RCHME SURVEY REPORT

HAMBLEDON HILL

HAMBLEDON HILL, CHILD OKEFORD, HANFORD AND IWERNE COURTNEY or SHROTON, DORSET

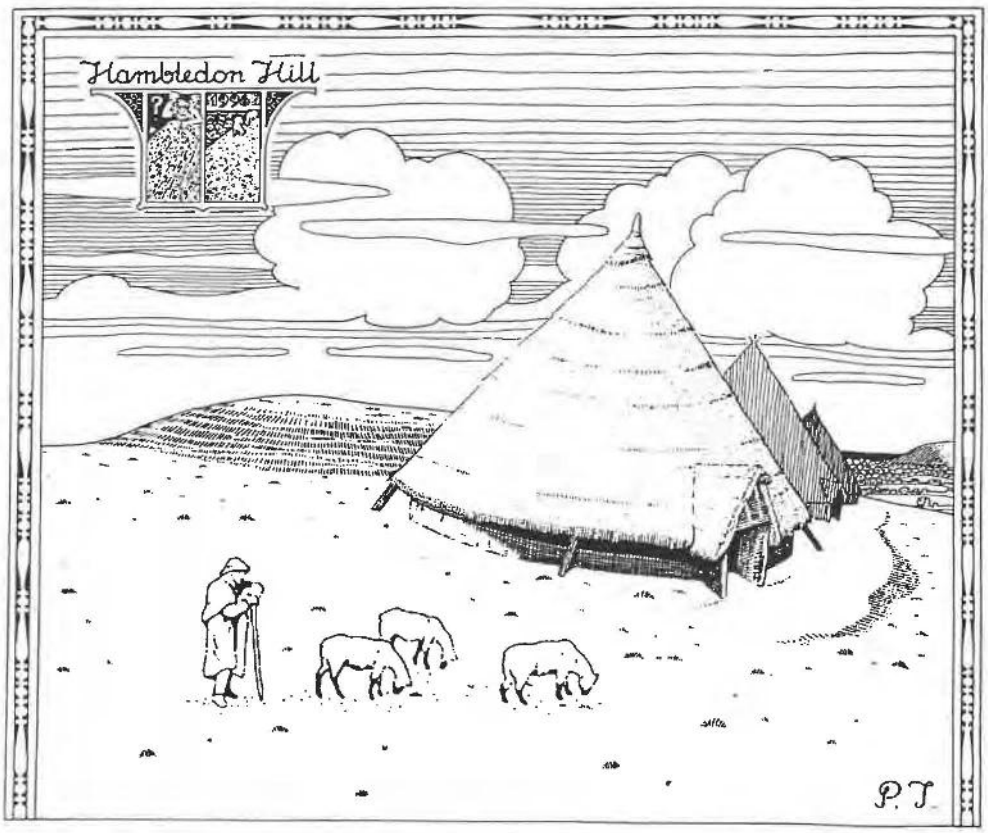
NMR NUMBERS ST 81 SW 10 and 17

REQUEST SURVEY

JUNE-SEPTEMBER 1996

RCHM
ENGLAND

RCHME (CAMBRIDGE)
Brooklands
24 Brooklands Avenue,
CAMBRIDGE, CB2 2BU



Roundhouses south-east of the northern long barrow
Reconstruction drawing by Peter Topping after Heywood Sumner

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1. INTRODUCTION

Summary

In 1996 the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) undertook an archaeological survey of Hambledon Hill in Dorset. The fieldwork revealed significant new information about the extent and form of the Neolithic causewayed enclosure complex (National Monuments Record number ST 81 SW 17) and added a wealth of new detail about the impressive Iron Age hillfort (ST 81 SW 10) and its associated landscape. The earthworks recorded in the interior of the hillfort are particularly important, indicating a complex 'town plan' which is exceptionally well-preserved. Medieval and later remains around the hill were also recorded.

As part of the survey, the history of archaeological investigation on the site was reviewed, and drawings from the previously unpublished excavations carried out in 1958-60 by Desmond Bonney of RCHME were prepared for publication.

Between late May and September 1996, staff from RCHME's Cambridge and Exeter field offices carried out an archaeological survey of the multi-period earthwork complex on Hambledon Hill in Dorset. The archaeological landscape includes at least two Neolithic causewayed enclosures, with approximately contemporary cross-ridge dykes and outworks, two Neolithic long barrows, a number of Bronze Age round barrows and, most obviously, a well-preserved multi-phase Iron Age hillfort,

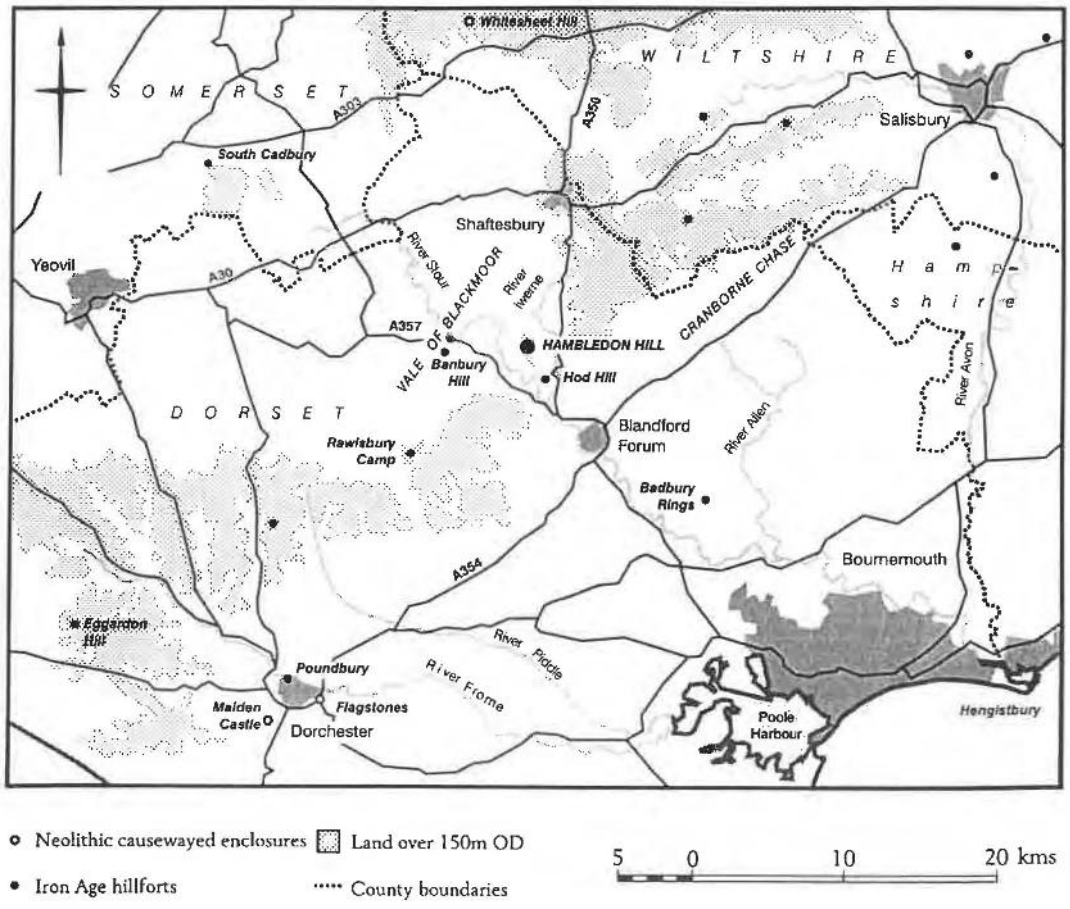

Figure 1: Location map, showing some other sites mentioned in the text

widely regarded as one of the most impressive monuments of its kind to be found anywhere in England. Medieval and later cultivation and Post-Medieval quarrying have taken place on and around the hill. Hambledon Hill lies in the parishes of Hanford, Child Okeford and Iwerne Courtney or Shroton in North Dorset (centred at National Grid Reference ST 848 122).

The hill is an imposing massif of cretaceous Upper, Middle and Lower Chalk, comprising three steep-sided spurs radiating from a slightly higher central dome; the very top of the dome is capped with a thin deposit of clay-with-flints, which represents essentially the only geological variation on the hilltop (Ordnance Survey 1977). The massif stands isolated between the alluviated valleys of the river Stour to the west and its tributary the Iwerne to the east, some 3.5kms north of their confluence. The summit, which rises to 192m above OD, commands almost panoramic views over distances of up to 45kms, particularly across a broad arc over the Vale of Blackmoor to the north. Conversely, the combination of dramatic topography and massive earthworks makes the site a prominent landmark when seen from the surrounding countryside. The area to the east of Hambledon Hill - Cranborne Chase - is exceptionally rich in prehistoric sites and monuments, and has been a testing-ground for archaeological methods and theories since the early nineteenth century.

The new survey was undertaken both as part of RCHME's national project to record Industry and Enclosure in the Neolithic Period, and in response to a request from English Heritage for an accurate record of the Iron Age hillfort, on which to base future management of the monument. The hillfort lies within a National Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), on land owned by the Hawthorn Trust under the auspices of English Nature. The Reserve is an 'open access' site, and it is intended to use the results of the survey in its presentation to the general public. In addition, the investigation was supported by Roger Mercer, whose final report on the excavations and fieldwork undertaken between 1974 and 1986 is nearing completion (Mercer and Healy in preparation). The preliminary results and interpretations of his research into the Neolithic monuments have already heavily influenced current thinking about the purpose of the enigmatic monuments known as causewayed enclosures and their role in the surrounding landscape.

The principal monuments, the Neolithic main causewayed enclosure and the Iron Age hillfort, are protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Dorset 269 and 14 respectively) and are recorded in the National Monuments Record as ST 81 SW 17 and 10. For further identifiers and full grid references, see Gazetteer of Sites and Monuments in Appendix i.

Summary description and history

For terms which appear in bold type in the text, see schematic plan (Figure 2); most of these are the names used by Roger Mercer and Roger Palmer to describe the different elements of the site. The complex palimpsest of the archaeological landscape, formed over several millennia, makes the study of individual monuments in isolation difficult, and in fact to some extent inappropriate, since many of the elements inter-relate and dating is seldom precise or straightforward. Nevertheless, some sub-division of the site is necessary, and the evolution of the earthworks can be broken down into four broad periods: earlier Neolithic - Beaker (late Neolithic/earliest Bronze Age), early - middle Bronze Age, late Bronze Age - Iron Age - Roman, and early Medieval - Post-Medieval. The individual monuments are described in detail in Section 3.

The earlier Neolithic **main causewayed enclosure**, which has been the subject of several campaigns of excavation, occupies the domed central summit of Hambledon Hill. It comprises a single line of interrupted bank and ditch, almost triangular in overall plan, with an internal area of 8.3ha (20.5 acres). The narrow necks of land immediately to its south and east are crossed by two causewayed **cross-dykes**, which echo the course of the main enclosure earthwork. The recent survey has identified a possible remnant of a third cross-dyke extending across the northern neck of land. Three outer earthworks - the **Shroton spur outwork**, **Hanford spur outwork** and **'relict' spur outwork** (so-called because it is mostly overlain by Iron Age features) - extend across the three least steep approaches to the central part of the hill. On the south-eastern spur (the Stepleton spur), stood a second, much smaller, oval causewayed enclosure known as the **Stepleton enclosure**. Mercer has suggested that a slight earthwork which he termed the **hillfort spur enclosure**, previously thought to represent an early stage in the development of the Iron Age ramparts, may in fact be of Neolithic date, although trial excavation could not confirm this. These separate elements seem to have been linked by a series of causewayed linear earthworks, which approximately follow the natural contours of the hill. The **Stepleton outwork** and **western outwork** both survive in parts as earthworks, but no comparable outwork has been identified on the eastern side of the hill. The different character of these linear earthworks suggests that they may result from a later phase of construction, though still within the earlier Neolithic sequence; the evidence remains inconclusive. Material for the construction of the Hanford spur outwork may have come from the digging of a number of **flint mines** or quarries discovered nearby and excavated by Mercer, though the dating of these remains uncertain.

Approximately mid-way between the main causewayed enclosure and the putative hillfort spur enclosure, a well-preserved early Neolithic **long barrow** occupies the narrow spine of land later enclosed by the hillfort. A second **long barrow**, which was investigated by Mercer and is perhaps of different date, though still within the earlier Neolithic period, lay immediately to the south of the main causewayed enclosure, between it and the southern cross-dyke. This earthwork had been bulldozed prior to ploughing and was therefore totally excavated; the present mound is a replica of the original barrow.

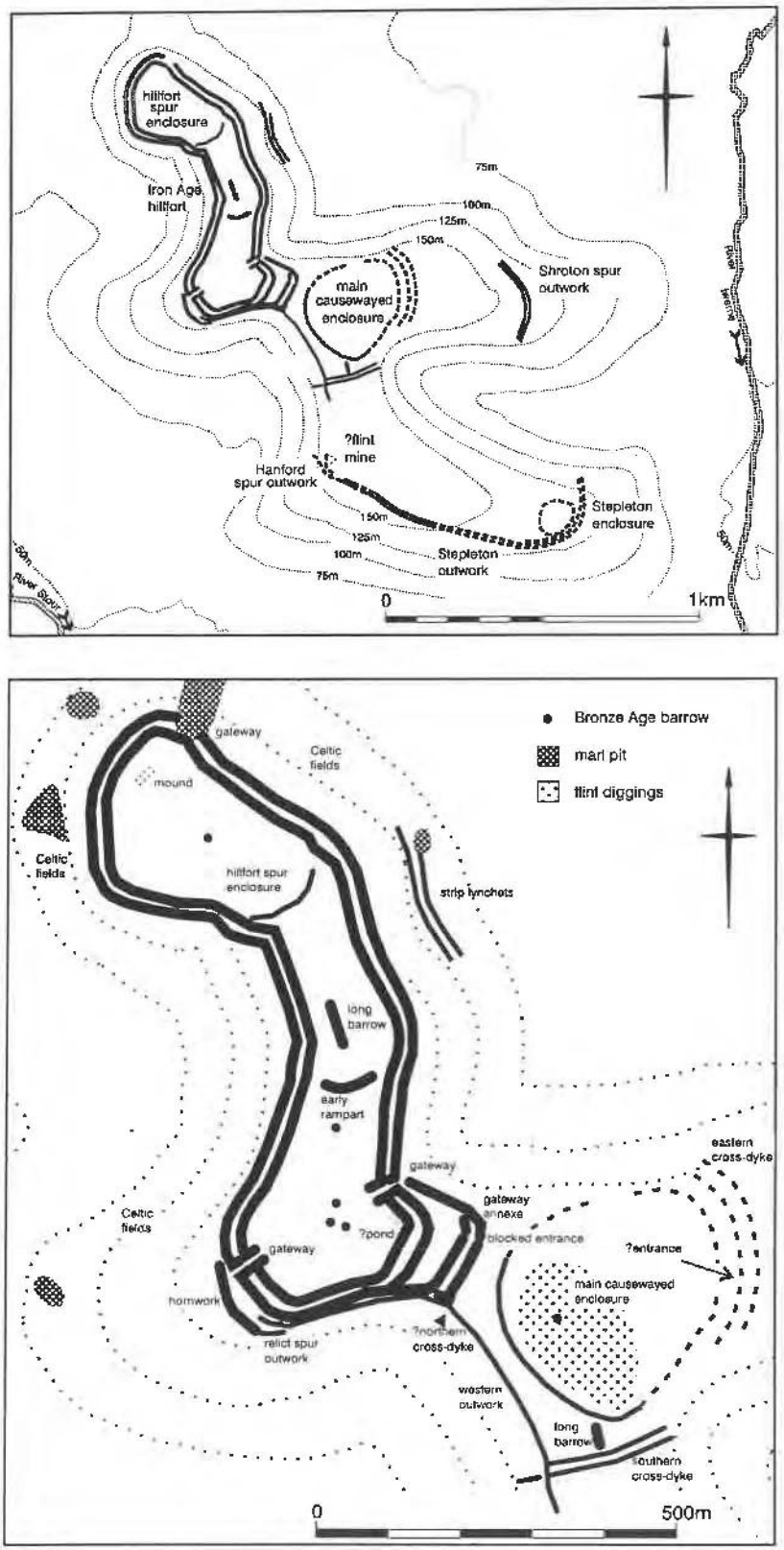

Figure 2: Schematic plans of the site

Prior to the RCHME survey, one certain and one possible Bronze Age **round barrow** had been identified on Hambledon Hill, both lying within the southern third of the interior of the hillfort. In the course of the new survey, a further four possible barrows were identified, one standing near the centre of the main causewayed enclosure. Although these earthworks are the only features which can be assigned with confidence to the Bronze Age period, it is possible that some of the house platforms, and perhaps the agricultural terraces re-used by the earliest ramparts of the hillfort, originated in the later Bronze Age.

