse (Cunliffe and Poole 2000a). In the Late Iron Age a small enclosed settlement developed in the eastern side of the fort, later extending beyond the defences, and continuing to be occupied into the late Roman period (ibid).

Ground survey, supplemented by air photography, has shown that Woolbury developed at a junction of pre-existing linear ditches associated with an extensive field system (Cunliffe and Poole 2000a; Eagles 1989; Palmer 1984) to the north and south-east. It is highly likely that the southern side of the defences are actually constructed over an existing linear ditch that is set back from, but ran parallel to, the edge of the north-west-facing escarpment. This feature can be seen on air photographs as a double ditch to the north-east of the hillfort and still survives as an earthwork by the south-west corner, from where it continues as a single scarp for at least 700m across Stockbridge Down (Eagles 1989, fig 2). Close by the south-west corner of the hillfort is a junction with another linear ditch that can be traced in a south-easterly direction for at least 600m. This ditch marks the western limit of a block of fields that covers at least 1 sq km and may link to other fragmentary remains

Fig 2.30
Aerial photograph of Woolbury hillfort on Stockbridge Down, Hampshire showing the ploughed interior and adjacent plough-levelled field system (Copyright reserved Cambridge University Collection of Air Photographs, ANE 77, 1966).

visible on air photographs farther to the east. North of Woolbury, at the foot of the escarpment and beyond, another block of fields can be traced almost to the banks of the River Test (Palmer 1984).

On Stockbridge Down, beyond the areas of prehistoric cultivation bounded by the linear ditches, earlier activity is represented by 14 mounds, most of which are likely to be barrows of Early to Middle Bronze Age date (Eagles 1989). The Down has also produced an isolated Beaker burial and stray finds of Middle Bronze Age pottery and flints; settlement of the latter date in the immediate vicinity seems probable (ibid).

Other settlements of the 1st millennium BC in the immediate vicinity are relatively few in number. Across the River Test, some 2km west, is the Early to Middle Iron Age enclosed settlement on Meon Hill (Liddell 1933) and, 1km north of this, the Iron Age settlement and Roman villa at Houghton Down (Cunliffe and Poole 2000e). Some 3km to the south, Neal (1980) investigated a Middle to Late Iron Age settlement at Little Somborne and on Steepleton Hill, 1.5km west-south-west, a

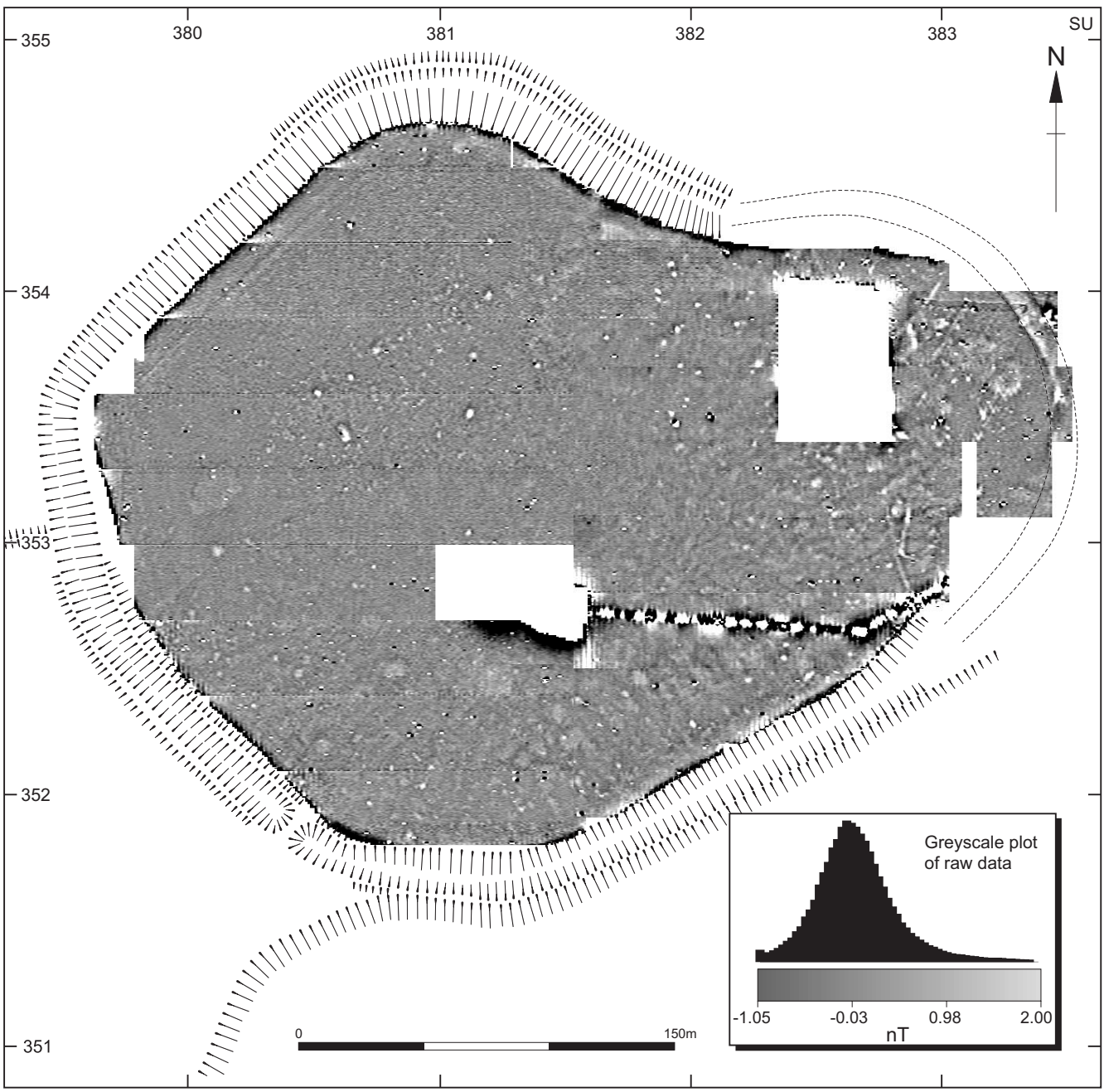


Fig 2.31
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Woolbury in relation to the plan of the partially removed hillfort earthworks.

large, bivallate, enclosure of Suddern Farm type is known from parchmarks, but is as yet undated (Cunliffe 2000, 23–4).

Magnetometer survey (Figs 2.31–2.32)

Magnetometer survey was first employed at Woolbury in support of the excavations carried out by the Danebury Environs Project in the eastern half of the hillfort in 1989 (Cunliffe and Poole 2000a). The initial coverage concentrated on exploring this zone of the hillfort in order to provide advance information on the distribution of archaeological features in the area selected for excavation and the location of the ploughed-out eastern section of the hillfort rampart. At this stage resources were not available to extend the survey across the whole of the

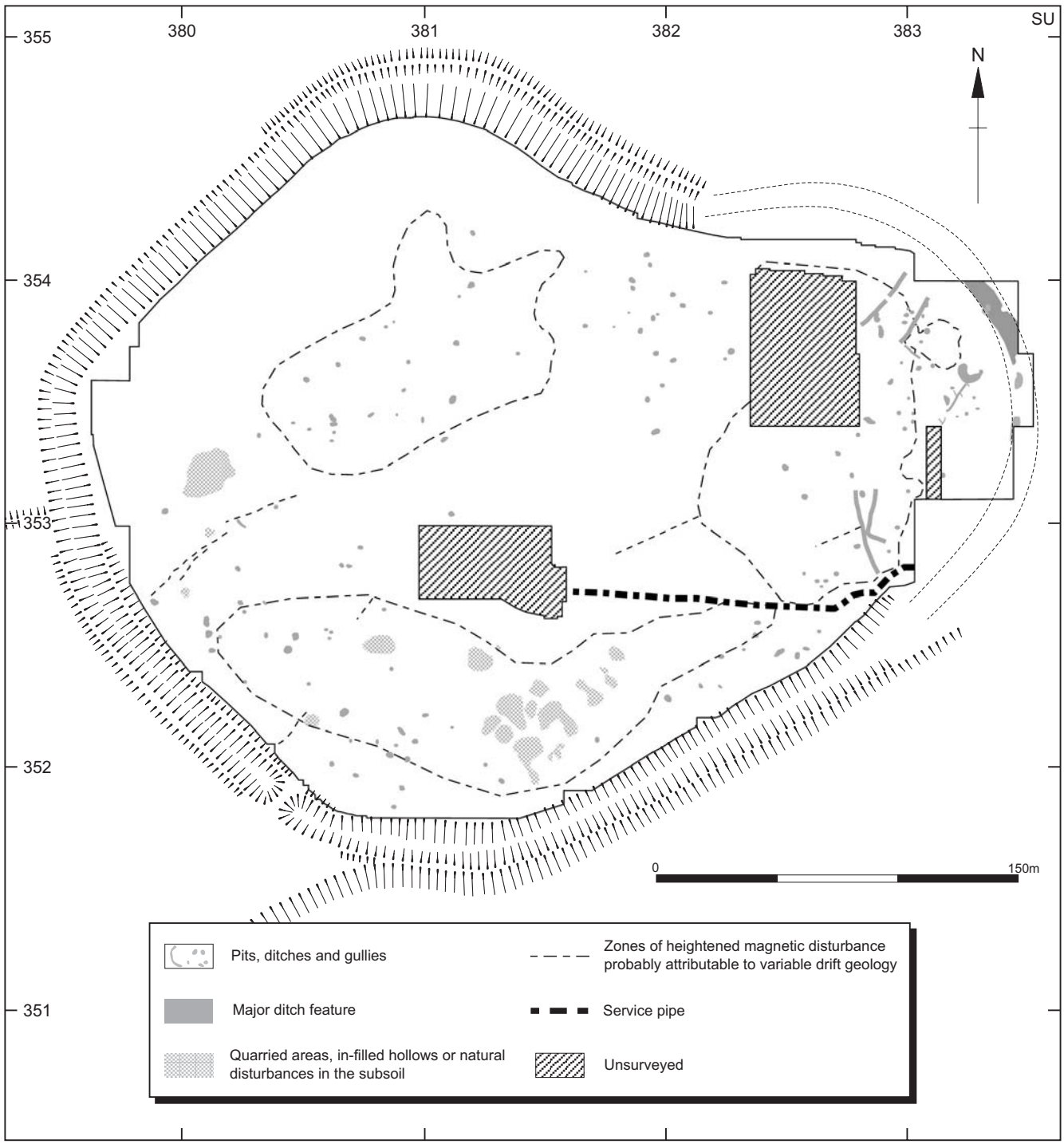


Fig 2.32 Interpretation of the magnetometer data from Woolbury.

hillfort interior, but the initial results from the eastern half provided a sufficient sample of the internal area to enable the overall character of the archaeological activity within the hillfort to be reliably predicted (Payne 2000b). After a six-year gap the magnetometer survey of the hillfort was finally completed in 1997 by the Wessex Hillforts Survey.

Observation of the completed survey shows that the excavated area at the eastern extremity of the fort contains a greater complexity of archaeological activity than the remainder of the enclosed area and is untypical of the general low level of internal activity at Woolbury. Throughout the majority of the survey the only anomalies present are occasional positive anomalies indicative of isolated pits. Some clustering of pits occurs in the middle of the northern half of the fort repeating a trend seen at other hillforts with a relatively low level of internal activity such as Uffington Castle (Oxfordshire), Perborough Castle (Berkshire) and Beacon Hill (Hampshire), where greater concentrations of pits occur in discrete areas.

On the evidence of excavation, the pits at Woolbury are probably of Early to Middle Iron Age date. Four out of a total of five Middle Iron Age pits uncovered in the 1989 excavation were previously detected in the magnetometer survey and as the discrete anomalies in the rest of the fort are similar to the anomalies from the excavated pits, there is a high probability that they represent other occurrences of this type of feature. The very low density of pit-type anomalies mapped across the interior of Woolbury confirms the impression gained from the more limited sample excavation that contemporary use of the hillfort was only sporadic or of limited duration or intensity.

There is a considerably higher density of archaeological activity in the eastern sector of the hillfort than in other areas, as evidenced by several linear-positive magnetic anomalies indicative of ditches. These appear to be absent elsewhere in the hillfort and it is now known from excavation that they correspond to a phase of Late Iron Age and Roman re-use of the site after the hillfort had fallen in to disrepair, when a settlement was established in the eastern part of the old hillfort extending for an undefined distance outside the hillfort ditch. Excavation by the Danebury Environs Programme in 1989, although limited in extent, has shown that the settlement area was divided by small ditches into a number of enclosures or paddocks (Cunliffe and Poole 2000a). More linear features, which probably belong to this same phase of occupation, are visible in the magnetometer survey, indicating that activity in this period spread south of the excavated area but was concentrated in a relatively confined area in the eastern end of the site. The Late Iron Age–Roman activity does not appear to extend to the western parts of the hillfort, which might have been preserved for agricultural use by this time (Cunliffe and Poole 2000a). In addition to the ditched enclosures, other features belonging to the later phase detected by the magnetometer survey (as positive anomalies) included a Roman period pit (F10) and a quarry hollow (F13) within one of the enclosures.

The line of the missing eastern section of the hillfort defences was mapped by the magnetometer survey as a broad shallow positive anomaly. There is a gap in this anomaly at the extreme eastern limit of the magnetometer coverage suggesting the presence of an entrance but the survey coverage is insufficient to be certain of the continuation of the ploughed out ditch to the south. The rampart seems to have been obliterated and the ditch filled in during the phase of secondary reoccupation of the site in the Roman period.

Some of the weaker large and irregular positive anomalies that occur in the western, south-western and southern areas of the hillfort are best interpreted as geological variations or perhaps evidence of quarrying of unknown date. Some of these anomalies also show as patches of darker soil on aerial photographs (Fig 2.30). A series of trial trenches excavated across the hilltop in 1989 demonstrated that the site is only partially covered by deposits of clay-with-flints and that the composition of this is very varied. This could easily account for some of the more irregular anomalous areas in the survey.

Conclusions

The magnetometer survey results fully support the conclusions of the Danebury Environs Project that Woolbury probably never became a major settlement focus and only underwent a low level of use in comparison to Danebury following its construction in the 5th century BC. The chronology and development of the site in relation to Danebury is discussed fully in Chapter 1 (pp 10–14).

Oxfordshire

Alfred's Castle: Ashbury; NGR SU 277 822

Summary

Date of survey:
12 to 13 August 1996.
Landuse at time of survey:
Rough grassland (mown prior to survey).
Geology:
Coombe Deposits (Pleistocene chalky drift) over Cretaceous Middle Chalk.
Soil Association:
511f – Coombe 1 – well drained calcareous fine silty soils, deep in valley bottoms, shallow to chalk on valley sides in places.
Approximate area enclosed:
Interior area of 1.2 hectares (*c* 2.75 acres).
Planform:
A small earthwork enclosure of approximately hexagonal shape situated at the southern end of a much larger, now ploughflattened, elongated ditched enclosure.
Form of ramparts:
A single internal bank formed of six relatively straight sections fronted by a ditch (3m deep with a V-shaped profile and narrow flat-bottom where excavated) clearly visible on the south, east and west, but less distinct on the north. The ramparts were constructed from blocks of the local sarsen stone augmented by chalk, probably in several phases.
Entrance features:
There are three breaks through the defences, two are opposed to one another on the southeast and north-west sides of the earthwork and another gap is present in the centre of the north-east section of the defences.
Previous finds:
Surface pottery collected from within the enclosure includes fabrics of Iron Age and Romano-British date. The larger ploughedout enclosure is associated with later Iron Age pottery (source : Oxfordshire SMR).
Previous recorded excavation:
Excavations were carried out at Alfred's Castle by the Hillforts of The Ridgeway Project between 1998 and 2000. These were aimed at determining the form and development of the earthwork defences defining the fort, the dating of the entrances relative to the construction of the defences and the character and chronology of any internal occupation.
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
English Heritage scheduled monument number 28163, formerly Berkshire 89 and Oxfordshire 203.
County SMR No.:
733.
Project site code:
WHSP Site 3.

Morphology and setting

Alfred's Castle (Fig 2.33) differs from the other enclosures in the so-called 'Ridgeway grouping' of hillforts not only in terms of size but also because of its position in the landscape. The majority of the other hillforts in the Lambourn and Marlborough Downs area occupy sites on the edge of the chalk escarpment (or in the case of Hardwell Camp on the side of the escarpment) facing north across the lower lying Vale of the White Horse and the Thames Valley (Fig 1.17, sites 2–8). Alfred's Castle is situated some way to the south in a more central downland position and, unlike its neighbours on the Ridgeway to the north, does not occupy a readily defensible hilltop or scarp edge location. The site sits in a well-defined block of downland forming a shallow bowl bordered by higher ground east and south and the main chalk escarpment slope farther north. Alfred's Castle is an anomaly in the regional distribution of hillforts not just because of its topographical situation. The visible earthwork defences, although of hillfort proportions, enclose a relatively insignificant area of approximately 1.2ha, particularly when compared with the larger neighbouring sites of Segsbury (enclosing 12ha) and, Uffington on a slightly smaller scale, (enclosing 3.3ha). Furthermore, cropmark evidence shows Alfred's Castle located within a wider landscape, and given this apparent complexity, the term hillfort seems not an entirely adequate description for this site.

Fig 2.33
Aerial view of the small fort of Alfred's Castle from the west with the National Trust property of Ashdown House visible in the background (NMRC, NMR 15073/32, SU 2782/17, 1993).

The earthwork enclosure and ramparts that form Alfred's Castle date from the Early Iron Age, but excavations within the enclosure have revealed a longer history of settlement on the site. The earliest features date to the Late Bronze Age, then the main enclosure was constructed in the Early Iron Age, with evidence of later occupation in the form of a small late 1st to late 3rd century AD villa building. This marked the end of occupation on the site.

Evidence from aerial photographs indicates that Alfred's Castle is located on the edge of a more complex archaeological landscape than the earthwork evidence implies. Alfred's Castle itself is situated within the southern end of an earlier elongated ditched enclosure visible only as a cropmark. This enclosure lies on the eastern edge and forms part of a system of large single ditched enclosures or fields that occupy the natural bowl described above. The cropmark remains of at least nine of these irregular ditched enclosures were traced over an area of approximately 3 sq km centred on SU 2650 8280.

These enclosure ditches have their origins in the Late Bronze Age with two of the ditches appearing to be aligned on existing Early Bronze Age round barrows, one respecting the barrow and the other cutting through. There is evidence that these ditches were being used well into the Late Iron Age–Romano-British period, allowed to partly silt up and then recut along the same course at a later date in the Iron Age. In their final phase they were incorporated into part of a system of villa estates identified in this area.

These villa estates have large field systems associated with them, and where the ground rises sharply to the east of Alfred's Castle there are extensive remains of small embanked co-axial field systems. These differ from the large ditch defined fields described earlier and post-date the 'hillfort' phase of Alfred's Castle.

Alfred's Castle, therefore, appears to occupy a focal point in a landscape already divided up by linear boundaries and earlier field systems, and these features seem to have influenced the location of the site more than topographical or defensive considerations. Nearby Weathercock Hill and Tower Hill have both previously produced evidence of Late Bronze Age settlement (Bowden *et al* 1993, Miles *et al* 2003) and there may be a link between this activity and the location of Alfred's Castle.

Survey and excavation (Figs 2.34–2.36)

Background

Alfred's Castle was selected for inclusion in the Wessex Hillforts Survey Project on three major grounds. Firstly, although the defensive earthwork at Alfred's Castle is of hillfort sized proportions, the area enclosed is only ~1.2ha (2.75 acres). The site was included in the overall sample in order to help achieve a balanced sample of different recognised hillfort types and inclusion of examples of smaller hillforts where available was important for meeting this objective. Secondly, Alfred's Castle provided a suitable example of a hillfort interior under stable grassland containing the possiblity of well preserved archaeological features undisturbed by ploughing.

The topography of the interior of Alfred's Castle suggests that it has never been ploughed in historical times, the whole of the site being covered with humps and hollows suggesting the presence of largely undisturbed buried structural features (Fig 2.36). The site was therefore also included in the project to balance the number of surveyed hillfort sites with surviving earthwork remains in the interior with less well preserved sites under arable cultivation. Thirdly, Alfred's Castle is part of wider grouping of hillfort sites distributed across the North Berkshire Downs often termed the 'Ridgeway Hillforts', which are the subject of wider study (Miles *et al* 2003; Lock and Gosden 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 2000; Gosden and Lock 1999, 2001, and 2003). The majority of the hillforts in this well-defined group (*see* Fig 1.17) were included in the sample studied by the Wessex Hillforts Survey in order to satisfy the aim of investigating identifiable groupings of hillforts.

The Ridgeway forts form the most obvious group on the overall distribution map of sites investigated by the project for undertaking such a study. Because of the considerable variation in size and form exhibited by the Ridgeway hillforts it was important to explore the relative differences or similarities between the internal characteristics of the sites as a group. It was hoped that by revealing the nature of the internal activity at each hillfort the magnetometer surveys would allow the project to study relationships between the varying surface characteristics of the individual hillforts and possible differences of function or occupation histories. Questions that might be answered by the availability of such data include:

- Do hillforts with more elaborate defences and entrances exhibit greater internal complexity indicative of a lengthy sequence or several episodes of occupation?
- Does the size of the enclosed area bear any relation to the nature of the internal activity?

Survey and excavation (1996 and 1998–2000)

Magnetometer and topographical surveys of the internal area of Alfred's Castle were carried out for the Wessex Hillforts Survey in 1996. These were followed, between 1998 and 2000, by a campaign of targeted excavation forming part of the Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project, undertaken by Oxford University (Gosden and Lock 1999; Lock and Gosden 2000). Although limited in scale by the conditions of Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) these excavations attempted to determine the form and developmental sequence of the rampart and ditch enclosing Alfred's Castle and the character and chronology of any internal occupation of the site. Additional excavations were carried out in the immediate environs of the castle earthwork to investigate other possible associated earthwork features including linear ditches and the larger plough-flattened elongated ditched enclosure extending to the north.

The magnetometer survey of Alfred's Castle took place two years in advance of the excavations and because of the complexity of the archaeological deposits – now known to be present – the magnetometer data was initially difficult to interpret in any detail other than to say that it suggested intense activity. The data is similar to that obtained from Barbury Castle and Danebury in this respect (*see below*). The availability of the excavation record subsequently enabled the geophysical data to be considerably better understood and a more refined level of interpretation can now be advanced than was initially possible. This process demonstrates the value of following up initial geophysical exploration of the internal area of hillforts with more limited excavation of selective areas (for other examples *see* Payne 2000a). Initial geophysical survey lessens the danger of opening up unproductive trenches particularly when time, resources and permission for

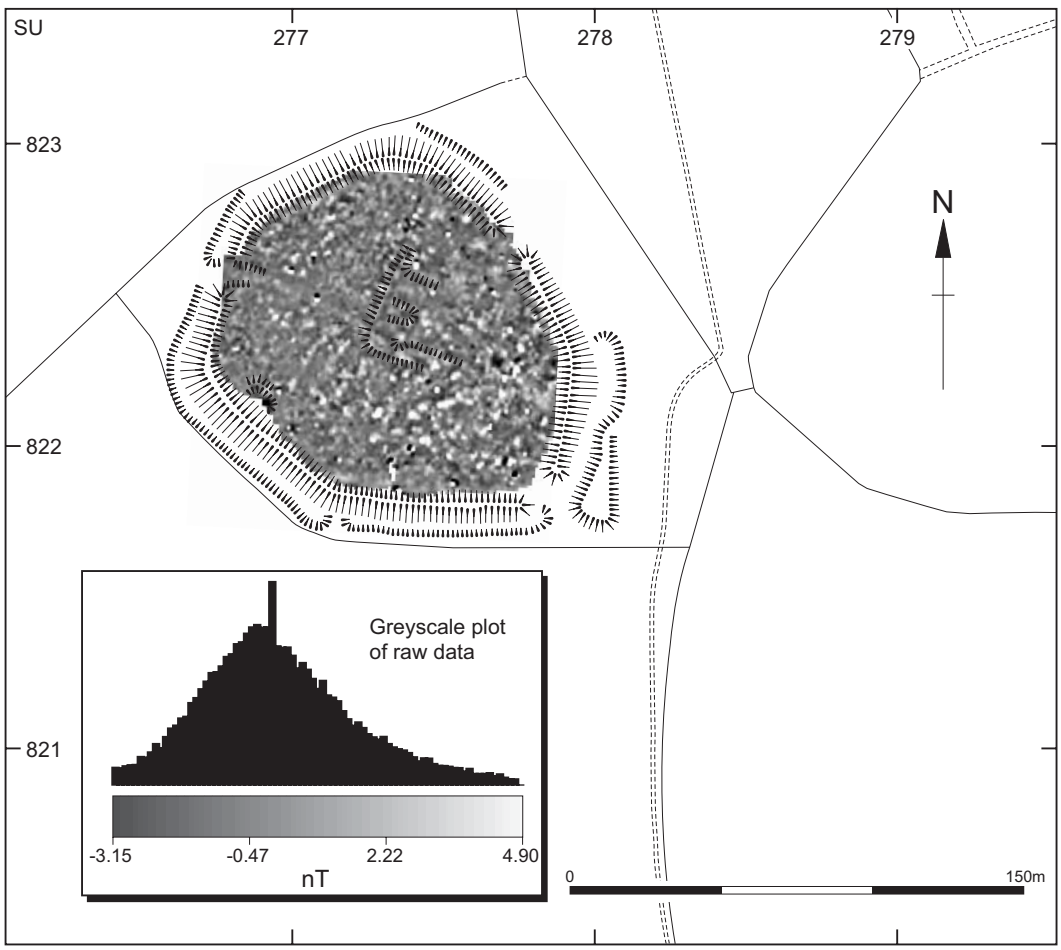


Fig 2.34
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Alfred's Castle shown in relation to the plan of the hillfort earthworks.

