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STONEHENGE WORLD HERITAGE SITE LANDSCAPE PROJECT
DURRINGTON FIRS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT

Sharon Bishop

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND INVESTIGATION

ENGLISH HERITAGE

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Research Department Report Series 86-2010

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT

Sharon Bishop

NGR: SU 118 441

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SUMMARY

Analytical survey and investigation of the earthworks within part of the Durrington Down plantation, also known as Durrington Firs, suggests an east to west progression for the central group of early Bronze Age round barrows, around which the other 'fancy' barrows could be said to cluster (Durrington 10-23). The barrows were overlain by a previously unrecorded Second World War military camp and trackway which have caused them damage. Durrington Firs was surveyed in May and June 2010 as part of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS) Landscape Project.

CONTRIBUTORS

Sharon Bishop and David Field (Archaeological Survey & Investigation) carried out the analytical field survey. Deborah Cunliffe (Imaging, Graphic & Survey team) penned the survey drawing for publication and Sharon Bishop produced this report.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

English Heritage would like to thank Richard Osgood (MOD Archaeologist) and Mr Baxter of Durrington Down Farm for information and access. Thanks to Luke Griffin (Archive Support Team, NMR) for supplying the aerial photographs, and to Dr Lorna Haycock at the Wiltshire Heritage Library for assistance with Cunnington's notebooks.

ARCHIVE LOCATION

The project archive is held at:

National Monuments Record Centre (NMRC),
English Heritage
Kemble Drive,
Swindon
SN2 2GZ

FRONT COVER

The image used on the front cover is:
NMR SU 1144/9 NMR 21959/10 4th February 2003 © English Heritage (NMR)

DATE OF SURVEY

The survey was conducted in May and June 2010.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The earthworks within the southern end of Durrington Down plantation, which is also known as Durrington Firs, were surveyed by English Heritage during May and June 2010. Most of the earthworks are round barrows which are overlain by the remains of Second World War military activity. Two round barrows, situated to the west and east of the plantation respectively, were also surveyed.

The survey is part of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS) Landscape Project, which is designed to provide fresh information and up to date plans for the planned new Stonehenge visitor centre; to improve understanding of the WHS necessary for its appropriate management (Young *et al* 2009, Aim 6), and to supplement information from recent university interventions in the area.

The survey area discussed in this report is centred at NGR SU 118 441 and lies *c* 500m west of Larkhill Camp, within the parish of Durrington, Wiltshire (Fig 1). It extends for roughly 530m east to west and measures up to 170m in width. The Durrington Down plantation is on private land with no public access (Young *et al* 2009, Map 5). It is owned by the Ministry of Defence and the surrounding fields form part of Durrington Down Farm.

The site lies near the northern end of the Upper Stonehenge dry valley (Young *et al* 2009, Map 9). It extends between the valley floor in the west and the 110m contour in the east, on a south-west facing slope within a gently undulating wider plateau topography. The underlying geology is Upper Chalk overlain by shallow well drained soils, with deeper silty soils in the valley bottom (SSEW 1983).

Table 1 provides a concordance of the various numbering systems applied to each monument. It includes the National Monuments Record's (NMR's) archaeological database, the county Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Register of Scheduled Monuments (RSM) number for each round barrow. Grinsell's (1957) numbering system for the round barrows is generally accepted in the literature and is therefore retained for this report. The appendix presents the measurements of the surveyed barrows (Table 3).

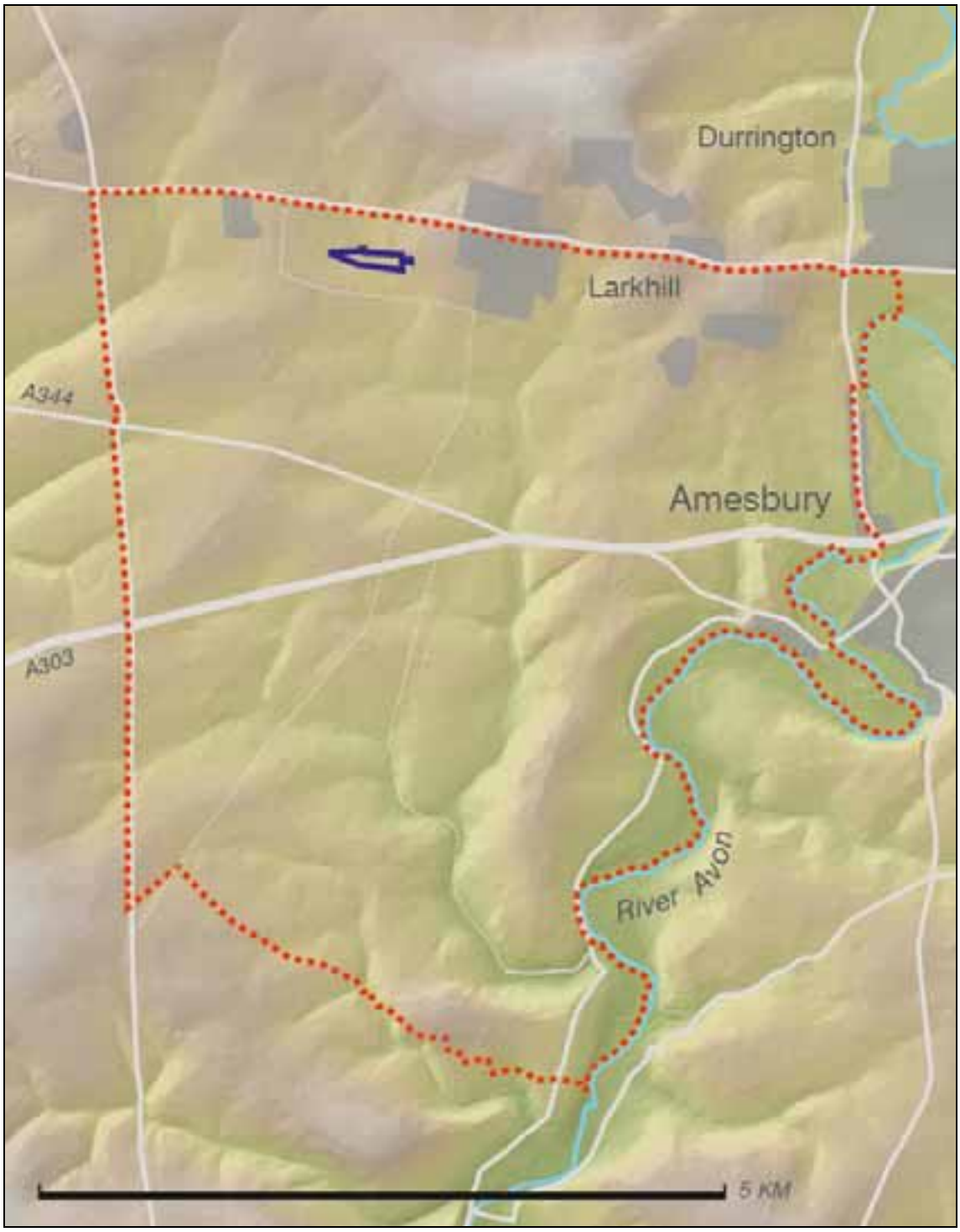

Fig 1: The location of the survey area within the World Heritage Site.
The survey area is outlined in dark blue and the WHS boundary as a dashed orange line.

Monument Type	NMR's Archaeological Database: NMR Number	Monument Number	Scheduled Monument Number (RSM)	Wiltshire HER	Hoare's Barrow number (1812)	Goddard's number (1914) Durrington ...	Grinsell's number (1957) Durrington ...
ROUND BARROWS							
BARROW CEMETERY	SU 14 SW 71	219633	10235				
POND BARROW	SU 14 SW 81	219663	10398	SU14SW620	68	10	10
BOWL BARROW	SU 14 SW 301	870251	10234	SU14SW626	67	9	9
BOWL BARROW	SU 14 SW 405	937710	10235	SU14SW628	69	11	11
BOWL BARROW	SU 14 SW 406	937766	10235	SU14SW629	70	12	12
BOWL BARROW	SU 14 SW 407	937768	10235	SU14SW633	75	16	16
BOWL BARROW	SU 14 SW 408	937778	10235	SU14SW634	76	17	17
BOWL BARROW	SU 14 SW 409	937980	10235	SU14SW635	77	17a	17a
BOWL BARROW	SU 14 SW 410	937987	10235	SU14SW636	83	18	18
BOWL BARROW	SU 14 SW 411	938257	10235	SU14SW637	72	19	19
BOWL BARROW	SU 14 SW 412	938260	10235	SU14SW639	81	21	21
BOWL BARROW	SU 14 SW 413	938261	10235	SU14SW640	79	22	22
BOWL BARROW	SU 14 SW 414	939087	10236	SU14SW641	78	23	23
SAUCER BARROW	SU 14 SW 415	939091	10235	SU14SW630	71	13	13
SAUCER BARROW	SU 14 SW 416	939097	10235	SU14SW631	73	14	14
DISC BARROW	SU 14 SW 417	939101	10235	SU14SW632	74	15	15
DISC BARROW	SU 14 SW 418	939111	10235	SU14SW638	82	20	20
ROUND BARROW	SU 14 SW 419	939116		SU14SW60U	80	21a	not listed
OTHER MONUMENTS							
MINEFIELD	SU 14 SW 713	1367913		SU14SW63Y			
MILITARY CAMP / PRISONER OF WAR CAMP	SU 14 SW 737	1525185					
TRACKWAY	SU 14 SW 738	1525191					
BARBED WIRE FENCE	SU 14 SW 739	1525211					
TRACKWAY	SU 14 SW 740	1525219					
GUNPOST / AGRICULTURAL MARKS	SU 14 SW 711	1367900		SU14SW63Z			

LANDSCAPE HISTORY

Environmental evidence suggests large natural clearings or glades of grassland, scrub and some trees were a natural part of an extensive open park forest which stretched across the southern English chalklands in the early post-glacial period (Allen & Scaife 2007). This openness, with the opportunities for hunting and gathering it provided, attracted Mesolithic communities who constructed what is perhaps the first monument in the Stonehenge landscape: the post holes in what was later to become the Stonehenge car park (Vatcher & Vatcher 1973; Young *et al* 2009, 155). This open landscape may be a contributing factor to the density of later, Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments, with some localised clearance around monuments such as causewayed enclosures and long barrows. The large number of round barrows constructed in an established open downland landscape suggests large tracts of downland were probably cleared by around 2000 BC, during the Early Bronze Age (Allen & Scaife 2007).