The exceptionally well-preserved **Iron Age hillfort** is a complex monument in its own right; there are two, and in places three lines of ramparts and traces of dense occupation throughout the interior. Though there has been very little archaeological excavation carried out, it is clear from the superficial appearance of the earthworks that the ramparts experienced several phases of expansion and re-modelling. The clearest example of this is the **early rampart**, which went out of use as such when the hillfort was extended to take in the southern end of the spur. In addition, an unfinished barbican-like defence across the fairly level south-eastern approach, here termed the **gateway annexe** , and a '**hornwork**' added to the south-western gateway, testify to a number of other major changes. The south-western and south-eastern **gateways** are both relatively complex, with in-turned flanking earthworks, forming passage-like entrances. At the northern end of the hillfort, a third entrance is more simple in form, and was perhaps contemporary with an earlier phase of the hillfort. Although the earthwork evidence suggests that all the house-platforms identified in the interior could theoretically have been occupied at the same time, it is almost certain that these too originated at different dates and experienced many minor changes, even where they continued to use long-established sites. Some of the house-platforms may have survived in use well into the Roman period, since stray finds of Roman material are recorded in the vicinity.

Traces of arable field systems survive around the slopes of Hambledon Hill. Some are similar in form to '**Celtic fields**', which are generally accepted as being of later prehistoric or Romano-British date. They may therefore have been cultivated while the hillfort was occupied, but in some instances, the earthworks can be shown to pre-date the construction of the ramparts, while elsewhere they are clearly later. It seems likely that some fields may have continued in use into the Roman period, and that a few survived as boundaries until the Post-Medieval period.

Mercer's excavations revealed that in the Anglo-Saxon period (seventh - eighth centuries), at least fourteen bodies were interred in the bank of the Stepleton enclosure. It was common practice to re-use existing earthworks for inhumations, and it is possible that others exist elsewhere in the vicinity. No earthworks resulting from later Medieval activity have been identified within the hillfort; the excellent preservation of the prehistoric remains, which implies that there has not been any major scrub encroachment since the abandonment of the hillfort, suggests that the area might have been used as common grazing land. Later cartographic evidence (Dorset CRO b-e; Ordnance Survey 1887) suggests that the Medieval strip field pattern extended only as far as the lower slopes of Hambledon Hill, and the **strip lynchets** recorded on its sides appear to confirm this. The new survey recorded several small fields of **ridge-and-furrow** cultivation within the hillfort and two larger fields on the slope below the

south-west gateway, but these are interpreted as being of probable Post-Medieval date. The only other Post-Medieval activity known to have had a significant impact on Hambledon Hill is chalk quarrying to produce lime as an agricultural fertiliser. The large **marl pit** which impinges on the northern gateway of the hillfort is known from cartographic sources to have been in use by the mid-eighteenth century, and the main period of use was probably the nineteenth century, when there was a lime kiln on the same site. Shallow **flint diggings**, which were still in use in the early years of the twentieth century, have also disturbed much of the main causewayed enclosure.

It is possible that some minor modifications were made to the earthworks, particularly around the **blocked entrance**, when the hillfort was held, unsuccessfully, against Cromwell by a local militia (Hutchins 1870). Although Hambledon Hill would appear to have represented the 'Heights of Abraham' when General Wolfe trained his troops at Shroton Lines in 1745 (Dorset CRO f), prior to the storming of Quebec, there is no firm evidence that this involved any modification to the hillfort. Unlike many other monuments in such dominant locations, Hambledon Hill does not seem to have been significantly affected by later military activity. It was not chosen as a site for a Napoleonic beacon (Dorset CRO g), but the earthwork of an Ordnance Survey triangulation station, probably of early nineteenth century origin, was identified by the recent survey. Hambledon Hill underwent no major changes in the Second World War.

Ploughing of the majority of the Neolithic features began in 1964, and has now all but destroyed surface traces over c.75% of the area of the main causewayed enclosure, together with several of the outworks. The c.25% of the main causewayed enclosure which survives relatively well was ploughed only briefly, and has now been returned to pasture. It was the imminent danger of eradication by ploughing which prompted the total excavation of the Stepleton enclosure and a large sample of the main causewayed enclosure by Roger Mercer.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY

Plate 1: The northern long barrow, with the antiquarian excavation (RCHME: Crown Copyright reserved. Negative number AA96/2866)

Early observation and research

The relatively slight earthworks of the Neolithic enclosures may not have been considered significant until relatively recently. A plan of 1884 (Dorset CRO a), amended for the use of General Pitt-Rivers, local landowner and pioneer of archaeological fieldwork techniques, shows (in addition to the hillfort) the more massive Neolithic cross-dykes and spur outworks, but not the main causewayed enclosure, and does not suggest the interrupted nature of the earthworks. The southern and eastern cross dykes and part of the main causewayed enclosure were recorded on both the Ordnance Survey First and Second Edition 25-inch scale maps (Ordnance Survey 1887; 1901), the former map being amongst the earliest accurate depictions of a causewayed enclosure in Britain, though again the existence of the causeways was not recognised.

The fact that both Neolithic long barrows were known as 'The Giant's Grave' (Warne 1872, 325), a name probably originating in the Medieval period, implies that these distinctive monuments have been well-known locally for many centuries, if not since their creation. Looting may have been carried out at an early date; the results of what must be an antiquarian excavation through the centre of the northern barrow (mentioned by the Reverend Charles

Warne, writing in 1872) were never published. The recent survey indicates that some of the Bronze Age barrows have also been damaged by looting or unpublished antiquarian investigation.

It can be assumed that the existence of the Iron Age hillfort on Hambledon Hill has always been recognised. The fact that the boundary between the parishes of Child Okeford and Iwerne Courtney follows the eastern side of the hillfort indicates that it was regarded as a significant landmark early in the Medieval period. The re-occupation of the hillfort in the Civil War indicates that its defensive capability was fully appreciated. The earliest explicit mention in an archaeological context appears to have been by Thomas Gerard, writing in the 1620s, whose account was reproduced almost a hundred years later by a local antiquarian, the Reverend John Coker:-

...two Hills of great height which have their Toppes fortified with treble Ditches and Rampiers called at this day Hameldon and Hod. They have been camps, I think noone can denie, but of whose making I believe as few can tell...

(Coker 1732)

The antiquarian John Aubrey, writing in the later seventeenth century, recorded that:-

Old Captain Ryves, of Ranceston, told me that he knew Roman coins digged or ploughed up on the top of Hambledon Hill, which he gave away, and forgot what Emperor's description they had.

(Fowles and Legg 1980, 358)

An estate map of 1767 (Dorset CRO b) portrays the Iron Age ramparts lying within Iwerne Courtney parish with considerable accuracy, though this was clearly not the primary purpose of the map. Similarly, the Ordnance Survey 1-inch scale map of 1811, which was initially intended for military purposes, generally recorded major archaeological earthworks, and has a schematic depiction of the hillfort (Ordnance Survey 1811). Warne (1872, 65-9) provides the first detailed description of the hillfort, together with a sketch of the south-eastern gateway and gateway annexe. The depictions of the hillfort on the First and Second Edition 25-inch scale maps (Ordnance Survey 1887; 1901) show the main features of the site in detail, and formed the basis of most subsequent depictions. Nineteenth century theoretical discussions of the hillfort tended to focus on the role of the site in charting successive invasions by Belgic tribes and the Romans, as was normal at that time (Dorset CRO h). The earliest documented excavation was carried out by E Cunnington over two days in October 1894 (Cunnington 1895). The precise location of the trench was not made clear, and the character of the finds assemblage is not diagnostic of any particular part of the site. Cunnington's brief description suggests that it may have been in the vicinity of the early rampart, and a possible trench was identified near the top of that earthwork and perpendicular to it, extending for a least 3m. From its width (only 0.4m), it seems improbable that Cunnington did any more than examine the uppermost layers of the feature. The recent survey also identified two possible mounds of spoil overlying one of the larger houses at the southern end of the interior (grid reference ST 8451 1234), though these may well represent some form of disturbance other than antiquarian excavation. Finds from Cunnington's trench included a few fragments of a large quern, apparently of a non-local stone, Romano-British pottery, an iron spearhead and knife, and a quantity of

slingstones and river-washed pebbles. In addition, there were some distinctive 'Celtic' (ie Iron Age) remains, comprising '...mostly badly burnt soft pottery and fragments of small querns, made of the greensand that appears near the base of the hill'. Cunnington also briefly records stray finds, mostly Roman (including coins of Constantinian date), found earlier on the hilltop.

Research from the early twentieth century onwards

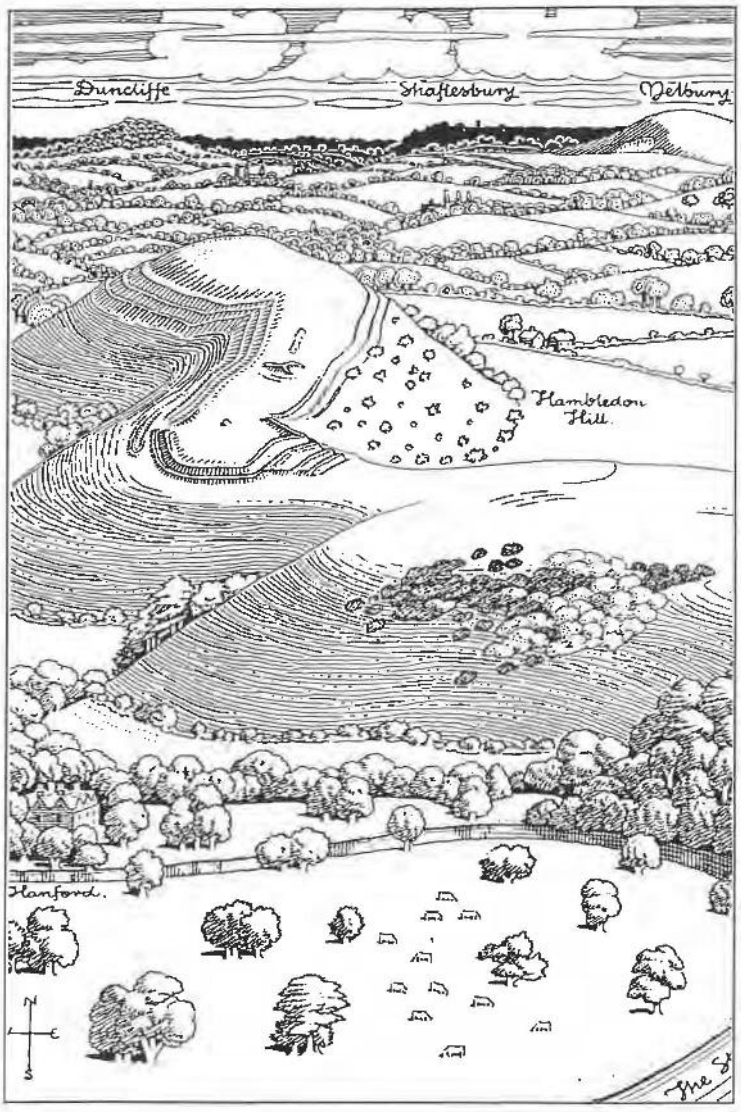

Figure 3: Extract from Heywood Sumner's view of Hambledon Hill

It was with the aid of the Ordnance Survey 1-inch map depiction of the natural topography, and the First and Second Edition 25-inch depictions of the archaeological earthworks, that Heywood Sumner produced his beautiful semi-bird's eye view of Hod Hill and Hambledon Hill in 1913 (Sumner 1913, 15-17; Figure 3). The tinted line-drawing, and earthwork plans, portrayed part of the main causewayed enclosure, together with the southern cross-dyke and the Shroton outwork. In the accompanying text he observed that these slight earthworks were likely to date to a different period from the hillfort.

The general growth of field archaeology in the early part of the twentieth century, and the advent of aerial photography in particular, prompted increasingly sophisticated research into causewayed enclosures. The first detailed account of the earthworks on Hambledon Hill, and the earliest suggestion of a Neolithic date for some of them, was made by Gardner in the late 1920s in the light of aerial photographs taken in 1924 (NMR a; Gardner 1925; Gardner in Crawford and Keiller 1928, 44-55). These photographs remain some of the most dramatic and informative images of the earthworks (see Plate 2). Gardner's suggestion of a Neolithic date for the main

causewayed enclosure was based primarily on the proximity of the two long barrows, and the recovery of a few flint flakes and a scraper from the flint diggings. He identified for the first time the earthwork now thought to be the possible Neolithic 'hillfort spur enclosure'; his tentative suggestion that the Iron Age ramparts at the northern end of the spur might follow an 'even earlier' plan was to be revived by Roger Mercer almost sixty years later. The causewayed appearance of the main enclosure was attributed entirely to damage by later cart-tracks, though Gardner was well aware that this construction technique was then becoming regarded for the first time as a diagnostic characteristic of early Neolithic enclosures. This misinterpretation is presumably the reason for the somewhat surprising omission of Hambledon Hill from Curwen's seminal analysis in 1930 entitled 'Neolithic Camps', a paper which was commissioned by Crawford and originally to be written by Alexander Keiller (Curwen 1930).

The first known excavations undertaken on the main causewayed enclosure were carried out by G de G Sieveking and RWH Erskine in July 1951 (Farrar 1951, 105-6; Dorset County Museum a). No detailed account was published, but the location of the trenches was depicted on the plan of the earthworks made by RCHME in 1959 (RCHME 1970 and Figure 4). Through a series of small trenches in the ditch segments around the western side of the main causewayed enclosure, the excavations were able to confirm a Neolithic date for its construction and to distinguish two different phases of use. The earlier phase was associated with 'Neolithic bowl' pottery (then referred to as Windmill Hill style), flint and chert scrapers, alleged 'hearths', and human skull fragments. The later phase was again associated with Neolithic bowl pottery, but also Bell Beaker, Peterborough and 'rusticated' wares (indicating a late Neolithic - early Bronze Age date), together with leaf-shaped arrowheads, scrapers and other flint tools, but no axes.