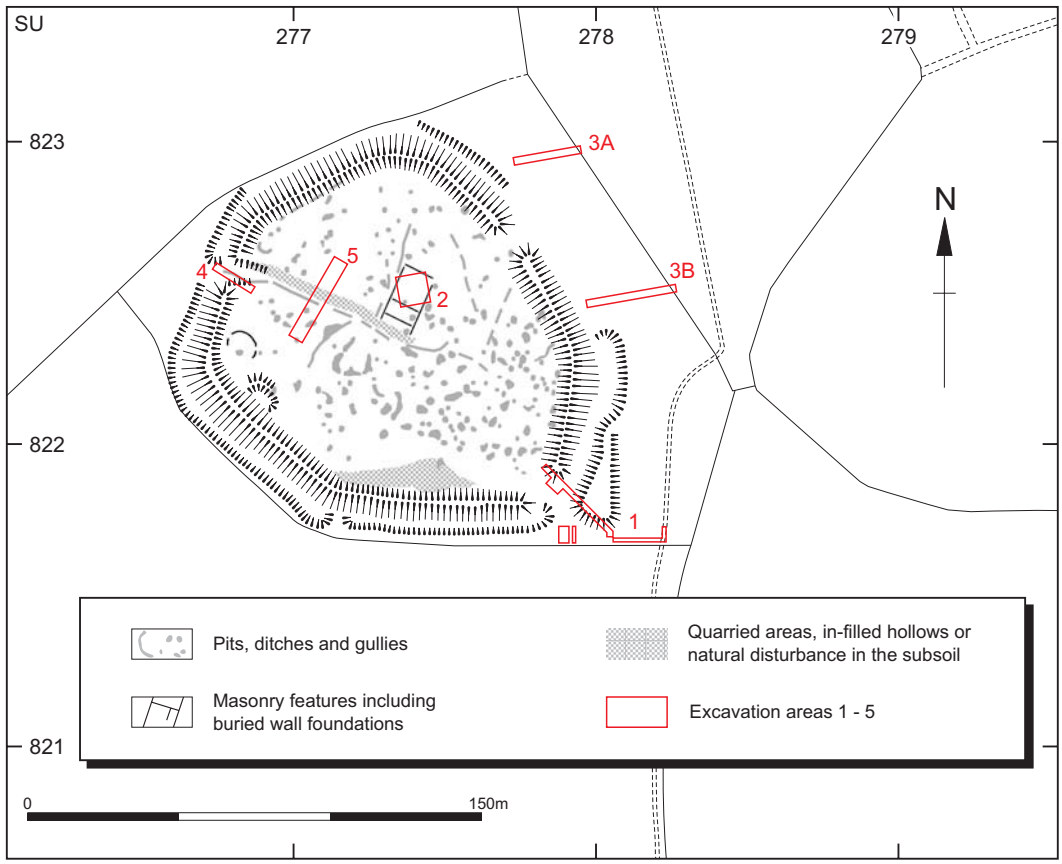


Fig 2.35
Interpretation of the magnetometer data from Alfred's Castle.

excavation are limited. Where only limited trenches are allowed, in order to minimise disturbance to a protected site, their contents are interpretable in a wider context with the aid of geophysical evidence. Geophysical survey can also help predict the complexity of the archaeological evidence that is likely to be encountered in different areas of the site, enabling appropriate sampling strategies to be devised and adequate resources to be allocated to the excavation process. In turn the excavation refines and extends the limited interpretation that is possible based on the geophysical data alone. The mutual effectiveness of such a combined approach cannot be over-emphasised.

Analytical earthwork survey would also have been a worthwhile approach prior to excavation in the case of Alfred's Castle given the well-preserved topographical detail in the interior. This would probably have provided a greater understanding of the internal earthworks than was subsequently provided using the simple height mapping methods of contour survey and digital terrain modelling.

The results of the 1996 magnetometer survey were different in character to those from many of the other hillforts examined during the Wessex Hillforts Survey but were difficult to interpret with confidence and required testing by excavation. The Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project excavations described below fortunately provided the opportunity for this to take place.

The interior of Alfred's Castle is characterised by a generally disturbed magnetic response, suggesting intensive activity and widespread ground disturbance in the past but with little coherent pattern. Following excavation, this is now understood to be a reflection of the well preserved deep stratigraphy and succession of features belonging to several phases of occupation from the Bronze Age to the Roman period. Evidence of plentiful pits uncovered during excavation is fully supported by the magnetometer data which suggests that these are densely and widely distributed throughout the interior of the enclosure. Anomalous activity is most pronounced towards the south-eastern side of the site indicating that the late prehistoric occupation was particularly concentrated within this area (again this is compatible with excavation evidence from Trench 1; *see below* and Fig 2.35).

Linear anomalies running into the enclosure from what is now known to be an original

entrance on the north-west towards the site of the Roman building, are interpreted as a roadway worn into the surface of the chalk from prolonged use and subsequently silted following abandonment of the site. This feature remains uncorroborated by excavation but is clearly visible as a topographical feature – a linear depression – in the digital terrain model (Fig 2.36). Other smaller linear and circular magnetic anomalies are probably indicative of gully features that might have surrounded former timber structures.

The rectangular Roman masonry building, now known from excavation, is vaguely visible as a series of extremely weakly resolved parallel negative magnetic anomalies (located immediately north of the centre of the enclosed area). The geophysical evidence suggests overall dimensions of approximately 12m wide by 25m long, an estimate that accords reasonably well with the actual recorded dimensions of the building (12.6m × 22.5m) after it was fully revealed by the third season of excavation in 2000. The poor definition of this major Roman masonry structure in the magnetometer data is understandable owing to the amount of ferrous metal and collapsed building material on the site.

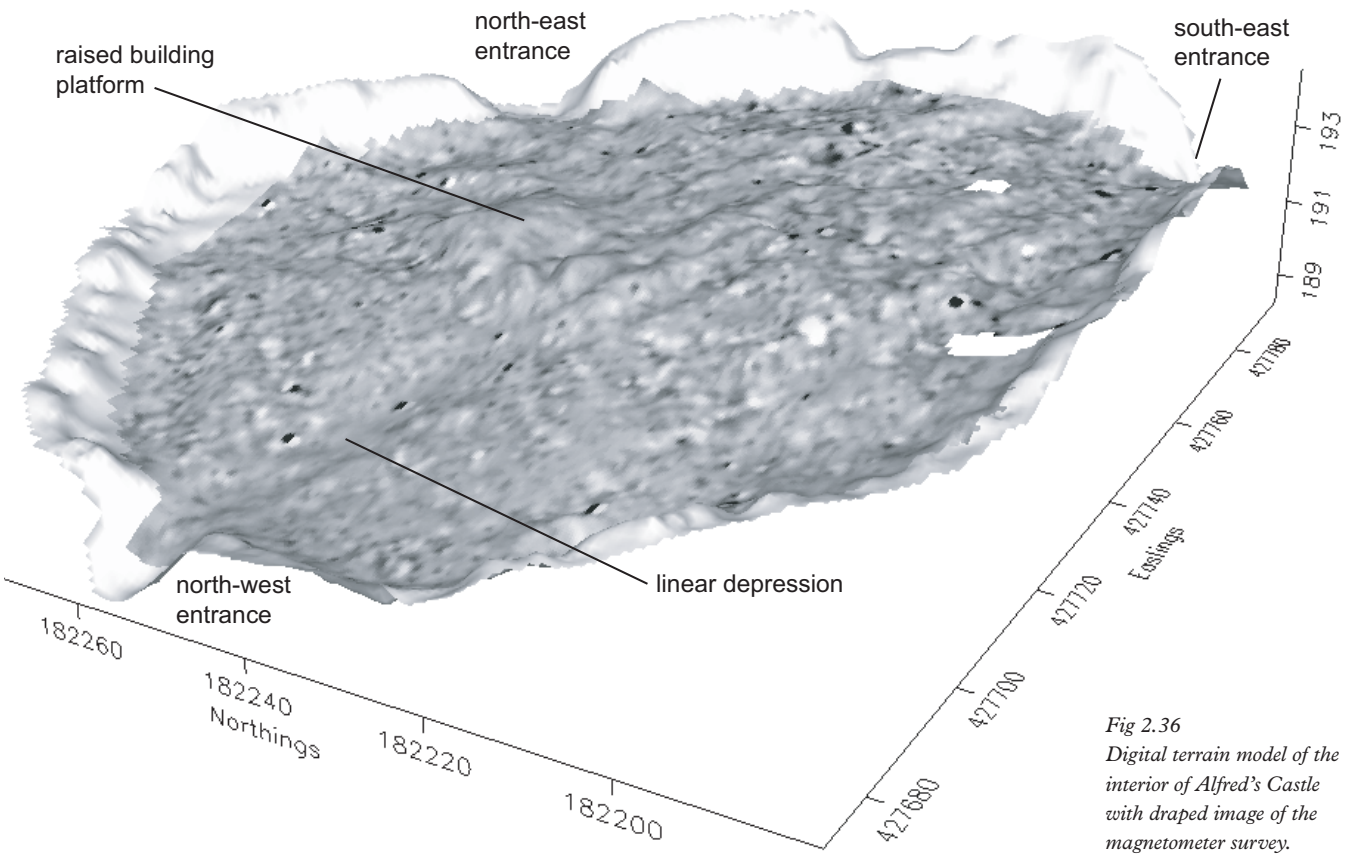


Fig 2.36
Digital terrain model of the interior of Alfred's Castle with draped image of the magnetometer survey.

The high density of anomalous magnetic activity recorded at Alfred's Castle is paralleled by the magnetic results obtained from some larger and more complex chalkland hillforts such as Barbury Castle, Danebury and Maiden Castle. This trend would seem to indicate that there is a distinctly identifiable, or even diagnostic, geophysical signature associated with chalkland hillforts containing a high density of internal occupation activity and a rich artefact assemblage. Because of the richness of the archaeological deposits these sites contain, they stand out as having high potential for socio-economic reconstruction as proved by the wide range of archaeological materials recovered from Alfred's Castle. The ability of magnetometer survey to predict effectively the presence of such important archaeological deposits is truly a valuable aid for ensuring the future safe-guarding of such sites, but also raises questions of how to proceed with researching the more numerous emptier hillforts.

Excavations in 1998–9 – comprising Trenches 1 and 4 (Fig 2.35) – were positioned to investigate possible entrances cut through the south-eastern and north-western sides of the earthwork in an attempt to determine if these were part of the original design of the fort. (This section is based on interim reports and information kindly supplied by Dr Gary Lock.)

Trench 2 (a 10m × 10m square) was positioned to examine a prominent raised platform (clearly visible as a rectilinear topographical feature in the digital terrain model; *see* Fig 2.36) suggestive of a probable buried building situated towards the middle of the fort interior. The raised area also coincided with a series of weakly defined low magnetic gradient anomalies that suggested the presence of a rectangular pattern of buried masonry walls of flint or chalk construction and therefore reduced magnetic susceptibility to the surrounding soil matrix. Trench 2 was subsequently extended in 2000 by a series of limited exploratory trenches (11–19) to trace the full extent of the building verified by the initial season of excavation.

Another trench (Trench 5) was opened to provide a sample of the archaeological deposits in the north-western sector of the fort interior. The magnetometer and topographical surveys show a linear feature in this area running from the north-western break in the defences to the southern edge of the building mound investigated in Trench 2. This feature is interpreted as a possible long-lived roadway or hollow-way providing access via the original north-west entrance into the fort.

Trenches 3, 6 and 8 were positioned to investigate the large outer ditched enclosure immediately north of the smaller upstanding earthwork of Alfred's Castle. This feature, which was identified by aerial photography, was not included in the magnetometer survey carried out in 1996.

Other trenches (10, 20, 21 and 23) were opened in 2000 to examine earlier ditch systems in the area around Alfred's Castle in order to determine their relationship to the hillfort.

The results of these excavations can be summarised as follows:

i) The defences and entrances: The 1999 season of excavations revealed that the eastern rampart of Alfred's Castle is composed of large sarsen blocks laid in four or five approximate rows parallel with the ditch to give a width of approximately 1.5m. Only the lowest one or two courses remain and behind these is an area of compacted chalk with a possible rear revetting slot and internal structural postholes. These latter features might comprise a second phase during which the rampart was widened. It is immediately noticeable that the rampart is very different in character to nearby Uffington (a 'classic' sequence of box rampart replaced by a dump rampart (Miles and Palmer 1995; Miles *et al* 2003)), Liddington (similarly, Hirst and Rahtz 1996), and Segsbury (a complex sequence of palisades with ultimate dump rampart (Lock and Gosden 1998)). The picture that has emerged from these combined excavations highlights the diversity within a relatively localised group of sites of rampart construction techniques and development of hillfort defences instead of a common regional style or sequence.

The main hillfort ditch at Alfred's Castle was cut into bedrock chalk, to a depth of 3m with a V-shaped profile and a narrow flat bottom. The stratigraphy in Trench 1 is complex, indicating a sequence of natural and artificial fill events. Sarsen stone is present in the bottom of the ditch and throughout the lower half of the fill and presumably represents material fallen from the rampart above, either as a product of natural

decay or intentional destruction. It appears that the destruction of the rampart began when the ditch was empty and continued slowly over a long period of time (perhaps suggesting an initial act of deliberate slighting followed by a long period of gradual decay). A concentration of sarsen in the upper fill of the ditch in Trench 1, associated with Romano-British material, is linked to the filling of the ditch in this area to create a new entrance through the south-west section of the Iron Age defensive circuit in the Roman period (*see below*). A late 1st to early 2nd century AD date is suggested for this episode.

A second ditch section in Trench 3b (60m north of the Trench 1 section) produced a ditch similar in profile but with a quite different infill. This emphasises the dangers of relying on a single section through the defences for understanding the overall sequence.

Several pieces of evidence point to the south-eastern entrance not being an original prehistoric entrance, but a break through the rampart established during Romano-British times and probably associated with the stone building in the centre of the enclosure. The building does in fact seem to be oriented south-east so that this entrance would form the main access to it. Evidence from a small test pit (Trench 1B) indicated that the main pre-Roman enclosure ditch was originally continuous around the south-eastern corner of the enclosure and the south-eastern entrance was a later adaptation. A possible Late Bronze Age (naturally silted) ditch was encountered in Trench 1 underlying the hillfort defences inside the south-east entrance

Trench 4 examined the north-west entrance of Alfred's Castle and uncovered evidence for the presence here of an original prehistoric entrance contemporary with the construction of the hillfort earthworks. It was found that the main enclosure ditch does not continue across the break in the rampart and the presence of an original entrance is further supported by the ramparts terminating in rounded ends and the presence of well defined ditch terminals. An additional point of interest was that the structure of the rampart in Trench 4 varied considerably from the structure revealed in a comparable section through the defences in Trench 1 on the opposite side of the enclosure. In Trench 4 the sequence of the rampart was similarly of two phases, the initial sarsen boulder faced rampart was enlarged by the addition of a substantial chalk bank at the front and revetting posts at the rear unlike the rampart on the east which was widened by the addition of chalk at the back. This means that the rampart as a whole has a complex development, with different sections showing distinct variation in construction style. This unconformity suggests the main rampart of Alfred's Castle as it exists today was not constructed as a single unit and although it has only one major phase of construction it shows evidence of several alterations over time.

ii) The interior: The main excavation in the interior (Trench 2 measuring 10m × 10m) was sited over the location of what turned out to be a Romano-British building surviving as a prominent surface feature near the centre of the site (Fig 2.36). The building was underlain by prehistoric layers, dating to the Iron Age. There were some 15 pits or large post-holes dating to the Early to Middle Iron Age in a band running from the north-west corner through the centre of the site. The pit assemblages included ashy deposits with carbonised material, pottery, bone (including human remains), bone tools, bronze items, loom weights and spindle whorls.

The Romano-British building (*see* Gosden and Lock 2003) overlying these features is of rectilinear plan with masonry walls running diagonally through the excavated area south-west to north-east and south-east to north-west as hinted at by the weak linear low magnetic gradient anomalies recorded in the magnetometer survey. The most northern and western of the walls revealed (2003 and 2018) were of similar thickness and represent the outer walls of the building. They are composed of chalk blocks bonded with mortar and placed on two courses of sarsens as foundations. The outer west wall (2003) survives to a maximum height of 1m. Other internal walls running off 2003 at right angles define a number of internal divisions or rooms and show evidence of being constructed in several phases.

Because the walls are composed of chalk blocks and sarsen they would be

unlikely to show much geophysical contrast. Nevertheless, very faint signs of their presence in the form of extremely weak low magnetic gradient anomalies are recognisable in the magnetometer data. Large numbers of nails and roof-tiles in the destruction layers from the collapse of the building no doubt contributed to the poor definition of the anomalies from the buried walls. Coins in the destruction layers were late 3rd century AD and there was a rich array of Roman finds in the lower destruction levels/floor deposits (including glass, coins, and fine pottery of the 2nd–late 3rd/4th centuries AD).

A curvilinear feature (2006), uncovered during excavation in 1999 west of the Roman building, is thought to be a section of a round-house gully (otherwise destroyed) or a drain connected with the Romano-British building. This links with magnetic evidence from elsewhere on the site for possible curvilinear gullies.

Trench 5 was located to sample the deposits in an area of the enclosure where the surface topography suggested that masonry building remains were absent. It contained a spread of Iron Age pits similar in morphology and fill to those in Trench 2. The presence of intercutting pits in Trench 5 is consistent with the high density of anomalous magnetic activity recorded throughout the hillfort interior by the magnetometer. Remnants of poorly preserved sarsen walling revealed at the northern end of the trench may represent the remains of out-buildings at the rear of the main Romano-British building to the east. At the southern end of the trench part of the circuit of a double stake-wall round house was excavated. It was approximately 10m in diameter and the wall line was cut by at least one later pit. Ephemeral features such as this are unlikely to be detectable by geophysical means.

iii) The overall sequence: The main elements of the site recorded by the excavations consist of a substantial masonry constructed Romano-British building occupying the central northern part of the enclosure. This structure is underlain by prehistoric features dating to the Early to Middle Iron Ages including pits, postholes and a curvilinear gully, for some of which there are good indications in the magnetometer data. The excavated pits were exceptionally rich in finds. The Iron Age features indicate that the site was one of considerable richness in terms of artefacts, many of which entered the pits as placed deposits.

The overall sequence of development has five major divisions (Gosden and Lock 2003):

1. Pre-dating the enclosure are two flat-bottomed linear ditches probably of Late Bronze Age origin.
2. The hillfort type defences of Alfred's Castle were probably constructed in the Early Iron Age, utilising the two earlier linear ditches where they joined.
3. The larger, now plough-flattened, outer enclosure is part of a pre-hillfort system of enclosures, its western ditch re-cutting one of the Late Bronze Age linears. The purpose and internal character of this enclosure is as yet unknown but it possibly represents one of several field enclosures.
4. In the late 1st or early 2nd century AD, the substantial stone building was erected inside the defences of Alfred's Castle facing a newly created entrance through the earlier ramparts to the south-east.
5. The building was destroyed in the late 3rd century AD and there is no evidence for further occupation or activity at the site.

Preliminary interpretation of the site, based on an initial assessment of the excavation findings, sees it developing from a Late Bronze Age landscape (Weathercock Hill, Tower Hill and linears (Bowden *et al* 1993; Miles *et al* 2003) slightly earlier than the hillfort sites that developed at Liddington to the west and Uffington to the east. The range and richness of the finds from Alfred's Castle distinguish it from the other excavated sites of a similar period in the area suggesting it was a site of significant importance in both the Early–Middle Iron Age and Roman periods. Dense magnetic activity recorded during the magnetometer survey in 1996 can now be seen as a pointer to this.

Note on the topographical survey

The surface evidence for the existence of well preserved archaeological features in the interior of Alfred's Castle led to the

decision to conduct a topographical survey in addition to the magnetometer survey to produce a terrain model of the interior to complement the geophysical data (Fig 2.36). Both surveys were carried out in 1996 two years before the commencement of excavation.

The resulting digital terrain model (DTM) has clearly defined the building platform in the northern half of the site and the hollow-way running from the original Iron Age entrance on the north-west to the platform providing good correspondence with the geophysical results. Also indicated by the survey are a series of depressions immediately inside the rampart. These probably represent quarries used to obtain chalk to widen and heighten the original rampart structure as demonstrated by excavation. The uneven ground surface indicated by the terrain model in the eastern part of the site reflects the high density of Iron Age occupation features known to be present in this area.

Segsbury Camp or Letcombe Castle: Letcombe Regis; NGR SU 385 844.

Summary

Date of surveys:
5 to 9 August 1996 (earlier surveys 1-5/11/93 and 25-29/4/94).
Landuse at time of survey:
Sheep pasture/set-aside.
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk.
Soil Association:
343h – Andover 1 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk on slopes and crests. Striped soil patterns locally.
Approximate area enclosed:
12 hectares (30 acres).
Planform:
Approximately oval composed of several straight lengths of rampart on the south and west but following a more rounded alignment on the north side reflecting the contours of the escarpment edge.
Form of ramparts:
Main internal bank fronted by a wide deep ditch around the whole circuit of the enclosure. A counterscarp bank or second outer rampart is present on the south possibly continuing around the west side but removed by ploughing and resuming again on the north-west side. The internal bank is out-turned at the point where it meets the eastern entrance gap.
Entrance features:
The original entrance on the east is flanked by out-turns of the rampart, that on the north now plough-flattened. There are gaps in the inner bank on the north and south sides, where it has been cut through by the modern surfaced road. It is possible that the southern gap was an original entrance. Another gap on the north-west, opposite the partially preserved counterscarp bank, does not appear to be original.
Previous finds:
Sherds referred to in the sources as 'Southern Second A' and 'Southern Second B' have been picked up on the site. Roman coins of Tetricus and Maximian are also recorded.
Previous recorded excavation:
Excavation in 1871 (by Dr T Phené for the Newbury Field Club) revealed a cist in the southern section of the hillfort rampart below a sarsen slab on the hillfort bank, known as the Altar Stone (depicted on some earlier OS maps). The cist was floored with flat stone slabs, walled with flints and contained fragments of human bone, flint scrapers, the remains of a possible shield-boss and part of an urn or drinking cup. The deposits were interpreted by Grinsell as a possible secondary Saxon burial. Modern small-scale excavations were carried out in the hillfort interior and through a section of the hillfort ramparts between 1996 and 1997 by Dr Gary Lock and Dr Chris Gosden of Oxford University (Lock and Gosden 1997(b), 1998).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
Oxfordshire 209 (formerly Berkshire 30).
County SMR No.:
7200.
Project site code:
WHSP Site 2.

Morphology and setting

Segsbury (Fig 2.37) is a large, univallate enclosure sited on the edge of the north-facing escarpment of the Berkshire Downs at 210m OD enclosing 12ha (30 acres). The location gives extensive views across the Vale of the White Horse although to the east and west visibility is restricted to little more than 1.5km. Immediately south of the monument is the Ridgeway, a track whose antiquity is the subject of ongoing debate (Fowler 2000).

The circuit at Segsbury comprises an inner rampart, a ditch and a relatively substantial counterscarp that now only survives along the south side and for a short length around

Fig 2.37
Aerial photograph of Segsbury Camp (or Letcombe Castle) looking north showing excavation by the Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project in Progress during 1996 (NMRC, NMR 15519/29, SU 3884/49, 1996).

the north-west arc. Both the interior and the immediate environs of the site have suffered from extensive ploughing in recent times.

The rampart is breached at four points on the circuit. Of these, only that on the east can be considered to be of undoubted Iron Age date and has been tested by excavation (Lock and Gosden 1998, 62; Lock *et al* 2005). This entrance also has a short, out-curving ditch flanking the northern side of the approach, a feature first revealed by the magnetometer survey. A breach on the north-west of the circuit is clearly later in date and the counterscarp at this point is continuous. The remaining two breaches carry a north–south track that gives access to the foot of the

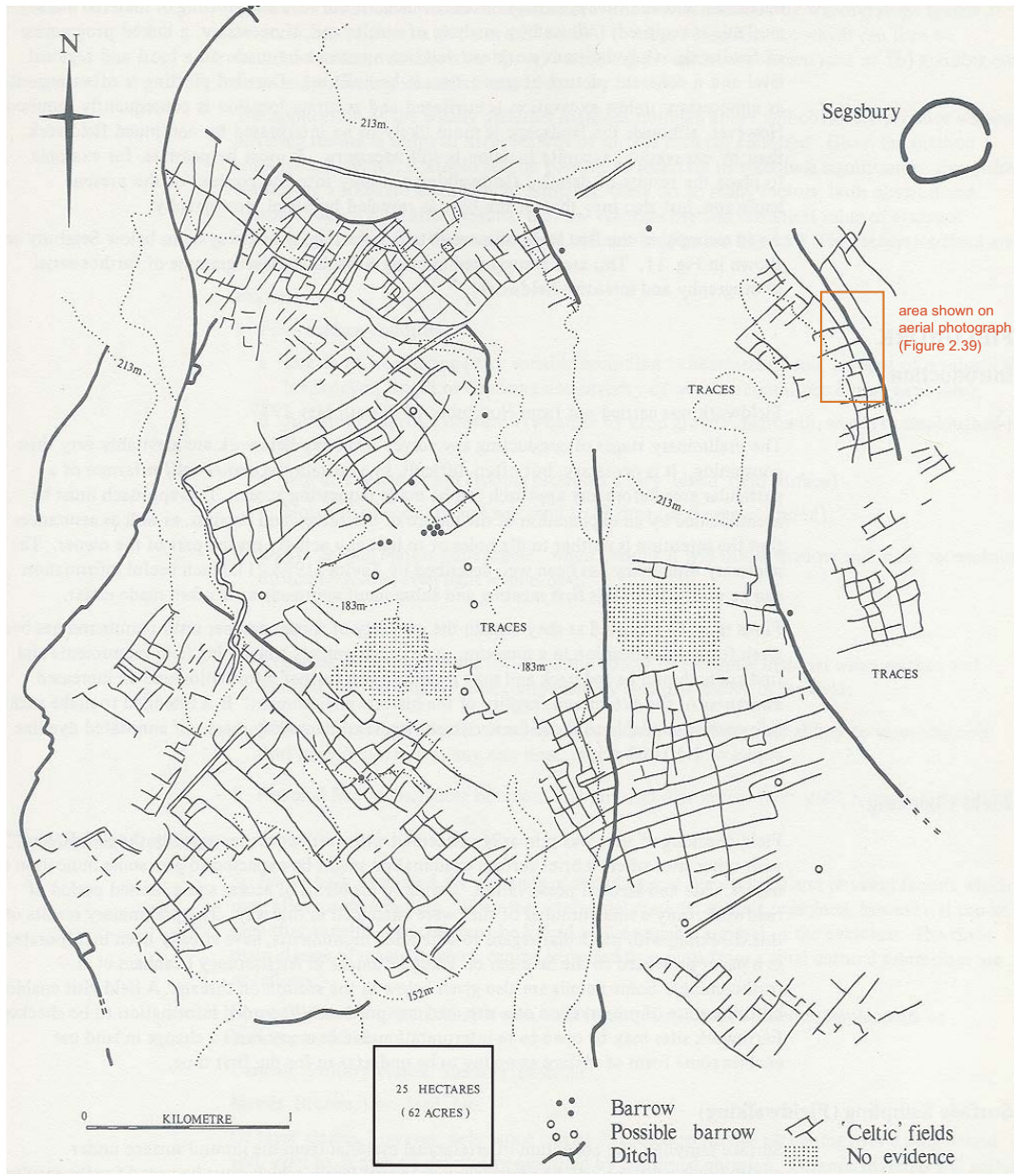


Fig 2.38
Plan of the extensive field systems and linear boundary works in the area south of Segsbury hillfort (from Richards 1978).

escarpment and the Vale of the White Horse from The Ridgeway. Recent excavation of the southern entrance has led to the suggestion that it may be of Iron Age origin and the track Roman. However the evidence is not conclusive (Lock and Gosden 1998, 60–2) and clearly requires more work.

At a point on the west side of the circuit the earthwork evidence suggests the presence of a blocked entrance. This is marked by a characteristic inward kink in the rampart and ditch of the type noted elsewhere (cf Liddington Castle, Uffington Castle and Beacon Hill). It may be significant that outside the hillfort at this point there are cropmarks and geophysical anomalies possibly indicating settlement. In addition the magnetometer survey of the interior (*see below*) suggests a clear strip between this putative blocked entrance and the known east entrance.