More diverse activities are visible in the Stonehenge landscape by the Middle Bronze Age. 'Celtic' fields became widespread over large areas of Salisbury Plain (McOmish *et al* 2002, 52; Allen & Scaife 2007). The early soils were fertile and easily tilled but subject to erosion through rainsplash, soil creep and occasional but recurrent mass erosion events (Allen & Scaife 2007, 29). Erosion changes the soil and the shape of the landscape, eroding hilltops and infilling valleys. The dry valleys usually act as environmental catchment areas and have a high potential for buried prehistoric sites, although test pits excavated in the centre of the Upper Stonehenge dry valley, close to the survey area, found a profile only 35cm deep over a Pleistocene coombe deposit (Richards 1990, 210).

Throughout the Iron Age farming appears to have been the predominant activity in the Stonehenge landscape (Young *et al* 2009, 156), although it has left little evidence immediately around the survey area other than perhaps re-use and modification of the Celtic fields (Yates 2007). Roman period farmsteads and small unenclosed villages are known across Salisbury Plain (McOmish *et al* 2002, 88) and by the early medieval period Amesbury had become the centre for a large royal estate, although little is known of how the surrounding landscape was used (Young *et al* 2009, 156).

Durrington was retained as part of the royal Amesbury estate until the 12th century, when it was divided between the West End and East End manors (Stevenson 1995). Both of these manors were located at the north-eastern corner of the parish, near the River Avon, and they provided two foci for the development of Durrington village. Durrington is one of several long narrow parishes arranged along the Avon valley. Strip parishes are typical of chalkland areas and provided each community with access to water and a range of soil types: there were meadows beside the river, open fields on the gravel and chalk near the village and rough pasture on the downs further west. Durrington had a more extensive area of good potential arable than most other parishes, however, which contributed to its relative prosperity: in the 14th century it was one of the wealthiest and most populous settlements in the Avon valley (Hare 1981, 137; Stevenson 1995).

The Wiltshire downlands were important for their sheep pastures and the growth of the cloth trade helped to maintain the lords of the manors' income during the medieval period. Durrington's extensive downland pasture was shared between the two manors and the court rolls show that the lessee of Knighton, in Figheldean parish, also kept sheep there (Hare 1981, 143). The open downs were crossed by paths and roads, including the road between Bulford and Shrewton that passes to the north of the site, which was recorded as the Packway as early as 1555 (Stevenson 1995). According to Hare (1981, 146), examination of the rental agreements and court rolls reveals the growing scale of chalkland agriculture during the 15th and 16th centuries, with some consolidation of holdings and the emergence of gentlemen large-scale farmers. Later documents show how provision was made for penning sheep on various parts of the land to manure them, the costs of digging a sheep pond were defrayed, and a Hayward appointed with responsibility for the common flock (Tankins 1975).

By the 19th century Durrington was poorer than its neighbour, Shrewton, largely as a result of bad estate management and a lack of investment by the Poore family, who appear to have been unscrupulous landlords (Tankins 1975, 51). William Cunnington refers to the barrows occupying part of the Cow Down in 1809 (Devizes Museum, Cunnington MSS, Book 13, 35). The parish was enclosed by an Act of 1823, when nearly half [1289] of its 2603acres were meadow or downland pasture. Later in the 19th century the amount of arable agriculture was slightly higher, having expanded westwards from the main settlement onto the open downs (Stevenson 1995).

The vast expanse of open grassland surviving in the west of the parish provided an ideal landscape for military training and much of the parish was acquired by the army in 1898 (Stevenson 1995, 93). Three tented camps were erected alongside the Packway in the early 20th century. At Larkhill the tents were replaced by huts in 1914. These were replaced by permanent brick buildings after the camp became the headquarters of the School of Artillery in 1920, although the camp was largely rebuilt in the 1960s (ibid). Military activity intensified during the Great War and again in the Second World War, when numerous accommodation camps and training facilities were dotted about Durrington's otherwise still open grassland (Fig 12). Between the Wars summer exercises on the Plain allowed the testing of equipment and tactics (Wessex Archaeology 1998). Farming operations were limited: cattle and sheep were allowed to graze on the ranges but were moved when firing was due to take place (James 1987, 133).

The Fargo Hutted Camp was constructed in 1943 in response to increasing demands for accommodation. From November 1944 it was used as a Prisoner of War Camp (James 1987, 139; Wessex Archaeology 1998, 29). Its concrete main road now forms the access along the western side of Durrington Down plantation. The camp extended for 470m south-south-west from the Packway and measured *c* 210m wide, covering 26 acres. It comprised pairs of Nissen huts for accommodation interspersed with larger Nissen huts that would have performed a range of domestic and administrative functions.

Aerial photographs show that the camp started to be dismantled in 1955. Initially this work was carried out by contractors who removed all of the waste material. Some material was later dumped in the bottom of the dry valley, where large lumps of concrete and rubble sometimes rise to the surface (Mr Baxter, pers comm). The former practice minefield here provided an already disturbed location that was ideal for dumping. The extra material helped bring the ground level up towards the height of Fargo Road immediately to the south, smoothing out the valley ready for ploughing. By the summer of 1967 all that remained of the military camp was the concrete road. The round barrows were encroached upon by the surrounding arable agriculture, part of the government's post war drive for self sufficiency (Darvill 2006). Durrington 9, and the other barrows on the western side of the valley, were damaged by ploughing during the later 20th century.

By the summer of 1968 the barrows had been fenced off and the area was planted with young trees, with the camp's concrete road providing access down the western side. Trees were not planted over the barrow mounds, which are visible as circular gaps in the mature trees on aerial photographs taken in the mid-1990s, although they do appear to have been planted right up to the outer edge of the surrounding ditches. The fir trees across the survey area, at the southern end of the plantation, were removed in the late 1990s and the tree stumps left to decay naturally, causing minimal further damage to the archaeology. The area was grassland by 2000 (Young *et al* 2009; Map 3), although hawthorn scrub and burrowing animals now threaten the earthworks.

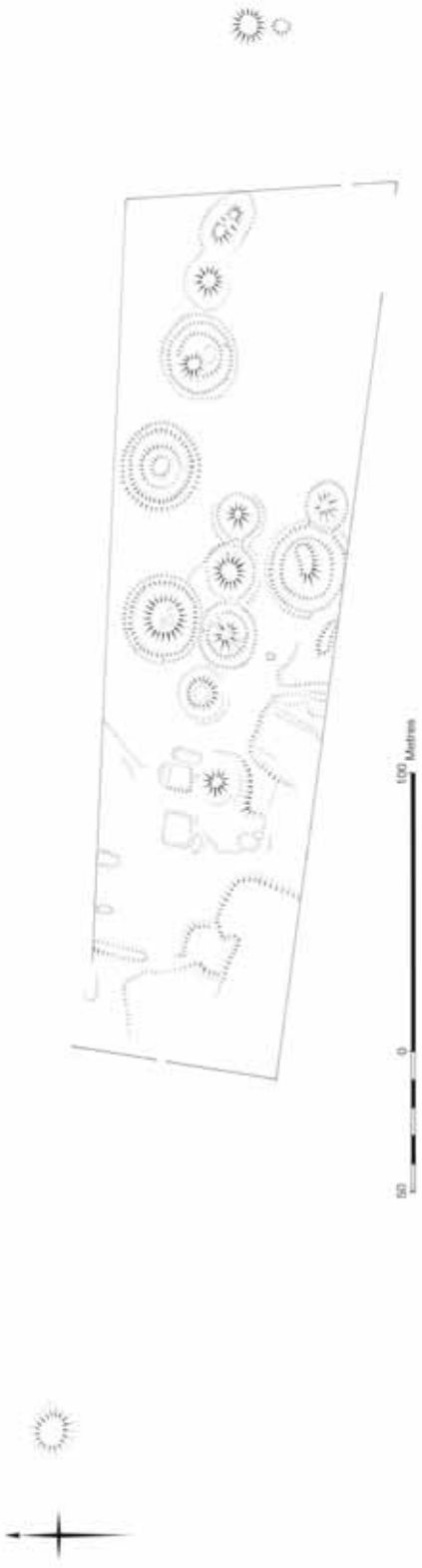

Fig 2: The surveyed earthworks.
The survey plan is reduced to fit A4 from the original 1:1,000 scale.

THE EARTHWORKS

The earthworks are described from west to east. They comprise fourteen round barrows within the former plantation (Durrington 10-22), a post medieval chalk pit and features associated with an overlying Second World War military camp. Two round barrows that appear to continue the alignment were also surveyed: Durrington 9 to the west and Durrington 23 to the east of the plantation (Fig 3). A concordance of the various numbering systems applied to each monument can be found in Table 1.

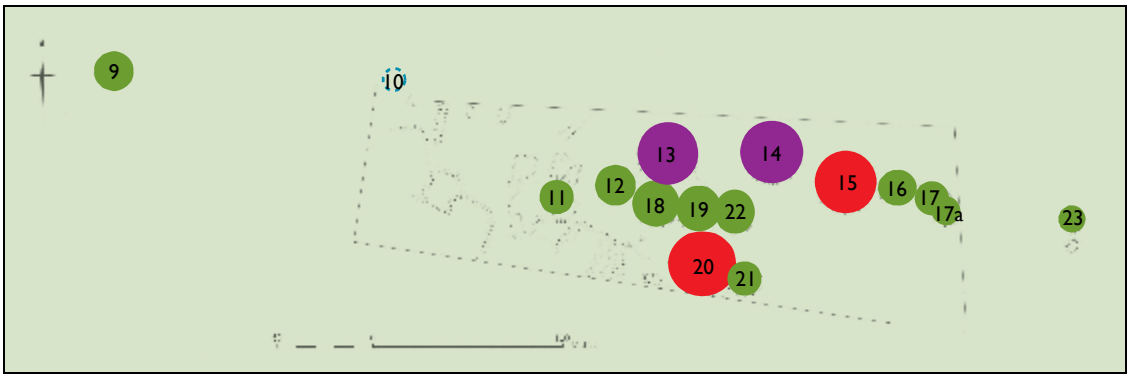

Fig 3: The numbered round barrows.
The round barrows are numbered and coloured after Grinsell's classification and listing (1957): green – bowl barrow, red – disc barrow, purple – saucer barrow, blue – pond barrow.