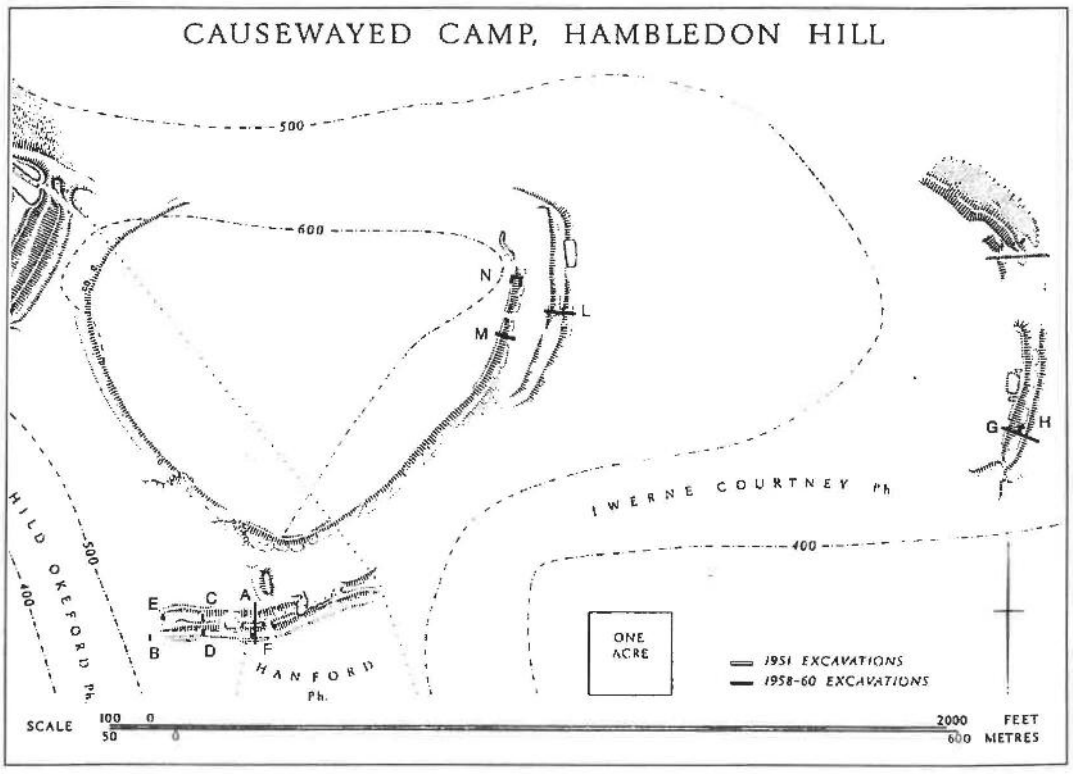

Figure 4: The Neolithic main causewayed enclosure (as surveyed by RCHME in 1959; trenches F and H differ slightly from version published in RCHME 1970)

HAMBLEDON HILL MAIN CAUSEWAYED ENCLOSURE
NORTHERN SECTION OF TRENCH M (EXCAVATED BY D BONNEY IN 1960)
REDRAWN AT 1:50 FROM ORIGINAL AT 1:24

EAST CROSS DYKE
TRENCH L
NORTHERN SECTION

SOUTHERN SECTION

SOUTH CROSS DYKE
TRENCH A
EASTERN SECTION

CHARCOAL CONCENTRATION (PROJECTED IN)

SOUTH CROSS DYKE
TRENCHES C AND D
EASTERN SECTION

CONTINUATION OF
SOUTH CROSS DYKE
TRENCH B
EASTERN SECTION

1 0 5 10 METRES

- Windmill Hill pottery
- Beaker pottery
- turf and topsoil
- rhalky wash with small chalk fragments
- large chalk blocks with flints
- dark humic occupation material

Figure 5: Section drawings from Desmond Bonney's excavations

In 1959, RCHME carried out a large scale earthwork survey of much of Hambledon Hill, recording many details of the main causewayed enclosure and the two adjacent cross-dykes for the first time, and identifying the degraded remains of the Stepleton enclosure (RCHME 1970, 131, 104-5). However, once again the full extent of the causewayed construction technique was not depicted. Both long barrows were surveyed at large scale and these plans remain a very valuable record of the earthworks prior to the damage caused by modern ploughing in the 1960s (NMR b). Over the three summers between 1958 and 1960, Desmond Bonney of RCHME excavated several trenches: two through the eastern side of the main causewayed enclosure and several more through the adjacent cross-dykes and the Shroton outwork (see Figures 4 and 5). The results seem to be closely comparable to those of the earlier excavation, although once again no detailed publication was produced (the excavation archive is now held by Dorchester Museum (b & c)). The Neolithic bowl pottery from the early phase was compared to that from the causewayed enclosure at Maiden Castle, as well as Windmill Hill, and the assemblage from the upper layers also indicated a phase of use in the Beaker period. Again, human remains were present, including skulls from the base of the eastern cross-dyke. The lithic assemblage was also comparable to that from the earlier excavation, though both flaked and ground flint axes were found. In Trench E at the western end of the southern cross-dyke (see Figure 4), three flaked and ground axes were found in close proximity, suggesting a specially placed deposit. A radio-carbon determination of 3780-3340 calibrated BC (4740±90 BP; NPL-76) was obtained from charcoal from the base of the inner ditch of the southern cross-dyke.

Intensive arable cultivation began in 1964, and field-walking over the following year recovered Neolithic material, including a jade (nephrite) axe of Alpine origin (Evens *et al.* 1972). In the face of the imminent destruction of the Neolithic monuments by ploughing, Roger Mercer carried out a programme of excavations between 1974 and 1986. The principal areas were the main causewayed enclosure (approximately 20% of the ditch was excavated), the southern long barrow, immediately to its south (totally excavated), and the Stepleton enclosure (totally excavated). A series of interim reports have described the results of this major investigation (Mercer 1976; 1977; 1980; 1984; 1987; 1988; 1989a; 1989b; 1990; Mercer and Healy 1995). Given that the final publication (Mercer and Healy in preparation) will combine and review all the earlier work, full references to Mercer's earlier reports will not be given here. As mentioned above, Mercer's preliminary interpretations of this work already underpin much of current thinking about the social and practical functions of causewayed enclosures and their physical development over time (see in particular Mercer 1980; 1990). The excavations confirmed the Neolithic date of all the outworks, with the exception of the hillfort spur enclosure, from which no datable material was recovered in a primary context.

The ditch of the main causewayed enclosure provided further evidence for specially placed deposits of human skulls and numerous other bones, together with considerable quantities of animal bones, predominantly from the meat-bearing parts of the carcass. Stone axes imported from sources in Cornwall and Devon were not uncommon, a few came from sources in South Wales and a single fragment from the well-known 'axe factories' at Great Langdale in Cumbria. The pottery was predominantly made of Kimmeridge clay obtained from sources *c.*2kms away, but small amounts of gabbroic pottery from Cornwall were also present. A similar, though

woodland, which was gradually cleared over the Neolithic period, before rapid and extensive clearance began in the early Bronze Age (Bell and Johnson in Mercer and Healy in preparation). However, analysis of the charcoal indicates that a wide range of species was utilised, and that the woodland habitat was already quite diverse by the beginning of the Neolithic period (Austin in Mercer and Healy in preparation).

While Mercer's excavations have generally been regarded as the key research into Neolithic activity on Hambledon Hill, the aerial photographic analysis and earthwork survey carried out over the same period by Roger Palmer is equally important in the context of RCHME's recent survey (Palmer in Mercer and Healy in preparation). Palmer's work, which interacted closely with the design and results of the excavation, identified and recorded many significant features for the first time, including the 'relict', 'western' and Stepleton outworks. The aerial photographic analysis required the flying of three sorties to provide cover of the hilltop itself at 1:5000 scale, but Palmer observed that many of the newly discovered features are in fact visible on Crawford and Keiller's photographs of 1924. He also noted that some of the features would not have been identified on the ground had their existence not first been noted from the air. The recent RCHME survey has confirmed all Palmer's additions to the RCHME plan of 1959.

In contrast to the intensive research into the Neolithic remains on Hambledon Hill, the Iron Age hillfort has seen little fieldwork and few major re-interpretations in the twentieth century. A brief discussion of the earthworks by AH Allcroft (1908, 366) concluded erroneously that the early rampart was a post-Roman attempt to reduce the area of the hillfort. Heywood Sumner's plan added little information to the existing Ordnance Survey depictions, but he made a number of prescient observations in the accompanying text. Firstly he suggested that the multivallate defences on the south-eastern approach to the hillfort appeared unfinished, and secondly that the circular platforms in the interior might have provided shelter for livestock (at a time when it was widely accepted that prehistoric people inhabited underground 'pit-dwellings').

Gardner's survey added a few significant details to the plan, including two scarps (f on Figure 17) which have been interpreted subsequently as both a remnant of the early ramparts and lynchets predating the construction of the hillfort. His accompanying analysis remains outstanding for its clarity and cogent argument. He rejected the interpretation of Allcroft, demonstrating that the southern part of the hillfort was a later expansion. Although he did not depict them on the plan, he commented in some detail on the trackways in the interior, and the relationship of these to the house platforms (which he interpreted as pit dwellings). He related the earthworks to pottery of All Cannings Cross type, which erosion had revealed stratified beneath the inner rampart bank, and suggested on the basis of the ceramic chronology accepted at that time that the main part of the hillfort could be dated to the early Iron Age around 500 BC, with additions in the late Iron Age.

The RCHME earthwork survey of 1959 improved slightly on the depiction of the ramparts, but interpreted the hillfort spur enclosure (probably wrongly in the light of Mercer's trial excavation) as being the earliest phase in the expansion of the Iron Age fort. By far the most significant contribution of the survey was the addition of much internal detail, including a total

of 207 house-platforms and other traces of occupation (RCHME 1970). Some areas, including the south-western gateway, were re-surveyed at large scales (NMR b).

Palmer's re-survey of small areas of the hillfort, principally around the possible Neolithic enclosure on the hillfort spur and the outwork underlying the south-west gateway, was carried out at a larger scale and recorded several more house-platforms in those areas. Mercer's detailed analysis of the hillfort as a whole concluded that the earthwork stratigraphy supported his hypothesis that the hillfort spur enclosure might be of Neolithic origin. He observed that the scarps recorded by Gardner seem to represent remnants of the ramparts of the early hillfort, but also suggested that they are modifications of a well-developed earlier field system, which in turn post-dates the hillfort spur enclosure. The recent survey supports both these major re-interpretations.

Mercer's excavation on the putative Neolithic enclosure on the hillfort spur took in an Iron Age house platform terraced into the upper silts of the earlier ditch (Mercer 1986). The house was circular in plan and approximately 6.5m in diameter. Finds included a fragment of a bone weaving-comb, glass beads similar to those found at All Cannings Cross, and an iron 'swan's-necked' pin, suggesting a date in the early Iron Age, around the late sixth or early fifth centuries BC (Brown in Mercer and Healy in preparation). Although it was not noted at the time by the excavators, the area appears to have been disturbed by Post-Medieval ploughing; this is evident in the published description of the topsoil, and in the muddled character of the pottery assemblage (which also included a possible sherd of Late Iron Age or Romano-British 'black-burnished ware'). Significantly, there was nothing to indicate that the house had been rebuilt, or that the platform had ever been re-used as such.

3. DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SITE

For an overview of the monuments on Hambledon Hill and their chronological development, see Section 1. Section 3 presents a detailed description of all the individual components of the site which survive as earthworks, and a summary of those which have been destroyed by ploughing and are now known through excavation, aerial photographic analysis, and previous surveys. For letters in bold type, in addition to the terms used above, see RCHME earthwork plan surveyed at 1:1000 scale (Plan 1), and the reduced version of the same plan included at the end of this report. Figures alongside the text are reproduced at various scales.

Each section of the rest of this report is divided into four periods:

The earlier Neolithic - Beaker periods (*c.*3800 BC - 1800 BC)

The early - middle Bronze Age (1800 BC - 1000 BC)

The late Bronze Age - Roman periods (1000 BC - 400 AD)

The early Medieval period to the Second World War (400 AD -1945)

The earlier Neolithic - Beaker periods (*c.*3800 BC - 1800 BC)

Plate 2: Aerial photograph by Alexander Keiller (1924), showing the enclosure prior to the start of ploughing in 1964. (RCHME: Crown Copyright reserved: National Library of Air Photographs ref. ST 8412/3)

The main causewayed enclosure

(See Figure 7)

The main causewayed enclosure occupies the domed central summit of Hambledon Hill. The course of the single causewayed bank and ditch follows a line around the hilltop between the 168m and 185m contours, on average some 9m lower than the summit. On the north side, the existence of an earthwork is uncertain, but it may follow the edge of the steep natural break of slope. A sub-triangular area of about 8.3ha (20.5 acres) is enclosed, with approximate dimensions of 320m south-west to north-east by 270m transversely. The outline of the enclosure as a whole is fairly smooth, suggesting that though it

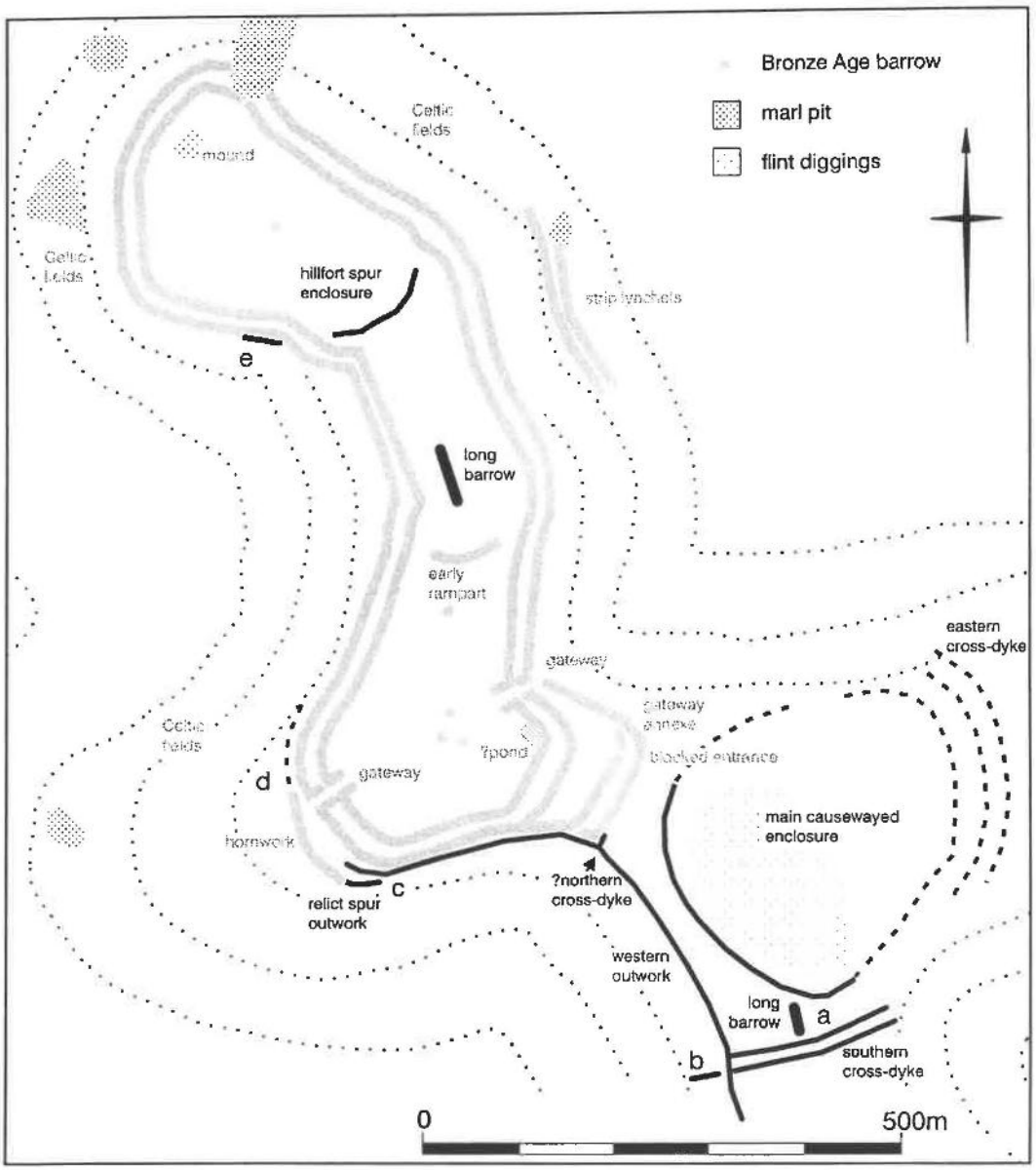

Figure 6: Interpretative plan: earlier Neolithic - Beaker periods

may have been constructed in segments it was planned as a whole from the outset. However, Mercer's excavations (site D) encountered a pronounced kink on the east side which the earthwork apparently did not fully reflect (RCHME 1970 and Figure 4); this corresponded to an unusually broad causeway 5.3m wide, which was interpreted as a possible **entrance**. At the north-western corner of the enclosure, on the line of the parish boundary, there is also a pronounced off-set between the surviving earthwork and the adjacent ditch segment in the ploughed area, which was excavated by Mercer. The rounded corners of the triangle correspond to the three spurs radiating from the central summit. Two of these relatively level approaches are 're-inforced' by the southern and eastern **cross-dykes**, while on the north-west, the **gateway annexe** of the hillfort may have destroyed or concealed a third similar earthwork (Mercer and Healy 1995, 13). The enclosure is now bi-sected from south-east to north-west

by a bridleway and field boundary, which follow the parish boundary between Child Okeford on the west and Iwerne Courtney or Shroton on the east. The section of the earthwork within Iwerne Courtney or Shroton parish, comprising almost two-thirds of its perimeter and three-quarters of its area, has been virtually destroyed by modern ploughing. It can still be traced as a vestigial scarp, with a chalky soil-mark on the line of the bank, but was not investigated in detail on the ground in the course of the recent survey. Although the features are clearly visible on aerial photographs, there is little available control to allow accurate photographic transcription, and the steep and variable topography makes it unlikely that Palmer's work can be improved upon at present. On the north side, where the course of the enclosure is least certain, a slightly more pronounced positive lynchet along the fenceline may reflect the existence of an earlier earthwork. To the south-west, the remainder of the enclosure survives relatively well as an earthwork, and is now preserved under permanent pasture. Approximately 20% of the total area was excavated by Mercer, mostly in the plough-damaged north-eastern part.