Segsbury is approximately 2km west of the western known limit of the Grim's Ditch, a major linear feature that can be traced for a distance of approximately 17km along the top of the Berkshire Downs escarpment (Bradley and Richards 1978; Richards 1978; Ford 1982). South and south-west of Segsbury air photography has revealed a complex pattern of field systems and linear ditches. This covers at least 10 sq km and has been analysed in detail by a

Fig 2.39
Aerial photograph of part of the field system near Segsbury Camp (NMRC, NMR 2107/1170, SU 3783/3, 1982).

number of fieldworkers (Bradley and Richards 1978, fig 7.2; Fowler 1983). The pattern displays a complex series of relationships between fields, tracks and linear ditches (Figs 2.38 and 2.39). The plots show a series of roughly north–south aligned linear ditches, some respecting field boundaries, others apparently cutting across the field axes. None of the linears known to date can be seen to approach the hillfort circuit, the nearest example passing some 600m to the south-east. The entire system is bounded on the west by a 'terminal' linear feature, beyond which there are few if any convincing traces of fields. There are at least two ditched enclosures attached to the east side of this linear ditch, the northernmost being sited at a point where the main linear ditch bifurcates. Within the field blocks are a number of smaller rectilinear units that may be settlements, some appearing integral with the field system, with others clearly overlying it. In addition, recent aerial photography carried out by the National Mapping Programme (Bewley 2001; 2003, 133) has revealed 'banjos' apparently underlying elements of the field system.

Survey and excavation (Figs 2.40 and 2.41)

Magnetometer coverage of the interior of Segsbury Camp began in 1993 when the former Ancient Monuments Laboratory (AML) of English Heritage surveyed a 120m-wide trial transect running east–west through the centre of the interior (Payne 1993b). The original purpose of the geophysical investigation was to support the future management of the site following its conversion from arable to grass under a Countryside Stewardship management scheme. The decision to undertake an initial trial survey was influenced by the large area enclosed by the hillfort. With an internal area of 12ha, Segsbury is by far the largest of the hillforts in the Ridgeway grouping. The initial survey revealed that numerous archaeological features were present within the hillfort, including ring-gullies, pits and possible hearths. Although the overall density of features was not particularly high, several discrete areas of the fort showed a much higher concentration of pits and ring-gullies separated by areas with a lower density of archaeological features.

After further magnetometer survey was carried out at Segsbury by the AML in 1995, completion of the coverage of the site fell to the Wessex Hillforts Survey in 1996. As well as filling in the remaining un-surveyed area of the interior, additional survey was undertaken to explore an external area adjacent to the main eastern entrance of the hillfort and a possible enclosure feature revealed as a soilmark on aerial photographs in the field immediately west of the site (NGR coordinates SU 382843). The reasons for continuing the previous non-intrusive survey work at Segsbury as part of the Wessex Hillforts Survey were:

- the group importance of the site,
- the linkage of the survey with a programme of sample excavation by the Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project (Lock and Gosden 1997b, 1998) and
- the continuing need to feed the results into improved management and presentation of the site.

Magnetometer Survey 1993–6

i) The hillfort interior. The completed magnetometer coverage inside the hillfort (Figs 2.40, 2.41) shows the greatest density of archaeological anomalies in the area just east of the centre of the enclosed area. Here there are up to six circular gullies and a high concentration of pits and other occupation features north of a wide linear zone of decreased magnetic activity, suggesting the presence of a roadway aligned on the east entrance. A considerable amount of activity is also present between this tentative road line and the southern rampart, with a particularly dense cluster of activity (two round gullies and a zone of up to 40 pits) in the main area later investigated by excavation (Trench 1; *see below* and Fig 2.41). Many more circular gully structures were partially resolved by the magnetometer survey and yet more were so weakly resolved as to be at the margins of visibility. In general they appear to be associated with pit clusters and are set well back into the hillfort interior – few if any occupy peripheral locations near the enclosing earthworks. Evidence of occupation activity appears to decrease considerably towards the northern and western sides of the hillfort. In these areas pits are less frequent and scattered rather than concentrated in clusters. Circular gullies are also absent.

The circular gully structures at Segsbury average around 12m in diameter but in the south-east sector of the camp there is a slightly more irregular example

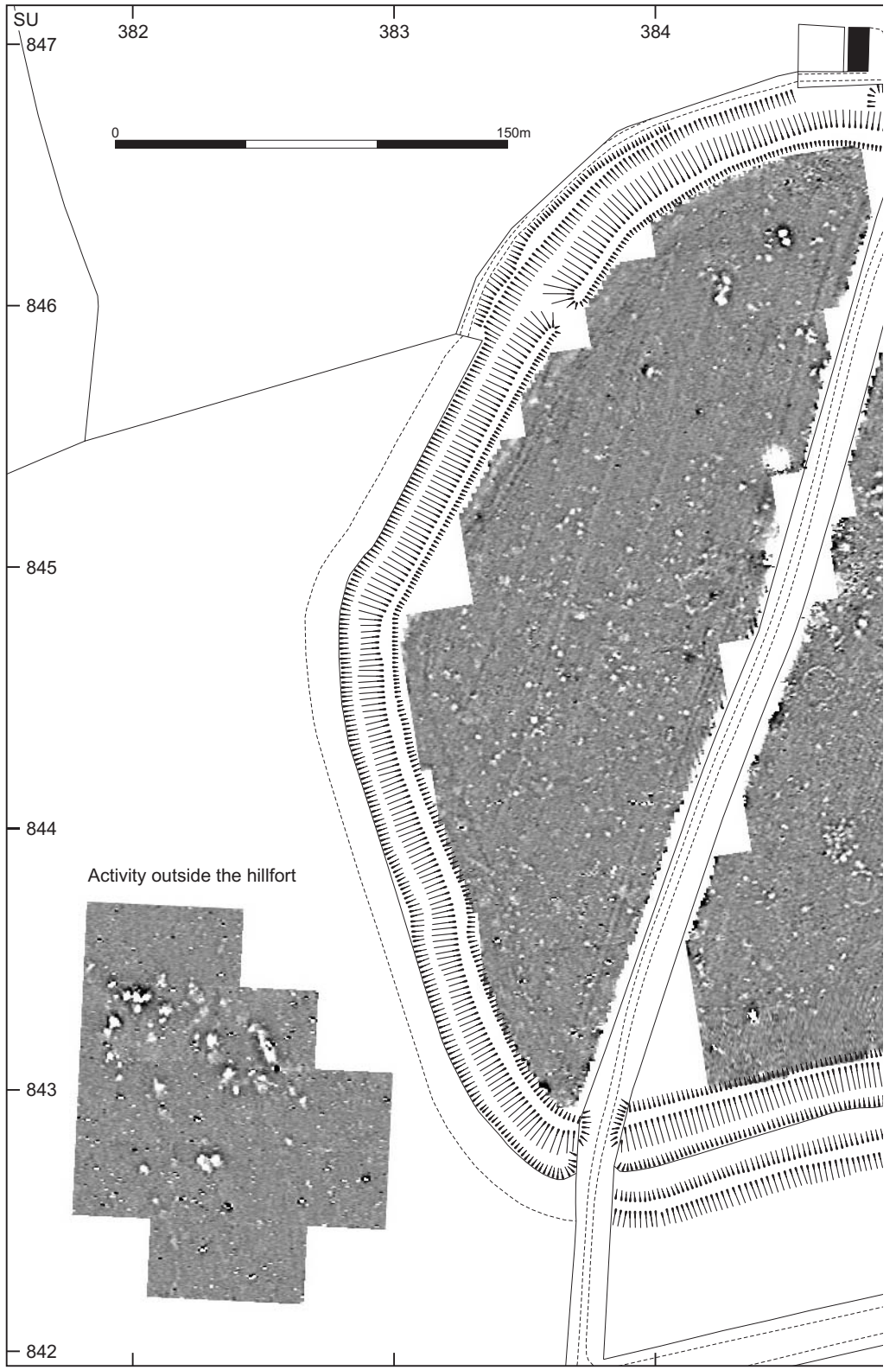
of 20m diameter. The latter might be more suitably interpreted as a small enclosure rather than as a gully demarcating a standing structure. By comparison the largest ring gullies at Beacon Hill are in the order of 14m in diameter, 13–16m in diameter at Oldbury and the single distinct example located within Liddington is 18m in diameter. A few possible, but poorly-defined examples at Norsebury range from 10–13m in diameter. Several anomalies; possibly representing burnt or fired features such as hearths or ovens, occur in the vicinity of the large 20m diameter ring in the south-east part of the hillfort and may be associated with this feature.

At Segsbury pits are most concentrated in the highest central area of the fort, comparable to the early period layout of Danebury (Cunliffe 1995) and the distribution of pits mapped by magnetometry at St Catherine's Hill. The circular structures at Segsbury tend to avoid the peripheral zone of the enclosure, unlike the situation at Danebury. At Segsbury the highest pit densities are clearly associated with the distribution of round structures while intervening areas lacking round structures, have a much lower density of pits. Similar patterns are apparent at the hillforts of Beacon Hill, Liddington Castle and Oldbury Castle discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

A broken curvilinear feature or series of short linear features was mapped around the northern and eastern sides of the fort interior immediately inside the line of, and concentric with, the bank of the main inner rampart. A trench was excavated over one section of the anomaly just inside the rampart and at the base of the slope in the northern part of the hillfort (Trench 3; *see* section on excavation below). This revealed a ditch sealed by a layer of tumbled chalk blocks from the later rampart above. The fill of the ditch included a dark organic layer with high concentrations of bone and pottery. This material had probably accumulated in the ditch as a result of down-slope movement of soil from the interior of the hillfort. The ditch terminated in the middle of the excavated area indicating a possible entrance gap or that the ditch is discontinuous, as suggested by the magnetic survey data. Pottery from the ditch suggests a Late Bronze Age or earliest Iron Age date.

The relationship of the excavated ditch in Trench 3 (and the more extensive related magnetic anomalies) to the main hillfort rampart remains to be fully understood. Several of the hillforts in the Ridgeway grouping are preceded by earlier enclosures of Late Bronze Age or earliest Iron Age date (for example Rams Hill and Liddington Castle). Although the ditch feature underlying the later hillfort rampart in Trench 3 at Segsbury could possibly represent a similar earlier phase of enclosure of the site, a comparable anomaly does not appear to be present around the southern half of the defensive circuit. It is possible that it could be concealed beneath the main hillfort rampart in these areas, except that no evidence was found for it in Trench 7a (*see below*). It may also have been removed by the subsequent construction of the enlarged (Phase 3) hillfort ditch in these areas (*see* p 96). Rather than being an earlier enclosure feature it could be a boundary feature such as a linear ditch partially built over by the hillfort rampart but not sharing the same layout as the whole defensive circuit. This might also explain the failure of the magnetometer survey to trace the feature around the full circuit of the hillfort.

ii) Anomalies at the eastern entrance. The additional magnetometer coverage undertaken outside the eastern entrance to the hillfort in 1996 revealed a broad but very weakly defined positive magnetic anomaly extending in a curve from the terminal of the hillfort ditch on the north side of the entrance to the south for a short distance before terminating. The anomaly represents the ditch of a now plough-flattened outwork screening the entrance to create an extended approach into the fort in a similar manner to the eastern entrance at Danebury. The magnetic response to the out-curving ditch is obscured, in part by ferrous anomalies caused by modern barbed wire fencing, but the presence of a wide, shallow, flat bottomed ditch extending outwards from the hillfort was confirmed at the location indicated by the magnetometer by excavation in 1997 (Trench 6). A slight eastward projection of the main hillfort ditch has also been detected by the magnetometer survey on the southern side of the entrance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Activity outside the hillfort

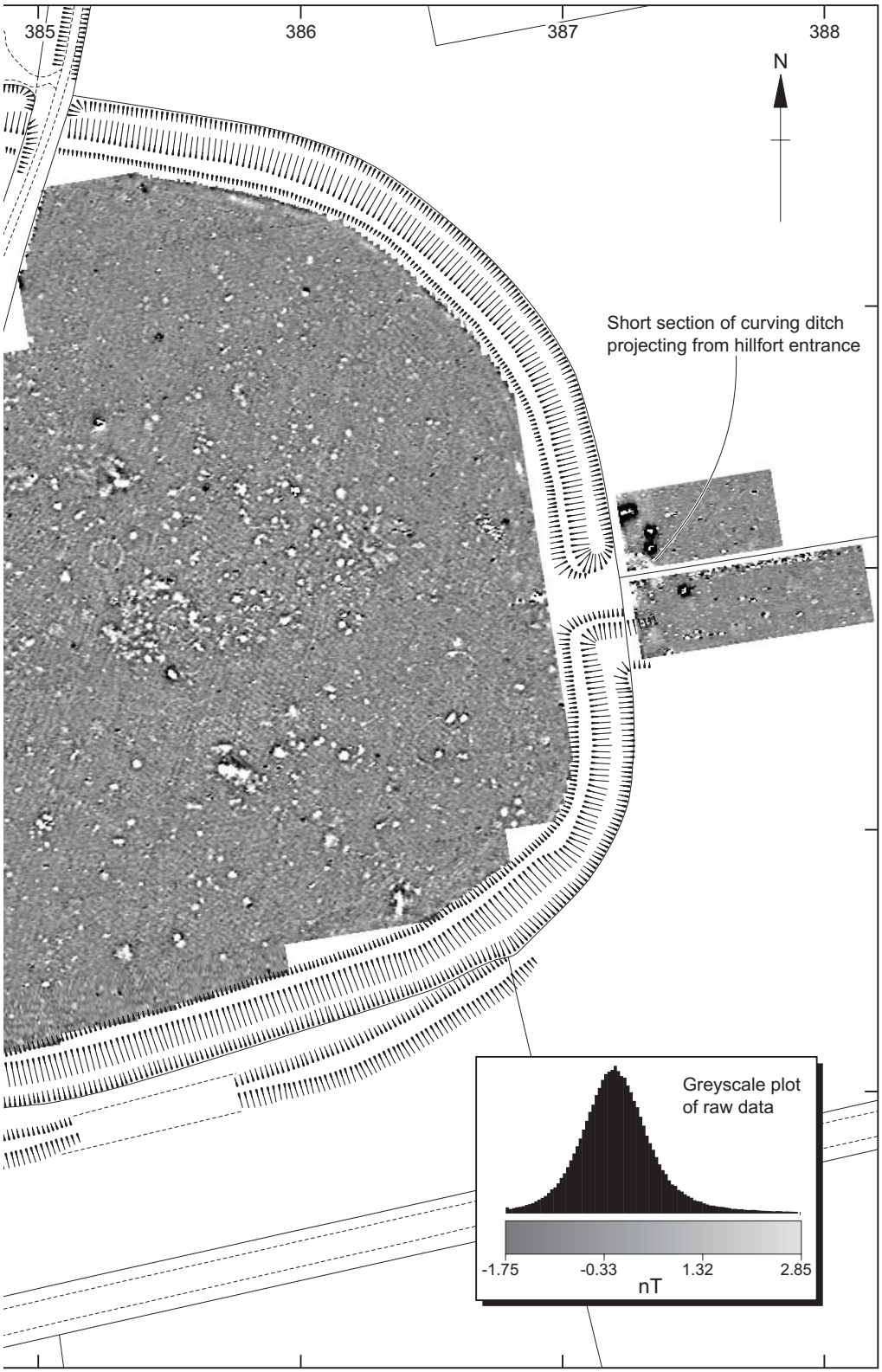
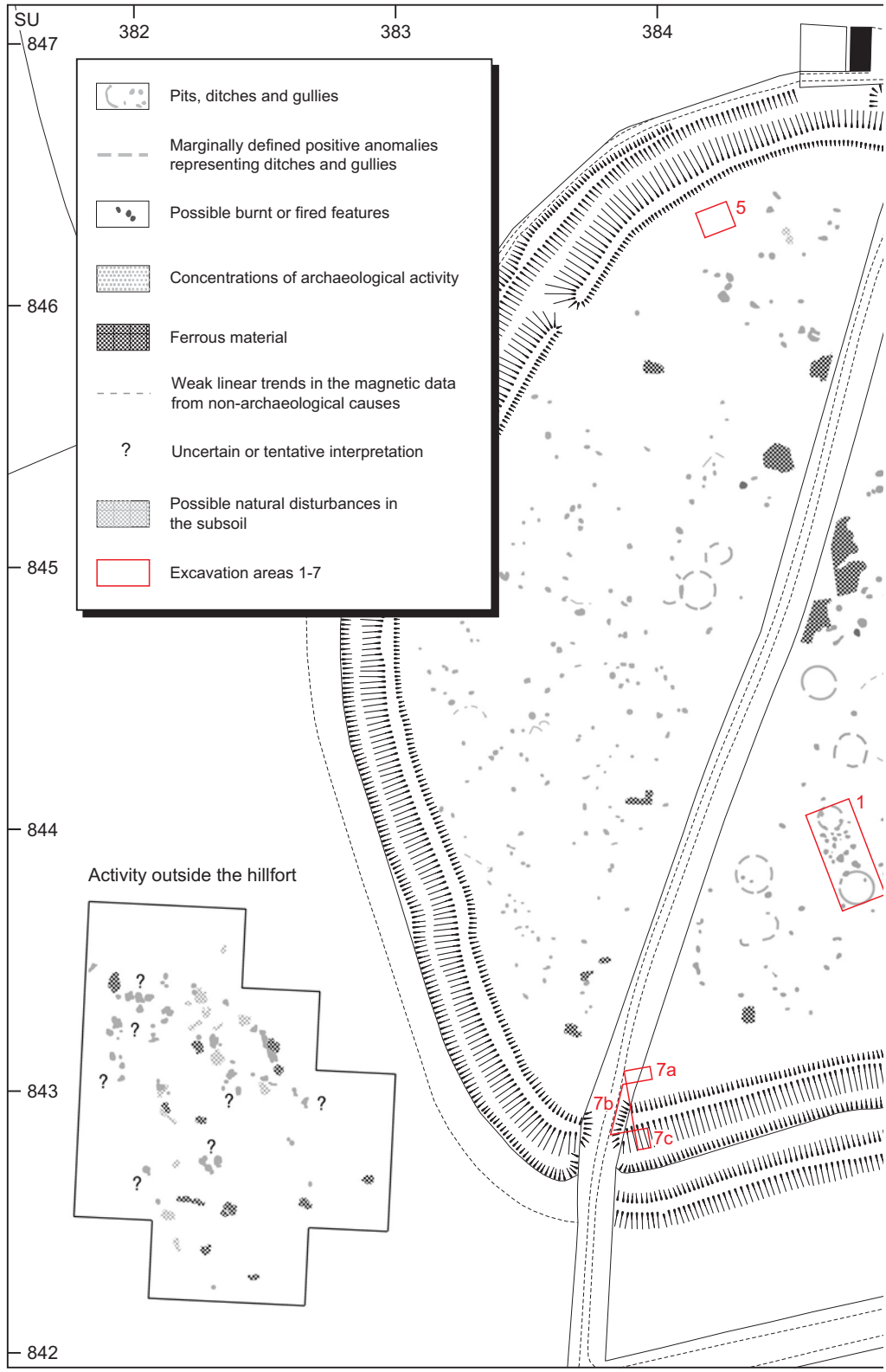


Fig 2.40
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Segsbury Camp (Letcombe Castle) in relation to the plan of the hillfort earthworks.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Pits, ditches and gullies
Marginally defined positive anomalies representing ditches and gullies
Possible burnt or fired features
Concentrations of archaeological activity
Ferrous material
Weak linear trends in the magnetic data from non-archaeological causes
? Uncertain or tentative interpretation
Possible natural disturbances in the subsoil
Excavation areas 1-7
Activity outside the hillfort
5
1
7a
7b
7c

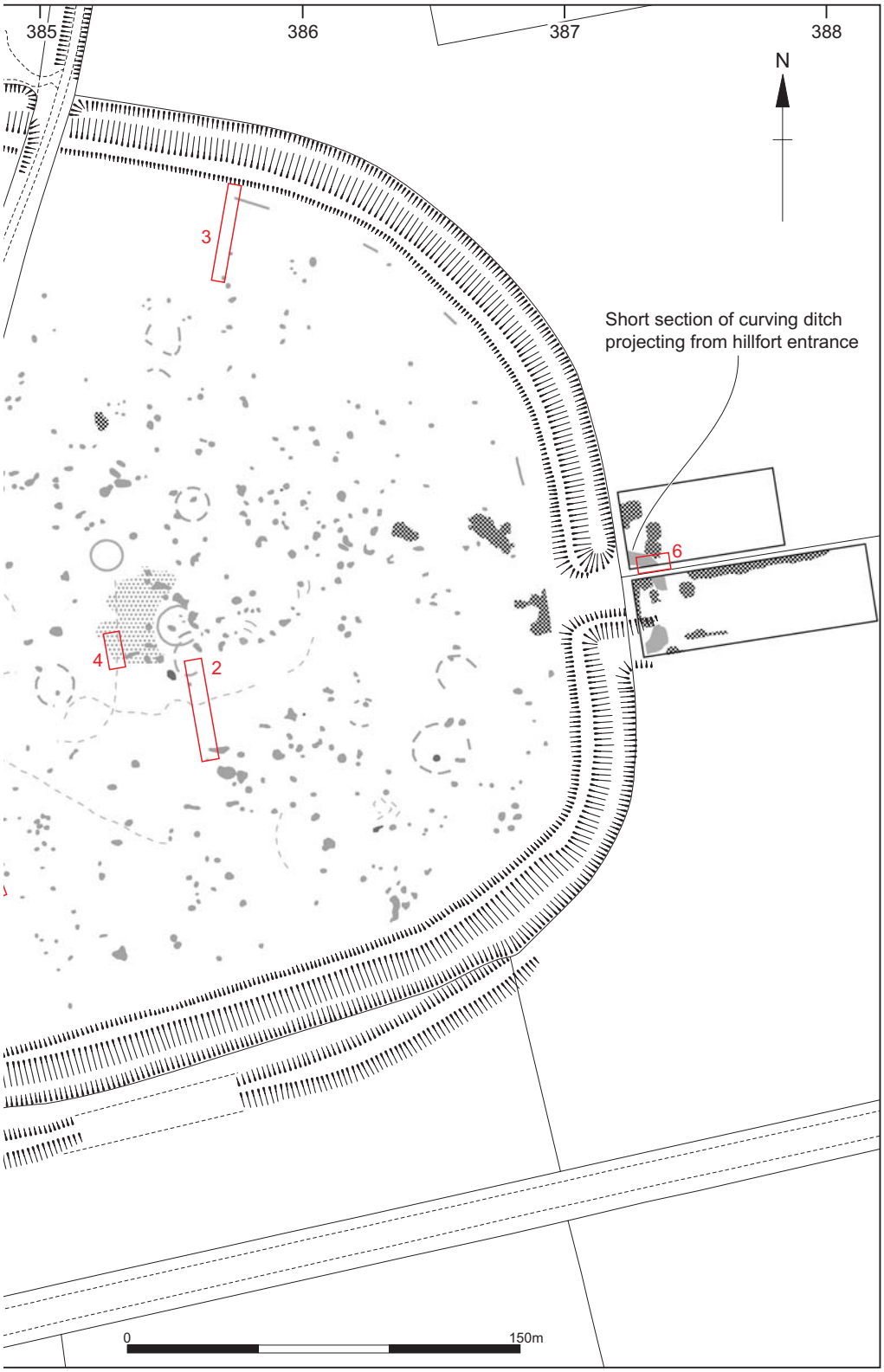


Fig 2.41
Interpretation of the magnetometer data from Segsbury.

marking the southern side of the extended corridor approach into the hillfort.

iii) Anomalies of natural origin. During the excavation of Trench 3 near the northern side of the fort, a natural clay-filled pipe in the chalk, 3.5m in diameter was uncovered. This had previously produced a magnetic anomaly similar to those produced by Iron Age pits. The presence of such natural features in chalkland hillforts that geophysically can easily be confused with archaeological features has implications for the reliable interpretation of magnetometer data from Iron Age hillfort sites on chalk and needs to be borne in mind for future surveys. A more extreme response to such clay pockets was encountered in the case of a pair of pronounced positive magnetic anomalies in the north-west part of the hillfort observed after topsoil stripping but not investigated further by excavation. The presence of these geological anomalies has implications for the interpretation of the complex of magnetic anomalies mapped in the field west of Segsbury at NGR SU 382 843, previously interpreted on the basis of aerial photographic evidence as a possible pit alignment forming a rounded cornered enclosure (Oxfordshire SMR reference PRN 11027). The site was covered by an additional magnetometer survey in 1996 in order to test this interpretation further. Although the survey clearly mapped a complex of magnetic anomalies in the same location as the aerial photography, their form and magnitude is suggestive of a geological origin at least in part, in keeping with similar anomalies of recognised geological origin in the north-west sector of the hillfort. On this basis, the presence of an additional archaeological site west of the hillfort must be open to some uncertainty, but neither should it be dismissed without more investigation.

Excavation 1996–7

(This section is based on interim reports and information kindly supplied by Dr Gary Lock.)

Shortly after the completion of the geophysical survey in 1996, Oxford University initiated a follow-up programme of limited excavation at Segsbury as part of the Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project (Lock *et al* 2005: Fig 1.2). The newly available geophysical results were used to target the areas of excavation on a range of features of potential archaeological interest identified within the hillfort. The aims of the excavations were to establish the character and dating of the construction and occupation of the hillfort and to verify and amplify the interpretation of the magnetometer survey results from the hillfort interior.

Trench 1, excavated from 1996–7, was the largest of the areas investigated inside the hillfort with dimensions of 40m × 20m (Fig 2.41). It contained the ring gully of a round structure 12m in diameter and a group of some 40 pits immediately north of it. These had initially been located by magnetometer survey and subsequently defined in greater detail by higher resolution magnetic survey including detailed fluxgate and caesium surveys immediately prior to excavation (Payne 2005). The interruption in the western side of the ring gully was clearly visible in the higher resolution magnetometer surveys, as was the ring gully of a second roundhouse subsequently uncovered at the very northern end of Trench 1 and explored thoroughly in 1997. This area was very badly damaged by ploughing and erosion, resulting in seriously truncated features that were difficult to resolve. This is probably also the reason why the smaller ring-gully did not show up clearly in the standard magnetometer survey and has obvious implications for estimating occupation densities from such data alone.

The larger circular gully was recut at some stage either to produce a vestibule area to the west or to reconstruct the western side of the structure. The recut terminal of the reconstructed gully to the west contained what might have been a deliberate deposit of red deer bones. A number of pits were present in and around the circular structure, two of which produced possible evidence of metal working. These were clearly resolved in the magnetometer survey. Numerous small post holes and stake holes inside the gully structure, undetected until excavation, may indicate a possible building but do not form a coherent pattern. Three large post holes (*c* 500mm in diameter) near to this possible house contained parts of human skeletons and may represent deposits in some way connected to the occupation. The large complex of pits to the north, although much inter-cut, is likely to be broadly contemporary with the circular structure. Most were less than a metre deep with near vertical sides and generally contained small amounts of pottery and bone with occasional pieces of metal. A smaller number had evidence of possible deliber-

ately placed deposits of animal bone and some larger pot sherds. A possible special deposit was discovered in one of the excavated pits [1312] consisting of a broken but almost complete decorated pot with an iron perforated disk. The design of the pottery has parallels in Wessex dated to the Middle Iron Age (the 3rd to 1st century BC). In common with most of the other excavated areas at Segsbury, Trench 1 also contained numerous natural features, including possible tree-throw holes of unknown age.