Durrington 9

A very slight circular mound is situated *c* 130m west of the concrete road. It stands just 0.2m high and measures 23m in diameter. There is no sign of any surrounding ditch or bank, which are presumably ploughed away if they existed. The round barrow sits on the south-eastern end of a spur on the western side of the dry valley, in approximate alignment with the group of round barrows to the east.

Durrington 10

A pond barrow listed as Durrington 10 was probably damaged during construction of Fargo Hutted Camp (Fig 12), although it was apparently recognisable as earthworks in 1995 when the monument was Scheduled. Long grass obscured any subtle earthworks in 2010 and prevented survey. An area of lush greener vegetation was noted along the western side of the barrow's approximate location, although this could be the result of later activity along the concrete road as part of the plantation.

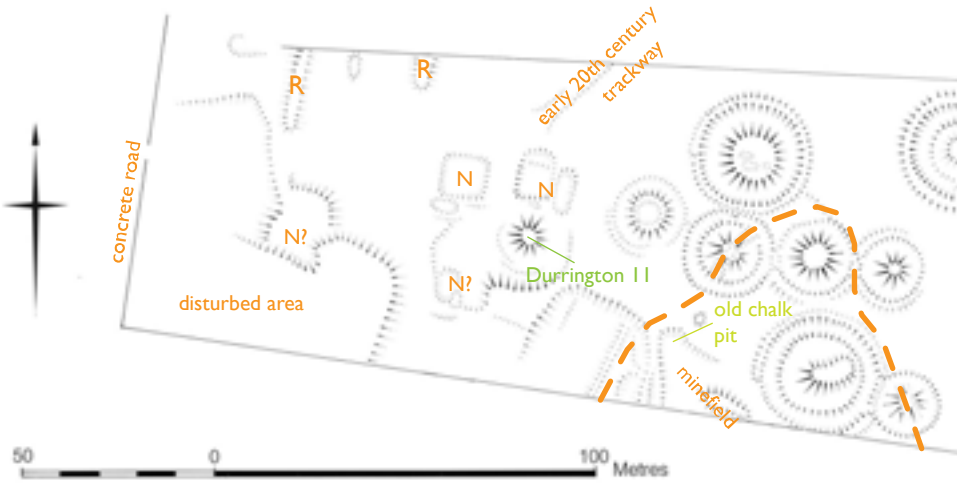

Fig 4: The earthworks from military activity.
The dashed orange line shows the route of the tank trackway around the northern tip of the practice minefield. Extract from survey plan reduced to 1:2000.

Second World War military camp

A concrete road (Fig 4) extends 410m north-north-east to south-south-west from the Packway and measures *c* 6m wide. It formed the main access for the Second World War Fargo Hutted Camp (Fig 12) and from 1968 it has provided access for the Durrington Down Plantation. Several slight hollows full of nettles are dispersed over the area between Durrington 9 and the concrete road and lumps of concrete and metal pipes are dispersed across the surveyed area to its east. Two linear banks (R), located parallel to and *c* 35m and 70m to the east of the concrete road, probably represent sections of minor roads or pathways within the camp.

The valley floor to their south is filled with very slight amorphous undulations and the south-western corner of the surveyed area, around SU 1165 4409, comprises a series of conjoined large amorphous platforms. Much of this area was probably disturbed when the military camp was dismantled and perhaps when the plantation's trees were planted and later cut down, hence the general lack of coherence to the earthworks. Long grass and hawthorn scrub at the time of survey also obscured their finer details.

A square hollow at SU 1171 4412 and two parallel rectangular hollows, *c* 0.2m deep and centred at SU 1173 4411, correspond with the location of two pairs of Nissen huts (N) on aerial photographs taken in the 1940s (Fig 12). Other rectangular hollows are suggested at the edge of the otherwise amorphous platforms, around SU 1166 4410 and SU 1171 4408, and may indicate the location of other pairs of Nissen huts (N?), which were regularly spaced in rows. A linear hollow around SU 1174 4414 represents part of

a south-west to north-east trackway that aerial photographs show pre-dates the camp (Fig 10).

Second World War minefield and trackway

A variety of smaller amorphous mounds and hollows form a roughly triangular area located mid-way along the southern side of the survey area, around SU 1177 4406 (Fig 4). The undulations are mostly the result of a contemporary practice minefield which extended south-east along the valley bottom to the Fargo Road, but include a former chalk pit (see below) which appears to have defined the minefield's north-western tip. Sections of a linear hollow flank the western side of the minefield and cut through the mounds of Durrington 18 and Durrington 21. Again, historic aerial photographs show that the sections of linear hollow combined to form a Second World War trackway which curved around the minefield, also passing between Durrington 19 and Durrington 22.

Durrington 11

Durrington 11 measures *c* 18m in diameter. It comprises a central mound which stands 0.8m high and is only partly surrounded by a ditch, 0.1m deep, with slight traces of an outer bank to the west and south (Fig 4). The top of the mound is oval: it measures 5m long by 3m wide and is orientated north-west / south-east. The base of the mound measures *c* 12m in diameter, the ditch is 3m wide and the bank 2m wide. There is no berm between the mound and the ditch, giving the barrow a bowl form.

Durrington 12

Durrington 12 measures 22m in overall diameter and comprises a circular mound, *c* 0.7m high, surrounded by a ditch *c* 0.3m deep, with a section of outer bank to the south-west (Fig 5). The top of the mound measures *c* 9m and the base is 14m in diameter. The ditch and outer bank are each 3m wide. The mound's top is concave in profile, perhaps as a result of the early 19th-century excavations. The ditch and outer bank clearly respect those around Durrington 18.

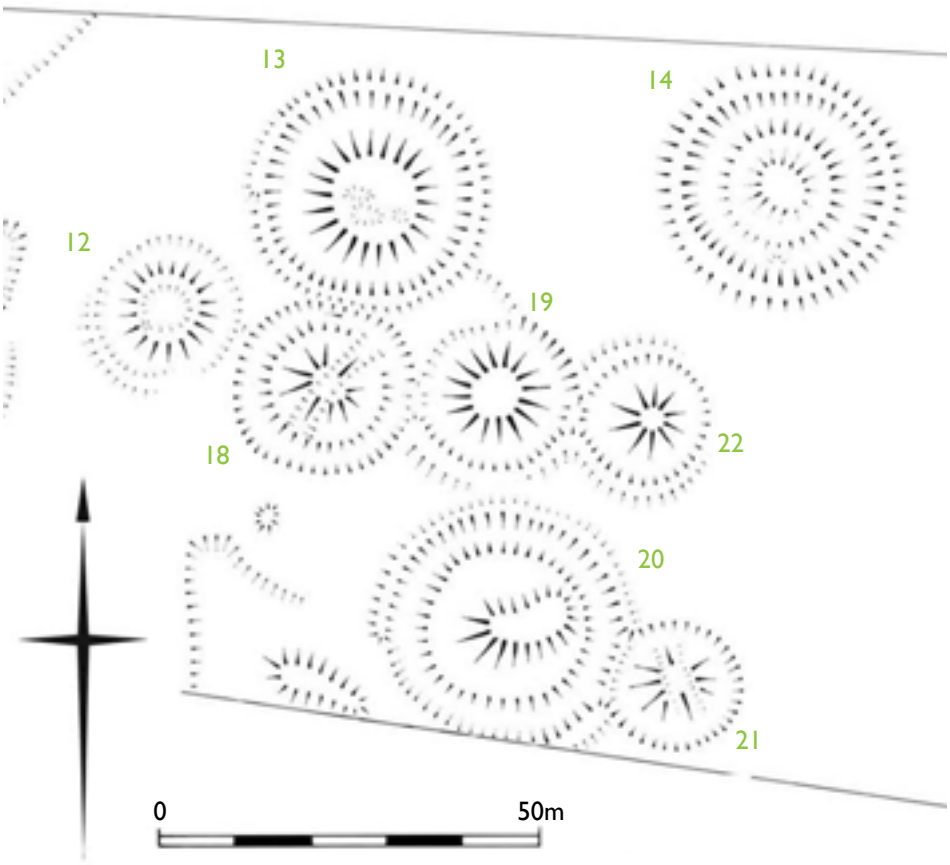

Fig 5: The central barrows
Extract from survey plan, at 1:1000.

Post medieval chalk pit

A slight hollow, *c* 0.3m deep, was surveyed at SU 1176 4407, which is the approximate location of a roughly circular extractive pit visible on early aerial photographs and marked as an 'Old Chalk Pit' on the 1880 Ordnance Survey 25 inch map. The hollow is relatively shallow and the pit may have been partially backfilled once it had gone out of use. It is grassed over on the early aerial photographs (Fig 10) and looks similar to but smaller than the pond barrow. The extractive pit has suffered damage from the overlying Second World War minefield, which has levelled the southern side.

Durrington 13

Durrington 13 is one of the larger round barrows in the group, measuring 33m in overall diameter. It comprises a circular mound which stands 0.8m high, surrounded by a concentric ditch and an outer bank. The mound has a broad top which measures *c* 12m in diameter and the base is 19m across. The ditch is *c* 6m wide; it is 0.5m deep on the western side and 0.7m deep on the eastern side. The outer bank stands *c* 0.2m high and

is 4m wide, although it appears to narrow and straighten out slightly where it abuts the edge of Durrington 18. Several amorphous hollows on top of the mound may relate to the early 19th-century excavations.