On the south-western side of the enclosure, the causewayed ditch is partly terraced into the natural slope of the hill, creating a fairly prominent continuous scarp, above which the remains of a slight causewayed bank survive more intermittently. At least twelve bank segments can be identified on the surface, 4.2m wide on average and ranging from 12.0m to 27.0m in length. Below the scarp, traces of the causewayed ditch survive mostly as slight depressions, but in places simply as a level terrace. At least eighteen ditch segments were recorded, on average 2.6m wide and ranging from 5.5m to 22.5m in length. The causeways through the bank and ditch generally coincide, but in some cases are slightly off-set from one another, in one case by as much as 5m. Mercer's excavations suggested that some of the causeways in the bank had been blocked by palisades. The earthwork is best preserved at the southern corner of the enclosure, where the scarp survives to a height of 1.0m and the bank is at best 0.4m high; the ditch segments measure no more than 0.2m deep. Mercer's excavations demonstrated that in the plough-damaged section, the bank in fact usually comprised only slightly mounded ploughsoil overlying a ridge in the natural chalk, which had formerly been protected by the overlying bank material, while the ditch segments survived to *c*.2m below the present surface. Desmond Bonney's section in his Trench M recorded the feature prior to modern ploughing.

At **a**, a possible counterscarp bank, 5.3m wide and 0.2m high, extends for 50m parallel to the southern corner of the enclosure. The bank does not appear to be causewayed and was not encountered in Mercer's trench P, a few metres to the west. A minimal scarp which seems to carry the line of the bank westwards in an arc away from the the enclosure probably results from much later activity, either the flint diggings or agriculture. Also at **a**, the terminal of a section of the main bank appears to turn inwards at an oblique angle for *c*.8m, coinciding with a causeway across the ditch. The opposite terminal of the bank does not do likewise, and the earthwork almost certainly relates to later disturbance, despite its somewhat entrance-like appearance.

A discontinuous linear scarp, of minimal height, extends for at least 85m roughly parallel to the western side of the enclosure, some 13m uphill from it. The earthwork seems to be of some

antiquity, since it is apparently interrupted by some of the post-medieval century flint diggings. Although no comparable feature was revealed in Mercer's trenches A and N, the alignment of the scarp suggests that it may be contemporary with the enclosure, or alternatively a slight lynchet associated with later agriculture following the line of the enclosure scarp.

Much of the area has been disturbed by shallow nineteenth century **flint diggings** (see below). In several places the enclosure earthwork has been considerably damaged, and a number of the original causeways have clearly been modified by later trackways, which probably provided cart access to the extraction pits.

The cross-dykes

(See Figure 7)

Certainly two, and probably all three, of the spurs which join the domed central summit of Hambledon Hill are 're-inforced' by double cross-dykes, of which only one survives well as an earthwork. The southern and eastern cross-dykes, which have been excavated, are almost identical to each other in profile, and this together with their similar plan relationship to the main causewayed enclosure, suggests that they may be contemporary with each other. There is no stratigraphic relationship between any of the three and the main causewayed enclosure, but in places they follow its outline closely. The superficial form of the causewayed cross-dykes and their excavated profiles are similar to that of the enclosure and they have been proven by excavation to be of earlier Neolithic origin. Their initial creation could well, therefore, be contemporary with the main causewayed enclosure itself.

The **southern cross-dyke** lies immediately to the south of the main causewayed enclosure, extending for 180m roughly east to west across the neck of the Stepleton Spur. In plan, it describes a shallow V-shape formed by two fairly straight stretches of almost equal length, the more easterly of which lies parallel to the south-eastern side of the main enclosure at a distance of *c*.25m from it. The earthwork comprises two main banks and ditches, with an outer counterscarp bank, all of which are causewayed. Like the main causewayed enclosure, the outer faces of the main banks are more prominent scarps, between 0.5m and 1.2m high, while the banks themselves are slight, measuring on average 3.6m wide and 0.3m high. The number of segments in each bank appears to vary, ranging from at least eleven in the inner bank, to only six in the outer counterscarp, and the length of the individual segments varies from 5.0m to 26.0m. The ditch segments appear from the surface traces to be slightly more numerous and generally shorter, ranging from 4.0m to 9.5m long. Mercer's excavations in 1977 and Bonney's Trench A (see Figures 4 and 5) demonstrated that the inner ditch had a shallow U-shaped profile and was 1.2m deep below the surface, with a broad flat base. The outer ditch was of similar depth, but V-shaped in profile, with evidence for one or more re-cuts, which may have been deliberately backfilled with large flints and loose chalk rubble (see Figure 5). It seems highly probable that this re-cutting produced the material which forms the counterscarp bank, which has no equivalent in the form of the eastern cross-dyke.

Although the lengths of both the bank and ditch segments vary, at three points towards the middle of the cross-dyke the causeways through all three banks and both ditches coincide,

suggesting possible entrances. Of these, one has been re-used by the present track, while another was investigated by Mercer's trench P (see Plan 2).

The eastern end of the cross-dyke becomes indistinguishable from the steep natural slope, but may originally have continued for a few metres further. The western end corresponds to the course of the **western outwork** (see below), but the precise relationship between the two earthworks is complex. For the most part, the western outwork appears to have incorporated the terminal of the cross-dyke, bending minimally to respect the two main banks and ditches but slightly truncating them. This indicates that the western outwork is later, and this relationship would concur with the chronological sequence suggested by the excavation of the **Stepleton outwork**. However, there are two indications that the cross-dyke may have been

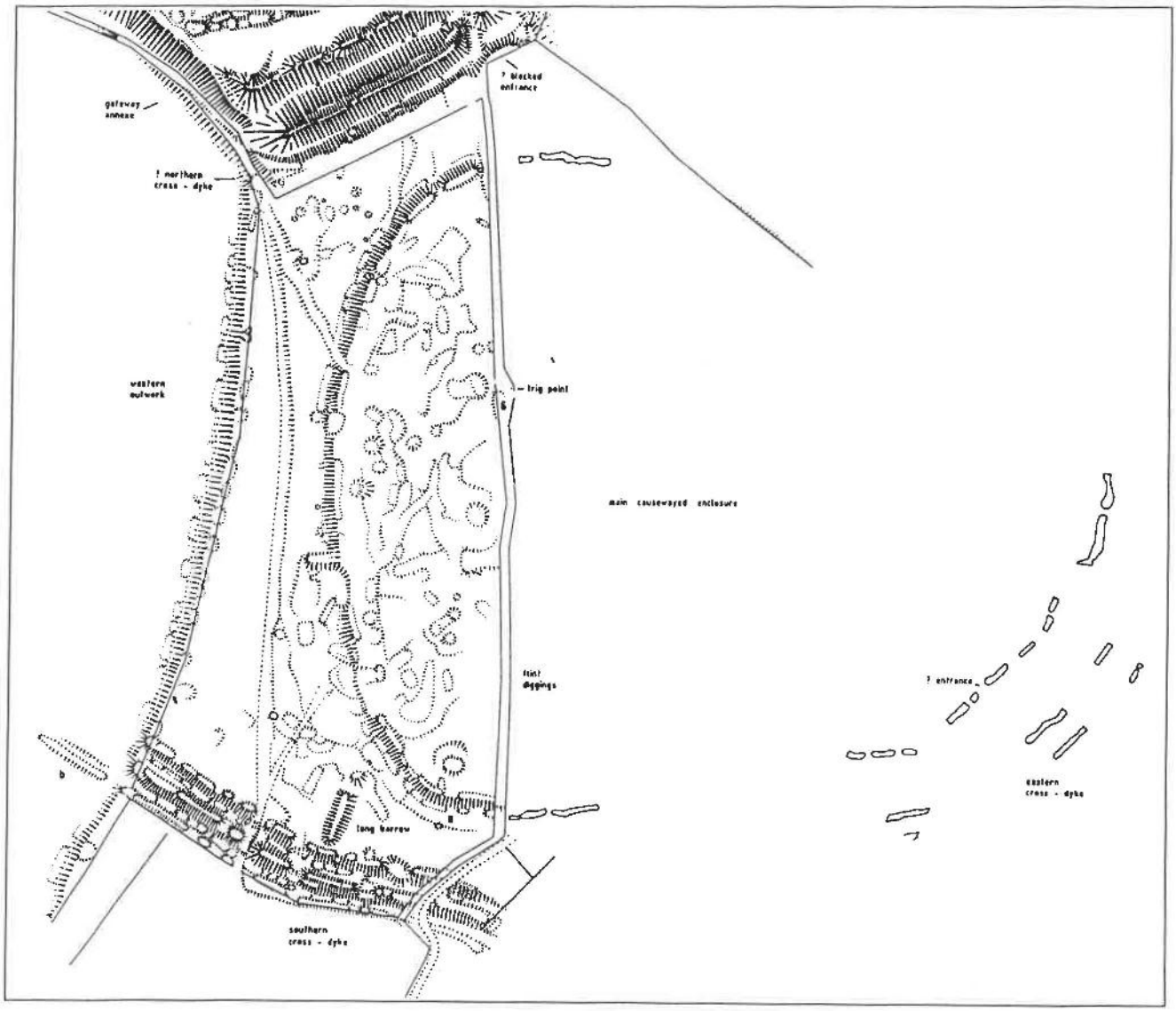

Figure 7: The main causewayed enclosure and environs

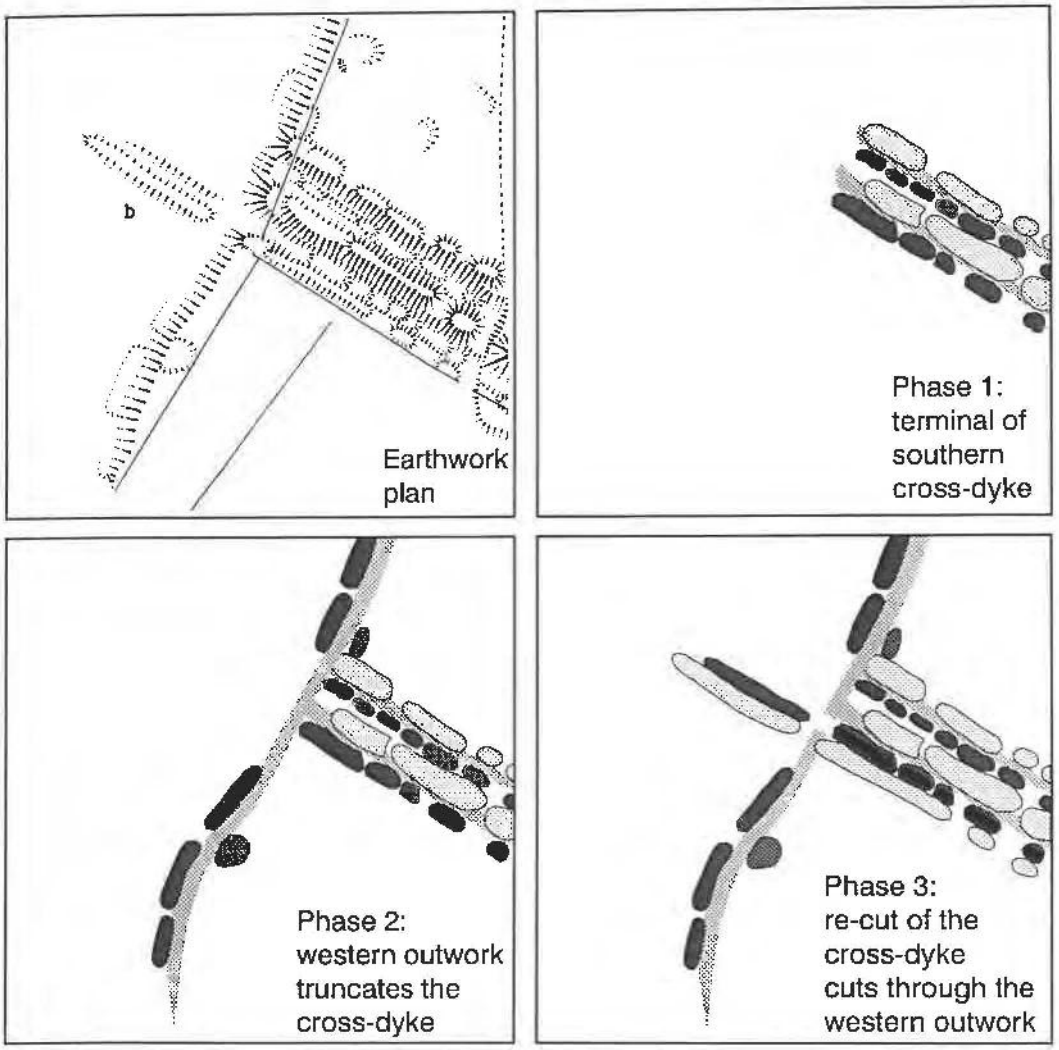

Figure 8: The southern cross-dyke and western outwork

modified again after the construction of the western outwork (see Figure 8). Firstly, the scarp of the western outwork is absent on the line of the outer ditch, suggesting that the outer ditch was extended so as to cut through the western outwork, probably in the course of the V-shaped re-cutting revealed by Bonney's Trenches A and B and by Mercer's Site P.

Secondly, to the west of the western outwork is a very slight 35m long segment of bank and ditch (**b**). This also appears to be contemporary with the re-cutting of the rest of the cross-dyke, in that its alignment continues the line of the counterscarp bank and outer ditch of the cross-dyke. Here, the distinctly rounded terminal of the eastern end of the bank suggests that it respects the western outwork. The 'reversed' position of the ditch in relation to the bank is also significant, since here it was clearly dug solely to create the bank which equates to the counterscarp bank of the cross-dyke. Along the course of the rest of the cross-dyke, the equivalent ditch was presumably dug initially to provide material for the main outer bank, which lies on its opposite side. Bonney's trench B, sited at what should be the intersection of the earthworks, revealed only a minimal depression in the natural chalk, whose significance is unclear.

It should be noted that although the counterscarp bank and the continuation of the cross-dyke are the latest event in the sequence which can be identified as earthworks, the sections of the apparently contemporary re-cut excavated by both Bonney and Mercer contained only earlier Neolithic bowl pottery. However, it remains possible that the modification is of later date (see below).

In general, the cross-dyke is better preserved than the main causewayed enclosure, having been protected from plough-damage by its re-use as a field boundary (its eastern half also defines the boundary between the parishes of Child Okeford and Hanford). However, it too has been damaged in places by the nineteenth century flint diggings. Towards its eastern end, it has been almost levelled by two adjacent tracks. To the east of this, the earthwork is effectively protected from modern ploughing by the steep slope and dense undergrowth, but the innermost bank is now obscured by a large dump of flint nodules.

The eastern cross-dyke is now only identifiable on the ground as an intermittent and vestigial scarp, together with a pale soil mark along the line of the bank; consequently it was not surveyed in detail on the ground by the recent investigation. However, the form of the earthwork is known through the previous RCHME survey, aerial photographic analysis and the excavations carried out by Bonney and Mercer. It extended roughly north to south for *c.*280m across the Shroton Spur, in a gentle arc echoing the eastern corner of the main causewayed enclosure, separated from it by a distance of *c.*25m. It comprised a double bank and ditch, similar in form to the southern cross-dyke, but with no evidence for a counterscarp bank. The section drawing of Bonney's Trench L (see Figure 5) indicates that the outer faces of the banks were more prominent as earthworks, standing 1.2m high. The excavation showed that the inner and outer ditches were both almost U-shaped with broad, fairly flat bases, and depths of 0.8m and 1.2m respectively. The causewayed nature of the ditches is not clearly evident from the RCHME earthwork plan, but was confirmed by Mercer's excavations.

Mercer (1985) speculated that there may have been a **northern cross-dyke** across the narrow neck of land connecting the domed central summit to the hillfort spur, which would have been destroyed in the Iron Age by the construction of the **gateway annexe**. Palmer concluded that an earthwork visible close to the south-western end of the gateway annexe probably resulted from the Post-Medieval flint diggings (Palmer in Mercer and Healy in preparation, 20). The recent survey identified a trace of a bank 0.2m high, which may be the remnant of the innermost element of such a cross-dyke. It extends for only 15m from west to east, on a slightly different alignment from the Iron Age counterscarp bank which seems to overlie it. The alignment also coincides with slight irregularities in the form of the western outwork, although the supposed junction between the two earthworks lies on the line of the **track**, and has consequently been almost levelled. The projected alignment of the earthwork to the east would have lain some 30m from the perimeter of the main causewayed enclosure (slightly further than the other two cross-dykes). If the earthwork were similar in form, it would have been all but destroyed by the construction of the outer ditch of the gateway annexe, as suggested by Mercer. However, there is a series of 'scallops' in the upper edge of the outer side of the southernmost Iron Age ditch, which appear more regular than erosion alone might produce. It is possible that they

result from the incorporation of a pre-existing relatively shallow segmented ditch into the Iron Age ditch.