Trench 2 was located south of the main central zone of occupation in the eastern portion of the hillfort, perpendicular with the line of the possible road from the eastern entrance suggested by a linear zone containing few magnetic anomalies. The area produced partial evidence of another circular structure (not resolved by the magnetometer survey), a natural clay solution pipe and a scatter of stake holes, post pits and pits. The density of archaeological features in this area was nowhere near as great as in Trench 1.

Trench 3, opened in 1996, ran into the northern part of the hillfort interior from the inner edge of the northern hillfort rampart. The trench indicated that there had been a build-up of deposits behind the rampart on the north transported from the interior of the hillfort by down-slope soil movement (by a combination of ploughing and rain-wash). The soil depth in the trench varied from relatively shallow at the southern up-slope end (approximately 500mm deep) to a depth of 1.5m at the bottom of the slope against the foot of the rampart. The main feature of interest found in Trench 3 was the ditch described above. Trench 3 also contained a small number of pits and postholes of probable middle Iron Age date and the circular clay-filled natural solution pipe in the chalk previously mentioned.

Trench 4 was positioned to investigate a very tentative, weak, curvilinear positive magnetic anomaly appearing to define the highest area of the hilltop. Excavation revealed several pits and post holes in this area but nothing corresponding to the possible linear feature. Similar weak linear trends occur elsewhere in the magnetometer data from Segsbury and other hillforts investigated by the Wessex Hillforts Survey. Many have been shown to have no substance when investigated further by excavation, and they probably result from variability in topsoil thickness, agricultural effects, natural soil variation or even spurious artefacts of data processing.

Trench 5, measuring 10m × 10m, targeted a pair of very distinctive (strongly positive) circular anomalies in the north-west part of the hillfort identified by the Ancient Monuments Laboratory as being different to those created by storage pits. It was initially thought that these anomalies might represent hearths, but excavation revealed two solution pipes in the chalk bedrock filled with clay-with-flints, similar to those found in previous years at White Horse Hill and in Trenches 2 and 3 at Segsbury. The relative lack of other archaeological features within Trench 5 compared to the density of features found in Trenches 1, 4 and 2 could indicate zoning within the hillfort and suggest that the differences shown within the geophysics are real rather than being a product of overlying deposits masking features in the northern third of the interior.

Trench 6, opened in 1997 and measuring 10m × 5m, was positioned immediately outside the east entrance to investigate the possible curving earthwork feature extending out from the north side of the entrance, initially suggested by aerial photography and further supported by magnetometer survey. Excavation revealed the rounded terminus of a flat bottomed, steep sided ditch [6002], which appeared to be an outwork extending from the main ditch, precisely in the location expected from the geophysical survey.

Trenches 7a–c, opened in 1997, consisted of a section across the inner rampart and ditch on the southern side of the hillfort, adjacent to where the rampart is broken by the present roadway that cuts through the site. The trench was divided into three sub-areas: 7a – inside the rampart to the north, 7b – a section through the rampart and 7c – a section through the outer main ditch, together providing a continuous north–south section through the hillfort defences.

Trench 7a established that there was no pre-rampart ditch positioned inside the line of the rampart on the south side of the hillfort that corresponded with the feature on the inside of the northern rampart initially recorded by the magnetometer survey and confirmed by excavation in 1996 (Trench 3).

The stratigraphy within the rampart investigated by Trench 7b has yet to be fully resolved, but provisionally at least three phases of rampart construction are represented. The upper central area of the rampart section had been disturbed by

probable 18th-century and earlier activity linked to removal of sarsen stones from the ramparts for building material. Preliminary phasing of the rampart sequence is as follows:

Phase 1 – a probable timber revetted rampart represented by a row of post holes that formed the front face of the rampart backed by a chalk bank. Timber revetted ramparts are typical of the Early Iron Age and are also known at Liddington Castle, Uffington Castle, Danebury, Bury Hill 1 and Winklebury.

Phase 2 – was a larger version of the Phase 1 rampart with a rear revetment of posts. An internal structure within the rampart was probably associated with this phase, consisting of two or three courses of crude dry-stone walling creating a two-phase cell-like structure (a later wall overlying an earlier one). This was partly destroyed by a modern robber trench.

Phase 3 – the two phases of timber revetted rampart were succeeded by a massively enlarged dump rampart retained by a sarsen wall at the rear. The external ditch was greatly enlarged to provide material for the dump rampart, cutting through and largely obliterating the Phase 1 ditch. The ditch stratigraphy suggests a combination of intentional filling in the lower half (except for an initial layer of primary chalk shatter) with slower accumulation of mainly natural fills towards the top. A group of sarsen stones within the ditch could represent tumbled material from the destruction of the rampart. Romano-British pottery occurs beneath this context and a 1st–2nd-century Samian sherd above it suggests that partial rampart demolition took place early within the Roman period.

Dates for the construction sequence of the ramparts are not available as yet, but an initial analysis of the ceramic forms and fabrics from the excavation suggests a chronological span for the occupation of the hillfort ranging from early Iron Age to late middle Iron Age with activity beginning in the 7th to 6th century BC (slightly later than at neighbouring Uffington).

The rampart sequence at Segsbury is far from simple and the excavators state that 'There isn't an obvious simple solution based on the accepted sequence of early box ramparts replaced by later dump ramparts and the complexity of the evidence needs to be confronted' (Lock and Gosden 1998, 62). Broadly speaking, however, the evidence does conform to the widely accepted pattern in Wessex (*see* Chapter 4).

Conclusion

The pattern of occupation revealed inside Segsbury by the magnetometry, combined with evidence for multiple phases of rampart construction culminating in a massively enlarged dump rampart replacing earlier forms, and pottery of Early Iron Age to Middle Iron Age date, all suggest that Segsbury represents a developed form of hillfort. Occupation may not have been continuous or as long-lived as at Danebury, but Segsbury certainly appears to have many of the attributes that we would attach to hillforts of so called developed status. Evidence recovered by the geophysics and subsequent excavation for the lengthening of the approach into the hillfort at the eastern entrance by the addition of an outward projecting hornwork and the possibility of later blocking is a further indication that the site continued to be occupied into the Middle Iron Age. The majority of the occupation at Segsbury seems to date from the Middle Iron Age although there are signs that the origins of the hillfort were much earlier. What differentiates Segsbury from the neighbouring hillfort sites in the area at Uffington and Liddington is the intensity of occupation in the interior, the range of activities represented and a longer sequence of occupation.

Uffington Castle: Uffington, NGR SU 299 863

Summary
Date of survey:
Surveyed prior to Wessex Hillforts Project during the 26-28 April 1989 and 17–19 July 1995.
Landuse at time of survey:
Stable managed grassland.
Geology:
Cretaceous Middle Chalk.
Soil Association:
343h – Andover 1 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk on slopes and crests. Striped soil patterns locally.
Approximate area enclosed:
3.3 hectares (8.25 acres).

Planform:
Approximately a five-sided polygon composed of several straight sections of rampart.
Form of ramparts:
Main inner bank constructed in two major phases initially a timber revetted box rampart then enlarged into a dump-constructed rampart. External to the rampart is an outer ditch recut to a wider and deeper profile in the second phase and a secondary outer bank (or counterscarp).
Entrance features:
A well preserved entrance is present on the western side of the fort formed by the rampart terminals on either side of the entrance gap being out-turned to form a 16m long entrance passage. The out-turned banks of the entrance passage then turn again to connect with the line of the counterscarp. A blocked entrance, indicated by a conspicuous kink in the rampart, is present on the opposite eastern side of the fort.
Previous finds:
Saxon and Roman objects and burials and an "ancient urn" excavated from nearby barrows on White Horse Hill by Atkins in 1857. Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age pottery from the hillfort.
Previous recorded excavation:
19th century excavations by Martin Atkins. Modern excavations by Oxford Archaeological Unit (White Horse Hill Project) 1989–90 and Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project 1994–5 (Miles *et al* 2003).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
21778.
County SMR No.:
7304
Project site code:
Not applicable.

Although not strictly included in the Wessex Hillforts Survey, having been surveyed some years previously in 1989, Uffington Castle is included here because it is one of a well-defined group of hillforts on the northern escarpment of the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs, linked by the route of the Ridgeway, and therefore one of the group termed the Ridgeway Hillforts. The majority of these sites were investigated by the Wessex Hillforts Survey in 1996 but the geophysical results from Uffington are published in detail elsewhere (Miles *et al* 2003; *see also* pp 24–6).

Uffington Castle, (Fig 1.15), like Segsbury 8km to the east, is set on the edge of the north-facing escarpment of the Berkshire Downs. It is one of three large enclosures that cluster at the point where the escarpment makes a sharp turn to the south-west. Hardwell Camp (an enigmatic site of which very little is known) and Rams Hill, a hillfort with a long and complex sequence beginning early in the 1st millennium BC and continuing into the Roman period (Bradley and Ellison 1975; Piggott and Piggott 1940), is 1.5km to the east.

Uffington Castle is a univallate enclosure of 3.3ha (8.25 acres). Excavation of the hillfort and its immediate environs over the past decade has made this the most informative of all The Ridgeway group of sites (Miles *et al* 2003; Lock and Gosden 1997(a)). There were originally two entrances of Iron Age date. That on the west is a simple gap with the out-turned rampart terminals forming a deep passageway before turning onto the line of the counterscarp. To the east, the earthwork evidence – a characteristic slightly in-turned kink in the ditch and rampart – strongly suggested the presence of a blocked entrance, now confirmed by excavation (Lock and Gosden 1997(a)). Two other breaches, on the north-east and south-east are later, and have been suggested as possibly Roman in date (ibid).

The origins of the hillfort appear to lie in the later Bronze Age–earliest Iron Age and to be contemporary with a linear ditch approaching the site from the south, neighbouring Ram's Hill and the settlement on Tower Hill, some 2km to the south-west (ibid). Uffington castle has produced evidence of both Middle Iron Age and intensive Romano-British activity. The nature of the Romano-British material has led the excavators to suggest a possible ritual focus either within the hillfort or centred on a rectilinear enclosure 50m beyond its south-west corner (ibid).

South of Uffington Castle air photography has revealed an extensive area of field system associated with the linear ditch referred to above. This system covers at least 5 sq km and is separated from the major block of fields around Segsbury Camp (*above*, p 91) by the upper reaches of the Lambourn Valley, where a large Bronze Age barrow cemetery (the Lambourn Seven Barrows) might represent an area of reserved ground that was effectively a boundary (Bradley and Richards 1978). The field system is of regular form with a north-east–south-west axis and has a number of rectangular enclosures integrated into its layout (ibid, fig 7.6).

Wiltshire

Barbury Castle: Ogbourne St Andrew; NGR SU 149 763

Summary

Date of survey:
14 to 21 August 1996.
Landuse at time of survey:
Stable managed grassland.
Geology:
Primarily Upper Chalk, overlain by clay-with-flints towards the eastern end of the site.
Soil Association:
341 – Icknield – shallow, mostly humose, well drained calcareous soils over chalk on steep slopes and hill tops.
Approximate area enclosed:
5 hectares (12.3 acres).
Planform:
Approximately oval/eliptical.
Form of ramparts:
The fort is defined by a double line of ramparts with an external counterscarp around most of the circuit. The defences appear to have developed in several phases.
Entrance features:
Opposed entrances are present on the east and west sides of the hillfort. The original form of both entrances is now difficult to reconstruct due to widening in relatively recent times. A forework is present outside the eastern entrance.
Previous finds:
Early and Middle Iron Age pottery, a hoard of ironwork dated to the 2nd or 1st century BC, Roman pottery and a brooch and spoon of late 1st to early 2nd century AD date, a 6th or 7th century Saxon scramasax, knives and a spearhead (found 1934) and possible Saxon inhumations discovered in the ramparts (Meaney 1964, Cunnington, M E 1934, 174; Meyrick 1947; MacGregor and Simpson 1963; Bonney 1966.
Previous recorded excavation:
Military digging in 1939-45 exposed pits containing Early and Middle Iron Age pottery (Meyrick 1947, 260; Bonney 1966, 28; Officers' Reports 1971), 198). Analytical earthwork survey was carried out by the RCHME in 1998 (Bowden 1998).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
WI 4.
County SMR No.:
SU17NW200.
Project site code:
WHSP Site 4.

Morphology and setting

Barbury Castle (Fig 2.42) is a multiphase, bi-vallate hillfort on the north-facing escarpment of the Marlborough Downs. At 265m OD, the location gives extensive views in all directions and the neighbouring hillforts of Liddington Castle and Martinsell Hill are visible from here. On the northern side of the circuit there are traces of a third and outer circuit (Bowden 1998). The character of this is uncertain and it may be part of an earlier circuit or of an unfinished addition.

Fig 2.42
Aerial photograph of Barbury Castle taken from the north-west. Note the pock-marked appearance of the interior, the impressive double line of ramparts with a slighter outer earthwork, truncated outer ramparts at the western entrance and quarry disturbance on the north side (NMRC, NMR 15074, SU 1476/51, 1983).

Flint quarrying has damaged the ramparts on the northern side of the hillfort and sections of the outer rampart have been removed outside the western entrance (partly as a result of military activity on the site in the Second World War). Evidence of secondary heightening of the rampart was photographed by Keiller during one episode of demolition.

The site has two entrances, on the east and west. There is some indication of inturning of the inner rampart terminals at the west entrance, but the original form of both entrances is now difficult to reconstruct owing to widening in relatively recent times when the ends of the ramparts were truncated and the ditch terminals partially infilled. A curvilinear forework is present outside the eastern entrance, well preserved to the south but seriously reduced by ploughing to the north. A similar feature is present at the south-east entrance to Chiselbury hillfort, overlooking Fovant, in southern Wiltshire (Crawford and Keiller 1928, 74, plate VII). The northern part of the Barbury forework is cut by the outer ditch of the main hillfort and it would therefore appear to be a feature earlier than the ultimate hillfort defences (Bowden 1998).

The earthworks of the defences indicate that Barbury should be viewed as a 'classic' developed hillfort. Within the interior are extensive earthwork remains of pits and circular structures, many of which are probably prehistoric in origin and reinforce this view of a developed and densely occupied hillfort. This surface evidence is corroborated by the dense pattern of anomalies recorded during the magnetometer survey and the uneven, cratered appearance of the terrain model (*see below*).

There has been no formal excavation within Barbury Castle, but military activity between 1939–45 exposed pits and other features associated with Early and Middle Iron Age pottery (Meyrick 1947). A hoard of iron work including tools, weapons and vehicle fittings can be dated to the 2nd or 1st century BC (MacGregor and Simpson 1963). The area just outside the north-west ramparts has produced considerable quantities of Roman pottery associated with a small mound and consisting mainly of Savernake Ware (a typical domestic assemblage of the late 1st century to early 2nd century AD). Limited finds of Roman material from within the hilfort include a later 1st- or early 2nd-century brooch, a silvered bronze spoon and the lower part of a rotary quern. Post Roman activity is represented by a 6th- or 7th-century Saxon scramasax, knives and a spearhead (Swanton M J 1973), and possible Anglo-Saxon burials were recovered from the ramparts in 1939–45 (Cunnington, M E 1934; Meyrick 1947; Macgregor and Simpson 1963; Bonney 1966).

The immediate environs of Barbury Castle are rich in monuments of prehistoric date. A major linear ditch passes immediately by the eastern side of the monument and can be traced as a substantial earthwork down the scarp slope north of the hillfort before disappearing in modern arable ground. Below the western side of the fort is a disc barrow and a small cemetery of bowl barrows (Grinsell 1957). Extensive tracts of field system are known to the east and south-east of the hillfort, most notably on Burderop Down (this being an exceptionally well-preserved block) and Smeathe's Ridge, the latter also having evidence of extensive Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement. To the north, at the foot of the escarpment adjacent to Wroughton Copse, is a large settlement of Romano-British date. The settlement is partially overlain by a post-medieval penning earthwork that in the past was misidentified as a Roman military earthwork. Half a kilometer south of the hillfort, adjacent to Barbury Castle Farm and occupying the end of a deep coombe, are the extensive earthworks of a shrunken medieval settlement (Crawford and Keiller 1928, plate XLVI) that has also produced a small amount of Romano-British pottery. An earthwork survey of Barbury Castle was carried out by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in 1998 (Bowden 1998).

Magnetometer survey (Figs 2.43–2.45)

i) Objectives. Located within the Barbury Castle Country Park owned by Swindon Borough Council, Barbury Castle was included in the Wessex Hillforts Survey programme primarily to assist the interpretation of the monument to the public and inform the future management of the archaeological component of the country park. Prior to the 1996 geophysical and 1998 earthwork surveys the site was poorly understood due to minimal previous serious archaeological investigation. Barbury is a clear example of a hillfort defined by multiple earthwork defences and such sites are relatively rare in Wessex compared to simpler univallate forms of hillfort. This was another reason for inclusion as it was an important

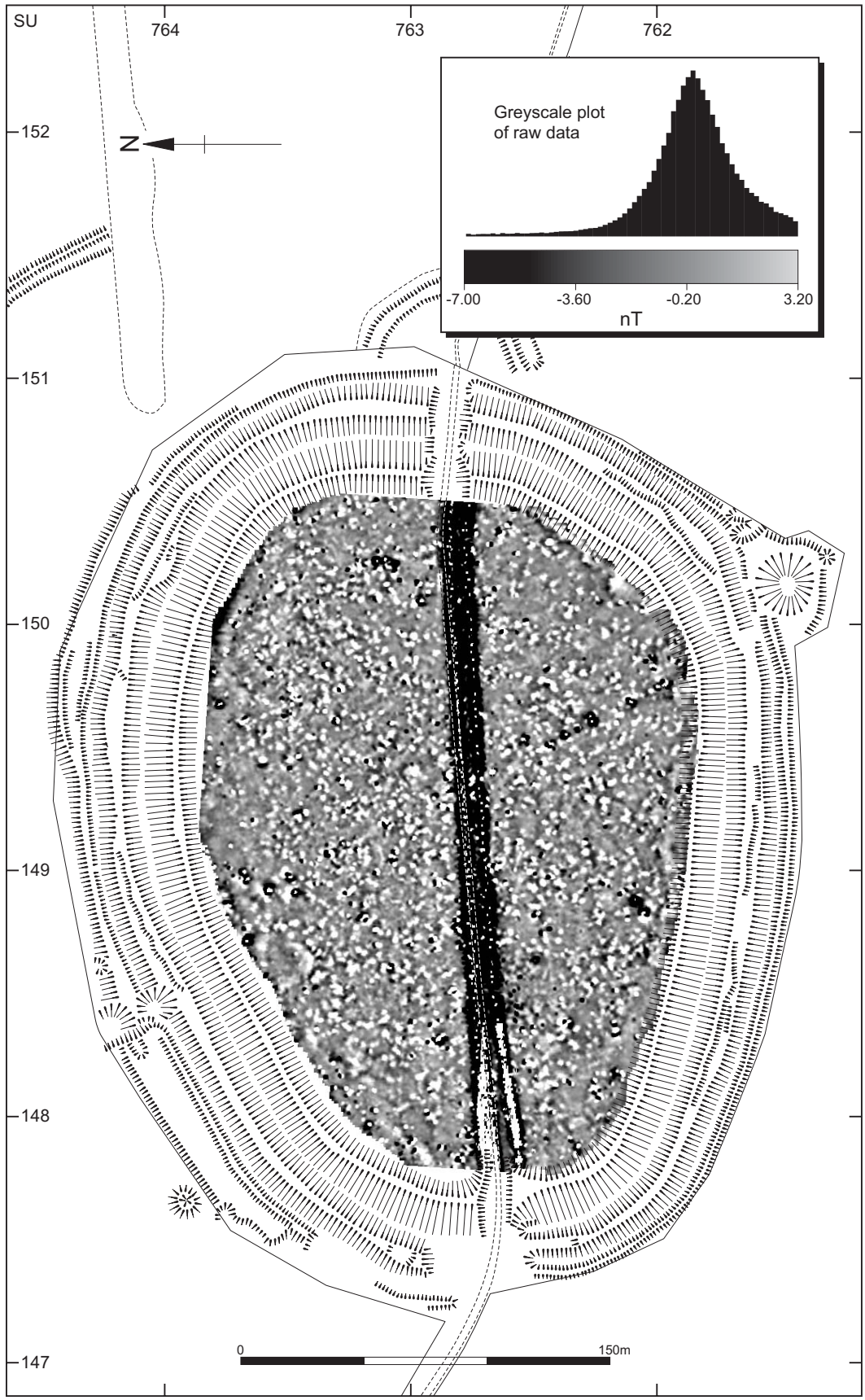


Fig 2.43
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Barbury Castle shown in relation to the plan of the hillfort earthworks.

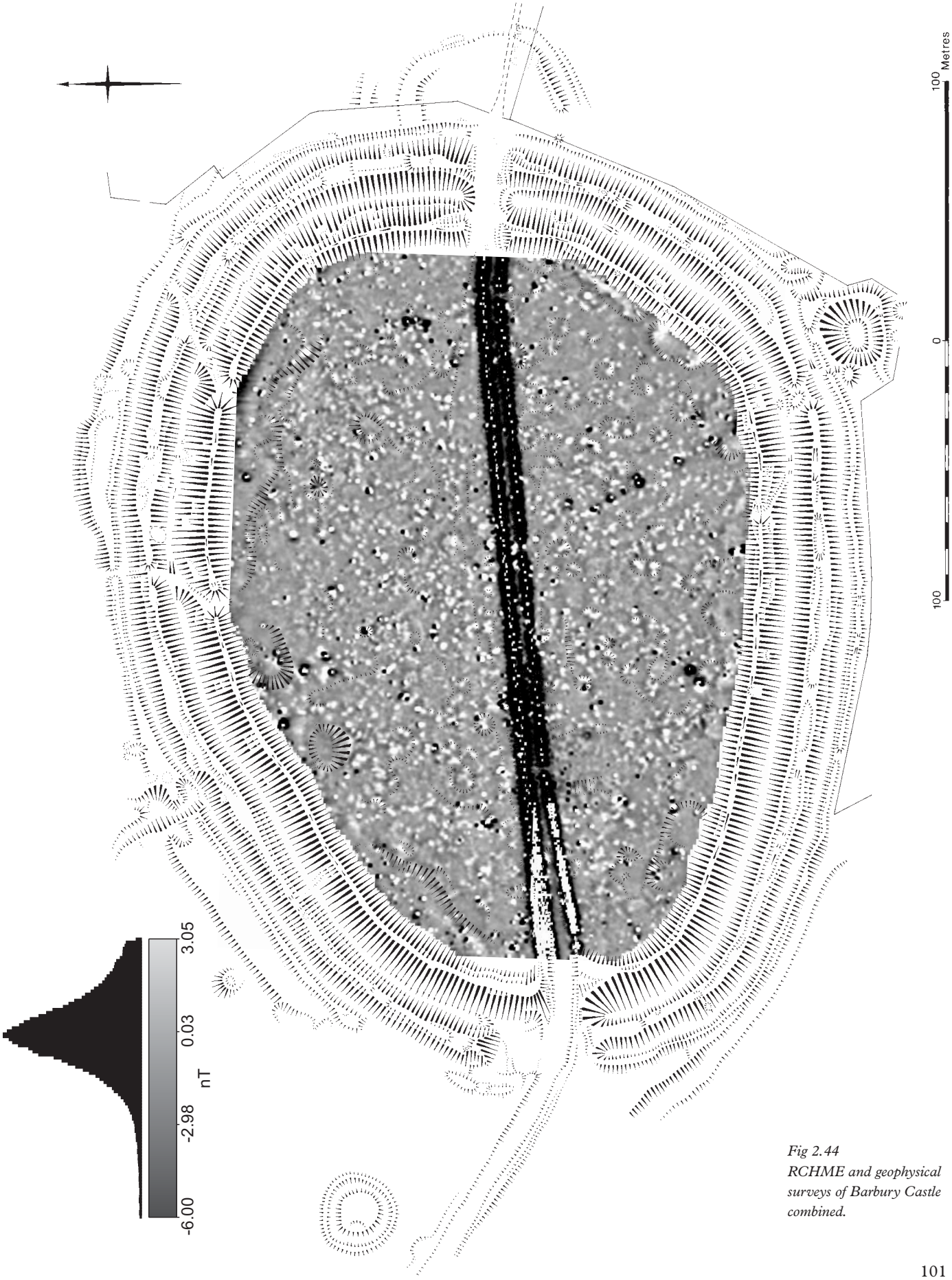


Fig 2.44
RCHME and geophysical surveys of Barbury Castle combined.

aim of the project to examine examples of these rarer bivallate and multivallate sites where they occur. Barbury is also one of a well-defined group of hillforts occupying the top of the northern escarpment of the Berkshire, Lambourn and Marlborough Downs. There were strong academic reasons for investigating this group as a whole rather than carrying out individual site specific work. Finally, Barbury was included in the survey programme as an example of a site under stable grassland management.

ii) Results. The magnetometer survey carried out over the full 5ha of the fort interior in 1996 indicates that it contains a high density of anomalous activity comparable to results obtained in the 1980s at Maiden Castle (Sharples 1991). This evidence is probably indicative of a great many pits (almost too many to distinguish separately) suggesting intense or prolonged occupation of the site in agreement with the suggested phased development of the hillfort defences. Some of the magnetic anomalies mapped in the interior are probably due to recent activity, but the likelihood is that most relate to the prehistoric occupation of the site. A band of intense magnetic disturbance, running between the hillfort entrances, results from the remnants of the metal fences that formerly lined both sides of a trackway passing through the centre of the hillfort. The position of another former fence may be indicated by another alignment of intense magnetic anomalies running approximately north–south in the south-east quadrant of the interior.