Durrington 18

Durrington 18 sits at the western end of an east to west line of three barrows of similar dimensions (with Durrington 19 and 22). It has a maximum diameter of 25m and comprises a circular mound which stands *c* 0.9m high and sits off centre on a circular platform which is surrounded by a ditch *c* 0.3m deep and *c* 5.5m wide. The base of the mound is 12m in diameter and the top is 5m across. A short berm separates the mound from the edge of the ditch on all but the western sides, giving the barrow a slightly skewed bell form (Ashbee 1960, 26). The ditch appears to cut slightly into the end of the outer southern bank of Durrington 19, with the two ditches almost touching immediately north of this point. The barrow has been cut through south-west to north-east by a trackway during the Second World War. A Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) Ancient Monument warning star is located on its western side (Fig 6).

Fig 6: The tank track across Durrington 18.
A white SPTA star would have been attached to the upright rail to the west (left) of the barrow. The rail stands c 1.4m high and was probably reused from the dismantled Larkhill Military Light Railway.

Durrington 19

Durrington 19 is the middle of three round barrows aligned east to west, located towards the centre of the round barrow cemetery (Fig 5). It has a maximum overall diameter of 21.5m and comprises a circular central mound surrounded by a ditch, in a bowl barrow form (Ashbee 1960, 25). The mound stands *c* 0.8m high; its base measures 14m in diameter and its top is 7m across. The ditch is *c* 5m wide and 0.15m deep. A slight outer bank to the south of the barrow, up to 5m wide but just 0.1m high, meets that around

Durrington 22 at a point between the barrows. To the east the ditch almost touches that around Durrington 22 and appears to cut slightly into its outer northern bank. The earthworks here have been damaged by use of the Second World War military trackway. To the west the southern outer bank appears slightly cut into by the ditch of Durrington 18.

Durrington 22

Durrington 22 is the easternmost of the central east to west alignment of three round barrows. It has a maximum overall diameter of 22.5m and comprises a central circular mound, surrounded by a concentric ditch forming a bowl barrow (Ashbee 1960, 25), with traces of an outer bank to the north and south. The mound is *c* 0.6m high: its base measures 10.5m in diameter and its top is 3.5m across. The ditch is *c* 4m wide and 0.3m deep and the outer bank *c* 4m wide and 0.2m high. The bank to the south extends westwards, meeting that around the southern side of Durrington 19 in a point between the two barrows. The northern outer bank appears slightly cut by the ditch of Durrington 19 although a slight rise separates the ditches where the barrows join.

Durrington 20

Durrington 20 lies to the south of the central alignment of barrows. It is a disc barrow with a maximum overall diameter of 36m, although its southern edge is truncated by the plantation fence and the ploughed field beyond. It comprises a kidney-shaped mound situated east of centre on a circular platform which is surrounded by a concentric ditch and incomplete outer bank. The mound stands 0.7m high at its south-western end and *c* 0.2m high at its eastern end, which is slightly up-slope. The ditch is *c* 6.5m wide and 0.15m deep and defines a platform or berm of up to 5.5m that separates the mound from the inner edge of the ditch on all but the eastern side. The outer bank is 3m wide and stands 0.2m high. It is cut into by the ditch around Durrington 21 and appears to slightly overlap the southern outer bank of Durrington 19. The earthworks are clearly visible on aerial photographs taken in 1943, which appear to show the mound as two conjoined circular mounds, one central to the platform and the other immediately to its north-east.

Durrington 21

Durrington 21 sits immediately east-south-east of the larger barrow of Durrington 20. It has a maximum overall diameter of 17m and comprises a circular mound, which stands 1.2m high, surrounded by a concentric ditch. The base of the mound is 11m in diameter and the top is 5m across. The ditch measures 4m wide and *c* 0.2m deep. It appears to cut into the outer bank around Durrington 20: the ditches are separated by a low bank across the join. A Second World War military trackway cuts north-north-west to south-south-east through the mound.

Durrington 14

Durrington 14 is the most northerly of the group and sits slightly apart from the other barrows. It has a maximum overall diameter of nearly 34m and comprises a central mound which sits on a circular platform surrounded by a concentric ditch and outer bank. The mound stands *c* 0.5m high; its base measures 11m in diameter and its top is 6.5m across. The ditch is *c* 5m wide and 0.1m deep and the outer bank *c* 4m wide and 0.2m high. A berm separates the bottom of the mound from the edge of the ditch.

Durrington 15

Durrington 15 measures 33m in diameter and comprises an oval mound, 0.5m high, which sits north-west of centre on a circular platform which is surrounded by a ditch and outer bank. The platform measures 15m in diameter, the base of the mound is 12m and the top 5m across. The ditch is 4m wide; it is 0.3m deep to the south-west but shallower up-slope to the north-east, where it is only *c* 0.1m deep. The outer bank measures 4m wide and correspondingly is slightly higher down-slope, where it measures a maximum of 0.25m high. An oval area of darker green vegetation was noted south-east of the barrow mound, which is perhaps a result of disturbance from an early excavation or later plantation activity. Aerial photographs show a barbed wire fence skirting the western side of the barrow during the Second World War (Fig 12). It was removed by 1945 and there is no sign of the fence on the ground.

Durrington 16

Durrington 16 measures a maximum of 20m in diameter and comprises a central circular mound which is almost completely surrounded by a ditch. The base of the mound measures 13m in diameter and the top is 5.5m across; it stands *c* 0.6m high. The ditch is 4m wide and *c* 0.2m deep. The ditch is not visible south-east of the barrow mound, although on the barrow's northern side it appears to join the ditch surrounding Durrington 17 and 17a to the east.

Durrington 17 & Durrington 17a

Durrington 17 and 17a are two conjoined mounds surrounded by a single ditch except to the west. The barrows are *c* 18m and 16m in diameter, respectively. They measure a combined length of just over 27m and are orientated north-west to south-east, with a slight saddle between their two tops. The base of the north-western mound measures 12m wide and its top is 4.5m. It stands 0.8m high to the south-west, but only 0.3m high upslope to the north-east. The south-eastern mound stands 0.5m high and appears higher because of the hill-slope. Its base measures 9m and its top is 3m in diameter. The shallow flanking ditch is 6m wide but just 0.1m deep. North of the mounds it appears to

continue westwards to join the ditch around Durrington 16. Any southern join between the two is not visible.

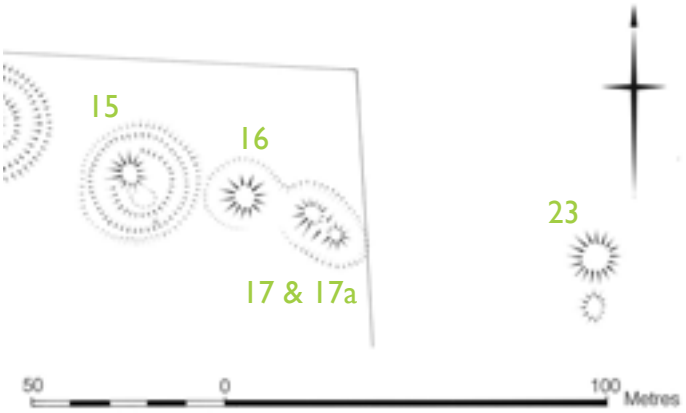

Fig 7: The easternmost barrows.
Extract from survey plan at 1:2000.

Durrington 23

Durrington 23 is the most easterly of the group, situated *c* 60m east of Durrington 17a and outside the plantation. It comprises a circular mound which stands *c* 0.6m high. The mound's base is 15m and the top is 8.5m in diameter. A 20th-century SPTA military warning star is located on its eastern side, at SU 1200 4409. Subtle detail and any surrounding ditch were obscured by waist high vegetation at the time of survey.

The ditch was described as mutilated in 1970 although it was still visible as a slight depression 2m wide when the barrow was scheduled in 1995. After the Second World War the barrow was treated as an island in arable fields and it is likely that some of the mutilations to the ditch are the result of plough damage; however, aerial photographs taken in 1943 suggest that the ditch may have had a causeway to the north-east of the mound. Damage across the eastern side of the mound is also visible, extending north to south.

Possible gun emplacement

A possible Second World War gun post immediately south of Durrington 23 has been suggested from a cropmark visible on aerial photographs taken in 1970; however, there is no corresponding feature visible at this location on aerial photographs taken in December 1943 or October 1945, which clearly show the other wartime and earlier earthworks. A low rise of darker green vegetation was noted at this location during the field survey (Fig 7), which is probably the result of late 20th-century arable cultivation where the plough repeatedly turned to avoid Durrington 23.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Durrington Firs round barrows lay beyond the area investigated by Stukeley, although he did note that 'an agreeable group of barrows' existed to the north of the Cursus (Burl & Mortimer 2005, 91). In the early 19th century Sir Richard Colt Hoare similarly commented that on the hill opposite the pond barrow now known as Durrington 10 'is a beautiful group of tumuli, thickly strewed over a rich and verdant down' (1812, 166). He went on to warn against outward appearances, however, commenting that many of the barrows had already been opened. The identity of the original excavator is unknown.

William Cunnington had four barrows on Durrington Down excavated in November 1803 (Devizes Museum, Cunnington MSS, Book 3, 3). It is not clear exactly which four, although Goddard attributed descriptions of the contents of two to Durrington 11 and Durrington 19 respectively (1913). Cunnington described Durrington 11 as 40ft [12m] in diameter and not more than 10inches [0.2m] in elevation. He found a large Collared Urn containing burnt bones but no ashes. The urn was preserved within a cist in the solid chalk which had been cut exactly to fit the urn, a secondary series of south-eastern style (Form II) (Longworth 1984, 286). Considerable amounts of decayed linen, and perhaps some woollen pieces, were found underneath the urn and were interpreted as having been used to collect the cremated bones before being placed in the urn (Devizes Museum, Cunnington MSS, Book 3, 4; Cunnington 1884, 260). Durrington 19 also produced a sepulchral urn (Hoare 1812, 167), but of unknown type.