The spur outworks

Three earthworks, essentially similar in form to the double cross-dykes described above, traverse the less pronounced spurs which are not occupied by the Stepleton and hillfort spur enclosures. Although there is no stratigraphic relationship between any of them and the main causewayed enclosure, the spur outworks appear to echo the cross-dykes to some extent and therefore seem to relate primarily to the domed central summit. At present, there is insufficient evidence to show whether or not they are contemporary with the main causewayed enclosure and/or cross-dykes. Alternatively, the Hanford spur and 'relict' spur outworks may be parts of much more extensive linear earthworks along the entire western flank of the hill. Therefore Palmer refers to the 'Stepleton-Hanford outwork system' (Palmer in Mercer and Healy in preparation, 12-17), rather than separating them as has been done in this report. This division is indeed arguably artificial, relying on the change of alignment at the junction of the two sections, and the theory that the overall plan developed with concentricity in mind.

The **Shroton spur outwork**, as portrayed on the plan made by RCHME in 1959, extends for *c*.275m in an arc from north to south across the eastern end of the Shroton Spur. It lies some 380m east of the main causewayed enclosure, some way down the fairly gentle approach to the domed central summit, approximately following the 140m contour for much of its length. The earthwork comprised a causewayed double bank and ditch. Bonney's Trench G indicates that the outer face of the inner bank was up to 1.2m high and that the associated ditch was 0.7m deep with a rounded U-shaped profile. The outer bank and ditch were less massive, the outer face of the bank only 0.3m high and the ditch only 0.6m wide and 0.2m deep (having perhaps been truncated by ploughing). Finds of all kinds were less frequent than in the **eastern cross-dyke**. Mercer excavated two sections, which confirmed the results of the earlier work.

The present field boundary follows the line of the spur outwork, and it now comprises a single scarp (essentially a lynchet) between 0.6m and 1.8m high. There are some irregular depressions towards its northern end, but these relate primarily to more recent quarrying. In view of the poor condition of the earthwork, it was not recorded in detail by the recent survey.

The **Hanford spur outwork** was a double causewayed earthwork extending across the upper part of the Hanford spur, roughly from south-east to north-west, for approximately 110m. It differs slightly in plan from the Shroton spur outwork, in that only the southern section of the outer ditch follows the course of the inner; the northern part turns a more obtuse angle and extends slightly further to the north. As mentioned above, Palmer argues that the Hanford spur outwork and the **Stepleton outwork** (see below) are parts of a single linear earthwork. Much of the spur outwork was excavated by Mercer in view of the threat of total destruction by ploughing. However, the area is now maintained as pasture under the management of English Nature.

A few vestigial scarps relating to the Hanford spur outwork can be traced on the surface, but the earthwork has essentially been ploughed out, and was therefore not recorded on the ground in the recent survey. No indication of the possible **flintmines** was noted on the ground; aerial

photographic analysis by RCHME confirmed the distribution of the marks plotted by Palmer, but was unable to resolve the question of their date.

The **'relict' spur outwork**, recorded by RCHME in 1959 as two scarps, was first suggested to be a Neolithic earthwork by Mercer and Palmer. It comprises the remnant of a double or triple causewayed cross-dyke underlying the **hornwork** of the south-western gateway of the Iron Age hillfort (see Figure 9). It remains visible as an earthwork for only 50m, curving south-eastwards away from the south-eastern tip of the hornwork, but the recent survey confirms that it formerly extended in a convex arc across the full width of the spur. The form of the spur outwork seems to have been similar to that of the other outworks and cross-dykes. Two segments of an outer bank, 5.2m wide and 0.6m high on average, can be identified, separated by a causeway 1.5m wide. To the east of this, three segments of a second causewayed bank survive, the causeways coinciding with those in the outer bank. The causewayed ditch which was probably associated with the bank cannot be identified as a distinct feature. The bank is 6.0m wide, its outer face 1.6m high and its inner 0.2m high; the shortest of the three segments is 10.0m long and the longest 18.5m long.

A possible third element of the earthwork (c) survives as an irregular scarp between 1.0m and 1.6m high, apparently underlying the base of the Iron Age outer rampart. Both this scarp and the outer face of the inner bank seem to merge with the newly identified continuation of the **western outwork**, which may indicate that the two earthworks are contemporary. The scarp continues to the north-west within the area enclosed by the hornwork; this section may be a counterscarp bank associated with the Iron Age ramparts prior to the addition of the hornwork, but it seems more likely that it is a 'fossilized' element of the spur outwork.

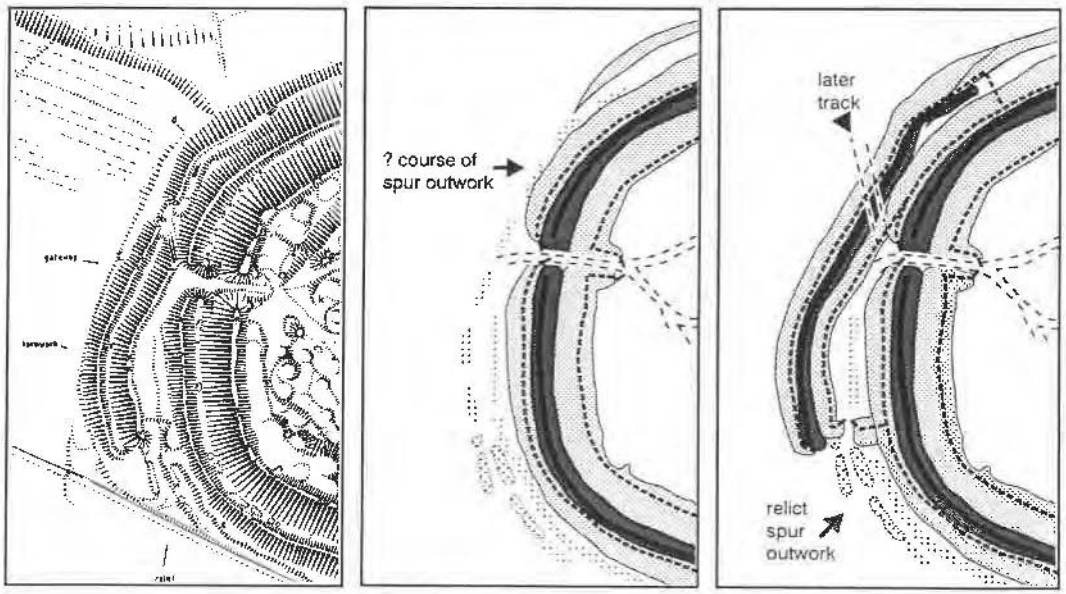

Figure 9: The 'relict' spur outwork

A dog-leg in the course of the Iron Age counterscarp bank at d also suggests that the spur outwork is preserved beneath the later earthworks. The dog-leg, which is particularly clear on the aerial photographs taken in 1924 (see Plate 2) is at variance with the line of the outer rampart, and is also slightly mis-aligned with the hornwork. A break of slope continues

northwards from this point before merging with the face of the outer rampart; this hints that some form of earlier earthwork may have continued towards the **hillfort spur enclosure**. Possible traces of such an earthwork are visible intermittently in the face of the outer rampart, and the anomalous berm at **h** may be associated with the same feature. Thus the relict spur outwork and the western outwork may have formed a single long linear earthwork similar to the Stepleton-Hanford outwork system envisaged by Palmer.

The Stepleton enclosure

(See Figure 10)

The smaller causewayed enclosure at the eastern end of the Stepleton Spur was severely damaged by ploughing in the 1960s and was consequently totally excavated by Mercer; no trace now survives on the ground, which remains under intensive arable cultivation. The site lies near the steep tip of the spur, but some way from the level ground, sloping by *c.*15m from west to east. An oval area of 0.8ha, measuring 80m north - south by 105m east - west, was enclosed by a single line of causewayed bank and ditch at approximately the same period as the main causewayed enclosure. The plan made by RCHME in 1959 recorded that the earthwork was then fairly well-preserved, with the outer face of the bank standing to a maximum height of 1.5m and slight traces of the ditch surviving on the northern side. Mercer's excavation showed

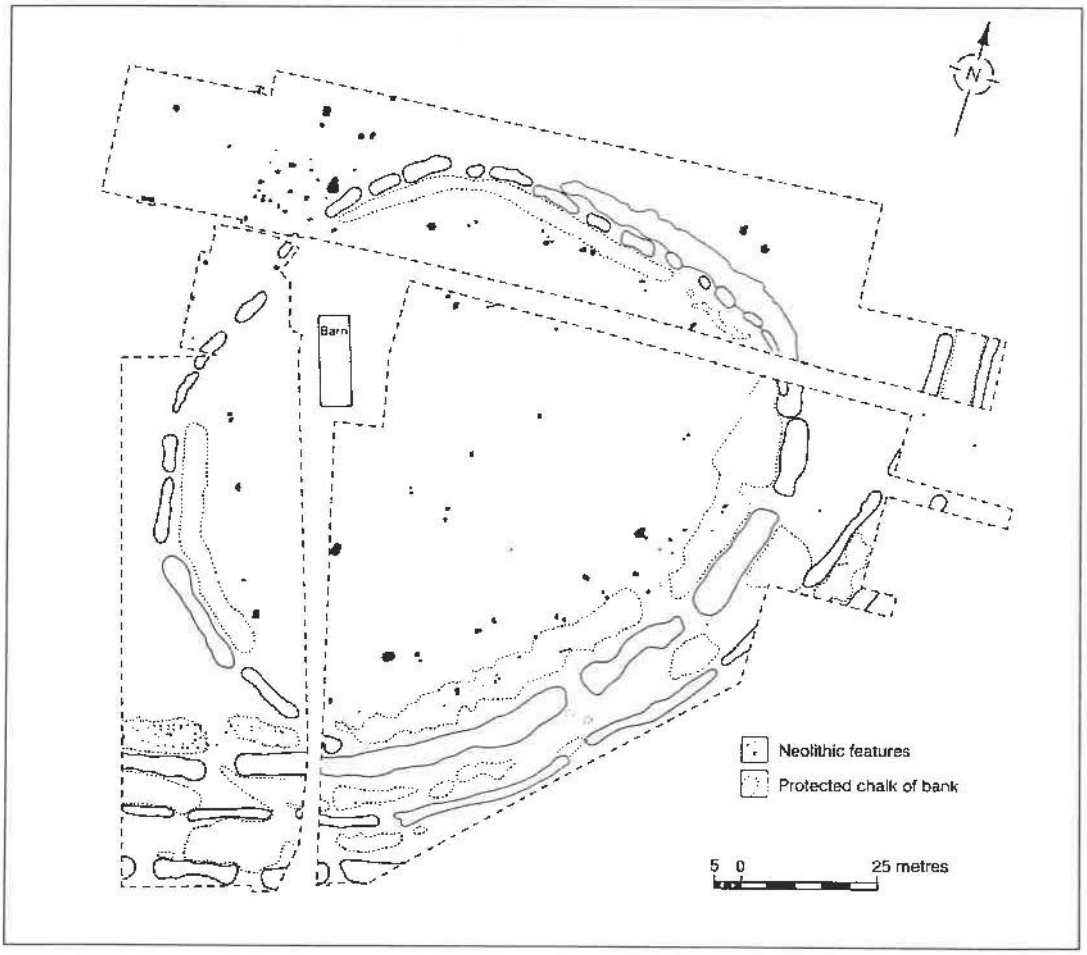

Figure 10: The Stepleton enclosure after excavation (after Mercer)

that the ditch had comprised approximately thirty segments, ranging from 4.5m to 25.0m in length. The bank was by then poorly preserved, but appeared to have had fewer causeways. Towards the end of the Neolithic period, the ditch on the south-eastern side of the enclosure was massively re-cut, with fewer causeways, and the rampart was strengthened by the addition of timber-lacing and uprights. The re-cut section extended tangentially away from the southern side of the enclosure for several hundred metres at least, and was subsequently incorporated into the **Stepleton outwork** (see below). Although this defensive work appears to have been at least partly destroyed in an attack, activity within the Stepleton enclosure continued into the Beaker period.

The hillfort spur enclosure

(See Figure 11)

A single slight bank and ditch, apparently similar in form to a cross-dyke, crosses the hillfort spur from west to east, enclosing the broader northernmost third of the hilltop. The earthwork bows very slightly outwards to the south, and as early as 1928, Gardner suggested that it may have continued beneath the main Iron Age ramparts to form a more complete enclosure (Gardner 1928, 54). The RCHME survey of 1959 affirmed that the earthwork pre-dates the main ramparts, but interpreted it, on the grounds of its apparently continuous form, as the earliest phase in the construction of the hillfort. Mercer's excavation of a small section through the well-preserved part of the earthwork (Plan 2) demonstrated that it had been constructed considerably earlier than the later sixth century BC, when an Iron Age house was cut into the upper silts of the ditch (Mercer 1986). He also observed that the eastern end of the earthwork was slighted by the scarps (f) which he interpreted as lynchets pre-dating the construction of the Iron Age hillfort. The excavation was unable to confirm the suspicion that the enclosure is of Neolithic origin, since no artefacts or material for scientific dating were recovered from the primary silts. However, the ditch had apparently been dug as a series of interlinked pits, a technique which is characteristic of many Neolithic enclosures, and this led Mercer cautiously to accept a Neolithic date for the hillfort spur enclosure.

On the western side of the hill, the Iron Age ramparts ascend the natural slope more obliquely than the pre-existing earthwork. As a result, the bank and ditch of the spur enclosure can be traced for approximately 100m within the hillfort. The western end of the earthwork is preserved relatively well, although the bank and ditch had been virtually levelled prior to the construction of the Iron Age house in the late sixth century BC, and were graded further by Post-Medieval ploughing. The bank now survives up to 8.0m wide and 0.3m high and the ditch up to 4.0m wide and 0.4m deep. Mercer's excavation demonstrated that when first dug, the ditch was V-shaped in profile, with a width of 3.6m and depth of 2.6m. An apparent gap in the earthwork on the highest point of the ridge may be a later modification, since there is a slight hint that the ditch continues beyond the terminal of the bank. The eastern part of the bank and ditch is far less clear due to the density of overlying features, including several Iron Age house platforms, but its course can still be traced.

The recent survey suggests that the course of the western end of the earthwork was designed to lead smoothly into the head of a steep-sided natural **coombe**. Immediately to the north of

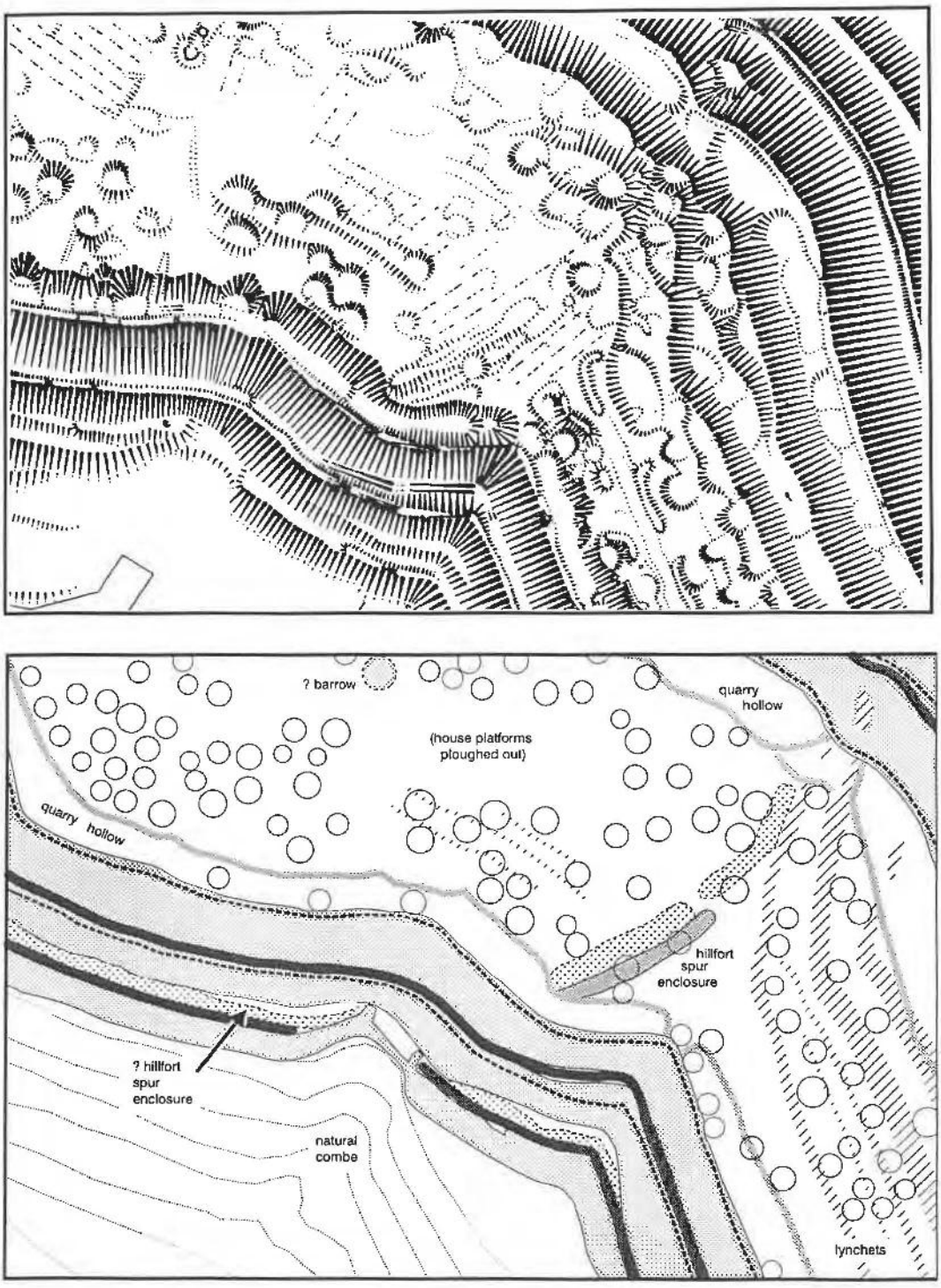

Figure 11: The hillfort spur enclosure

the coombe, a scarp (e) which is formed by a slight accentuation of the steep natural slope, and is distinct from the Iron Age outer rampart, appears to continue the projected line of the enclosure earthwork within the hillfort. As it runs northwards, the scarp merges with the outer face of the rampart, but can be traced as a slight break of slope as far as the northernmost end of the hillfort spur.