Consideration of the combined earthwork and geophysical evidence (Fig 2.44)

The interior of the fort is full of slight earthwork features and in suitable natural lighting conditions the ground surface has a very pock-marked appearance when viewed from the air (NMR 14873/04, 1997, NMR 15862/15, 1997). This is suggestive of considerable ground disturbance in the past as would be caused by pit digging over an extended period of time. Surface observations by the RCHME (Bowden 1998) suggest the presence of remains of hut circles in the form of hollows and terraces with crescentic backscarps, between 35 and 40 in number, and showing a particular concentration in the eastern part of the fort. There is no obvious relationship between this distribution of surface features and the

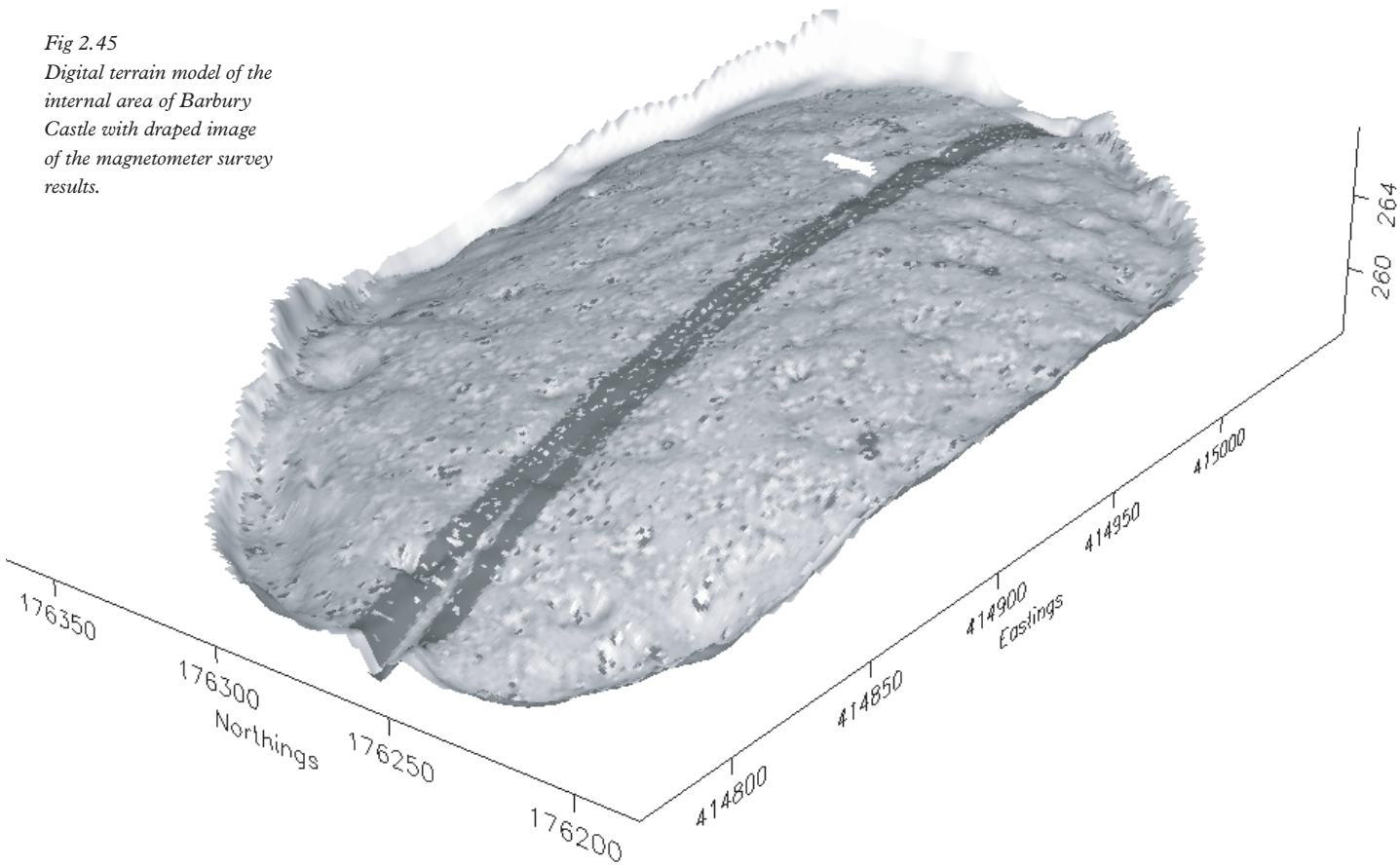


Fig 2.45
Digital terrain model of the internal area of Barbury Castle with draped image of the magnetometer survey results.

evidence from the magnetometer survey, which suggests that the fort interior is uniformly covered with sub-surface disturbance. Many of the hollows mapped by the RCHME survey – particularly those in the south-eastern part of the fort interior – have discrete positive anomalies (probable pits) associated with them, lending weight to their interpretation as possible house sites – but this is not exclusively so and, given the great density of pit-type anomalies mapped by the magnetometer at Barbury, could be coincidental. In the north-western half of the hillfort, the arcs of several possible circular gully structures are just visible amid (and partly obscured by) the widespread responses to pit type features that dominate the magnetic results (*see* Fig 2.43). There are no accompanying signs on the ground of these tentative features (Fig 2.44). Deeper, sharper defined earthwork features within the hillfort are interpreted by the RCHME (Anderton 1998) as the product of Second World War gun positions, trenches and bomb craters. These are probably linked to the use of the hillfort during the Second World War for anti-aircraft defences covering the approaches to Wroughton airfield and Swindon.

Quarry scoops up to 1.6m deep are present behind the ramparts around most of the circuit of the enclosure and are clearly visible in the terrain model of the hillfort interior produced by the Central Archaeology Service in 1996 (Fig 2.45). The larger and deeper quarry scoops are also clearly resolved in the magnetometer survey as areas of raised positive magnetic response. These anomalies are particularly clear south of the eastern entrance. The possible presence of earlier round barrows within the area later occupied by the hillfort (Bowden 1998, 6–7) was not confirmed by the magnetometer. A large pond lies immediately adjacent to the counterscarp on the south-east side of the fort and a second similar feature visible as a rounded depression (and a broad weakly positive magnetic anomaly) may be present adjacent to the inner rampart on the northern side of the fort interior.

Conclusion

The density of activity within Barbury contrasts strongly with the other 'Ridgeway' hillforts of Liddington and Uffington to the east of Barbury where occupation is less dense and largely confined to the late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age.

Barbury can now be recognised as a hillfort of developed status, containing a much higher density of occupation features than the neighbouring hillforts in the district. The multiple lines of ramparts and the density of features in the interior revealed by magnetometry indicate that Barbury was a substantial defended settlement probably occupied for several centuries in the mid-1st millennium BC and perhaps combining domestic, agricultural, military and sacred functions. The position of the hillfort in the landscape would have allowed it to dominate and exploit the resources of the surrounding downs and the vale to the north. The ultimate hillfort defences at Barbury were possibly preceded by a slighter hill-top enclosure as known at other hillforts on the Marlborough and North Berkshire Downs including Rams Hill, Liddington Castle and possibly Segsbury (*see above*). No pottery identified as Late Iron Age has been recovered from the enclosed area but abandonment of the hillfort in the 1st century BC would be consistent with the evidence from other developed hillforts in the region.

Castle Ditches Camp: Tisbury; NGR ST 963 283

Summary

Date of survey:
8–18 September 1997.
Landuse at time of survey:
Arable (immediately after crop harvesting).
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Greensand (sand and cherty sandstone).
Soil Association:
541B – Bearsted 2 – deep well drained coarse loamy soils, locally very stony.
Approximate area enclosed:
9.7 hectares (24 acres).
Planform:
Approximately an equilateral triangle with rounded corners.
Form of ramparts:
On the edge of the natural escarpment to the west the fort is defined by a triple tier of ramparts with two intervening ditches now heavily wooded. Across the neck of the promontory on the more easily approachable south-east side of the fort three massive banks and external ditches were constructed, measuring 75m wide overall. Two additional outer banks and ditches of smaller size reinforce and protect the winding eastern entrance into the hillfort north of the entry point of the modern farm-track into the site.

Entrance features:
There are two major entrances and possibly another two simpler ones. The eastern entrance takes the form of a hollow-way between the middle and outer rampart which serves as a hornwork and has an additional outer bank and ditch. The middle and inner ramparts were crossed through simple staggered gaps. The west entrance takes the form of a track 180m long and up to 6m deep incised into the side of the hill leading up to the fort through the ramparts at an oblique angle. Below the ramparts, the approach is protected on the lower (west) side by an additional bank. On the north-east and south sides of the fort interruptions in the ramparts suggest additional entrances of more simple form.
Previous finds:
Haematite pottery (source : Wiltshire SMR).
Previous recorded excavation:
Repair work by Wessex Archaeology in 1989 recorded a partial section of the inner ditch and part of the outer bank (Fielden 1991).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
WI 11.
County SMR No.:
ST92NE200.
Project Site Code:
WHSP 15.

Morphology and setting

Castle Ditches Camp is a large multivallate hillfort, roughly triangular, enclosing an area of 9.7ha (24 acres) with an overall area, including the defences of 17.5ha (43 acres). The site occupies the western end of a greensand promontory at 191m OD and dominates the central area of the Vale of Wardour and the valley of the River Nadder. Around the escarpment edge Castle Ditches is defined by three ramparts separated by two ditches. Now covered in mature, and in places very dense, woodland the defences are of massive proportions, measuring an average of 45m in width with ditches still up to 6m deep. On the south-eastern approach, across the neck of the promontory, the defences comprise three massive banks, each with an external ditch, with an overall width of 75–85m. Overall Castle Ditches bears a striking similarity to the developed hillfort at South Cadbury, some 30km to the west (Barrett *et al* 2000).

In 1997 when fieldwork was conducted, the interior of the hillfort was under intensive cultivation, contrasting sharply with the predominant present day pastoral economy of the Vale of Wardour. In the early 19th century Sir Richard Colt Hoare recorded that 'the entire area of this camp is under tillage, and the greater part of the ramparts are so concealed by thick copse wood that no adequate idea of their strength and boldness can possibly be formed' (Colt Hoare 1812). It is evident from this that the condition of the site has changed little down the centuries and it is encouraging how much archaeological evidence still survives in the interior, based on the magnetometer survey, (*see below*) despite so many years of gradual degradation by ploughing.

There has been no major excavation of the site, although Sumner recorded 'haematite' coated pottery and the author (M Corney) has noted Middle to Late Iron Age and Romano-British pottery in the ploughed interior. A hoard of late 2nd-century AD *sestertii* was found on the hilltop in the 1980s (Dr P Robinson pers comm) and emergency work by Wessex Archaeology in 1989 recorded a partial section of the southern defences following a landslip (Fielden 1991). No suitable aerial photograph of the site was available because the dense woodland covering the ramparts effectively obscures the view of the site from the air.

The circuit is breached at four points, two of which, on the east and west, are undoubtedly original. The principle entrance is that on the east side, giving access from the greensand promontory. This is a complex structure 140m in length and, although now damaged by a modern farm track and a small reservoir on the inner rampart, its original form can still be discerned (Fig 2.46). The outermost rampart forms a substantial hornwork from which the original hollow-way turns sharply west across the line of the middle rampart. To reach the innermost rampart and entrance proper, the track turns south-west and then west to give passage into the interior. At this point, modern damage coupled with the ongoing cultivation of the interior has removed any surface evidence of an inturned entrance, although the line of the approach track can be seen to continue as an east–west route across the hillfort on the magnetometry survey (Fig 2.46). This route can be traced to the other major original entrance located on the western side of the hill. As at the east entrance, part of the outer rampart deviates from the line of the defences to create a hornwork flanking a very deep (up to 6m in depth) and well-defined hollow-way. The hollow-

way cuts diagonally across the defences for a total distance of 180m, and then enters the hillfort by way of a very deep and well-worn cut with a steep gradient, that extends into the interior for a distance of 25m. As with the eastern entrance, ongoing cultivation has seriously degraded the inner rampart and the original form of the entrance is now obscured.

There are two more breaches in the circuit on the north and south respectively. The latter, despite some modern damage and a very dense cover of vegetation, has certain characteristics suggestive of some considerable antiquity. The ramparts either side of the gap are markedly offset, a feature observed on many earlier Iron Age hillfort entrances. There is also some evidence on the geophysical plots of a possible track or road heading towards this gap from the possible blocked entrance on the northern side of the hillfort (*below*). It is possible that the southern break in the defences is also an earlier entrance, subsequently blocked. The long-term cultivation of the interior has seriously degraded the inner rampart in the areas discussed and surface observation and remote sensing alone cannot provide the crucial evidence of proof.

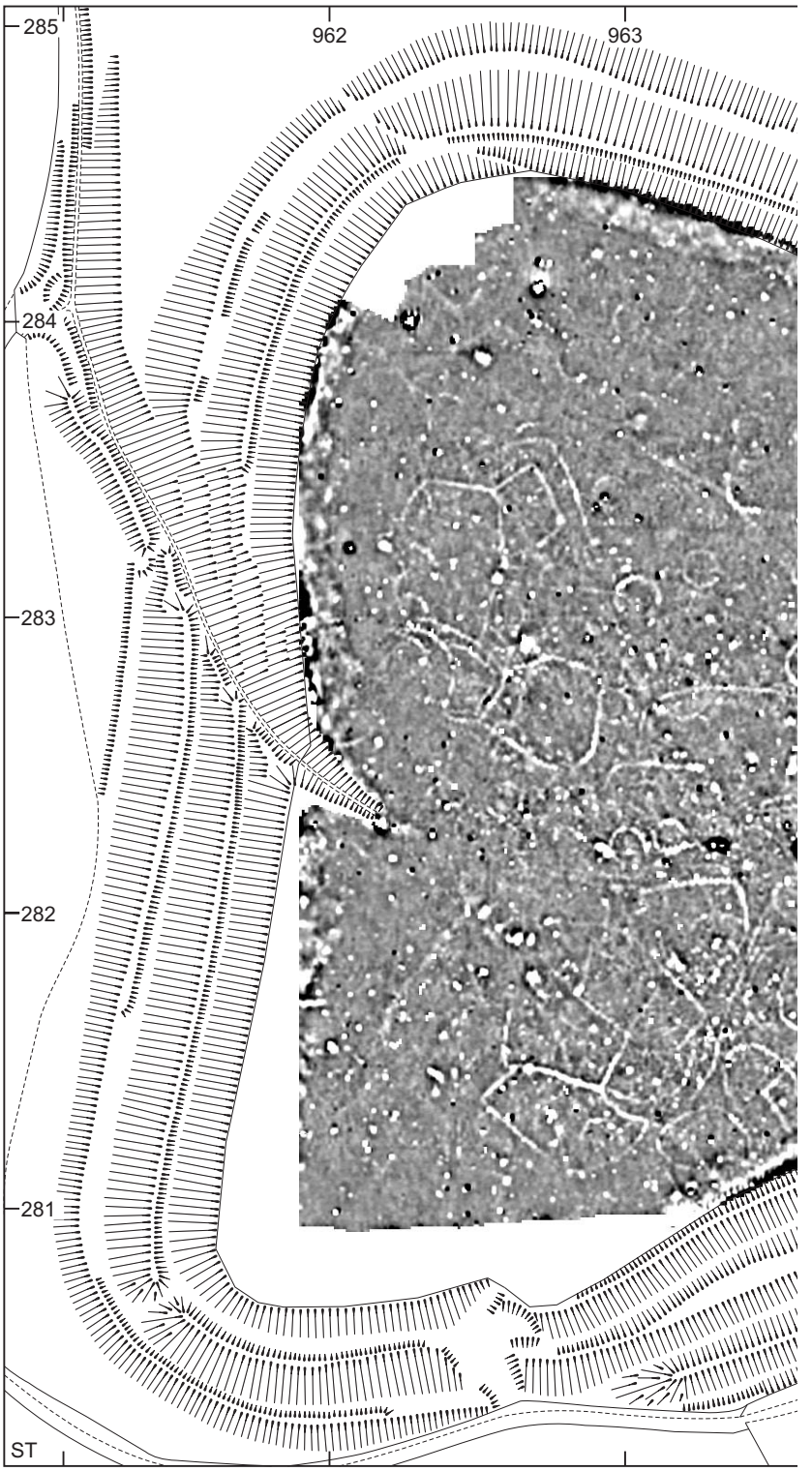
On the northern side of the hillfort the earthworks of the middle and outer ramparts suggest the presence of a second blocked entrance. This is especially clear on the outer rampart where the terminals either side of the break are markedly offset. Evidence of blocking on the inner rampart is now difficult to discern due to dense vegetation, the cultivation of the interior and the accumulation of plough-soil behind the bank. As with the suggested southern entrance, it is likely that excavation would be required to confirm the field observations.

Sumner (1913, 1988) considered Castle Ditches to be one of the finest camps in the Cranborne Chase area (covering north-west Hampshire, south-west Wiltshire and north-east Dorset) regarding it as a 'British tribal centre' on the strength of the earthworks and the sizable area enclosed. The scale of the surviving earthworks coupled with the complexity of internal features recorded by magnetometry (*below*) clearly demonstrates that Castle Ditches is a developed hillfort with a long sequence of occupation. The morphology of the internal features shows at least two major phases, one associated with numerous circular structures and a second with a large number of sub-angular enclosures. Pits and other features are also widely distributed across the interior suggesting intensive activity. If the postulated earlier entrances on the northern and southern sides should prove to be correct it also implies that the axis of the site may have been changed at some point. Hillforts in Wessex with more than two entrances are extremely rare. Equally rare are hillforts with north- and south-facing entrances (*see* Hill 1996, 110). Generally two are the norm, often with one subsequently being blocked, such as those recorded at Danebury (Cunliffe 1984a) or Beacon Hill (Eagles 1991). It may be that Castle Ditches has undergone at least one period of abandonment or reduced use and on renewal of activity the axis of the site was re-aligned between the more developed east and west entrances.

The presence of Romano-British material from the hillfort is of some interest. One possibility is that a shrine or temple was constructed within the site, although there is no evidence for such a structure on the geophysical survey. A phase of late and post-Roman reoccupation could be an alternative possibility. The Vale of Wardour is an area where a significant number of British place-names and river names have survived (Eagles 1994 and in litt). The site should be regarded as having high potential as a post-Roman centre.

Contemporary features in the immediate environs of Castle Ditches are few. Just beyond the outermost rampart at the north-west corner there is a short (40m) length of bank with a ditch on the south side. This feature is undated, covered by very dense vegetation, and may be part of a more extensive group of earthworks observed but not recorded in detail in Haredene Wood, a large and well-established block of woodland covering an area of some 500ha immediately north of Castle Ditches.

Owing to the nature of the Greensand sub-soil and predominance of a pastoral economy in the Tisbury area, aerial photography has been of little value in identifying new sites. However in 1994, a series of air photographs of a low knoll situated 500m west of the western entrance into Castle Ditches recorded the faint earthwork remains of a univallate enclosure of approximately 3ha (NMR15161/23-28). This is oval in shape and although undated does have the appearance of a prehistoric feature. The occurrence of smaller enclosures in close proximity to hillfort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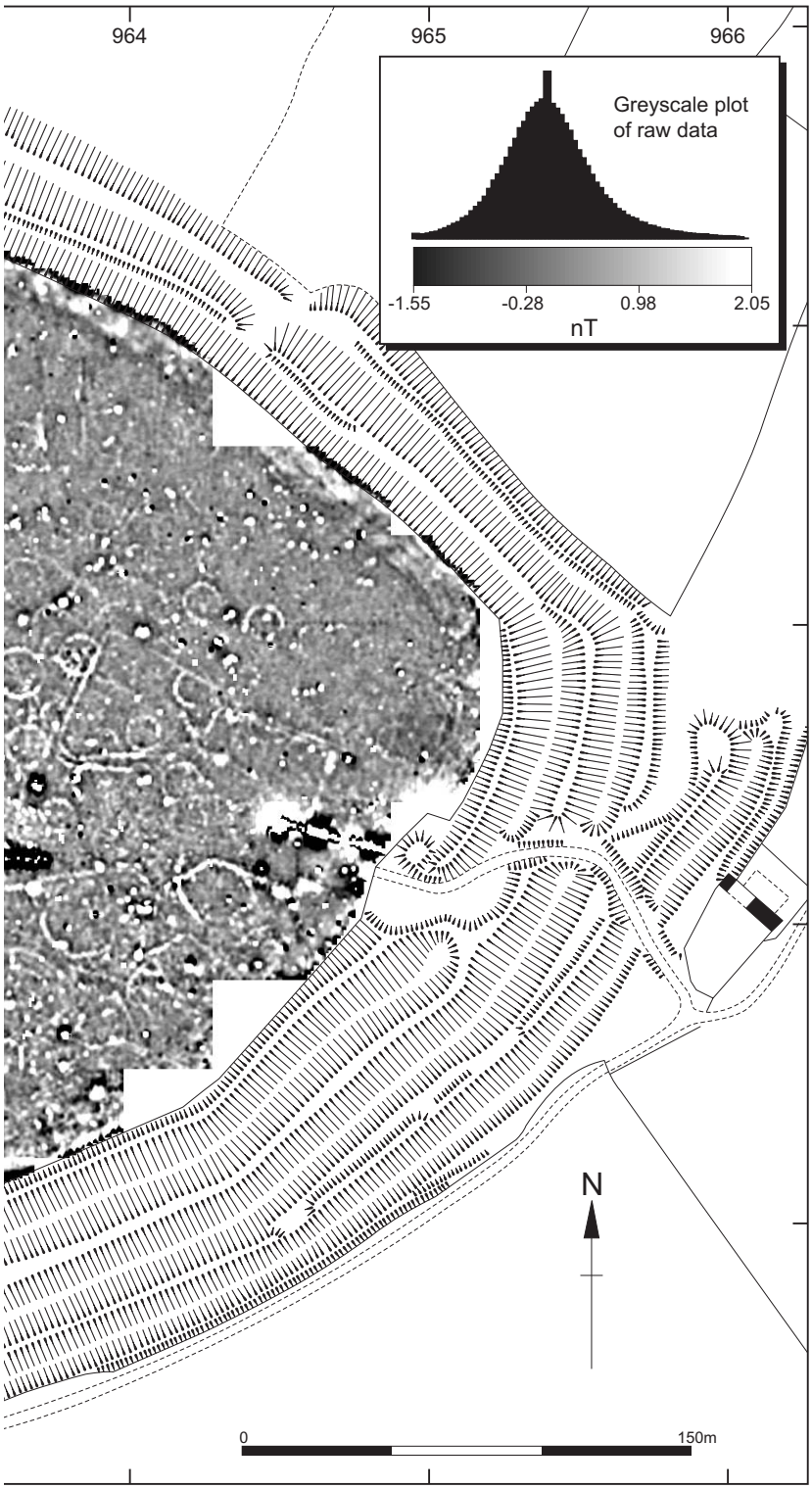
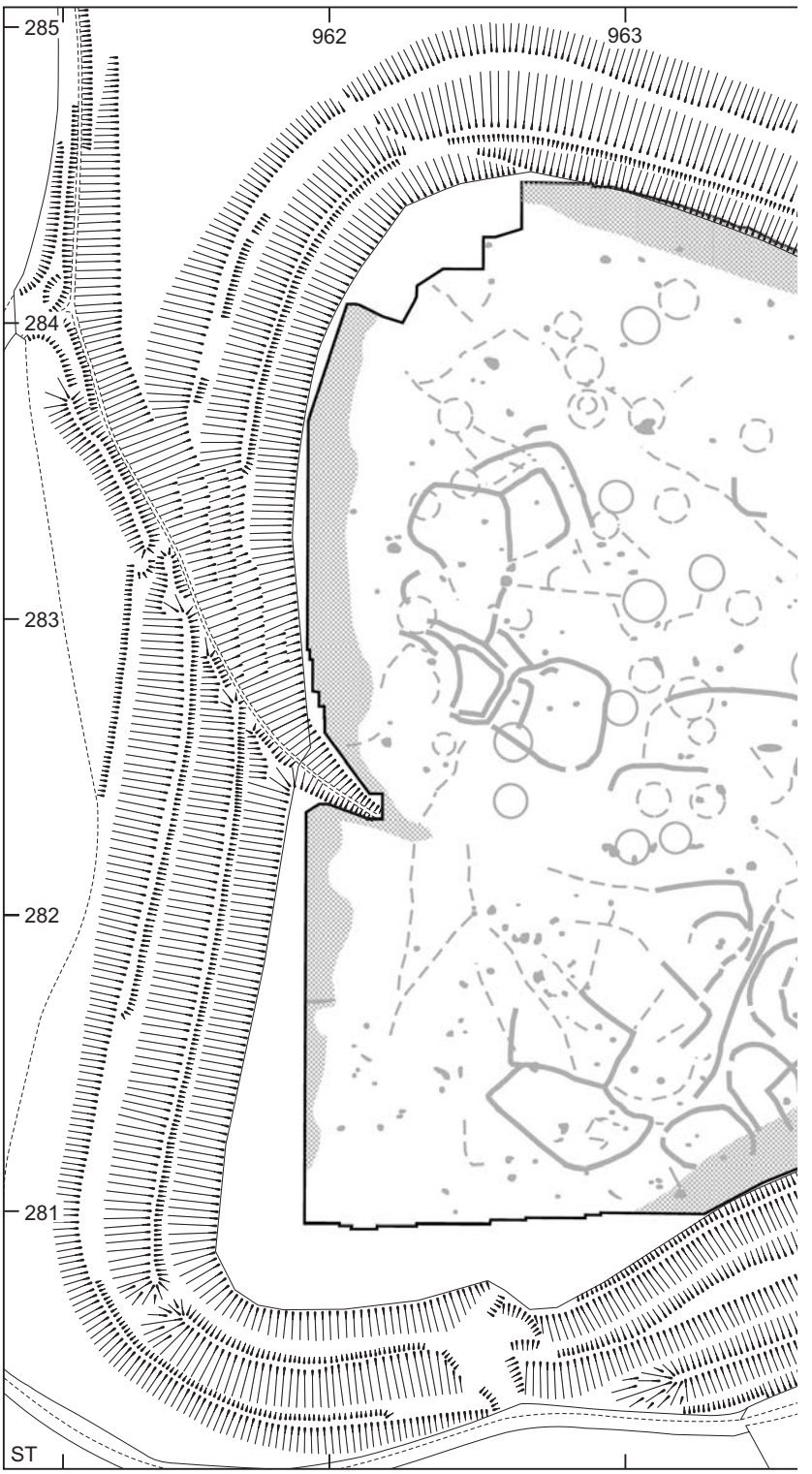


Fig 2.46
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Castle Ditches shown in relation to the plan of the hillfort earthworks.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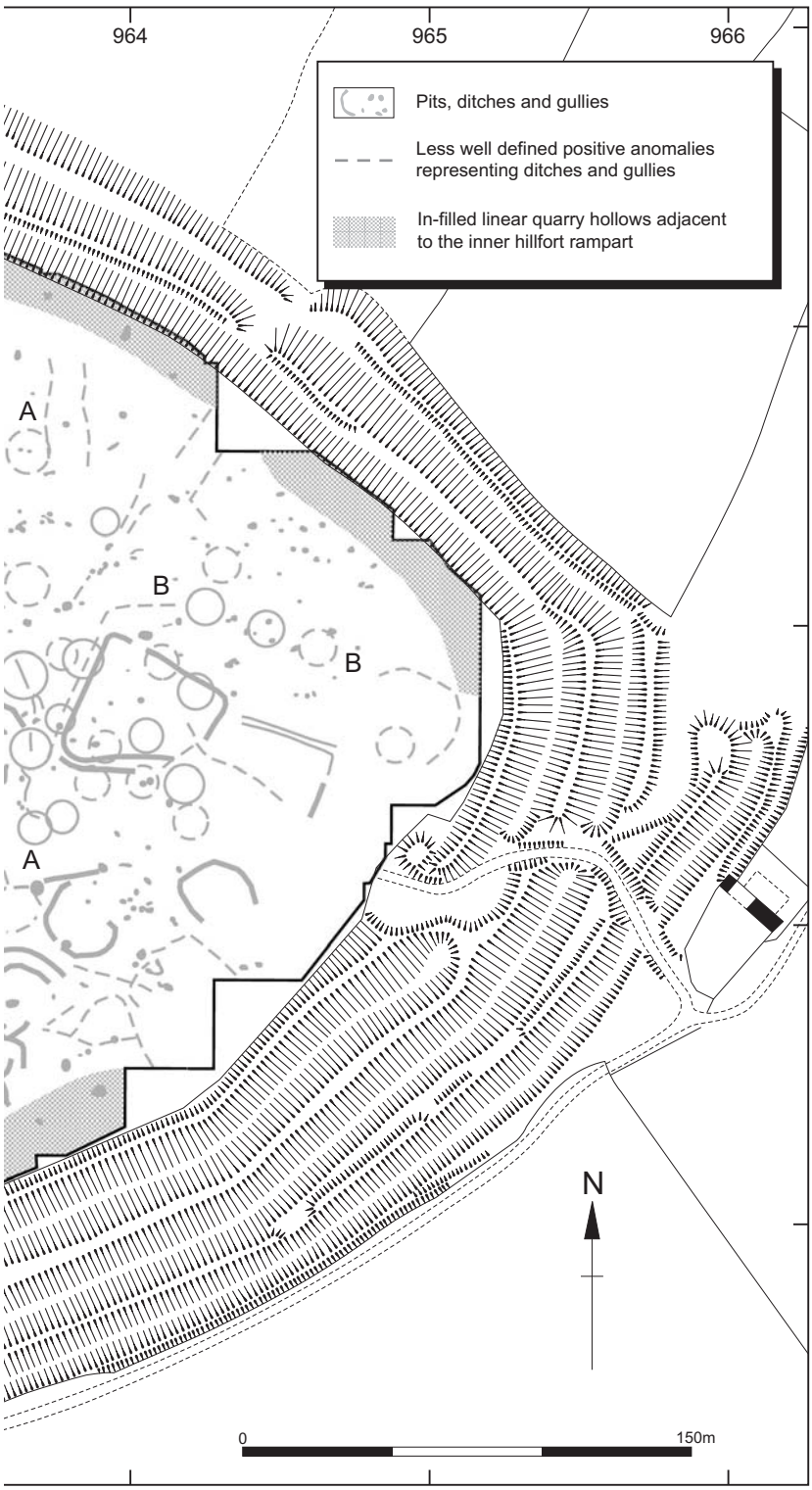


Fig 2.47
Interpretation of the magnetometer data from Castle Ditches.

entrances is a phenomenon noted at many sites in Wessex and is discussed in greater detail below (pp 139–41).