Cunnington returned with Hoare and friends from Salisbury on a beautiful summer's day in 1809 (Devizes Museum, Cunnington MSS, Book 13, 35-6; Hoare 1812, 166-167), when they dug into several barrows and found different combinations of urns and cists containing ashes or burnt bones but few other finds. A sepulchral urn with a small brass [bronze] pin was found beneath Durrington 18 but only an interment of burnt bones in an irregular cist in Durrington 12. A large 'rude' urn containing an interment of burned bones was discovered in Durrington 21 and another interred in a cist of considerable depth beneath Durrington 13. Above the latter was a second urn containing burnt bones, with a small child's skeleton nearer the surface. Hoare noted that Durrington 13 was bowl shaped within a ditch and refers to it as a 'Druid barrow second class' (1812, 167)

Cunnington and Hoare described several of the other barrows in the group as of 'Druid' forms (Hoare 1812, 21-22). Beneath Durrington 14, a 'Druid barrow of the second class', their excavations found a skeleton with its head orientated to the north-west and four beads near its neck. It appeared that another interment of burned bones had already been removed, implying that the barrow had been opened before. Hoare described the beads as wooden (1812, 167), although they are listed as shale in the Devizes Museum catalogue (Annable & Simpson 1964, 51).

Hoare noted that the elevated mound of Durrington 15 was not in the centre of this 'Druid barrow', in which he found a 'cinerarium' and ashes in a cist, and Cunnington's notes refer to Durrington 20 as a Druid barrow with an oblong mound (Devizes Museum, Cunnington MSS, Book 13, 36). It contained a cist full of ashes in the smaller end and simple interments of burnt bones just under the turf in the broad end. Hoare refers to the cist as a 'cinerarium' (1812, 167). They found nothing in Durrington 23 or Durrington 16, but noted that the latter had been opened before, as had Durrington 17 and 17a and Durrington 22 (ibid).

A century later the round barrows were listed by the Reverend E H Goddard (1913) and this list was later revised by Leslie Grinsell (1957). Their descriptions differ slightly: for example, Durrington 13 was listed as a bowl-shaped barrow by Goddard (1913, 243) and as a saucer barrow by Grinsell (1957, 223). They may also include misinterpretations and errors: both listed Durrington 15 as a disc barrow, although Grinsell put the tump south-west of centre (1957, 217).

The barrows were not physically disturbed until the mid-20th century, when the urgent needs of the Second World War resulted in the construction of a military camp at their western end. Such features have themselves become part of the archaeology of the area, although they are yet to be comprehensively recorded archaeologically. A desk-based assessment of military installations was conducted by Wessex Archaeology (1998) and pre-1945 military features were included in the scope of the Stonehenge WHS National Mapping Project, which mapped the archaeology visible on aerial photographs (Winton 2000, 5).

Field inspections of the round barrows have been conducted at various points: for Ordnance Survey mapping revision in 1970, and as part of the Monuments Protection Programme for Scheduled monuments in early 1995. The arable fields east and west of the tree plantation were fieldwalked as part of the Stonehenge Environs Project and test pits were dug along a transect parallel with the Fargo road farm track as part of the dry valley research (Richards 1990, 210). An archaeological appraisal, field evaluation and archaeological assessment of Durrington Down Farm were conducted in the early 1990s (Darvill 1992a-c).

The trees of the plantation have discouraged full survey. Although the round barrows were included in the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England's review of monuments around Stonehenge (RCHME 1979) and their wider survey of the Salisbury Plain Training Area (McOmish et al 2002), they have not formerly been subjected to detailed analytical survey, geophysical survey or modern excavation. The same applies to many of the round barrow cemeteries in the Stonehenge landscape, which have been highlighted as a research priority ideal for thorough non-invasive investigation (Darvill 2005, Objective 10).

DISCUSSION

Much of the south-western corner of the surveyed area was probably disturbed when the Second World War military camp was dismantled and perhaps again when the plantation's trees were planted and cut down, hence the general lack of coherence to the earthworks in this area. Long grass and hawthorn scrub at the time of survey also obscured the finer details of features at the western end of the survey area. As one moves eastwards, out of the valley bottom, the earthworks become more distinct and fall neatly into two themes: the round barrows and the Second World War military features (Fig 8).

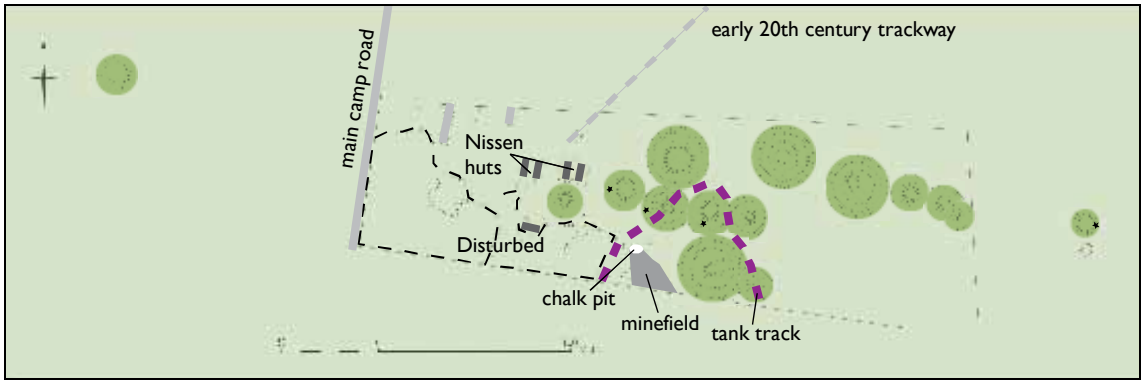

Fig 8: Interpretation of the earthworks.
The round barrows are shown in green and the small black stars are the SPTA warning stars, placed in an attempt to protect them.

Round barrows

Round barrows are the most common form of prehistoric monument in Britain, with over 30,000 examples known (Last 2007, 1). The Durrington Firs barrows take a variety of forms and are clustered into a compact linear group that extends roughly east to west up the eastern side of a dry valley. In several cases the ditches, outer banks and potential joins between them have suffered damage from 20th-century activity: the cumulative effects of the construction and demolition of a military camp and use of contemporary trackways, post-War arable agriculture and a late 20th-century tree plantation.

Cunnington's notebooks and correspondence formed the basis for Hoare's brief published description but contain little additional information regarding these barrows (Devizes Museum, Cunnington MSS; Hoare 1812, 166-7), perhaps partly in reflection of his disappointment on opening. There is also an element of confusion over some of the descriptions, which contain few details for corroboration and differing numbering systems. Cunnington describes this group of barrows as 12 in number, of various forms and about half a mile north-east of Stonehenge (Devizes Museum, Cunnington MSS, Book 3, 3). Whilst the first part of this description fits, the Durrington Firs barrows are located *c* 1.95km [1.2 miles] to the north-north-west of Stonehenge. The contents of the fourth

barrow excavated by Cunnington in 1803 are attributed to Durrington 11; however, he describes it as 40ft [12m] in diameter and not more than 10inches [25cm] in elevation. Durrington 11 is 18m [60ft] in diameter and the mound of stands 0.8m high. It is possible that some of the barrow descriptions became muddled.

An overall diameter and elevation are given for the four barrows opened in 1803 but attention generally focused on what, if anything, was found within. The usual method of excavation was to sink a shaft from the top downwards at the approximate centre of the barrow. This preserved the outward form of the barrow and was usually successful in locating an interment in a chalk cut cist but failed to locate any satellite interments and most structural features (Simpson 1975; Grinsell 1978).

As the descriptions above show, barrow typology is highly subjective, with considerable overlap between types. Cunnington described several of the barrows as of a 'Druid' form and these are clearly the 'fancy' disc and saucer barrows listed by Grinsell (1957). Cunnington tended to use Stukeley's terminology but his extensive experience resulted in a typology published by Hoare (1812), which was later adapted by Thurnam (1871). McOmish *et a*l (2002, 33) noted that more recent typologies have been over simplistic and that Hoare's observation of detail was quite appropriate. Recognition that many, perhaps most, barrows are the product of multi-phase construction introduces a further element of complexity into their categorisation.

It is perhaps most important to recognise that they are all forms of round barrow. As such they conform to the general trend for circular monuments that dominate the late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age; part of an array of circular ceremonial monuments together with henges, hengiforms and causewayed ring ditches (Field 1998; Bradley 2007). Excavation evidence suggests that interment and commemoration of the dead was not the sole, or even the main, purpose of these structures (Woodward 2000; Last 2007).

Round barrows marked places in the landscape that may already have held significance; places that attracted repeated visits and at which it was appropriate to perform particular actions and deposit particular types of material. These activities included the recurring displacement of the earth, ultimately into a round mound and or bank form, but the bulk of activity at these places may have been non-monumental (Last 2007; Field 2008). Both the highly visible fresh chalk and the subsequent grass covered mounds intrude into the consciousness of later inhabitants, marking a link with the past and perhaps legitimising the present (Field 2001; 2008). The barrows illustrated that others had gone before, emphasising both the human and ancestral presence and reflecting changing perceptions of the humanly created landscape in the 2nd Millennium BC.

Architecture

The Durrington Firs round barrows are relatively small when compared with other round barrows found on Salisbury Plain (McOmish *et al* 2002, 39). They range in size between 13m and 36m in diameter and stand a maximum of 1.2m high. The ring ditches around most are just 0.2m deep, with the exception of that around Durrington 13 which is between 0.5m and 0.7m deep. The components of several are more pronounced to the south-west due to the natural slope of the hill, which rises to the north-east. With a central depression measuring 20.5m in diameter the pond barrow of Durrington 10 is exceptionally large for these rare types of round barrow, the hollows of which are usually between 10m and 14m across (Thomas 2005, 93).

The largest barrows in the group are the four fancy barrows of Durrington 13, 14, 15 and 20. The remaining barrows are between 13m and 25.5m in diameter and are usually classified as bowl barrow forms. There is not a direct correlation between their diameter and the height of the mound: Durrington 21, the highest mound at 1.2m high, has a diameter towards the middle of this range, at 18m. Stylistically, small low mounds are often associated with Early Beakers or Middle Bronze Age burials (McOmish *et al* 2002, 40; Needham *et al* 2010, Table 1), although bowl barrow forms are also constructed throughout the intervening periods. The most common form of construction for round barrows near Stonehenge is for a turf core enveloped with chalk cut from the encircling ditch (Lawson 2007, 211).