The major irregularities in the Iron Age ramparts on the east side of the hill seem to represent remnants of the possible pre-hillfort lynchets (**f**), rather than the hillfort spur enclosure. However, a section of the quarry hollow inside the inner rampart has been left undug (as first noted by Gardner 1928, 50), perhaps indicating that the line of the hillfort spur enclosure was respected in the construction of the Iron Age ramparts. Together with the scarp on the western side of the hill, this may indicate that the earthwork was not simply a cross-dyke as has sometimes been suggested, but completely enclosed the northern end of the spur (an area of some 5.8ha).

The outworks

At some point, perhaps somewhat later in the earlier Neolithic period, there seems to have been an attempt to fortify the western side of the hilltop by linking the three enclosures and the spur dykes with causewayed linear earthworks. These differ in character in that they relate to the contours more closely and generally follow the natural break of slope, unlike the main causewayed enclosure and hillfort spur enclosure. The woodland to the north and south of the Shroton outwork was investigated to determine whether any corresponding earthwork survives along the eastern side of the hill, but no trace was found.

A causewayed double bank and ditch was added to the re-cut of the south-eastern side of the Stepleton enclosure, described above, to form a triple earthwork (the **Stepleton outwork**). This may enclose the entire tip of the spur, following the 122m contour around the perimeter of the enclosure and extending for an unknown distance to the north. To the west, the earthwork diminishes from three to two lines of bank and ditch, and ascends the slope obliquely as far as the **Hanford spur outwork**. Although long stretches have been ploughed away and can no longer be traced on the ground, Mercer and Palmer noted that the double bank and ditch survives as an earthwork along the north-eastern edge of the **yew wood**. A well-preserved stretch some 340m long, extending from east-south-east to west-north-west, was recorded by the recent survey (see Figure 12). As elsewhere, the outer faces of the banks survive as fairly prominent scarps up to 0.7m high, while the ditch segments survive as minimal depressions or a level terrace. Several slight traces of interruptions in both the ditches and the banks seem to confirm that the earthwork was causewayed.

The earthwork as a whole makes several slight changes of alignment, not all of which correspond to variations in the natural topography. This may indicate that the earthwork was constructed as a series of short lengths. However, towards the western end of the earthwork, the final deviation seems to be intended to incorporate the Hanford spur outwork, perhaps indicating that the Stepleton outwork was constructed at a later date.

The **western outwork** is clearly visible on the aerial photographs taken in 1924 (see Figure 7 and Plate 2) but was initially thought by Gardner (1928, 51-2) to be an Iron Age trackway. In

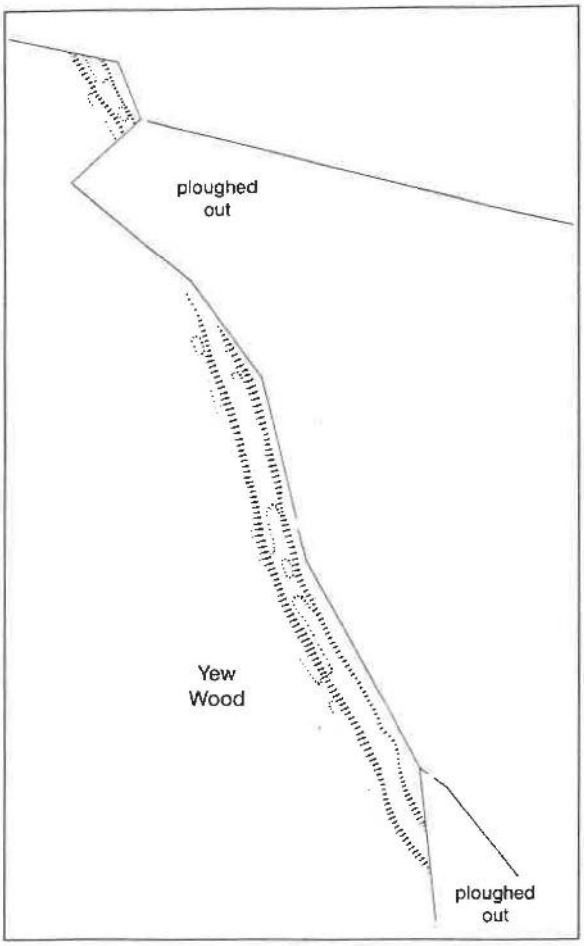

Figure 12: The Stepleton outwork

1982, it was identified by Palmer as a possible Neolithic earthwork and this was confirmed by excavation in the same year. It survives well as an earthwork, but is hard to distinguish from the steep natural slope. It runs in a shallow arc for at least 340m from south to north along the natural break of slope to the west of the main causewayed enclosure, coming to within 40m of the enclosure at its closest point. It follows the 170m contour, and its line coincides with the present field boundary (which is modern and has not seriously affected the earthwork). The outwork comprises a slight enhancement of the natural slope, to form a continuous steep scarp up to 1.2m high. Along the base of this scarp, a series of eighteen fairly uniform ditch segments survive as depressions of minimal depth. They are 2.5m wide on average and between 5.5m and 17.0m long; however, in places only a level terrace exists. The intervening causeways appear to be between 1.0 and 4.0m wide, and in some cases coincide with less steep sections of the main scarp. Along the upper edge of the scarp is a series of shallow scoops, sub-circular or oval in plan, measuring up to 0.1m deep and between 3.5m and 9.0m in diameter. There is no clear pattern in the siting of the scoops; they do not appear to have coincided regularly with either the ditch segments or the causeways, but Palmer (in Mercer and Healy in preparation 21-2) has suggested that they may have been dug to create a level terrace for the bank. There are also three small mounds, widely separated, each apparently associated with an adjacent scoop. In view of the relatively good preservation of the rest of the outwork, this would appear to be a genuine reflection of the form of the original earthwork, rather than a remnant of a continuous bank. At its southern end, the western outwork turns slightly eastward before fading into the natural slope; its relationship (if any) with the **Hanford spur outwork** cannot be determined. Palmer considered that the northern end of the outwork was probably lost beneath the ramparts of the Iron Age hillfort, but the recent survey suggests that it may have descended the contours obliquely in order to incorporate the **relict outwork**. To the east of scarp c of the relict outwork, a scarp up to 1.2m high continues along the fenceline immediately to the north of the **track**. The fresh appearance of this earthwork is certainly partly due to erosion caused by the track and there are no surviving indications of any ditch at the base of the scarp. However, the alignment of the

earthwork differs very slightly from that of the track and - more importantly - from that of the Iron Age rampart, suggesting that it is not associated with either. A prominent scarp in the middle of the track seems to indicate the point at which the earlier earthwork was graded, presumably to facilitate the passage of vehicles. To the east of this, the scarp seems to be overlain by a counterscarp bank associated with the **gateway annexe**, which is itself difficult to distinguish from the extremely steep natural slope. However, the alignment of the rest of the feature suggests that it could have joined the western outwork obliquely at the point where it meets the putative **northern cross-dyke**.

The relationship between the western outwork and the **southern cross-dyke** has been discussed in detail above (see Figure 8). It would seem that the main banks of the cross-dyke were slightly truncated by the western outwork, but that the counterscarp bank of the cross-dyke may have been a later modification post-dating the outwork. The relationship between the western outwork and the possible northern cross-dyke can only be tentatively suggested, given the indistinct nature of both earthworks and the confusion caused by later modifications. However, the abrupt change in alignment suggested by the line of the newly identified scarp seems to indicate that the linear outwork respects the terminal of the cross-dyke, and therefore also post-dates it.

The northern long barrow

(See Figure 13)

The northern long barrow is located on the narrow spine of land which forms the central portion of the hillfort spur. Its orientation from south-south-east to north-north-west respects the natural topography, so that its long profile is conspicuous from both east and west of Hambledon Hill. The barrow measures 66.0m long, and is slightly trapezoid, diminishing in width from 16.0m to 13.0m and in height from 2.5m to 1.8m from south to north; this suggests that its front end faced south. Straight flanking ditches can be traced on each side of the barrow as minimal depressions or level terraces. As first noticed by Mercer and Palmer, a number of slight interruptions in the course of the western ditch may indicate that they were discontinuous or causewayed.

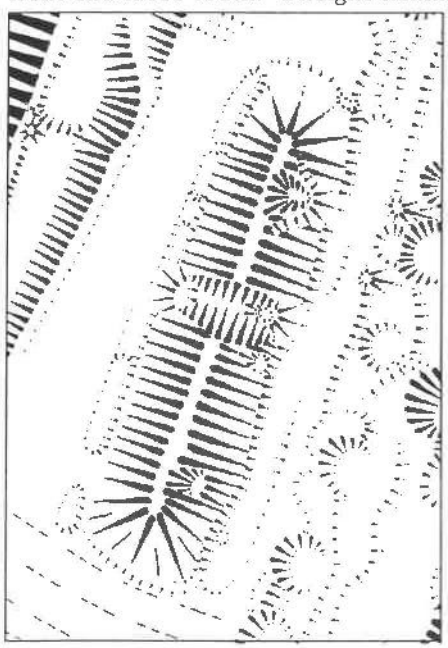

Figure 13: The northern long barrow

A V-shaped trench cut precisely through the middle of the barrow from west to east almost certainly results from an antiquarian excavation. It was commented on by Charles Warne in 1872, though he did not mention any finds and it is unclear whether he knew when it was dug (Warne 1872, 325). The trench is 7.5m wide across the top, and the spoil has been pushed outwards to form mounds at both its east and west ends. Two smaller holes dug into the eastern side of the barrow may also be excavations, given that there is little other scrub or rabbit damage in the vicinity.

Southern long barrow

(See Figure 14)

The southern long barrow is situated between the main causewayed enclosure and the southern cross-dyke. Although there is no stratigraphic relationship between it and the other two earthworks, there are hints that it may post-date their initial construction. It is aligned cross-slope from north-north-west to south-south-east at right angles to the southern cross-dyke, and its position corresponds to the slight angle change in that earthwork. It was almost destroyed by bulldozing in advance of ploughing, and was consequently totally excavated in 1977. It has subsequently been reconstructed as a simple oval mound, 27.0m long by 10.0m wide and up to 1.3m high.

A large-scale contour plan made by RCHME in 1959 (Figure 14 and NMR b) indicates that the barrow was originally approximately 26m long by 13m wide, diminishing in height from *c.*1m at its northern end. The slightly trapezoid shape, together with the opening at the northern end of the surrounding ditch revealed by excavation, suggests that it faced north, towards the main causewayed enclosure. Slight traces of the ditch were originally visible on the surface along the western side of the barrow. The survey also recorded that the earthwork had been damaged by small-scale quarrying prior to its destruction by bulldozing. Mercer's excavation showed that the flanking ditches were dug as a series of interlinked pits, and curved inwards at both ends of the barrow and linked up at the southern end. The ditches had experienced a similar sequence of re-use to that of the main causewayed enclosure, and large quantities of Neolithic bowl pottery were recovered from the primary silts. A few fragments of human bone were recovered from the bulldozed material which had formed the mound.

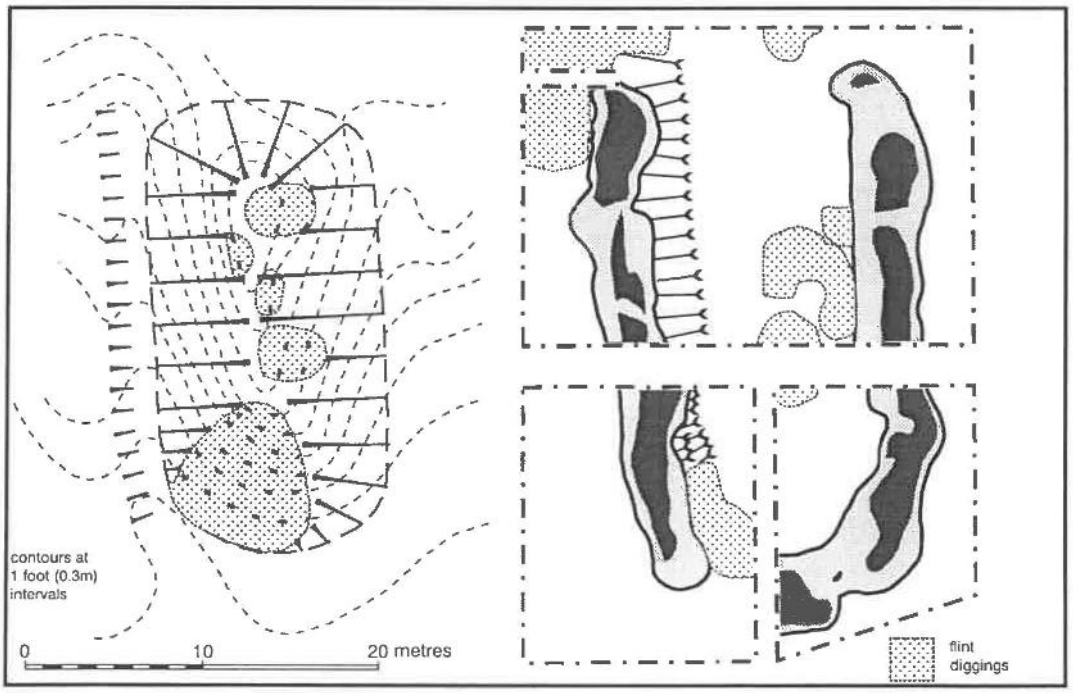

Figure 14: The southern long barrow before ploughing (after Bonney) and after excavation (after Mercer)

The early - middle Bronze Age (1800 BC - 1000 BC)

Plate 3 The gateway annexe, cleared of scrub in 1995, seen from the north (RCHME: Crown Copyright reserved. Negative number AA96/2861)

Round barrows

(See Figure 15)

In addition to one certain and one possible barrow identified previously, the recent survey recorded a further four possible barrows. All are located on local high points, rather than in relation to pre-existing earthworks. With the exception of the certain example, the barrows have been severely degraded by ploughing.

One round barrow (1) was portrayed on the Ordnance Survey First Edition (surveyed 1885, published 1887) and this has been recorded by every subsequent survey. It lies on the summit of a slight rise on the southern third of the spur later enclosed by the Iron Age hillfort. It is circular, 14.0m in diameter and 0.6m high, with minimal traces of an encircling ditch on its western side. Two small squarish depressions, each with an associated mound of spoil, indicate that the barrow has been subject to looting or antiquarian excavation. The new survey revealed for the first time that the barrow acted as a focus for two or three Post-Medieval field boundaries (see below). Its isolated position in relation to the ridge-and-furrow cultivation accounts for its relatively good preservation as an earthwork.

A second barrow (2), lying 25m south of (1), was first identified by LV Grinsell (Grinsell 1959). It is sub-circular, with a maximum diameter of 8.0m and a height of 0.1m, but has been distorted by ploughing.