Magnetometer survey (Figs 2.46–2.48)

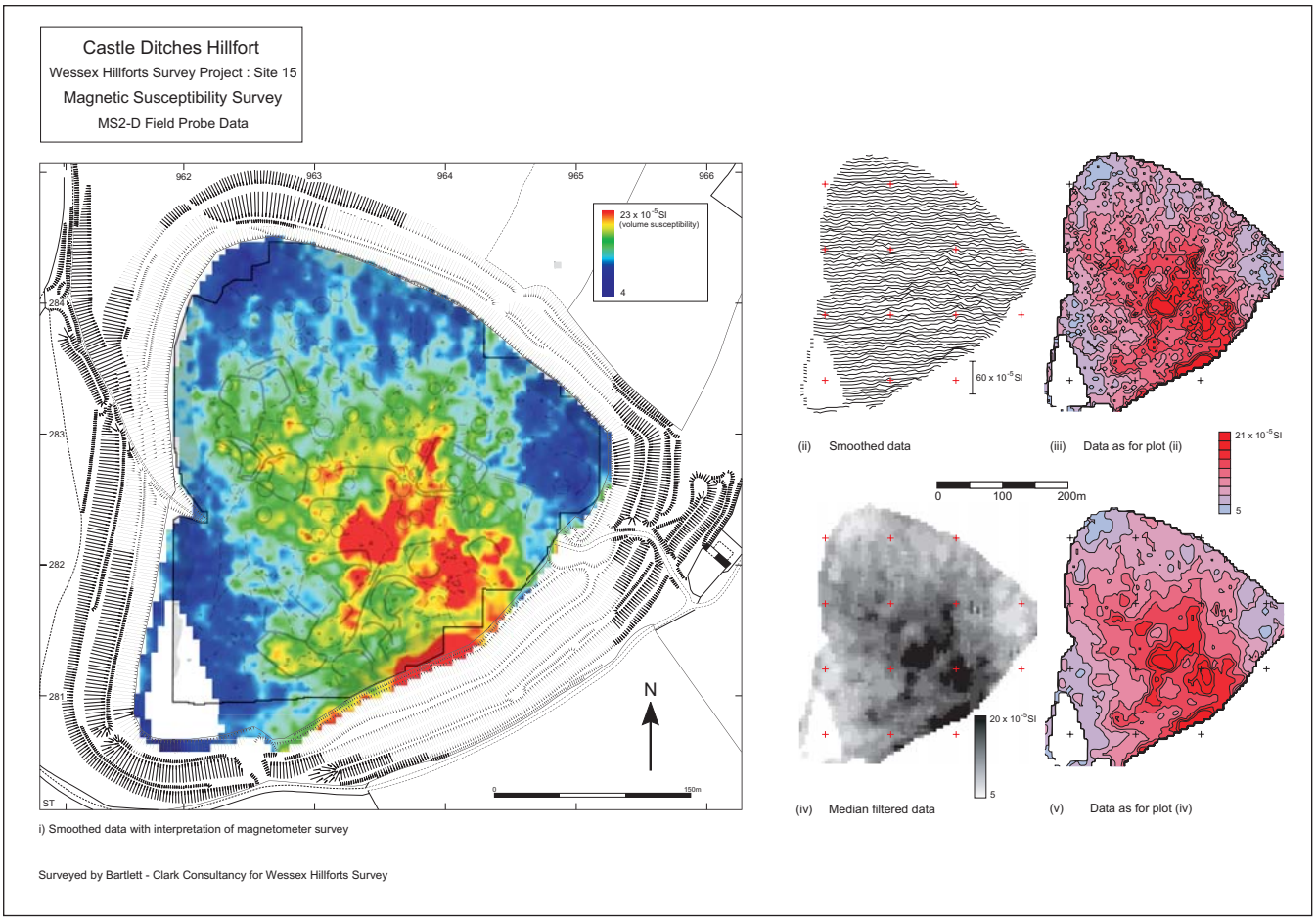
Castle Ditches was selected as a priority for survey because it represents a large hillfort, defended by impressive multivallate defences with complex entrances, suggestive of late occupation. In complexity it is comparable to other hillforts farther west in Dorset and West Wiltshire such as Battlesbury Camp, Badbury Rings, Hod Hill and Hambledon Hill. Hillforts defined by multivallate ramparts are relatively rare in the core study area of the Wessex Hillforts Survey in central Hampshire and north Wiltshire and where they do appear in this region they generally seem to represent a relatively late development in hillfort design or augmentation (for example at Bury Hill). Multivallate defences become increasingly common towards the western edge of the survey region towards Dorset and Somerset where hillfort occupation persisted for longer and celebrated examples of these strongly developed hillforts appear including Hambledon Hill, Hod Hill, Maiden Castle and South Cadbury Castle. The interior of Castle Ditches has been under the plough for many years (with obvious implications for the long-term preservation of any archaeological features contained within it), a factor that further reinforced the need for geophysical investigation.

The magnetic results from Castle Ditches are among the most striking produced by the Wessex Hillforts Survey and reveal a complex and interesting pattern of archaeological features. The features mapped within the fort by the magnetometer are clearly of several phases, as indicated by overlapping anomalies. At least two distinct phases of activity appear to be represented. One phase is characterised by circular anomalies indicative of hut emplacements. These vary in diameter from 10m to 15m and number no fewer than 20, although as many as 50 may be present. They appear to concentrate in the northern half of the hillfort and are often arranged in lines (A and B on Fig 2.47) similar to the layout of such structures around the periphery of Danebury in its Late period (Cunliffe 1995, fig 9, 24). Some of the circular features appear to overlap indicating periodic replacement of some structures and several phases of building. Though the circular structures cannot all be contemporary, their overall number suggests that a sizeable community probably inhabited the hillfort over a period of time.

The second series of features mapped by the survey consists of a system of irregularly shaped ditched enclosures laid out along the axes of, and divided by, the north–south and east–west roadways running between the two sets of probable entrances (*see above*). In several places the enclosure ditches cut unconformably across the circular features (or vice-versa depending upon phasing) suggesting they each represent separate phases of activity. The circular features also seem to occupy the lines of the trackways defined by the enclosures suggesting that the roadways had fallen out of use or had yet to be established at the time when the circles were constructed. The extensive network of enclosures is associated with a zone of elevated magnetic susceptibility readings ($15–20 \times 10^{-5}$ SI volume susceptibility; Fig 2.48) extending across the interior to the north-west from the ramparts on the south-east side of the hillfort (Bartlett 1999 and *see* pp 35–6). In contrast the eastern, northern, and western periphery of the enclosed area is characterised by much lower MS readings (below 10×10^{-5} SI). The susceptibility values are particularly low in the south-west area of the site where there is a corresponding reduction in magnetic anomalies.

A sparse scatter of pits is evident throughout much of the hillfort tending to occur in loose clusters (as at numerous other hillforts). Greater concentrations of pits occur towards the northern periphery of the site and among the enclosure features in the southern half of the fort. One concentrated group of strong positive magnetic anomalies between two open ended enclosures (75m west of the east entrance) occupies the centre of an area of particularly high MS suggestive of some type of high temperature industrial activity. The cross-roads at the intersection of the two possible trackways running through the hillfort is also associated with a peak in the magnetic susceptibility but, other than suggesting intense occupation, the exact cause of these high readings is not known.

A series of broad linear zones of magnetic disturbance behind the internal face of the inner rampart revealed by the magnetometer survey suggests the presence of quarries dug to provide material for heightening and extending the hillfort ramparts. Quarry hollows such as these are generally indicative of numerous phases of rampart development and continual augmentation characteristic of the Middle to Late Iron Age examples of devel-



i) Smoothed data with interpretation of magnetometer survey

Surveyed by Bartlett - Clark Consultancy for Wessex Hillforts Survey

Fig 2.48
Magnetic susceptibility survey results from Castle Ditches (from Bartlett-Clark Consultancy).

oped hillforts in Wessex including Danebury, Hod Hill and Maiden Castle. The new geophysical evidence for quarry hollows, combined with the extravagant visible earthworks, all suggest that Castle Ditches underwent sustained occupation or multiple reoccupation. The quarries had not been noted previously because cultivation of the hillfort interior has caused them to become infilled with soil and obscured as surface features.

An intense east–west aligned linear magnetic magnetic anomaly (alternately positive and negative), immediately north of the point where the inner rampart is broken by the eastern entrance, is the response to a ferrous pipe leading to a covered reservoir built against the inner rampart at NGR ST 96492831.

Conclusion

The elaborate earthworks and entrances of Castle Ditches combined with the new evidence from geophysical survey for quarries, several phases of occupation, a rudimentary street-plan and numerous circular gully structures indicative of hut emplacements all reinforce the earlier view of Sumner that Castle Ditches is a hillfort of particular significance and undoubted archaeological importance.

Fosbury: Tidcombe and Fosbury; NGR SU 319 565

Summary
Date of survey:
30 September to 4 October 1996.
Landuse at time of survey:
Predominantly pasture, but the northernmost part of the interior is under woodland.
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk (soft white chalk with many flint nodules).
Soil Association:
343h – Andover 1 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk. Striped soil patterns locally.
Approximate area enclosed:
10.5 hectares (26 acres).
Planform:
Irregular – composed of several straight lengths of rampart.

Form of ramparts:
The defences consist of an inner bank with an equally proportioned second outer bank separated by an intervening ditch. Quarry hollows are present on the internal side of the inner rampart along the southern half of the defensive circuit.
Entrance features:
Original entrances appear to be present on the eastern and southern sides of the defensive circuit. Several possible more modern breaches through the ramparts are present in the western, north-western and northern sections of the defences.
Previous finds:
Grinsell (1957) notes that Meyrick recorded Iron Age A/B sherds from the interior.
Previous recorded excavation:
None known
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
WI 162
County SMR No.:
SU35NW200
Project Site Code:
WHSP Site 9

Morphology and setting

Fosbury hillfort (Fig 2.49) is a large bivallate enclosure of 10.5 hectares (26 acres) set just south of the crest of Haydown Hill at a height of 254m OD. The site occupies a central position in the Hampshire Downs and has extensive views in all directions, especially across eastern Wiltshire and the chalklands of western and central Hampshire. The hillforts of Walbury Camp and Chisbury lie 7km to the north-east and 10km to the north-west respectively, and the small one hectare hillfort of Godsbury is located 10km west along the same escarpment.

Fig 2.49
Aerial view of the large partially wooded hillfort of Fosbury Camp on Haydown Hill, Wiltshire looking north (NMRC, SU 3256/20/141, 1971).

A rampart, ditch and a substantial second outer bank define the hillfort circuit with a well-preserved series of quarry scoops surviving within the southern arc. Of the five breaches through the defences only that on the east, with well-defined inturns, is clearly original. A possible second original entrance may exist on the south side with a staggered entrance passage formed by offset rampart terminals. Several possible, more modern breaches through the ramparts are present in the western, north-western and northern sections of the defences. Of the two breaches through the western side of the fort the northernmost might be original, but has clearly been subject to modification. Although the defences appear in plan to be gently curvilinear, they are in fact constructed in a series of short, straight lengths, a feature noted on many other Wessex hillforts, including Liddington Castle (*see below* for a more detailed discussion of this phenomenon).

Within the southern half of the enclosure are extensive earthworks defining small subcircular platforms, interpreted as hut platforms and pits up to 4m in diameter and 0.5m deep. The site has never been excavated although Grinsell (1957) notes that Meyrick recorded Iron Age 'A/B' sherds from the interior. The whereabouts of this material is unknown. 250m to the northwest of the fort air photography has recorded a single ring-ditch and the Wiltshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) notes a find-spot of Neolithic flint in the same vicinity. Five hundred meters north-west of the western defences, on the western tip of Haydown Hill and 200m west of the ring-ditch, air photographs show a sub-square ditched enclosure of approximately 0.5ha (1.2 acres) with an east-facing entrance.

Surrounding Fosbury is a remarkably regular block of prehistoric fields that, despite recent plough damage, still presents a very fine and coherent system. Best preserved on the eastern and southern slopes of the hill, the lynchets appear to be overlain by the hillfort counterscarp, thus predating it. This system can be traced over an area of at least 9 sq km and is associated with the linear ditch system that forms a major junction in the vicinity of Scot's Poor, on the extreme eastern edge of Salisbury Plain, 3.5km west of Fosbury (Massey 1998). Although Fosbury is not directly linked into a linear ditch,

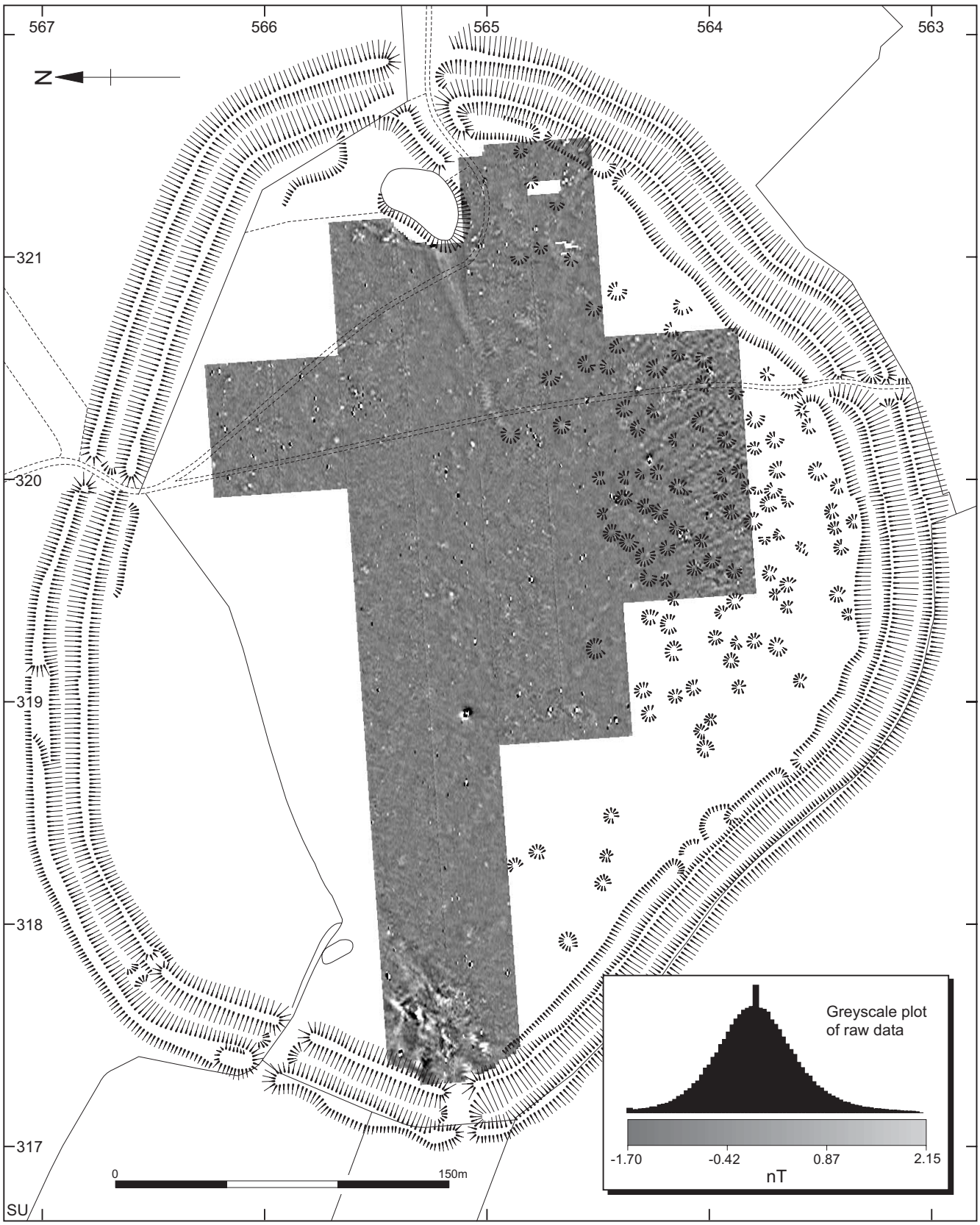

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Fig 2.50 (previous page) Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Fosbury Camp shown in relation to the plan of the hillfort earthworks.

Haydown Hill is partially enclosed by elements of this system. A major east–west linear ditch, cutting the field system around the hillfort, passes by less than 1km from the southern rampart of Fosbury.

The small sub-square enclosure on the western end of Haydown Hill is, in terms of its general morphology and the area enclosed, very similar to settlements of Middle to Late Bronze Age date known elsewhere in Wessex (Bradley *et al* 1994; Barrett *et al* 1991). The enclosure shares the alignment of adjacent lynchets and it is tempting to see this as a settlement contemporary with the field system in the Fosbury area. If this should prove to be so then the linear ditches that cut the field system should fall within the same late Bronze Age date range proposed by Bradley *et al* (ibid) for the extensive linear ditch networks studied east of the River Avon on Salisbury Plain, only 5km from Fosbury.

Magnetometer survey (Fig 2.50)

The large-scale Ordnance Survey mapping indicates numerous recessed platforms cut out of the sloping ground in the southern half of the hillfort interior (*see* Fig 2.50). These topographical features have often been taken to indicate the presence of former hut-sites constructed on the level ground formed by the platforms. Similar features are present at hillfort sites in neighbouring Hampshire (including Beacon Hill and Old Winchester Hill) where experience has shown that they generally produce no associated magnetic signature. It is therefore not surprising that these features – even if they do indeed represent hut features – have not been detected by magnetometry at Fosbury. The magnetic signal produced by the striped soil patterns that are a feature of the underlying subsoils in this area is far more predominant in this zone of the hillfort than any response to these assumed archaeological features. More work will be required to evaluate the archaeological significance of the platforms.

Elsewhere in the sample of the hillfort covered by the magnetometer, the magnetic response is very subdued and largely lacking in significant anomalies. A few localised anomalies, sparsely distributed throughout the interior, may represent isolated pits. Other anomalies are too weakly defined to be confident of their interpretation. The response to archaeological features inside Fosbury may be weakened by the unploughed terrain of the interior as this has been shown elsewhere to have a adverse effect on the resolution of archaeological features in magnetometer surveys of hillforts (*see* for example Beacon Hill and Danebury, this volume). The absence of large numbers of pits would, however, be unexpected in a hillfort with plentiful evidence of hut sites.

A weakly defined, broad, positive linear magnetic anomaly extending westwards from the pond in the eastern extremity of the hillfort may represent a hollow-way leading into the interior from the eastern entrance to the hillfort. Alternatively it may represent a spring fed water course or drainage channel associated with the pond to the east. A weakly defined positive linear magnetic anomaly – which is likely to be a boundary ditch of unknown date – runs north and south of the possible hollow-way. The alignment of this feature suggests that it may be associated with an earlier underlying field-system surviving as earthworks to the south on the southern slopes of Haydown Hill (*see above*).

An area of strong magnetic disturbance adjacent to the ramparts on the far western side of the hillfort may represent some form of buried archaeological structure. Some rectilinearlity in the arrangement of the anomalies is suggestive of a possible building but without more investigation and extension of the survey coverage this interpretation can only be provisional.

Discussion

The date of the construction of Fosbury remains unresolved although the relatively large area enclosed and the relative simplicity of the defences and entrance features would suggest an earlier rather than later 1st millennium BC date.

It is intriguing to note that the earthworks within the hillfort, long thought to represent settlement remains of a density usually associated with developed hillforts in Wessex, did not produce significant magnetic anomalies indicative of human occupation. This negative evidence should not necessarily exclude the possibility of pits being present in significant numbers, however, because the survival of pits as surface indications can lead to them being less clearly resolved in a magnetometer survey compared to completely infilled pits. The magnetic evidence for internal occupation activity is suprisingly low suggesting that the survey is either giving a false impression of the true density of archaeological activity within the fort, or that occupation was of a low intensity, sporadic or short-lived.

Liddington Castle: Liddington; NGR SU 209 797

Summary
Date of survey:
2–6 September 1996.
Landuse at time of survey:
Pasture.
Geology:
Primarily upper chalk/partially middle chalk, found to be overlain by clay with embedded flints in excavations carried out in 1976.
Soil Association:
341 – Icknield – shallow, mostly humose, well drained calcareous soils over chalk on steep slopes and hill tops.
Approximate area enclosed:
3 hectares (7.4 acres)
Planform:
Polygonal (roughly five sided)
Form of ramparts:
Univallate defences consisting of a bank, ditch and counterscarp constructed in four main phases starting with a timber and turf rampart in the latest Bronze Age to earliest Iron Age (perhaps 7–6th century BC) culminating in a final heightening of the rampart during the later Iron Age, Roman or post-Roman period.
Entrance features:
A simple causewayed entrance is present on the east and most accessible side of the fort. A second blocked entrance is evident on the west.
Previous finds:
Finds uncovered during flint quarrying in the hillfort between 1896 and 1900 were collected by Passmore and deposited in the Ashmolean Museum. The finds included late Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery. Additional stray finds from the hillfort documented in the Wiltshire SMR include: Neolithic stone implements including the pointed butt of a dolerite axe, and two Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowheads.
Previous recorded excavation:
Quarrying of the north-east area of the hillfort interior for flint took place from 1896 to 1900 (Passmore 1914). Limited excavation by the University of Birmingham (School of History) in 1976 was primarily concerned with testing for occupation or re-fortification of the site in the post-Roman period linked to research into the location of the battle of Mount Badon (Hirst and Rahtz 1996).
Internal features uncovered during this excavation included: Trench A: a shallow post-hole 40–50cm in diameter, traces of an occupation feature with a slightly dished floor, and a possible ditch or palisade trench approximately a metre wide about 13m inside the inner rampart. Trench B: a deep shaft of uncertain date, 1.5m in diameter with an upper weathering cone possibly a well or flint mine excavated to a depth of 2.3m but continuing down; a shallow pit 0.4m deep cut into natural chalk and about 1.1m in diameter with pot sherds of the 5th century BC in the upper fill. The fill of the ditch terminals bounding the eastern entrance contained finds of Roman date.

Analytical earthwork survey of the site was carried out by the archaeological survey team of English Heritage in 2000 (Bowden 2000).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
WI 127.
County SMR No.:
SU27NW209.
Project Site Code:
WHSP Site 5.

Morphology and setting

Liddington Castle (Fig 2.51) is a univallate hillfort enclosing approximately 3ha (7.4 acres), situated on the northern escarpment of the Marlborough Downs at 275m OD, overlooking the upper Thames Valley to the north and the valley of the River Og to the west. The latter is also a long established north–south route giving access to the upper Thames Valley from the chalk massif of central Wessex. Liddington Castle is one of a number of hillforts on this north-facing escarpment and is intervisible with Barbury Castle, 7km south-west, and Uffington Castle, 11km north-east.

The hillfort has one entrance on the east side. This is of simple form, being an interruption in the ditch and bank with no outworks or other substantial features. The rampart terminals at either side of the eastern entrance may have originally been faced with sarsen stones. On the western side of the circuit the earthworks display a distinct change of character at one point and it is possible to discern the position of a blocked entrance. This phenomenon is discussed in greater detail below (pp 138–9). Other sites with blocked entrances are known from within the project area and include Beacon Hill, Hampshire (Eagles 1991); Danebury (Cunliffe 1984); Uffington Castle (Miles *et al* 2003) and possibly Segsbury and Castle Ditches. The defences of Liddington also display a feature seen on a number of other Wessex hillforts; evidence of the construction methods

Fig 2.51
Aerial view of Liddington Castle from the west, showing several large deep depressions in the interior, the blocked entrance on the west (in foreground of photograph) and quarrying disturbance (NMRC, NMR 18668/09, SU 2079/49, 2000).

employed by the builders. It is clearly noticeable that the rampart is constructed in short, straight lengths with markedly angular and abrupt changes in alignment. This feature is widespread and can be seen at many sites in Wessex and beyond; notably Figsbury Rings, Yarnbury, Fosbury (*see below*) and Chiselbury – all in Wiltshire; Segsbury, Oxfordshire, Ladle Hill in Hampshire (an unfinished hillfort) and Perborough Castle in Berkshire. The south-western section of the inner rampart and the counterscarp bank have been badly damaged by quarrying.

The interior of the hillfort contains several earthwork features. Some large depressions, slighter scarps and indistinct traces of probable internal quarry scoops were recorded by earthwork survey undertaken in the summer of 2000 (Bowden 2000), but because fine surface detail was obscured by high vegetation at the time, other features may still await discovery. Some of the earthwork features correlate with anomalies mapped by the magnetometer survey (*see below*). Erosion has been a major problem in the past at the site and it has also suffered considerable earlier damage from quarrying.