Only two of the barrows imply more than one constructional phase in their outward form. The twin mounds of Durrington 20 and Durrington 17 and 17a, although very different, imply at least two phases of construction. At Durrington 20 a second small mound appears to have been placed immediately north-east of the central mound on the disc barrow's central platform, whereas the bowl barrow of Durrington 17a appears to have been added immediately east of Durrington 17.

The architecture found in the various barrows could imply slightly different functions. The pond barrow of Durrington 10 may have acted as an open place; an arena for associated activity perhaps including the storage of corpses and cremated remains prior to burial (Thomas 2005, 283). The relatively flat tops, low height and presence of berms at other barrows in the group may also have provided significant places for ceremonial activity, providing interfaces between physical and spiritual worlds (Field 1998, 323).

Although we know very little about the internal structure of any of the Durrington Firs round barrows, or at what depth the interments were found, some inferences can be made. The early 19th-century excavations found nothing in the easternmost barrows of Durrington 16, 17 and 23, but most of the other barrows contained at least one urn containing burnt bones, often in a cist cut into the chalk interpreted as the primary interment. It is not clear whether the urns were inverted or upright and the excavation methodology meant that usually only one interment was identified.

There was clearly a preference for cremation although two inhumations are recorded. A small child's skeleton was found near the surface of Durrington 13, where a second urn containing burnt bones was located above the primary urn which was contained in a cist of considerable depth. An adult skeleton was found under Durrington 14 and it appeared that another interment of burnt bones had already been removed (Hoare 1812, 167), although it is not clear if this was at the time the skeleton was laid down or a later opening. At Durrington 20 simple interments of burnt bones were found just below the turf at the broader end, although these were not thought to be the primary burial, which was not located (Devizes Museum, Cunnington MSS, Book 13, 36).

The cists were usually circular, a common shape across southern England (Thomas 2005, 291). At Durrington 11 Cunnington noted it was a perfect fit for the urn (1801-9, Book 3, 4), which implies that the urn was present when the cist was cut – perhaps the cremation had already taken place some time before. Decayed fabric found under the urn was interpreted as having been used to collect the cremated bones. At Durrington 12 burnt bones were interred in an irregular cist, without an urn, and the lack of such a container here could perhaps help to explain the informal shape of the cist.

The separation of burnt bones from the ashes, clearly visible at Durrington Firs, is also a common practice (Thomas 2005, 289). Cists full of ashes were found under Durrington 15 and Durrington 20, both of which contained a 'cinerarium' (Hoare 1812, 167). For Durrington 20 this appears to be the cist itself but at Durrington 15 Hoare refers to a cinerarium *and* ashes in a cist, perhaps implying a niche or scoop scraped out of the cist's floor. This may indicate where the cremated bones were to be set, as recorded beneath round barrows on Snail Down (Thomas 2005, 297) and other circular funerary monuments such as the Fargo hengiform (Stone 1939, 361).

Although one of the barrows opened in 1803 produced a small 'rude' urn about the size of a coffee cup (Devizes Museum, Cunnington MSS, Book 3, 3), the only 'drinking cup' or Beaker recorded from the excavations comes from Durrington 8 (Hoare 1812, 166), one of four round barrows scattered within 300m to the north and west of the pond barrow. This round barrow could therefore be earlier in date, although the Durrington Firs barrows are not aligned on it and do not appear to show it any particular regard. The large Collared Urn from Durrington 11 is the only urn to receive a description by the early 19th-century excavators other than 'large rude urn', which limits our ability to date them more precisely than *c* 1950-1500 cal BC, or Early Bronze Age (Needham *et al* 2010, table 1). Longworth lists it as one of the most numerous and widespread Bronze Age vessel forms (1984, 81).

Other finds from the cemetery, the beads from Durrington 14 and the piece of metal from Durrington 18, are described differently by each author, which again hampers attempts at more accurate dating. The round barrows of Durrington Firs are therefore assumed to fit broadly with the majority of excavated examples in the Stonehenge landscape, which were constructed in the Early Bronze Age (Richards 1990, 273).

The only modern excavation to take place in the vicinity was the opening of Durrington 7, one of the four barrows dispersed across the western side of the valley, which was investigated as part of the Stonehenge Environs Project (Richards 1990, W57). The barrow had been severely damaged by ploughing but excavation showed it had been constructed as an un-ditched cairn of flint nodules with a central area containing an oval grave. The grave contained a crouched juvenile inhumation, which produced a radiocarbon date of 2275-1958 BC (OxA 1398), together with a cremation deposit and animal bones. A number of secondary funerary deposits in pits were also found around the cairn and the barrow itself probably dates to this later activity.

Our knowledge of the architecture of the Durrington Firs round barrows is far from complete. Whilst there are clues in the outward form presented today and in Cunnington's notebooks, geophysical survey and modern excavation are likely to reveal a far more complex history for each monument than is described here. Each phase of construction and burial may have been part of a drawn out series of ceremonies, perhaps using different parts of the cemetery (Ashbee 1978; Thomas 2005). Although most of the mound material probably came from the ditches, turf and soil from elsewhere may have been added. Some of the barrows may have a timber element: either as a precursor to the round barrow as suggested by recent geophysical survey of Amesbury 50 (Vince Gaffney, pers comm); as a component of the barrow structure or burial ceremony (Ashbee 1978), or to aid its construction in the form of stake and peg holes (Thomas 2005, 300).

Spatial patterning – within the cemetery

Durrington 10, 14, 15 and 23 are more widely spaced but most of the barrows are within 10m of each other, forming a relatively dense cluster that is the accumulated distribution of several centuries. Where the barrows are close together 20th-century activities have confused their relative stratigraphy, which is further complicated by the natural slope of the hillside; however, it is still possible to suggest a sequence of construction for the central group of barrows (Fig 9).

The analytical earthwork survey suggests that Durrington 22 was constructed before Durrington 19, which was constructed before Durrington 18. These three barrows form a linear progression from east to west around which the other barrows could be said to cluster. Two other bowl barrows sit on the same alignment: Durrington 11 to the west and Durrington 23 160m to the east, at the far eastern end of the cemetery. Durrington 12 is located just north of this central axis and its ring ditch clearly respects that around Durrington 18, suggesting that it is later. The larger fancy barrow of Durrington 13 to the north was clearly measured out to almost touch the central alignment and there is only the slightest suggestion in the earthworks of its outer bank overlying that of Durrington 18: its southern side almost straightens out as it abuts Durrington 18.

Chronological development has been demonstrated for the round barrow cemetery at Snail Down, where 'fancy' barrows were added to the cemetery in later phases (Thomas

2005, 309). Using this as a model together with our field observations it is possible to suggest that the linear arrangement of bowl barrows was constructed first, from east to west, then the pond, saucer and disc barrows added around it (though not necessarily in that order). Fancy barrows are rare types generally, but relatively common around Stonehenge, where some of the best preserved examples can be found (McOmish *et al* 2002, 40; Lawson 2007, 205).

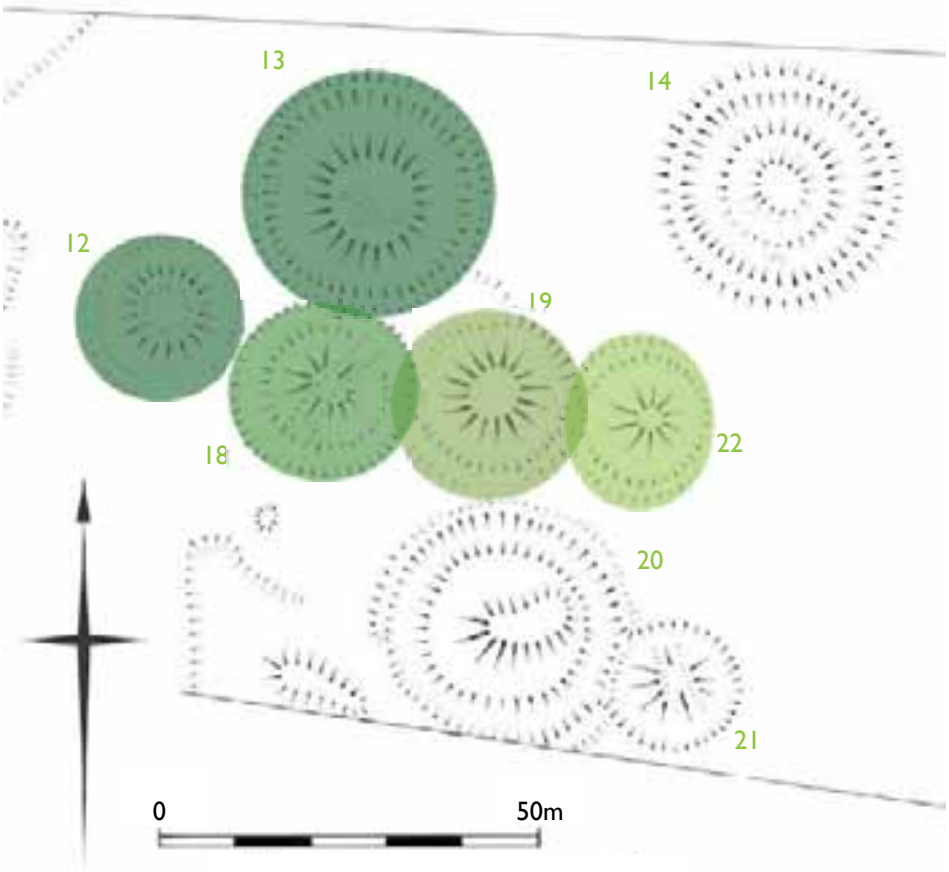

Fig 9: A possible sequence for the central round barrows.
Durrington 22 is shown in light green, Durrington 19 is slightly darker with Durrington 18 in mid-green. Durrington 12 and 13 (top) are shown in dark green. Extract from survey plan, at 1:1000.