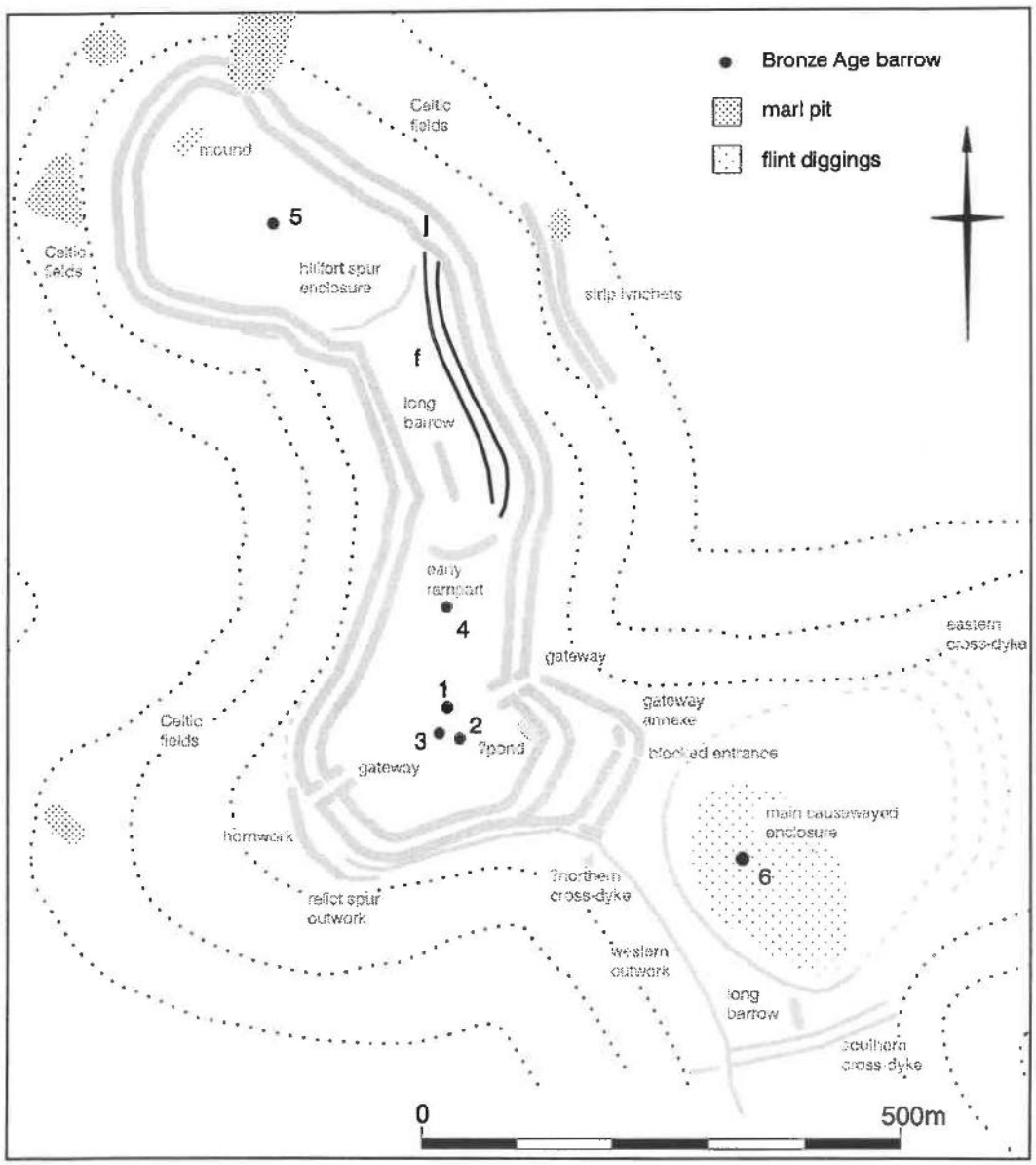

Figure 15 Interpretative plan: Bronze Age period

A third barrow (3), lies 20m south-west of (1). It is sub-circular, with an average diameter of 11.0m, and has been levelled by ploughing to a maximum height of 0.2m. A sub-rectangular hollow, probably resulting from looting or antiquarian investigation, has almost entirely removed the northern half of the barrow, and this has been compounded further by a plough furrow.

Barrow 4 lies 100m north of barrow 1, on the highest point of the hillfort spur, at an altitude of 190m OD. It is circular, 11.5m in diameter and has been levelled by ploughing to a height of 0.2m. There is no evidence that it has been damaged by looting or excavation.

Barrow 5 lies on the slight rise which forms the northern crest of the hillfort spur, at an altitude of 184m OD. The location is known to be the site of an Ordnance Survey triangulation pillar (Ordnance Survey 1887; 1901) and the immediate area has been heavily disturbed (presumably in the course of the removal of the pillar). Given that the mounds were not infrequently constructed

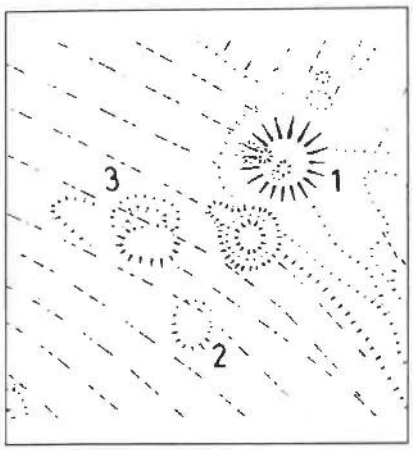

Figure 16: The Bronze Age barrow group (1,2,3)

by the Ordnance Survey to support their pillars, the identification of the barrow must remain tentative. However, there is a slight sub-circular mound 12.0m in diameter and up to 0.2m high, which is more pronounced on the northern side. This possible barrow would seem to have lain beyond the limit of Post-Medieval ploughing.

Barrow 6 is a dubious example, lying on the domed central summit of Hambledon Hill at an altitude of 192m, immediately to the south of the surviving triangulation pillar, and close to the centre of the main causewayed enclosure. It survives only as a scarp extending along the fenceline for a distance of 12.0m, with slight indications that this is a truncated remnant of a larger mound which has been destroyed by the footpath. In support of the possibility that this is a barrow, it is worth noting that the parish boundary between Childe Okeford and Iwerne Courtney runs along the fenceline at this point. The boundary follows the prehistoric earthworks elsewhere on the hilltop and it may be that here too it was originally aligned on the barrow as much as on the end of the **southern cross-dyke**.

Lynchets

(See Figure 11)

Mercer (1986) has argued that the two large scarps (**f**) which were used to form the basis of the eastern ramparts of the first Iron Age hillfort (see below) in fact originated as substantial lynchets. This interpretation remains uncertain, particularly given that the earthworks are remarkably large and in some respects dis-similar from known prehistoric field systems. However, Mercer has pointed out that two smaller scarps immediately west of **f**, which form level terraces supporting rows of house platforms, are similar in their extent, alignment and form (though considerably smaller) and may also represent earlier lynchets. The upper terraces, which are not particularly evident on the 1959 plan, can be seen quite clearly on the 1924 aerial photographs. They were described by Gardner as 'tiers' (Gardner 1928, 52) and interpreted as the 'habitation levels' of the hillfort, which was clearly their eventual function. Mercer and Palmer went on to suggest that the two **strip lynchets** outside the hillfort were originally part of the same field system. Although a prehistoric origin is possible, these were probably largely formed in the Medieval period (see below)

The possible lynchets within the hillfort extend from north to south for up to 350m, following a slightly 'S'-shaped course which does not entirely correspond to the natural contours. The sharper turn at their northern end seems to reflect the position of the bank of the **hillfort spur enclosure**, suggesting that they post-date it as Mercer suggested. The original size of the lynchets is difficult to gauge due to their re-use: the upper pair of terraces are *c.*1m high, while the lower scarps may have been as much as 5m high prior to their re-use in the ramparts of the first hillfort. This is suggested by a short section of the lower scarp f which was 'by-passed' by the re-modelled Iron Age rampart, so that it retains its probable original height.

The suggested Bronze Age date of the possible lynchets is uncertain, since neither the hillfort spur enclosure nor the first phase of the Iron Age hillfort can be securely dated. If the first phase of the hillfort is contemporary with the house platform excavated by Mercer and dated to the sixth to fifth centuries BC (early Iron Age), then the well-developed form of the lynchets would seem to indicate that they originated in the middle Bronze Age.

Stray finds

Artefacts of Bronze Age date have been discovered on Hambledon Hill, though the precise provenances are not known. A looped and socketed bronze spearhead 14cms long, of middle Bronze Age date, was found on the surface in 1945. A damaged bronze socketed axe of late Bronze Age date was found at an unknown date. Both are now held by Dorchester Museum.

The Late Bronze Age - Roman periods (1000 BC -400 AD)

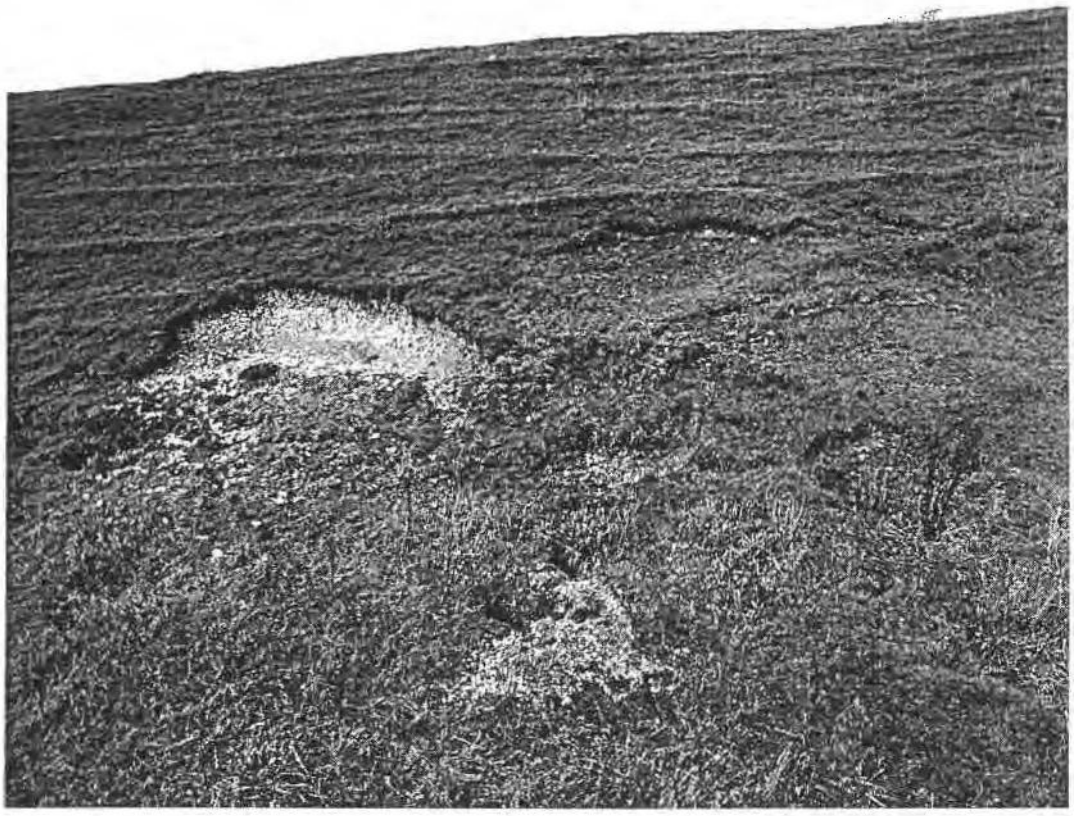

Plate 4: The southern rampart - slumping caused by animal burrowing (RCHME: Crown Copyright reserved. Negative number AA96/2862

The hillfort defences

The hillfort as it now appears represents the end-product of several phases of expansion and re-modelling. As mentioned above, the 1959 survey by RCHME interpreted the **hillfort spur enclosure** as the earliest phase of the Iron Age hillfort, and this has subsequently become widely accepted (see for example Hogg 1975, 219-20). Accepting Mercer and Palmer's re-interpretation, it seems likely that the earliest hillfort occupied the northern and central thirds of the spur, enclosing an area of approximately 7ha. Its plan is irregular and the construction technique variable, largely because the rampart incorporated several earlier