In the summer of 1976 the site was par-

tially excavated to explore possible links with the battle of Mount Badon (Hirst and Rahtz 1996). The excavation found no evidence for the battle although a considerable amount of archaeological data was recovered. In particular the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age was well represented, suggesting a date for the inception of the hillfort as early as the 7th century BC.

The defences are an apparently simple construction of an inner rampart, ditch and counterscarp. Hirst and Rahtz (1996, 29–30, 52) identify four main phases of rampart construction. The first rampart was timber revetted at the rear and was succeeded by two phases of dump rampart beginning with a small dump rampart with a rear facing of chalk blocks and then a more massive dump rampart with a front revetment of chalk blocks. These could all date to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (7th–6th centuries BC) on the evidence of pottery, although phases 2 and 3 might be later. Phase 4 is a slight heightening of the rampart for which dating evidence was sparse and the date and context of this event is therefore uncertain. All that can be said is that it dates to later in the Iron Age or to some subsequent period. Claims for post-Roman reoccupation cannot be substantiated on the available evidence although sunken feature structures of Anglo-Saxon date and a large Roman villa are known nearby (Fowler and Walters 1981). Immediately beyond the southern rampart is a small bowl barrow of probable earlier Bronze Age date.

Liddington Castle is situated at a junction in the local linear ditch system. South of the monument a substantial linear ditch with lesser ditched components (known as the *Bican Dic*) can be traced on the ground and as cropmarks for a distance of at least 6km along the edge of the west-facing scarp overlooking the Og Valley. This feature is also associated with an extensive block of prehistoric fields and numerous finds of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British material (Wiltshire SMR). To the west another linear ditch still survives as a slight earthwork and can be seen ascending a steep west-facing scarp before apparently terminating close to the blocked western entrance. The exact relationship is obscured by later quarry activity.

Half a kilometer north of the hillfort and at the foot of the steep escarpment, recent air photographs (Fig 2.52) have revealed the plan of another large enclosure of approximately 2.5ha (6 acres). This is bivallate, but the cropmarks suggest that the ditches are very narrow and they may in fact represent trenches for a double palisade. In form it strongly resembles Boscombe Down West (Richardson 1951) and the enclosure at Suddern Farm in its later phases (Cunliffe and Poole 2000c), both dated to the Late Middle–Late Iron Age. Another morphologically similar site is known from geophysical survey at Coombe Down, Wiltshire (McOmish *et al* 2002). There have been no recorded finds from the Liddington enclosure but its proximity to the hillfort and the

Fig 2.52
Aerial photograph of the enclosed settlement of "Boscombe Down" form on the lower shelf of the escarpment below Liddington Castle (NMRC, NMR 15342/14, SU 2080/12, 1995).

Fig 2.53
The ploughed-out remains of a large probable hillfort-type enclosure occupying the lower tier of the northern escarpment of the Marlborough Downs above the valley of the river Og at Chiseldon near Swindon, Wiltshire. The site is overlooked by Liddington Castle 2km to the east (NMRC, SU 1980/1/285, 1969).

character of the circuit raises intriguing questions about the character and succession of later prehistoric settlement in this region. On the edge of the north-facing lower chalk escarpment, 3km west, near Chiseldon, another large univallate enclosure is known from air photography (Fig 2.53). Enclosing at least 8ha (20 acres), this enclosure is undated but one entrance of slightly offset form is visible which may indicate a Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age date.

Erosion has been a major problem in the past at Liddington Castle and a programme of repair and consolidation of the earthworks was carried out during 2000–2001 as part of the Countryside Agency's Ridgeway Heritage Project.

Magnetometer survey (Figs 2.54–2.56)

Magnetometer survey was conducted over the whole interior of the fort during the first season of the Wessex Hillforts Survey in 1996. The results revealed an extensive spread of occupation activity including pits, and short lengths of curving ditches or gullies showing a particular concentration in the northern and western areas of the fort. At the centre of this zone, is a large ring-shaped magnetic anomaly possibly indicating the former position of a round timber building of exceptional size. At 18m in diameter this is much larger than similar features found at other hillforts in the area such as Segsbury Camp, Oxfordshire and Oldbury Castle, Wilts, which generally range from 12–15m in diameter. The circular feature at Liddington might represent a high status building of a similar size to large round houses of Early Iron Age date previously excavated at sites such as Pimperne Down, (Dorset), Cow Down, Longbridge Deverill (Wiltshire) and most recently at Flint Farm (Hampshire); (Cunliffe 1991, 244; Payne 2004) or possibly a building with a communal or specialised function such as a shrine. Obviously the feature cannot be dated at present, but it is unlikely to be a barrow because the ditch is too narrow

and it seems to be closely associated with the surrounding distribution of pits. The presence of a shrine or temple within Liddington Castle belonging to the Roman period, as recently cautiously suggested by Bowden (2000), is also a possibility based on the presence of small amounts of Roman pottery and other finds indicating some activity within and around the hillfort during this period.

The most notable features recorded by the earthwork survey were four large circular depressions (features **n**, **p**, **q** and **r**; *see* Bowden 2000 and Fig 2.56 this volume). Feature **n** – the largest of the four depressions in the southern part of the fort, 11m in diameter and 1.55m deep – coincides clearly with a positive magnetic anomaly of likely archaeological origin in the magnetometer data. Feature **r** also coincides with a possible response to a pit in the magnetometer survey but also a response to ferrous material probably of relatively recent origin. Feature **q** lies within an area of anomalous activity containing numerous pit-type responses but also a possible response to larger scale ground disturbance from quarrying or geological variation. The remaining depression at **p** does not have a corresponding magnetic anomaly. Features **p** and **r** are

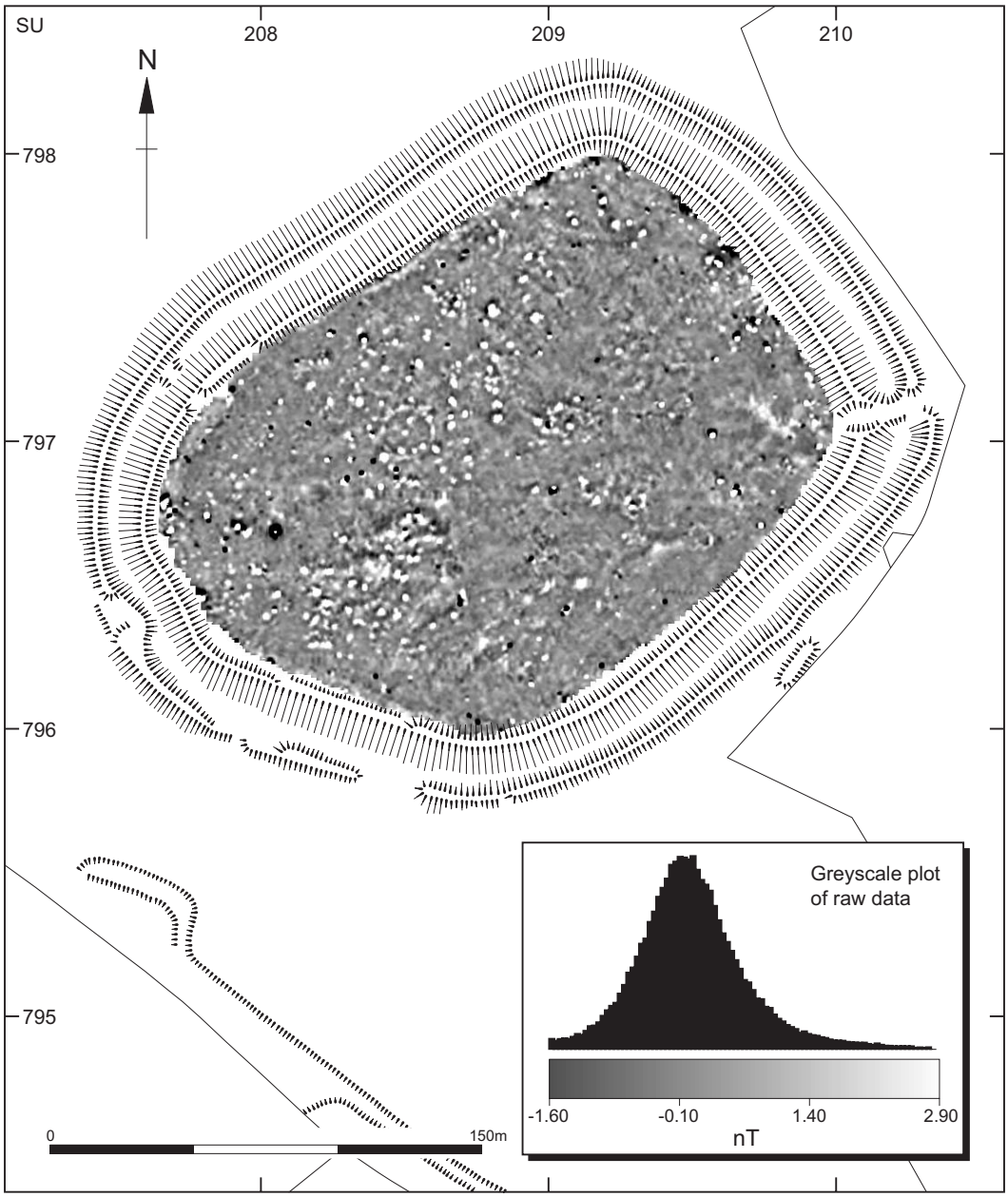

Fig 2.54
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Liddington Castle in relation to the plan of the hillfort earthworks.

interpreted by Bowden (2000) as holes of relatively modern origin possibly linked to First World War military activity by troops stationed at nearby Chiseldon Camp. Slighter hollows just to the north-east of the centre of the fort, none more than 0.3m deep, relate to the 1896 quarrying activity noted by Passmore (1914). These and other small hollows mapped near the south and south-east edges of the enclosed area (interpreted as possible hut sites) again have no obvious magnetic anomalies associated with them. Few, if any, of the pits that produced relatively strong positive magnetic anomalies at Liddington appear to be represented by surface depressions captured by the earthwork survey, but it should be noted that the earthwork survey was carried out in the summer when much of the surface detail within the fort was obscured by high vegetation. Because of this, other surface indications of archaeological features may still await discovery and mapping.

A suggestion of an internal quarry scoop in the form of a scarp following the inside of the rampart along the north side of the fort, and a similar feature on the south-west side of the enclosure, links in with several linear positive magnetic anomalies running parallel to the inner edge of the rampart set back a little into the fort interior. Another, wider quarry scoop, not apparent in the earthwork survey but indicated by a broad weak linear positive magnetic anomaly, seems to be present on the north-west side of the enclosure, north of the blocked western entrance. Anomalies of similar character have also been noted at

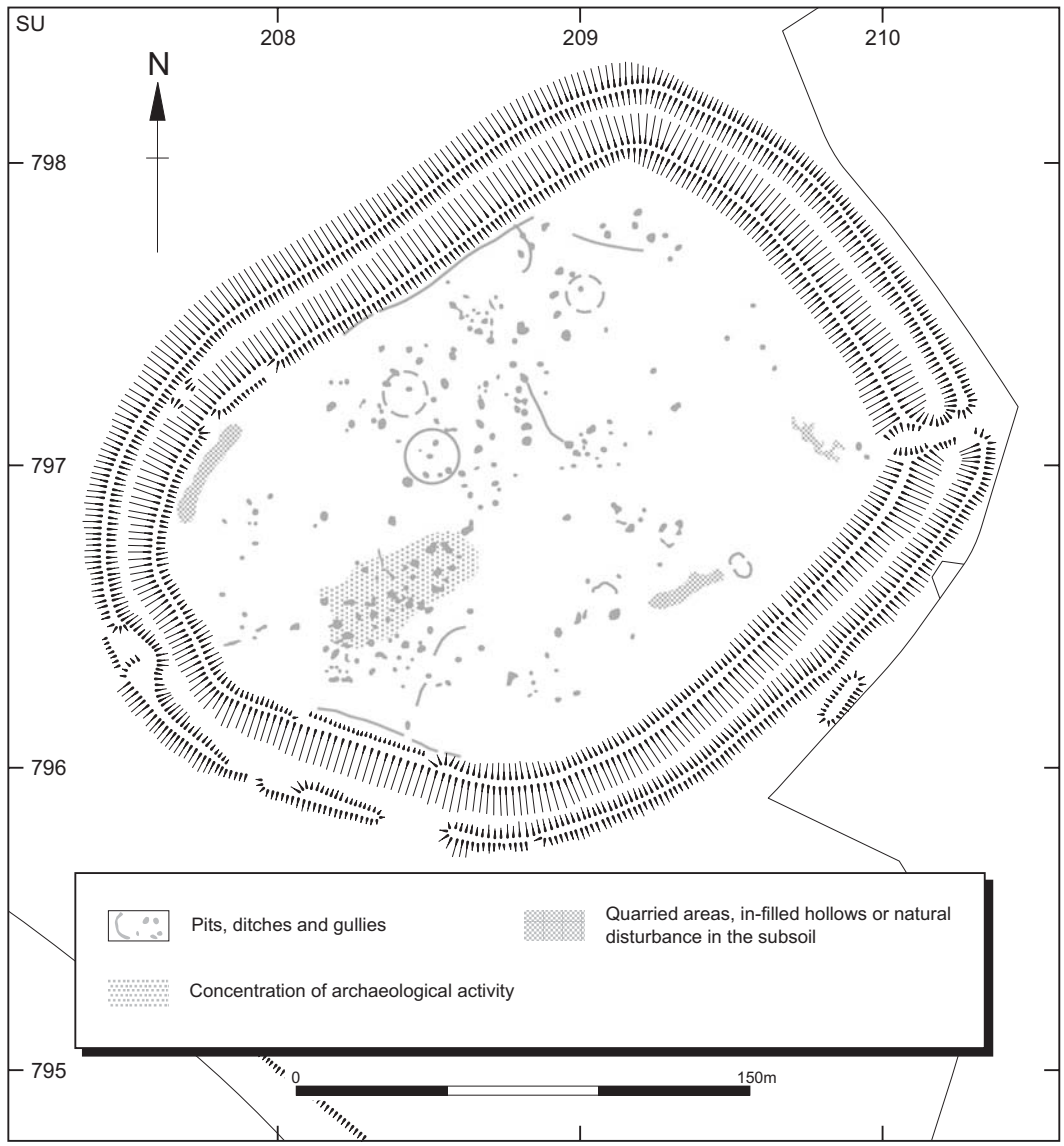

Fig 2.55
Interpretation of the magnetometer data from Liddington Castle.

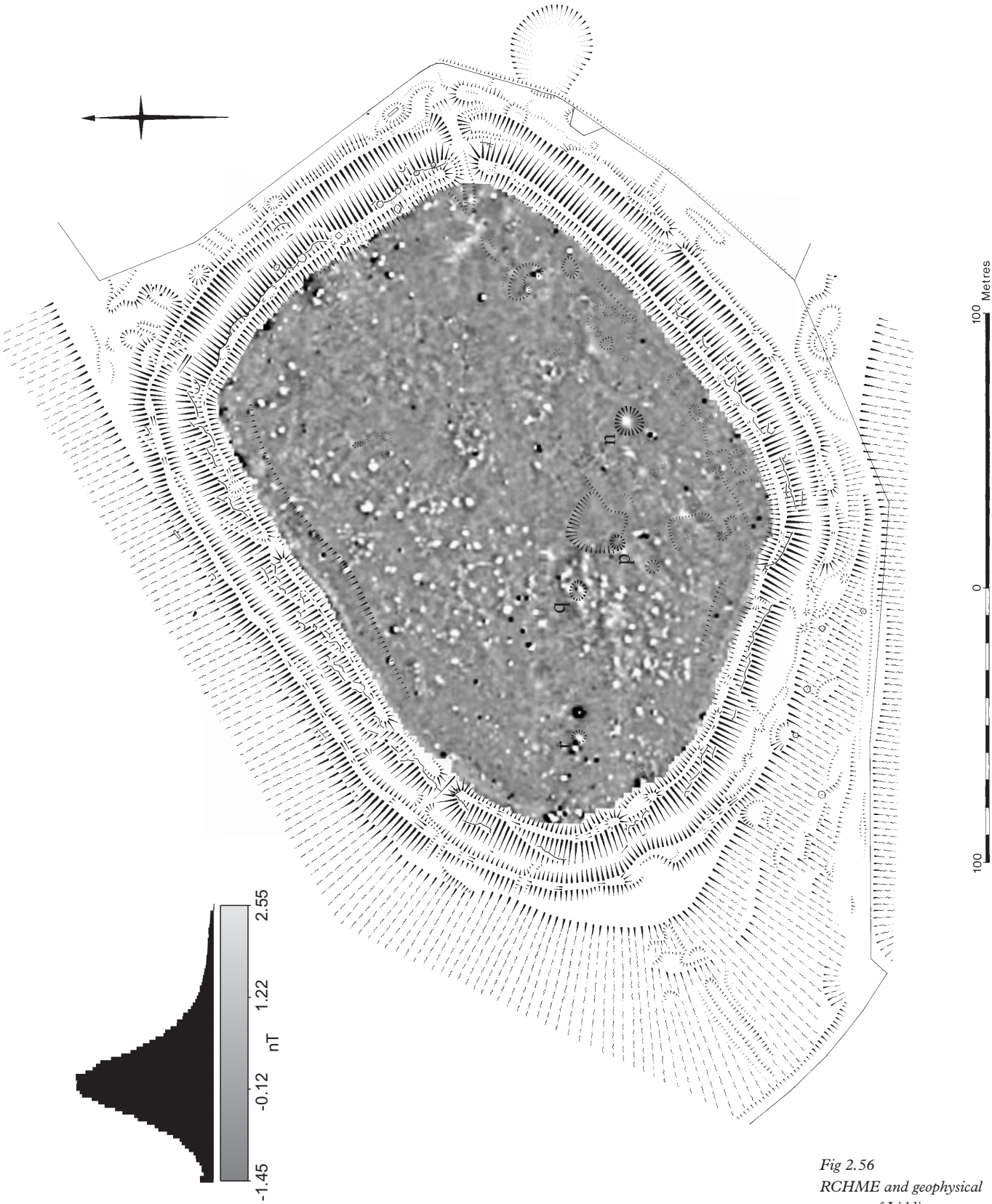

Fig 2.56
RCHME and geophysical surveys of Liddington Castle combined.

Alfred's Castle, Barbury Castle, Castle Ditches, Segsbury, Uffington Castle and Bury Hill following the inward facing side of the ramparts. During the 1976 excavations at Liddington Castle it was noted that the depth of topsoil over chalk increased towards the rampart tail (the area adjacent to the northern rampart of Segsbury was similar). A possible ditch or palisade trench (approximately a metre wide and about 13m inside the inner rampart) was also recorded at this time (in excavation Trench A; Hirst and Rahtz 1996). Both of these features may have some bearing on the interpretation of the magnetic anomalies subsequently mapped around the internal perimeter of the fort.

Although a possible linear ditch can be seen approaching Liddington Castle from the south-west, heading towards the blocked western entrance, there is no trace in the magnetometer data of any continuation of this feature into the hillfort interior. This is supported by the evidence of the earthwork survey which found no sign that it continued as far as the hillfort defences (Bowden 2000). It may instead turn to the south-east skirting the flank of the hill. The same lack of magnetic evidence for the presence of earlier linear ditches running through or under the hillfort applies to two slight linear hollows (interpreted as pre-hillfort land divisions) recorded by the earthwork survey emerging from under the hillfort counterscarp on the north-east and south-east sides of the enclosure. Such negative evidence is not always reliable because some former land divisions, particularly when represented only by banks, might not neccessarily produce a sufficiently distinctive magnetic signature to be detectable.

Conclusions

The pattern of activity mapped by geophysical survey at Liddington Castle suggests that it probably never underwent prolonged or intensive occupation. This seems to be in agreement with the limited material evidence obtained to date from earthwork survey, very partial excavation in the interior and the preliminary phasing of the rampart sequence by Hirst and Rahtz (1996). A similar picture is apparent at Uffington Castle, which Liddington resembles in several aspects. In contrast the hillforts of Segsbury (east of Uffington) and Barbury Castle (west of Liddington) exhibit signs of having been more heavily occupied over longer periods of time.

The material associated with the construction of the primary ramparts (phases 1–3) at Liddington belongs to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age transition. It suggests that Liddington was among the earliest hillforts in Wiltshire initially defined by a ditch and timber revetted rampart. While the timber revetted phase 1 rampart is clearly of an early date, the dump ramparts of phases 2–4 might date to the 5th–4th centuries BC (Hirst and Rahtz 1996). Liddington has produced no Iron Age pottery finds indicative of occupation after the late Early Iron Age, and by the middle of the Iron Age the site may well have been abandoned. The pottery from the site dates from at least two phases: pottery of the 7th- to 5th-centuries BC (group 1 – All Cannings Cross tradition, haematite coated, of the earliest Iron Age) and burnished and grass-marked pottery similar to ceramic phases 4–5 at Danebury dating to around the earlier 5th century BC. With the exception of Roman material, no pottery found to date at Liddington is any later than the equivalent to ceramic phases 4–5 at Danebury (that is late Early Iron Age, or the earlier 5th century BC).

Martinsell Hill Camp: Pewsey; NGR SU 177 640

Summary

Date of survey:
17–24 September 1996.
Landuse at time of survey:
Recently arable placed in set-a-side.
Geology:
Clay-with-flints deposited over upper chalk.
Soil Association:
581d – Carstens – well drained fine silty over clayey, clayey and fine silty soils, often very flinty.
Approximate area enclosed:
10 hectares (25 acres).
Planform:
Approximately rectangular.
Form of ramparts:
The defences are relatively minor in scale in comparison with many hillforts and consist of a single bank with an outer ditch, only partially preserved around some of the defensive circuit. The defences follow the curving edge of the steep escarpment on the east and south where they consist of a narrow bank, with the outer ditch only present along the north-east section. On the most easily accessible western side of the fort the defences are more substantial and better

preserved, consisting of a rampart and ditch cutting straight across the width of the promontory occupied by the fort. To the north the defences appear to have reused a straight section of an earlier east–west linear ditch. Only the rampart now survives along this section.

Entrance features:

There are two probable original entrances centrally placed on the north-east and west sides. Numerous other more modern breaches have been made through the ramparts on the western and northern sides of the enclosure.

Previous finds:

15 pottery sherds including fragments of Iron Age haematite-coated bowls, stamped, incised and finger decorated wares. 14 sherds of 1st-2nd century AD pottery (including Samian and Savernake wares) have been found on the site (Annable 1974).

Previous recorded excavation : None known to have been carried out within the hillfort.

Scheduled Ancient Monument:

WI 238

County SMR No.:

SU16SE202

Project site code:

WHSP Site 7

Morphology and setting

Located on a promontory of the south-facing scarp of the Marlborough Downs, at 289m OD, the univallate hillfort of Martinsell Hill (Fig 2.57) commands extensive views of Salisbury Plain and the eastern and central zones of the Vale of Pewsey. Enclosing 10ha (25 acres), the hillfort defences follow the edge of the steep escarpment on the east and south. To the north the defences appear to re-use a section of a linear ditch that cuts off the promontory from the rest of the chalk massif and links with a large settlement complex on Huish Hill, 2km to the west. The western rampart, the most substantial component of the circuit, cuts across the plateau of the promontory. There are at least two original entrances, centrally placed on the north-east and west sides. They are both of very plain form comprising of simple gaps in the bank and ditch. The north-east entrance has been eroded by a later hollow-way which runs for about 70m to the north-east. Here the defensive ditch has an outer bank 1.0m high running for some 60m on either side of the entrance.

The site has never been excavated although a great deal of ceramic material

Fig 2.57
Aerial photograph of the large hilltop enclosure of Martinsell Hill Camp on the southern escarpment of the Marlborough Downs overlooking the Vale of Pewsey (NMRC, NMR15640/23, SU 1763/19, 1997).

Fig 2.58 (opposite) Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Martinsell Hill Camp in relation to the plan of the hillfort earthworks.

has been recovered from many locations on the promontory of Martinsell Hill. From within the hillfort a small amount of pottery has been recovered, including furrowed bowls and early Roman material (Annable 1974). West of the hillfort, and spread over much of the plateau, significant concentrations of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery, Late Iron Age pottery and early Roman material were recovered by Meyrick (Swanton G 1987). Approximately 1km to the south-west of the hillfort are two cross-ridge dykes, a plough levelled enclosure (NMR 4785/22) and a possible small promontory fort, Giant's Grave. The interior of the latter has a number of earthwork platforms representing the positions of structures. Both Giant's Grave and the ploughed-out enclosure immediately to the east have produced casual finds of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery (Swanton G 1987). 300m beyond the north-western corner of Martinsell Hill hillfort is Withy Copse. A 'midden' excavated here by Mrs Maud Cunnington (Cunnington 1909) produced much Late Iron Age and early Roman material. Reinterpreted as a wholly early Roman feature (Swan 1975), further research has now shown that the Withy Copse feature is of Late Iron Age date and may be associated with pottery production. Evidence of possible kilns has also been recorded on the plateau west of the hillfort (Swanton G 1987). South of the hillfort, at Broomsgrove Farm, 1st- and 2nd-century AD pottery kilns have been identified (Swan 1984).

There are very few traces of prehistoric field systems on the chalk plateau in close proximity to Martinsell Hill. The drift geology of the immediate area is largely clay with flints and therefore not an area that is usually cultivated to any great extent in prehistory. The evidence for pottery production (part of the 'Savernake Ware' tradition) in the Late Iron Age and earlier Roman period suggests that much of the immediate environs of the hillfort may have been comprised of managed woodland to provide fuel for the kilns.

Below Martinsell Hill, at the eastern end of the Vale of Pewsey, our knowledge of the pre-medieval archaeological pattern is still very scant. The greensand derived soils of this area are notoriously unproductive in terms of cropmark formation and most records for the area are derived from stray finds. Ten kilometers west, at the foot of the escarpment is the important Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age transition site of All Cannings Cross (Cunnington 1923). Five kilometers south another site with All Cannings Cross type ceramics has been partially investigated beneath the early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Black Patch, Pewsey, and the 9th–8th century BC 'midden' site at East Chisenbury is 11km south-west (Brown *et al* 1994). The Vale of Pewsey and its environs is clearly an area of great importance during the early 1st millennium BC and the hillfort and associated sites on Martinsell Hill are of great regional significance.

Magnetometer survey (Figs 2.58 and 2.59)

The hill-top enclosure contains few magnetic anomalies consistent with internal settlement activity, but caution should be exercised with this interpretation because features such as small post-holes could still be present inside the fort but not detectable. Suitable recognition should be given at this juncture to Cunliffe's point (p 156) that where comparable early hill-top enclosures have been excavated, they have contained small four-posters and 'lightly built' huts. It is also possible that smaller archaeological features within the enclosed area have been gradually lost to agriculture over the course of many years. Occasional scattered positive anomalies of irregular appearance and variable magnitude do occur within the fort (particularly within the south-western zone), but their form and size suggests that they are probably of geological origin or a product of ground disturbance linked to chalk, clay or flint quarrying of unknown date. The soils on the site are very flint rich and therefore the site would be attractive for flint digging in both the prehistoric and more recent past. Weak linear and curvi-linear anomalies indicative of striped soil patterns of peri-glacial origin are also visible throughout much of the hillfort in the magnetometer data. Similar patterns are seen at Bury Hill (Hants), and Walbury (Berks). A small proportion of the magnetic anomalies at Martinsell (perhaps **A**–**E** on Fig 2.59) may relate to archaeological features, such as scoops or irregularly dug pits, but even so these are very sparsely distributed within the enclosed area.