It is notable that barrow cemeteries containing fancy barrows may contain multiple examples of other types but it is rare for more than one pond barrow to occur, although there are exceptions: the Lake Down cemetery contains four pond barrows (Komar 2010) and there are two at Winterbourne Stoke crossroads (Komar *et al* forthcoming). At Snail Down the single pond barrow sits in the valley floor and is part of a group of 33 barrows, of which 2 are discs and 2 saucers (Thomas 2005). At Silk Hill the pond barrow is accompanied by five disc barrows plus other bell and bowl forms (Lawson 2007, 208). At Durrington Firs the pond barrow, Durrington 10, sits slightly apart from the other

barrows and is the only barrow to occupy the valley floor. It sits approximately 50m north of the central east / west axis, apparently paying it no particular regard.

Four bowl barrows (Durrington 6-9) are dispersed within 300m to the north and west of the pond barrow, over the western side of the valley. Only Durrington 9 is visible as a slight rise in the meadow, all four barrows having suffered severe plough damage in the second half of the 20th century. Relatively early dates can be suggested for two of this group. Late Neolithic and early Bronze Age pottery scattered around Durrington 7 was initially interpreted as an urnfield, an unusual feature near Stonehenge, but was reinterpreted as probably associated with the construction and primary use of the barrow (Richards 1990, 172). Durrington 8 contained a Beaker (Hoare 1812, 166).

Two other round barrows should be mentioned in relation to the group. Hoare described a barrow to the south of the group (his barrow 80) as 'non sepulchral' (1812, 167). He opened another barrow to its south, on the opposite hill (ibid), although it is not numbered or included in Crocker's map. Maud Cunnington could not locate barrow 80 in the open downland in 1913 (Goddard 1913, 244) and early aerial photographs (Fig 10) show just one barrow mound between the cemetery and the Fargo road, at SU 1190 4389. This barrow is shown on the 1880 Ordnance Survey map as a hachured mound with a small tree enclosure on the summit. By the mid-20th century it had been damaged irrevocably by the military practice minefield.

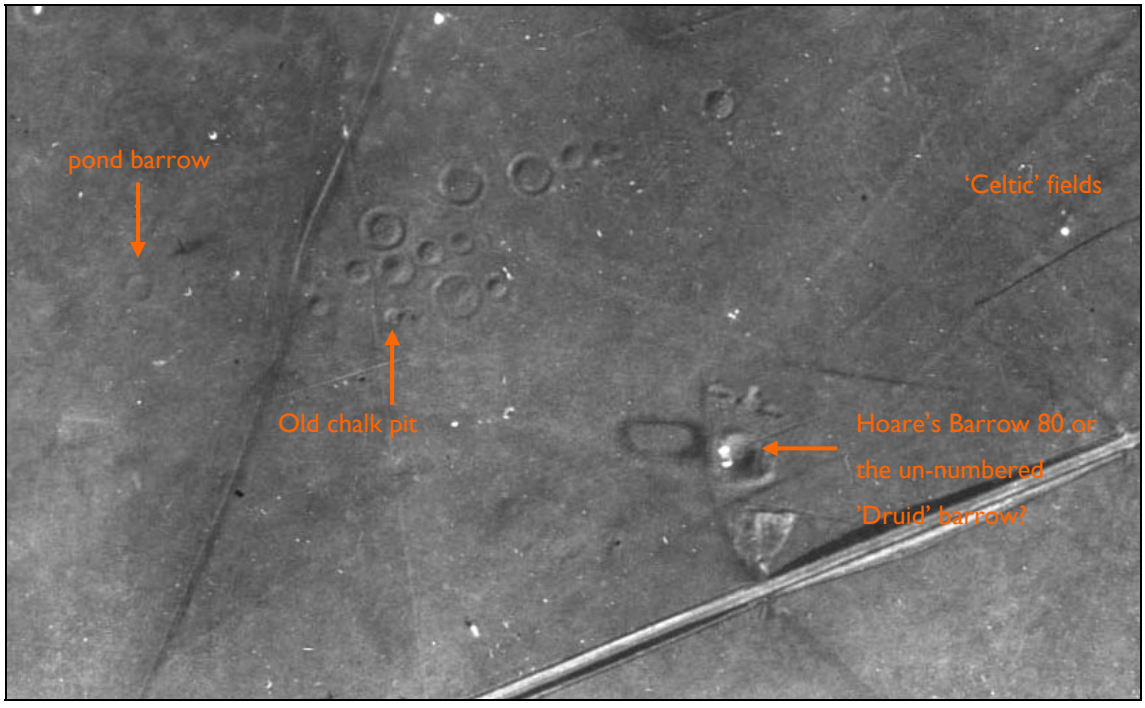

Fig 10: The earthworks in the early 20th century.
Extract from NMR SU 1144/2 CCC11752/4513 undated but probably taken in the 1930s.
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The tight clustering and relatively small size of the individual Durrington Firs barrows implies that it was perceived as important to build the barrows and place burials close to a specific location on the hill slope. Each time there was a conscious and deliberate decision to allow space for other barrows and burials too. This element of respect is a common feature of the round barrow cemeteries around Stonehenge and across the wider region (Richards 1990, 273; Field 1998, 315).

The Durrington Firs barrows were placed sensitively, with consideration for existing burials, other monuments and natural features, in locations that were in harmony with the perceived values and significances at that particular time (Field 1998, 322; Lawson 2007, 210). Choices were made against a range of ideologies which were not static but changed over time, perhaps to the point where additions were simply 'following tradition' (Field 1998, 315). The arrangement of the round barrows would have presented a visual message that may have expressed degrees of allegiance, ancestry or family relationships and even spiritual belief, but this is yet to be proven by modern science (Lawson 2007, 207).

Spatial patterning – the wider landscape

The round barrows of Durrington Firs are just some of perhaps 1000 examples located between the Till and Avon rivers (Lawson 2007, 202), within a few miles of Stonehenge and several other large Neolithic monuments. They appear to be located in zones around and having reference to Stonehenge (Woodward 1996) although their ubiquity has led to the observation that they could be regarded as a single extensive cemetery (Richards 1990, 273). The Stonehenge region is the only place in Wiltshire where large nucleated barrow cemeteries occur, in stark contrast to further west on Salisbury Plain where barrows are scarce, or on the Marlborough Downs where cemeteries are smaller (Fleming 1971). Around Stonehenge they extend over a lozenge-shaped area measuring *c* 9km north to south by 6km east to west. Within this the round barrows tend to cluster into a number of groups or cemeteries, often with a linear element, which demonstrates a persistent interest in particular locations over a considerable period of time.

Given the environmental evidence for an open grassland landscape by the early Bronze Age (Allen & Scaife 2007) a high degree of visibility can be assumed, although some barrow groups are more visible than others due to their topographic location. One can see to Stonehenge from the Durrington Firs barrow cemetery, but from Stonehenge the cemetery remains invisible (Tilley 2007, 203). Conspicuous barrows are often found in linear cemeteries (Peters 2000, 348). Some, like the Cursus Barrow Group, clearly follow ridges and false crests making them highly visible, whilst others, including the Durrington Firs group, are less conspicuously located in valleys. This positional trait is common in Wiltshire, where prominent high points are often deliberately ignored and barrows sited in relation to slopes, watercourses and springs (Field 1998, 320; 2008). Indeed, Hoare commented that he had 'found them in no part of our county so numerous, or large, as in the Vale of Wily between Boreham and Upton Lovell' (1812, 98).

The Durrington Firs barrows were constructed on a dry, well drained slope, perhaps above a seasonal watercourse such as a spring, bourne hole or winterbourne stream (McOmish *et al* 2002, 46; Cleal 2005, 121). Today much of the valley is cultivated but prior to the military presence the water table on the Plain was much higher. The unpredictable presence of water may have added to the significance of the natural valley and these locations revisited again and again, developing their own powerful mythology which attracted people to construct their barrows here (Field 2001). Each barrow added further significance and over time they were developed into a linear cemetery group.

Water provided an essential component for successful existence on the chalk and was centrally important to settlement. Historically, the higher downs have been regarded as inhospitable, windy and lacking summer water; marginal areas away from the hub of everyday life along the more attractive sheltered river valleys (Field 1998, 318). The same is probably true in prehistory: people are likely to have exploited a range of resources across the whole landscape. Contemporary Bronze Age settlements often lack a surrounding enclosure (Brück 2007) making them less conducive to cropmark formation and therefore detection by aerial survey (Wilson 2000, 132). Along the river valleys they may also be masked by later settlements and agricultural improvements such as post-medieval water meadows.

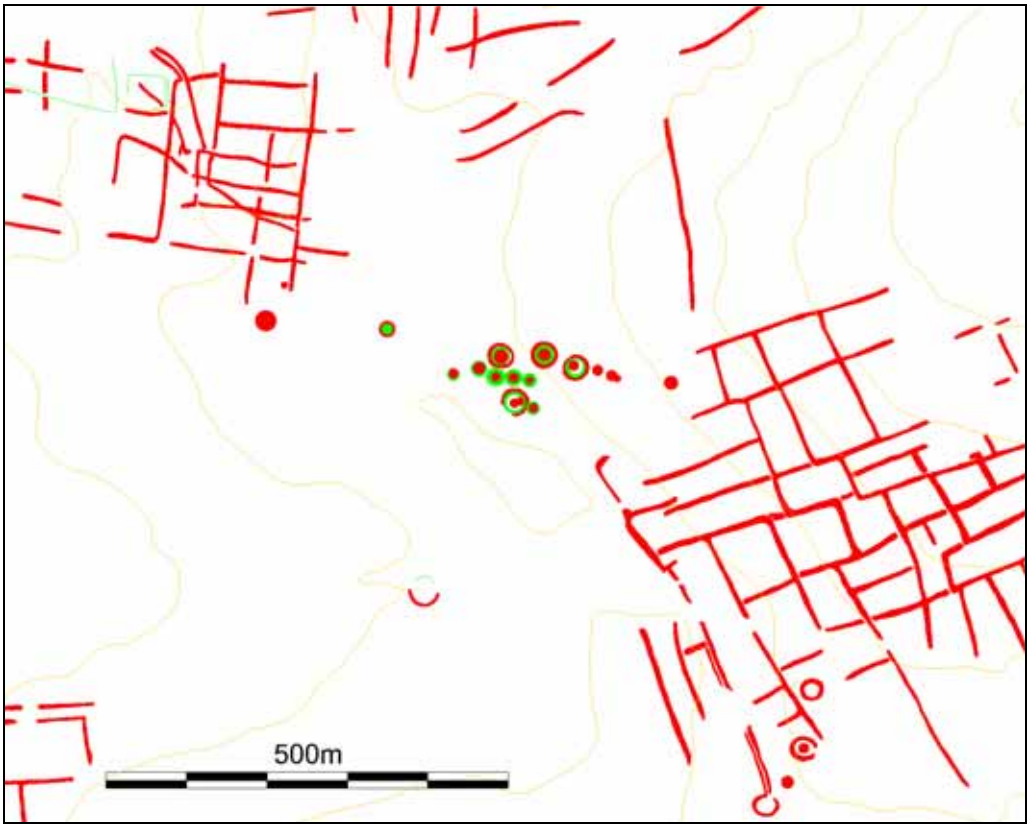

Fig 11: Round barrows and 'Celtic' fields on Durrington Down.
Field survey of Durrington Firs round barrows combined with an extract from National Mapping Programme (NMP) mapping for SU 14 SW. Banks are shown in red and ditches in green.