The results suggest that the site functioned differently to many of the other hillforts in the region or only underwent a short episode of occupation perhaps as a temporary camp only sporadically occupied during seasonal communal gatherings. The results from Martinsell are consistent with those

Fig 2.59 (over) Interpretation of the magnetometer data from Martinsell Hill Camp.


Greyscale plot
of raw data
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0.32
1.00
nT
0
150m


E
C
B
A
D
localised positive magnetic anomalies
quarried areas, in-filled hollows or natural disturbance in the subsoil
A-E
anomalies referred to in the text
former fenceline
linear trends in the magnetic data resulting from non-archaeological causes
0
150m

from other hillfort sites in the hill-top enclosure group such as Walbury, Balksbury and Harting Beacon, which all appear to be associated with only minor archaeological activity, suggesting a low level of internal occupation.

Oldbury: Calne; NGR SU 049 693

Summary
Date of survey:
9–17 September 1996.
Landuse at time of survey:
Permanent pasture.
Geology:
Cretaceous Upper Chalk.
Soil Association:
341 – Icknield – shallow, mostly humose, well drained calcareous soils over chalk on steep slopes and hill tops.
Approximate area enclosed:
9 hectares (22 acres).
Planform:
Irregular – bow-shaped eastern side (with central entrance) but less regular on the north, south and east where the defences follow the shape of the contours.
Form of rampats:
The defences are bivallate except on the north-west where the perimeter follows the edge of a steep escarpment and the defence consists of a nominal bank, scarp and berm. The outer ramparts show signs of being unfinished and on the south the ramparts have been damaged by flint digging. A bank and ditch running north-west – south-east divides the western part of the interior from the remainder of the fort. This cross-bank has been interpreted as an earlier phase in the construction of the hillfort defences (*see below*).
Entrance features:
An original in-turned entrance flanked by the outer rampart is present in the middle of the more regular eastern side of the hillfort. This faces the easiest gradients leading up to the site across the relatively level plateau of Cherhill Hill. There are indications of a second in-turned entrance on the far western side of the fort, partially removed by the construction of the Cherhill Monument.
Previous finds:
Early Iron Age haematite coated ware (600–500 BC) was recovered from pits excavated in the interior by Cunnington in 1875. The base of one late Iron Age vessel, Roman coins and pottery, a 5th century Saxon brooch and part of a saddle quern (undated) have also been recovered from the site.
Previous recorded excavation:
Late 19th-century excavation by Cunnington (Cunnington 1871).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
WI 106.
County SMR No.:
SU06NW200.
Project Site Code:
WHSP Site 6.

Morphology and setting

Oldbury hillfort (Fig 2.60) is located at the western end of Cherhill Down, close to the western edge of the chalk massif of the Marlborough Downs, and has extensive views in all directions. It is the largest later prehistoric monument in the Avebury region, with Windmill Hill, Avebury henge and Silbury Hill all being visible from the eastern defences. The defences enclose an area of approximately 9ha (22 acres) and are bivallate except on the north-west where a simple ledge following the contour at the head of a steep coombe defines the boundary. The enclosing earthworks vary considerably in character, being most massive on the east and south – 'humouring the hill in its numerous sinuousities' (Colt Hoare 1812). There are two probable original entrances still visible, with that on the eastern side being the largest, with substantial inturns and a relatively complex series of outworks.

The earthwork defences display evidence of several stages of modification indicating a complex sequence of development. An earlier western limit of the monument is marked by a massive single bank and ditch that runs along the line of the 250m contour. Subsequently the defences were extended westwards along the break of slope overlooking a steep coombe that divides Cherhill Down from Calstone Down. This surface evidence, coupled with the discovery of a section of another possible smaller enclosure circuit within the north-eastern quadrant of the hillfort during the course of the magnetometer survey (*see below*), clearly indicates that Oldbury is an extremely complex site with a lengthy history of activity. Within the eastern part of the monument, slight earthwork remains indicate the presence of pits and possible structures, many of which appear to correlate with anomalies recorded by the magnetometer survey. Much of the interior of the south-western quadrant of the hillfort has been heavily disturbed by chalk and flint quarries of 18th- and 19th-century date (Colt Hoare 1812). These workings extend beyond the hillfort

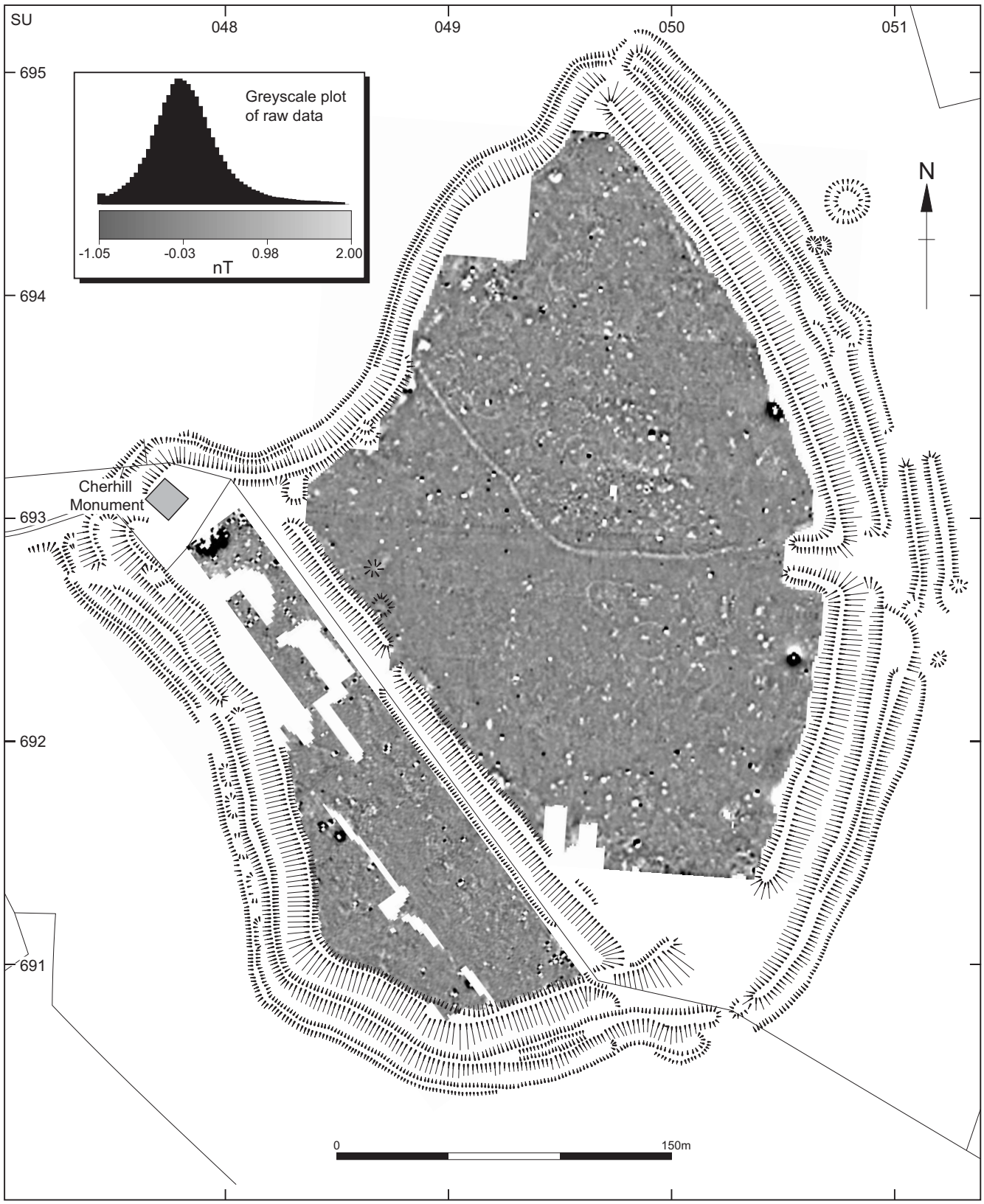
Fig 2.60
Aerial photograph of Oldbury on Cherhill Down, near Avebury, Wiltshire looking south. The various phases of the defences and the extent of quarrying disturbance around the periphery of the site are clearly visible in the photograph (NMRC, NMR 15834/07, SU 0469/40,1997).

to the south and south-east and have effectively destroyed or masked any earlier remains in close proximity to the hillfort.
As a result of evidence unearthed by the flint digging, Colt Hoare (1812) states that Oldbury 'appears to have been made use of as a place of residence as well as defence, for the labourers in digging for flints within its area, throw up numerous fragments of animal bones and rude pottery, the certain marks of habitation.'

Although no detailed scientific excavation has ever been undertaken on the hillfort, informal digging has produced numerous finds that indicate activity on the hilltop over a considerable period of time (Cunnington 1871; Grinsell 1957). The ceramics include a large amount of Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age forms and fabrics, some later Iron Age material, considerable amounts of Romano-British pottery and a penannular brooch of probable 5th–7th century AD date. The latter is of considerable interest as a very similar brooch was recently discovered 'near Calne', within 4km of Oldbury (Youngs 1995). The brooches are of British origin and of a type well-known in western Britain. The proximity of Oldbury to the western terminal of the East Wansdyke on Morgan's Hill, only 3km south-west, may be of some importance. Eagles (1994), has argued for a late 5th century AD date for the construction of the East Wansdyke. Given the presence of two 5th–7th-century brooches, one from within the hillfort, and one from nearby Calne (Youngs 1995) it is quite possible that Oldbury was re-occupied in the early post-Roman period. In this context it is tempting to see the smaller enclosure within the north-eastern quadrant as a post-Roman construction. The construction of other enclosures within hillforts at this period is known in the neighbouring county of Somerset at Cadbury Congresbury (Rahtz *et al* 1992). Cherhill village, immediately north of Oldbury, is also the site of a substantial Roman villa located beneath the medieval church (Johnson and Walters 1988).

Beyond the hillfort defences there are a significant number of monuments to the east along Cherhill Down and to the south on North Down. A substantial linear ditch approaches Oldbury from the east along Cherhill Down. This can be traced for a distance of 2.5km and although partially levelled by ploughing as it approaches Oldbury, enough survives to show that the feature terminated on the edge of the escarpment just outside the northern apex

Fig 2.61 (opposite)
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Oldbury in relation to the plan of the hillfort earthworks.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694
693
692
691
Greyscale plot of raw data
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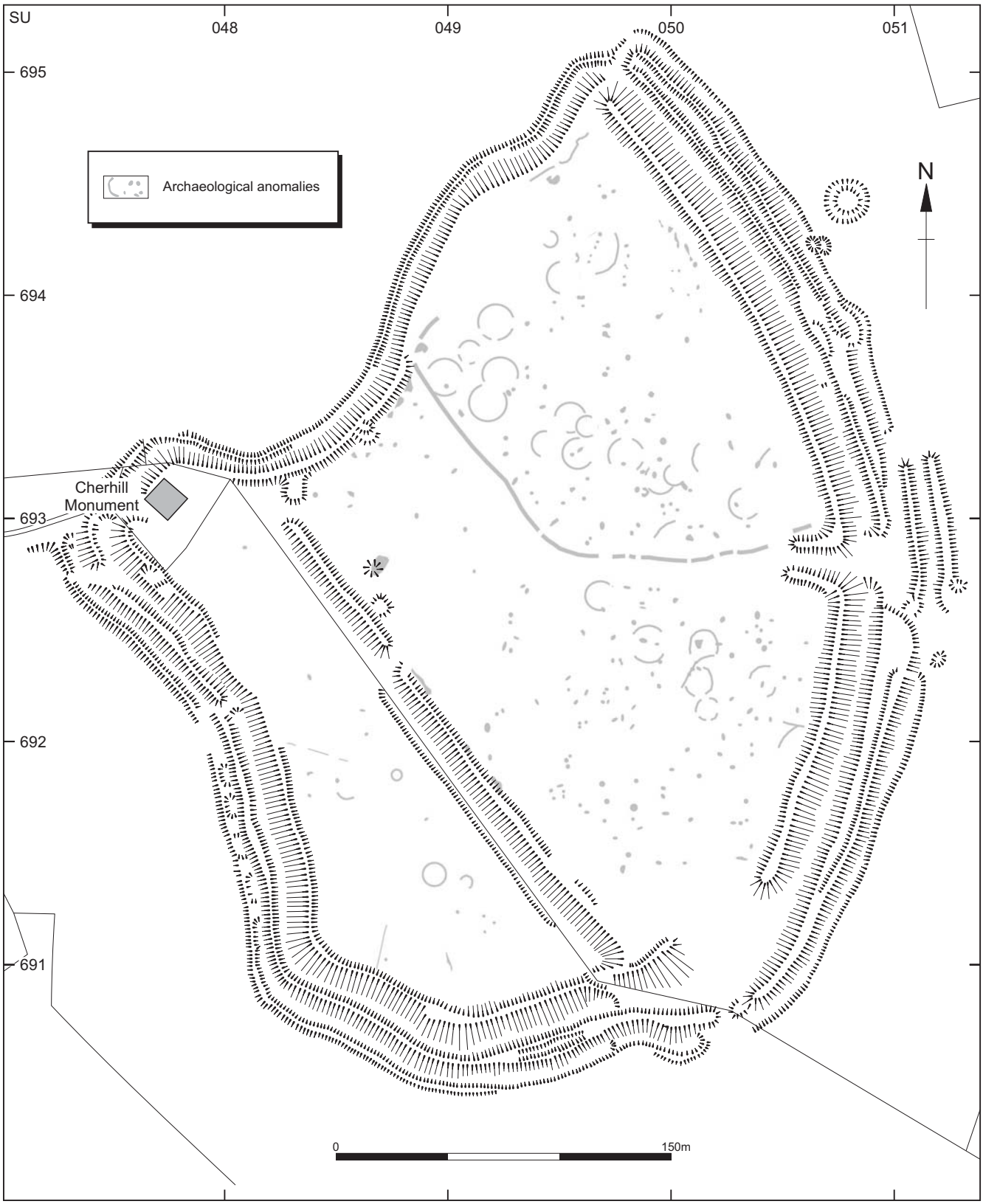
-0.03
0.98
2.00
nT
N
Cherhill Monument
0
150m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Archaeological anomalies
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of the hillfort. Just beyond the eastern entrance of the hillfort is an extant bowl barrow, presumably of earlier Bronze Age date. Between the barrow and the linear ditch, approximately 200m beyond the hillfort defences, there is a well-defined rectangular platform that has produced finds of Romano-British pottery and pennant sandstone roof tiles. The latter suggests the presence of a structure of some status and, given the exposed and elevated location, a later Roman period temple or shrine should not be ruled out. Temples or shrines of the Romano-British period set either within or in close proximity to hillforts are relatively common occurrences in western Britain. At Uley in Gloucestershire and Cadbury Congresbury in Somerset, temples of Romano-British date are located close to hillforts (Woodward and Leach 1993; Watts and Leach 1996).

No prehistoric field systems are known in close proximity to Oldbury. To the south, however, on North Down and beyond the line of the Roman Road from London to Bath (Margary 4), there are still slight traces of an extensive field system as well as significant concentrations of earlier Bronze Age barrow cemeteries. Beyond these, on Bishop's Cannings Down, settlements and fields of later Bronze Age date have been surveyed and partially excavated (Gingell 1992) and an Early Iron Age settlement associated with early All Cannings Cross-type ceramics sampled (Swanton pers comm).

North of Oldbury, on the lower chalk plateau, evidence of later prehistoric activity has been surprisingly elusive. This may in part be a reflection of the poor response to crop mark formation on this geology. However, recent excavations in the area of Yatesbury and Compton Bassett to investigate the early medieval origins of these villages have produced some evidence of prehistoric activity.

Magnetometer survey (Figs 2.61 and 2.62)

The fluxgate magnetometer survey carried out over the majority of the hillfort interior (excluding quarried areas) in 1996 revealed the presence of a previously unrecognised internal ditch dividing the northernmost third of the hillfort from the remainder. The ditch follows a curving course from just north of the in-turned entrance on the eastern side of the hillfort to a point on the north-western perimeter of the hillfort where there is a distinct change in the form of the inner rampart. This new discovery may indicate that the fort developed in several distinct phases and that it possibly retracted at a later date, or expanded to enclose a larger area, leaving part of the earlier defences redundant. Similar developments are known, for example, at Maiden Castle in Dorset, Torberry in West Sussex (Cunliffe 1976) and Conderton Camp in Worcestershire (Thomas forthcoming) associated with Middle Iron Age re-configuration of the defensive circuits. Another possible parallel is the hillfort on Cadbury Hill, Congresbury, Somerset where an internal rampart was constructed across the centre of the original area enclosed by the Iron Age defences associated with post-Roman reoccupation of the site (Rahtz *et al* 1992). If not an enclosure feature, the ditch might represent part of the course of a linear boundary ditch pre-dating the construction of the hillfort. This could be clarified by more magnetometer survey to determine if the ditch continues underneath the hillfort ramparts into the adjacent downland.

In the eastern and northern sectors of the fort, there is evidence of intensive occupation, including faint traces of up to 20 circular gullies, possibly the positions of successive phases of round timber buildings. Abundantly scattered amongst these structures, defined by localised positive magnetic anomalies, are in excess of 150 pits. The areas of occupation tend to cluster to either side of an east–west road corridor (defined by an absence of magnetic anomalies) running from the east entrance towards the Cherhill Monument (where there is the suggestion of a second in-turned entrance). Occupation activity appears to decrease in the southern and western areas, but due to the extreme weakness of the circular anomalies at Oldbury, traces of buildings could well be present elsewhere on the site which are not detectable above the threshold of instrument noise. Greater down-slope soil accumulation could also be obscuring other features in these areas. The geophysical evidence from Oldbury is not dissimilar to that obtained from Segsbury Camp (Letcombe Castle).

The new geophysical evidence from Oldbury has resulted in a major improvement to understanding of the site suggesting that it belongs in a category of hillforts typified by sites such as Danebury, Segsbury Camp and Yarnbury Castle. The site clearly has a complex history with evidence for several phases of modification of the enclosed circumference.

Fig 2.62
Interpretation of the magnetometer data from Oldbury.

Oliver's Castle or Camp: Bromham; NGR SU 001 647

Summary
Date of survey:
25–7 September 1996.
Landuse at time of survey:
Rough grassland/meadow.
Geology:
Cretaceous Lower Chalk.
Soil Association:
342b – Upton 2 – shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over argillaceous (clay enriched) chalk.
Approximate area enclosed:
1.6 hectares (3.9 acres).
Planform:
Approximately triangular.
Form of ramparts:
The defences consist of a modest bank and outer ditch where they cut across a natural spur on the eastern side of the fort. Around the remainder of the perimeter the defences follow and emphasise the natural contours of the steep sided promontory on which the fort is sited.
Entrance features:
A single entrance is present on the eastern side of the camp. It consists of a simple break sited centrally in the eastern rampart and on the most approachable side of the camp.
Previous finds:
The site has formerly produced finds of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman pottery.
Previous recorded excavation:
Partially excavated by M. Cunnington in 1907 (Cunnington, M E, 1908).
Scheduled Ancient Monument:
SAM WI 27.
County SMR No.:
SU06SW200.
Project site code:
WHSP Site 8.

Morphology and setting

Oliver's Castle (Fig 2.63) is a small univallate earthwork enclosing an area of approximately 1.6ha (3.9 acres). The fort occupies a triangular, west-facing promontory, 195m OD, at the extreme western edge of the Marlborough Downs chalk massif. The form of the natural promontory has dictated the shape of the enclosed area. Immediately south of this promontory a narrow coombe provides a natural route by which an ascent of the escarpment onto the plateau of Roundway Down can be made with ease. The clear earthwork remains of terraceways and a hollow-way demonstrate the intensity of past use of the route.

Oliver's Castle has a single entrance located on the eastern side of the monument; this is of plain form, comprising a simple

Fig 2.63
Aerial photograph of the small triangular escarpment-edge hillfort of Oliver's Camp, on Roundway Down near Devizes, Wiltshire. In the Interior two features are visible as surface relief (a circle and a rectangle). These produced intense anomalies in the magnetometer survey suggestive of ferrous material and are therefore likely to be of relatively modern origin (original photography held at Cambridge University Collection of Air Photographs, Unit for Landscape Modelling, AY 45, 1948).

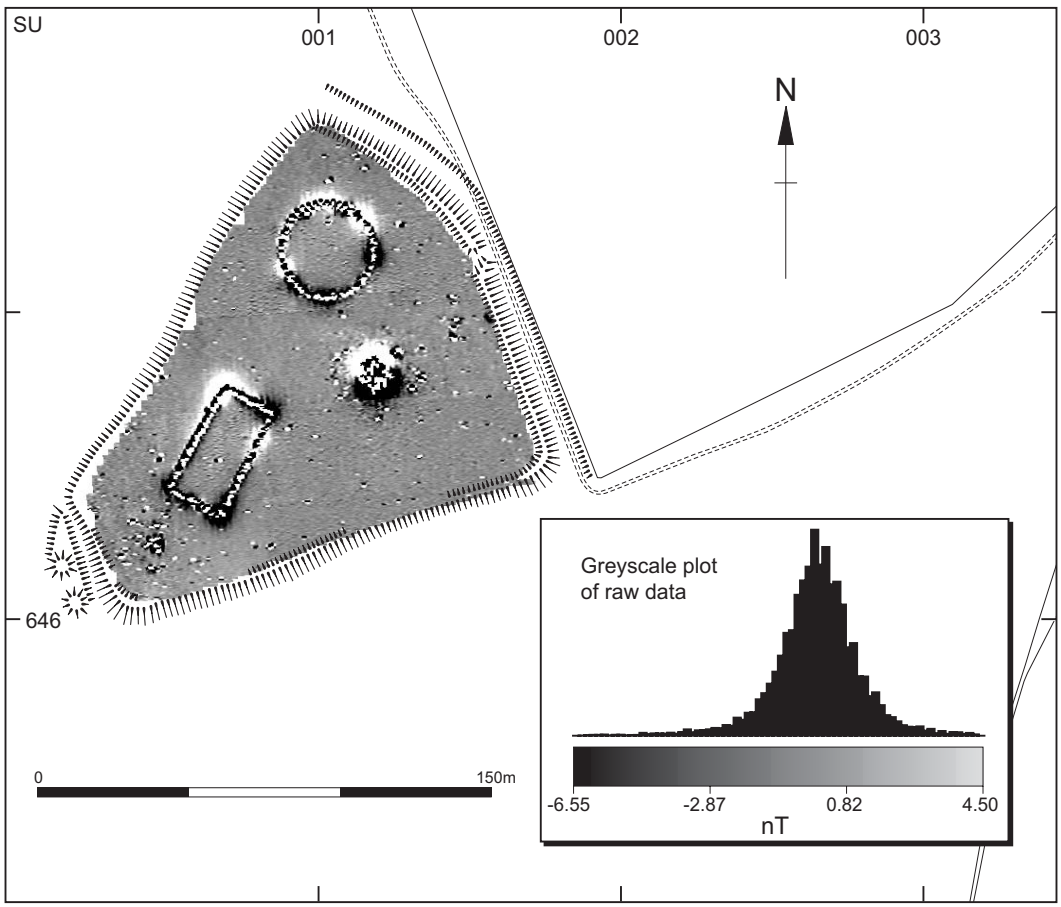

Fig 2.64
Greyscale plot of the magnetometer data from Oliver's Camp in relation to a plan of the hillfort earthwork.

break in the perimeter bank with a corresponding causeway across the ditch. A single rampart of relatively slight character with an external ditch defines the hillfort circuit. The greatest rampart height is seen on the east, facing the approach from Roundway Down and it rises slightly either side of the approach to the entrance. On the northern side there is a slight but well-defined counterscarp bank. At the western apex of the circuit, the hillfort ditch deviates from the line of the inner rampart to incorporate two bowl barrows of presumed earlier Bronze Age date. This deliberate inclusion of earlier features into the perimeter system is of considerable interest and is another example of a phenomenon seen in Wessex and areas beyond where earlier features were consciously incorporated into the hillfort landscape (Bowden and McOmish 1987; 1989).

Excavation of Oliver's Camp in 1907 by Maud Cunnington (Cunnington 1908) established a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date for the construction of the fort, although pre-hillfort activity is attested to by the barrows (*see above*) and Bronze Age hearths sealed by the rampart (ibid). The majority of the ceramics recovered belong to the early All Cannings Cross period and includes quantities of furrowed bowl, a form more usually associated with non-hillfort sites in Wessex. There was very little later Iron Age material although a quantity of late Roman pottery was recovered along with a substantial portion of an iron window grille. This fitting could suggest the presence of a substantial Roman building in close proximity to the hillfort, although the geophysics failed to locate any such structure within the monument. Close to the hillfort there are a number of other features that suggest the presence of a religious focus spanning the Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

Below the western apex of the hillfort, at approximately 160m OD, there is a narrow level platform following the contour. Although undoubtedly natural in origin this platform, like Oliver's Camp, also overlooks a spring known as Mother Anthony's well. This spring has, over many years, produced many casual finds of later Iron Age and Romano-British material, especially coins and metalwork (Dr P Robinson, *pers com*). Long suspected to be a temple or shrine,

recent air photographs (NMR15519/25) show a pair of oval enclosures, evidence of multiple ditches (with characteristics consistent with a late Iron Age date), stone structures and a metalled road with flanking side-ditches of presumed Roman date. It is possible that the iron window grille excavated by Cunnington inside Oliver's Camp originated from this complex.

East of the hillfort is the plateau of Roundway Down. Now heavily cultivated, air photography has revealed very faint and intermittent traces of a prehistoric field system across the plateau that approaches the eastern defences of the hillfort. No obvious settlement related features are visible in close proximity to the monument.

Magnetometer survey (Fig 2.64)

Magnetometer survey carried out over the interior of Oliver's Castle in 1996 failed to identify any internal occupation features clearly contemporary with the hillfort. Two unusually conspicuous anomalies in the form of a circle 30m in diameter and a rectangle with dimensions of 37m × 19m were recorded in the north and west parts of the fort interior. These are indicative of structures incorporating ferrous material such as reinforced concrete and are therefore presumably of relatively modern origin. A possible interpretation of these unexpected features is that they represent the remains of a former military installation (possibly a WWII search light post). The position of a dew-pond, visible as a depression in the center of the site, was also detected by the magnetometer as another area of intense magnetic disturbance having been partially in-filled with magnetic detritus. The magnetic response over the rest of the site is subdued and unremarkable, suggesting that only insubstantial remains of any earlier habitation are present.