Across southern England the distribution of round barrows implies that they mark land units, dividing up the valleys in a system of social, economic, agricultural and symbolic units based on river frontage (Field 2008). The linear trend of many cemetery groups also implies territoriality, with barrows placed along a boundary on land that is marginal to any settlement. These boundaries may have had a range of physical and spiritual meanings (Field 1998). The sheer number of round barrows observed around Stonehenge makes individual territories difficult to define. It is possible that the high downs were a vast no man's land shared by a number of communities, perhaps on a seasonal pastoral basis (Fleming 1971, 159), until later earthworks were created to physically divide up the landscape into fields.

Small round barrows start to become widespread in the Beaker period and may have been located close to settlements or agricultural land, although inconspicuous barrows often appear to have closer associations with middle and later Bronze Age agriculture and settlement (Peters 2000, 355). The Durrington Firs round barrows sit between two groups of 'Celtic' field boundaries which have been mapped by the aerial photograph NMP surveys (Crutchley 2000; 2002). In most cases there are no clear limits to the full extent of the fields, which have been flattened by ploughing and other subsequent activity and are often only detectable from the air (RCHME 1979, xiii).

The gap between these two groups might be explained by the masking effects of the Second World War military camp or colluviation, although the dry valley research elsewhere in Stonehenge Bottom suggests the latter is not a major factor locally, perhaps largely thanks to the lack of arable agriculture in the intervening millennia (Richards 1990, 210). The higher water table may have made the valley floor wetter and therefore unsuitable for arable fields in prehistory (McOmish *et al* 2002, 10). The presence of the round barrows themselves may also be a significant factor, although others nearby are clearly incorporated into areas of fields (Fig 11).

The orientation of the two groups of fields is very different and suggests that they were laid out independently and did not form part of the same field system, although they may have been in use around the same time. Dating of 'Celtic' field systems is extremely difficult but they are usually thought to have been first laid out in the middle Bronze Age, between 1500 BC and 1000 BC (McOmish *et al* 2002, 53; Yates 2007). There is slight evidence for earlier arable agriculture on Durrington Down: flint nodules comprising Durrington 7 were interpreted partly as field clearance and partly as funerary cairn (Richards 1990, 275). This could imply that there was a stable, long-term relationship between everyday activities and the creation of the round barrows. Whilst it is possible that the drinking cup from Durrington 8 points to Beaker settlement nearby at the head of the valley, as found beneath some round barrows at Snail Down (Thomas 2005), this is extremely tenuous without further corroborative evidence.

Second World War military features

Earthworks relating to the Second World War are mostly situated in the western half of the surveyed area. They comprise an area of accommodation in the form of Fargo Hutted Camp and various training facilities, as well as part of the Second World War defensive system for Larkhill (Fig 12). None of these features had been recorded previously, even during the aerial photographic mapping projects (Crutchley 2000; 2002). The Durrington Firs survey of such a relatively small area clearly implies that many more 20th-century military features are be yet to be recorded. Once such a review has been conducted the military earthworks surveyed here can be set properly in context.

Fig 12: Durrington Down in 1943.
Fargo Hutted Camp sits at the western end of the barrow group and the curving white line of a contemporary trackway cuts across two of the barrows (circled). The fuzzy black line is a barbed wire fence, part of the defence network for Larkhill Camp, and was removed by 1945. NMR US/7PH/GP/LOC122 extract from frame 1082 24th December 1943 English Heritage (NMR) USAAF Photography.

An early 20th-century trackway extends to the north-east, towards the Packway, and predates the Fargo Hutted Camp which was constructed in 1943. The Camp is one of several that formed parts of the overwhelmingly military focus for the Larkhill area during the 20th century (Stevenson 1995). Two groups of the Camp's Nissen huts are easily traced as rectangular hollows *c* 0.2m deep immediately north of Durrington 11. Their construction, removal and an associated pathway has truncated the barrow's outer bank and ditch. Durrington 10 was also probably damaged at this time.

The northern tip of a trackway around a nearby practice minefield has caused damage to other barrows. It cuts c 0.2m into the barrow mounds of Durrington 18 and Durrington 21 and obscures the possible join of the ditches around Durrington 19 and Durrington 22. The lack of a corresponding cut across the ditch indicates the probable use of tracked vehicles such as tanks. The damage probably also explains the presence of an SPTA warning star on the western side of Durrington 18 and next to other barrows in the group (Fig 6).

CONCLUSION

The analytical survey has recorded a cemetery of diminutive barrows that are tightly clustered together in an inconspicuous part of the landscape, and which provide a contrast with the better known barrow groups further south. The survey has made it possible to suggest a relative sequence of development for the Durrington Firs round barrow cemetery. Whilst there is no immediate Neolithic monument to act as stimulus, the valley may have contained a natural spring or winterbourne stream which accrued significance and attracted the round barrow builders, who developed a linear barrow cemetery during the early Bronze Age. The round barrows survived in excellent condition until the mid-20th century due to the generally benevolent pattern of land use as pasture over the intervening millennia.

The survey has also added several 20th-century military sites to the record and explained their relationship with the earlier monuments. These comprise Fargo Hutted Camp and associated trackways. Military activities during and agricultural practices after the Second World War have damaged the earlier earthworks, but have also added their own archaeology. The survey suggests that many other military sites are still to be recorded in the Stonehenge WHS landscape.

METHODOLOGY

A Level 3 detailed analytical survey (Ainsworth *et al* 2007) of Durrington Firs was carried out in May and June 2010. It used a Trimble R8/5800 survey grade GNSS receiver working in Real Time Kinematic mode (RTK) with points related to an R8 receiver configured as an on-site base station. The position of the base station had previously been adjusted to the National Grid Transformation OSTN02 via the Trimble VRS Now Network RTK delivery service. This uses the Ordnance Survey's GNSS correction network (OSNet) and gives a stated accuracy of 0.01-0.015m per point. The survey data was downloaded into Korec's Geosite Office 5.1 software to process the field codes. The data was then transferred to Autodesk Map 2007 software and plotted on to polyester drawing film at the elected scale of 1:000 for graphical completion in the field.

Fig 13: The initial survey.

A number of inter-visible control points on the site were established with GNSS to allow future work with conventional survey equipment. Their positions are marked by crosses on the English Heritage survey plan (Fig 13). Subtle earthwork detail was added using standard graphical techniques of taped offset and radiation using these control points.

The survey plan was completed at 1: 1000 scale using pen and ink on plastic drawing film. Additional report illustrations were prepared using Adobe CS2 software and the report prepared for publication using Word.

Monument records for each site surveyed have been added to English Heritage's archaeological database (AMIE) and existing records enhanced. The main elements of the monument record comprise location, indexed interpretation, textual description and main sources.

Table 2: AMIE records.

Event:	UID: 1518117	Stonehenge WHS Landscape Project
Archive Collection:		AF00338

AMIE Monument Records			
Existing	Amended	New	Revised total
20	20	4	24

In compliance with English Heritage RADF guidelines (Dickinson 2008), the project archive has been deposited in English Heritage's National Monuments Record, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ, where it can be consulted.

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APPENDIX

Table 3: Measurements of the surveyed barrows.

Name	overall diameter	mound height	mound base (diameter)	mound top (diameter)	plinth base (diameter)	berm (diameter)	pond (diameter)	pond (depth)	ditch (width)	ditch (depth)	ditch (diameter)	outer bank (width)	outer bank (height)
Durrington 9	23m	0.2m	23m	10m									
Durrington 10	[24.5m]						[20.5m]	[0.2m]				[2m]	[0.1m]
Durrington 11	18m	0.8m	12m	5m					3m	0.1m	[17m]	2m	0.1m
Durrington 12	22m	0.7m	14m	9m					3m	0.3m	19m	3m	[02]
Durrington 13	33m	0.8m	19m	12m					6m	0.7m	27m	4m	0.2m
Durrington 14	34m	0.5m	11m	6.5m		14m			5m	0.1m	26m	4m	0.2m
Durrington 15	33m	0.5m	12m	5m		15m			4m	0.3m	25m	4m	0.25m
Durrington 16	20m	0.6m	13m	5.5m					4m	0.2m	20m		
Durrington 17	18m	0.8m	12m	4.5m					5m	0.1m	18m		
Durrington 17a	16m	0.5m	9m	3m					6m	0.1m	16m		
Durrington 18	25m	0.9m	12m	5m		15m			5.5m	0.3m	25m		
Durrington 19	21.5m	0.8m	14m	7m					5m	0.15m	21m	5m	0.1m
Durrington 20	36m	0.7m	16.5m	10.5m		21m			6.5m	0.15m	30m	3m	0.2m
Durrington 21	17m	1.2m	11m	5m					4m	0.2m	17m		
Durrington 22	22.5m	0.6m	10.5m	3.5m					4m	0.3m	17.5m	4m	0.2m
Durrington 23	15m	0.6m	15m	8.5m									

Square brackets indicate estimated figures, for example where the surviving ditch does not completely surround the mound, or where the barrow could not be surveyed.
Maximum diameters are given. Figures may appear to not add up where the mound extends into the bottom of the ditch.






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