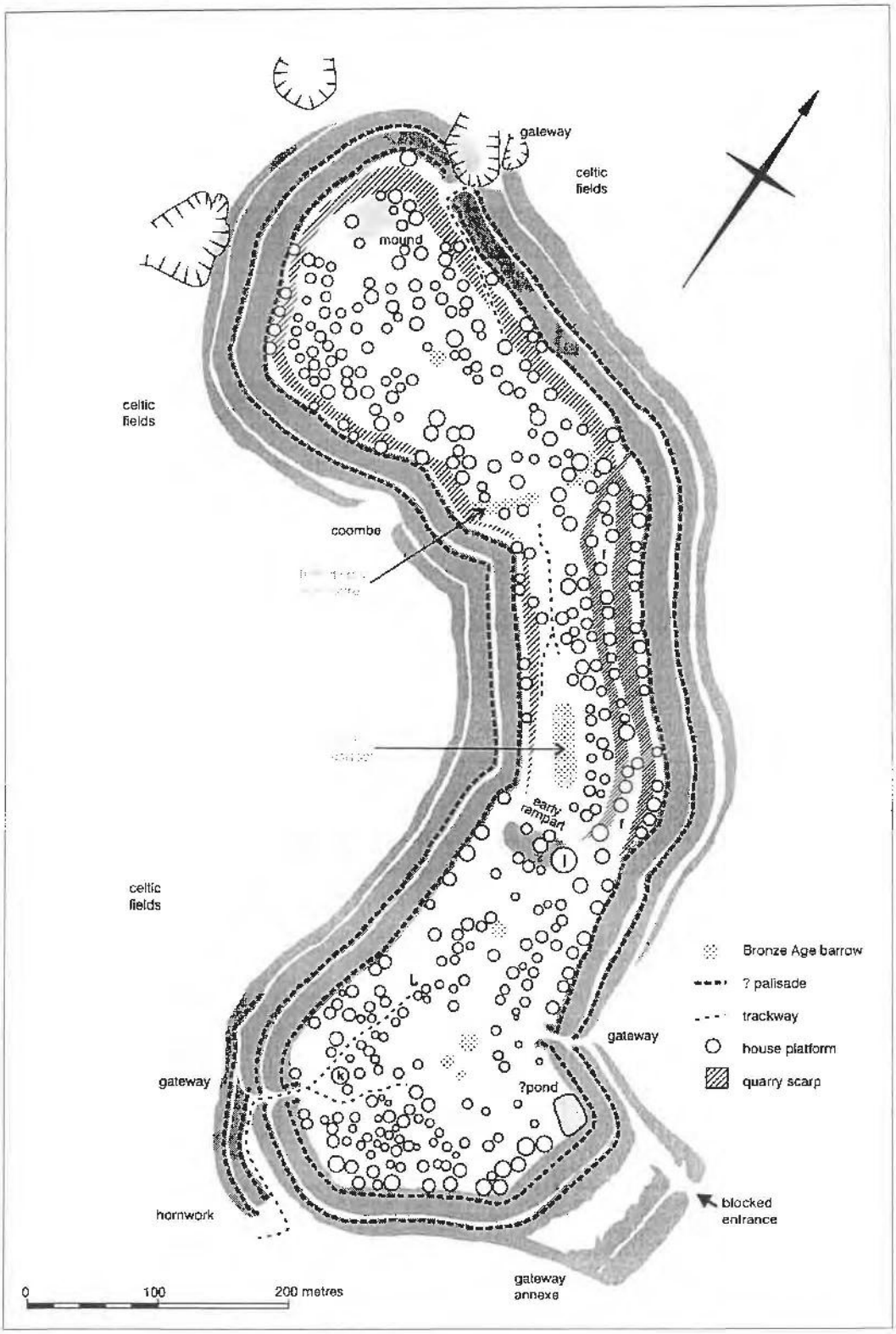

Figure 17: Interpretative Plan: late Bronze Age - Iron Age -Roman periods

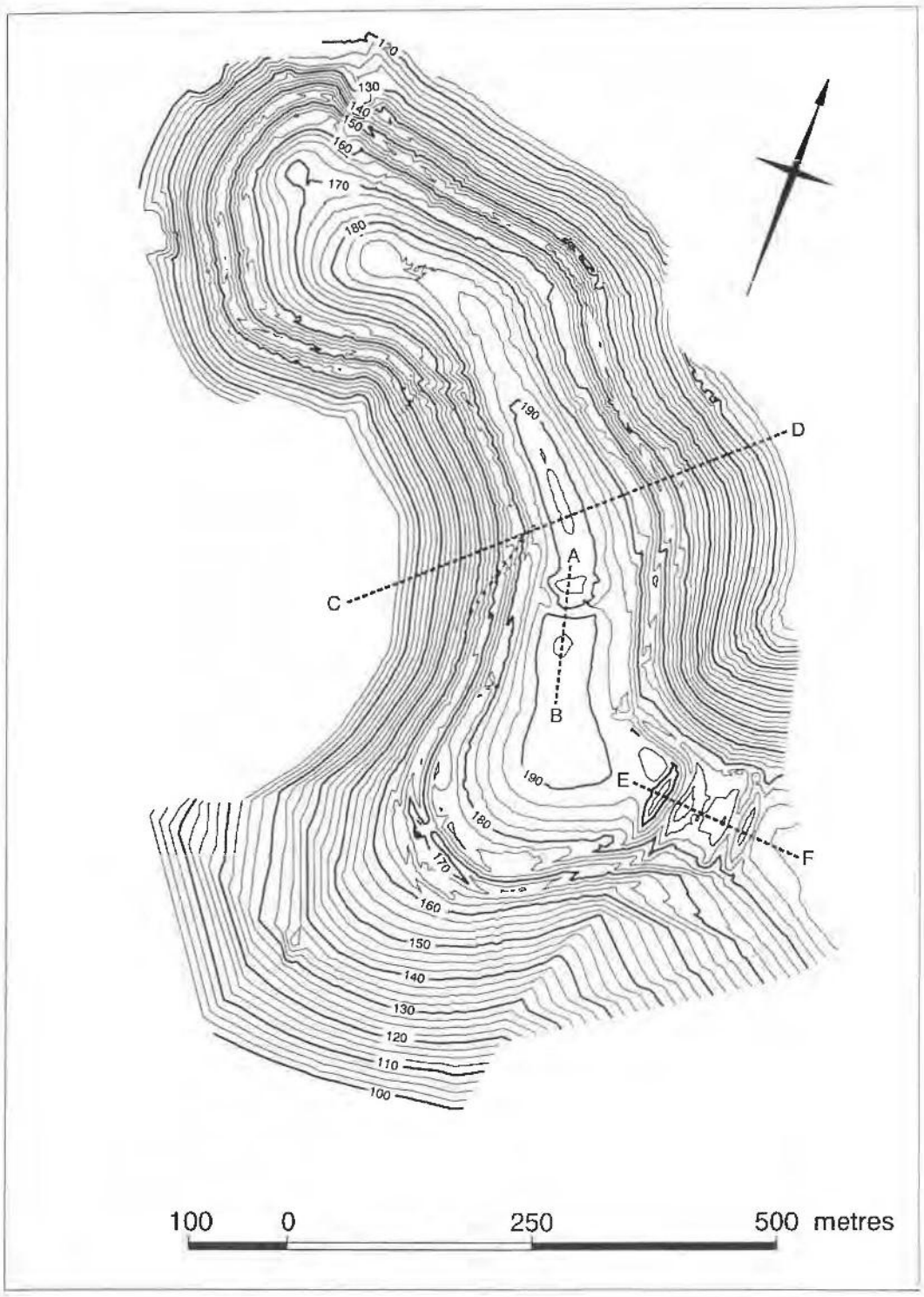

Figure 18: Contour plan, showing locations of profiles

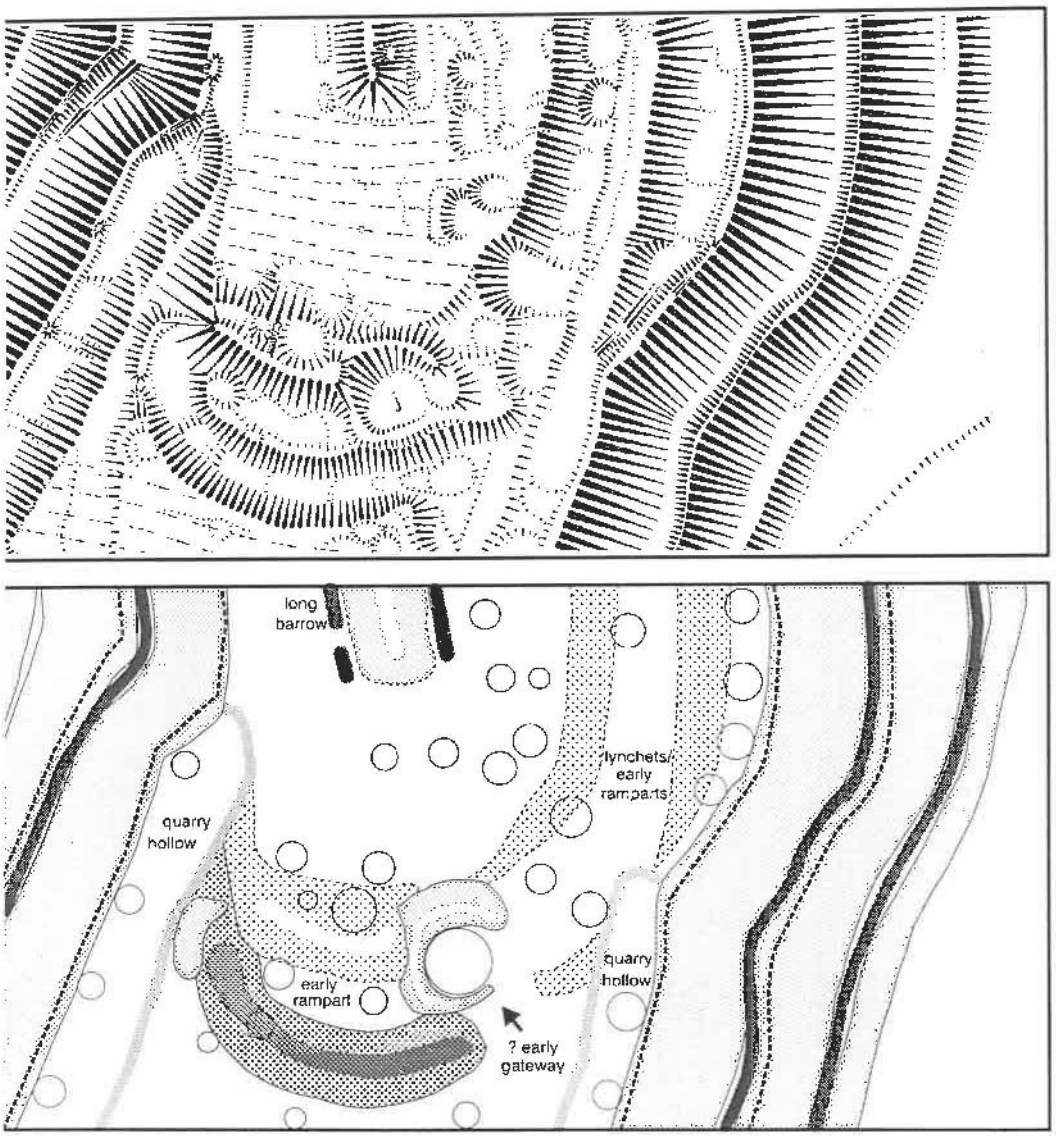

Figure 19: The 'early rampart'

features, including the putative Neolithic enclosure. The defences seem to have essentially comprised a single rampart, which made use of the naturally steep slopes where possible and only required the construction of a substantial ditch where the defences crossed the top of the spur (the **early rampart**).

It is unclear to what extent the northern end of the rampart actually re-used the earthwork of the **hillfort spur enclosure**, but it seems certain that it generally followed the line of the perimeter of the possible Neolithic enclosure. The western side of the central section of the hillfort underlies the bivallate ramparts associated with the later expansion. As discussed above, the eastern side seems to have made use of two existing scarps, which were probably earlier lynchets (f). These were perhaps 5m high initially, but seem to have been steepened and increased to more than 10m in height to create the ramparts. This technique created a level berm between 6m and 14m wide at the foot of the upper scarp, so that the lower scarp corresponds to what would normally be a ditch.

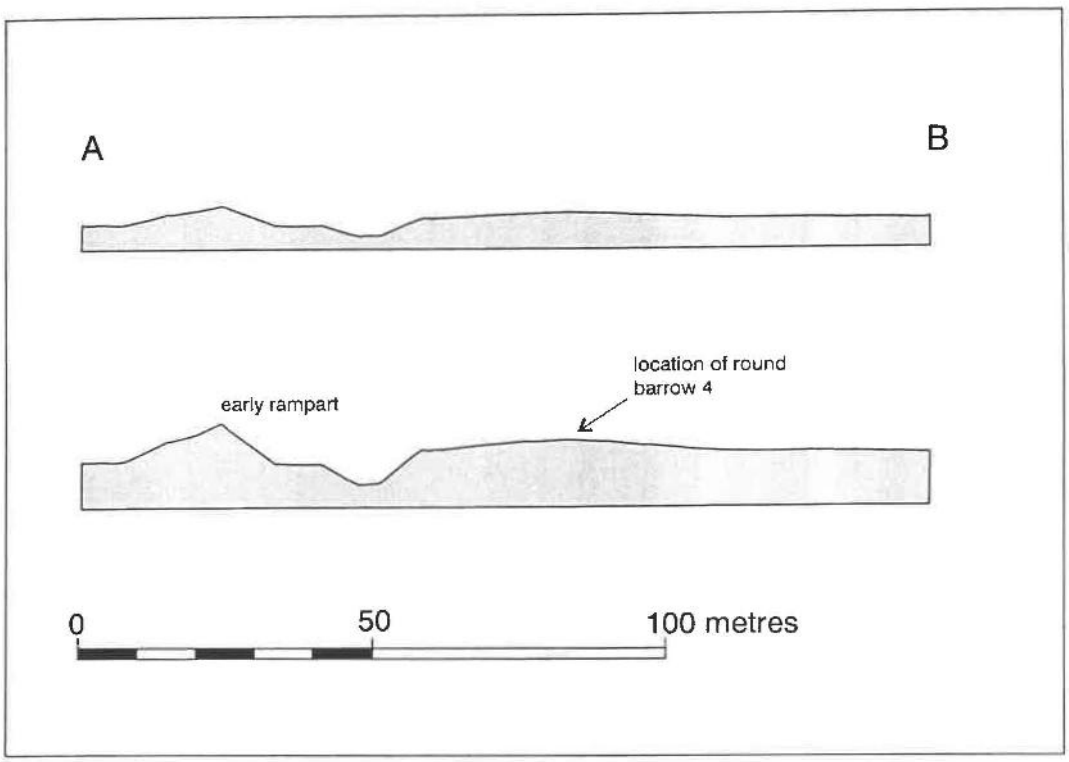

Figure 20: Profile through the early rampart

The level space between the two scarps was maintained in the construction of the **early rampart**, as a berm 9m wide between the bank and ditch (see Figures 19 and 20). At this point, considerably more effort was required to create the earthwork. The steep-sided ditch is 15m wide on average and up to 2.2m deep. Its fairly level base may result from later Iron Age activity, or possibly from Post-Medieval ploughing, since its alignment corresponds to that of the furrows of the adjacent field. The rampart bank is 22m wide on average and up to 4.5m high, but has been extensively modified by the later creation of at least five building platforms in its sides. The largest of these (j) involved the construction of a crescentic bank around its northern side, which has been misleadingly protrayed on previous plans from the Ordnance Survey First Edition (1887) onwards as an integral part of the rampart bank. In fact, the crescentic bank seems to mask a broad gap, perhaps 12m wide, in the rampart bank; this gap seems to coincide with an outurn in the outer slope of the ditch, and a slight irregularity in its inner slope. Taken together with the position on the level top of the spur, these slight anomalies hint at the site of an original entrance into the early hillfort.

The northern **gateway** (see Figure 21), which differs in its siting and form from both the south-western and south-eastern gateways, may have been a second original entrance. Although awkwardly sited overlooking a very steep natural slope, the gateway apparently continued in use throughout the later expansion of the fort. The northern gateway seems to have been damaged to a greater extent than has previously been made explicit, by the digging of the large Post-Medieval **marl pit**. Previous plans have suggested that the gateway through the inner rampart was unusually broad (some 18m), but it seems more likely from the sharpness of the northern rampart terminal that some of the material was removed to prevent landslips into the

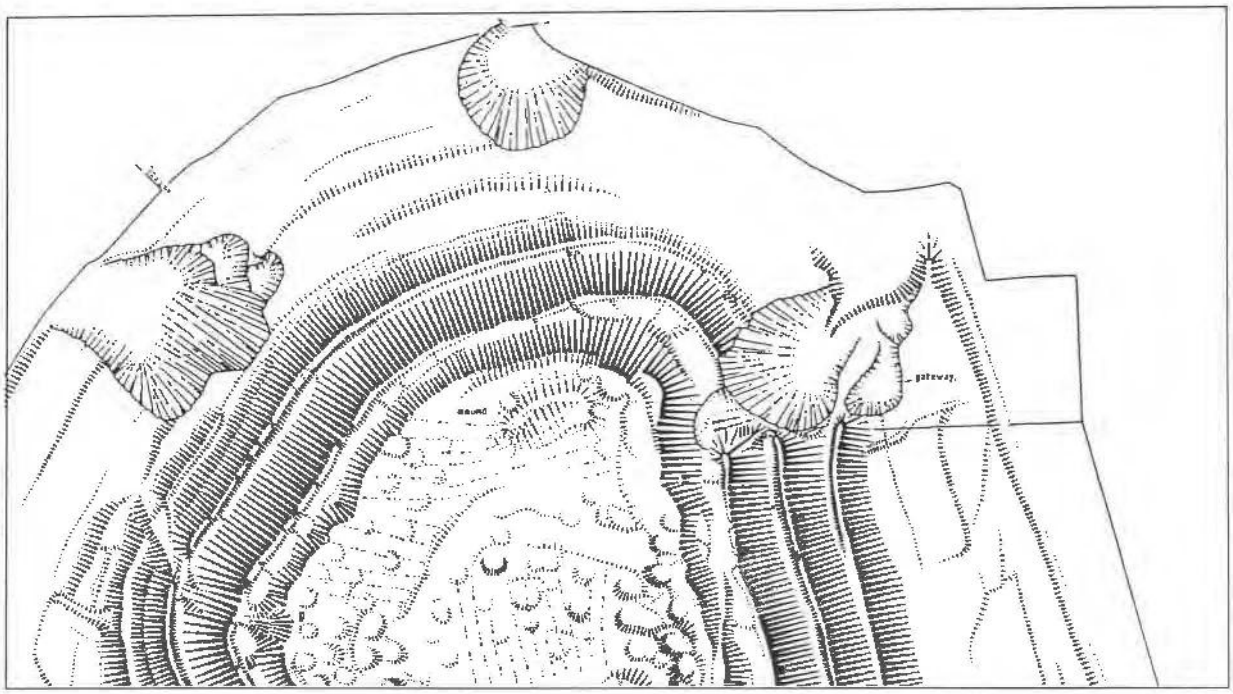

Figure 21: The northern gateway and later 'entrance'.

marl pit, and that the gateway was originally narrower. Despite the extent of the damage, the interpretation of the gap as a gateway remains secure, since the bulbous terminals of the inner bank and ditch and outer bank are convincing. In addition, the counterscarp bank, which is probably part of the later Iron Age re-modelling, swings slightly outwards to the east, and does not continue beyond the marl pit to the north. This earthwork too may have been modified in the course of the marl extraction, since the depression to its rear, which at this point gives it the appearance of a pronounced bank up to 1.6m high, has a fresh appearance and may be primarily an eroded hollow way, produced by horses or vehicles ascending onto the course of the pre-existing ditch. A well-defined trackway which obliquely ascends the scarp at the rear of the rampart quarry hollow to the south of the gateway is presumably the main route from the northern gateway.

An apparent entrance (g) at the north-western angle of the hill, is in fact a later modification, created by the slighting of the banks into their associated ditches. The angle of approach seems to suggest that the track was associated with the nearby marl pit, but this is probably fortuitous, since there is no evidence for related activity within the hillfort. The date of the modification is therefore uncertain.

The extension of the hillfort around the southernmost third of the spur involved the construction of more conventional massive bivallate defences with a substantial counterscarp. It is generally more regular in plan, and the monument as a whole covers an area of 27ha, with a perimeter 2.5kms long. The constructional technique is similar to the earlier hillfort, in that where possible the steep natural slope is accentuated by obtaining spoil from an internal quarry hollow or small ditch above the rampart and simply tipping it down the hillside to accentuate

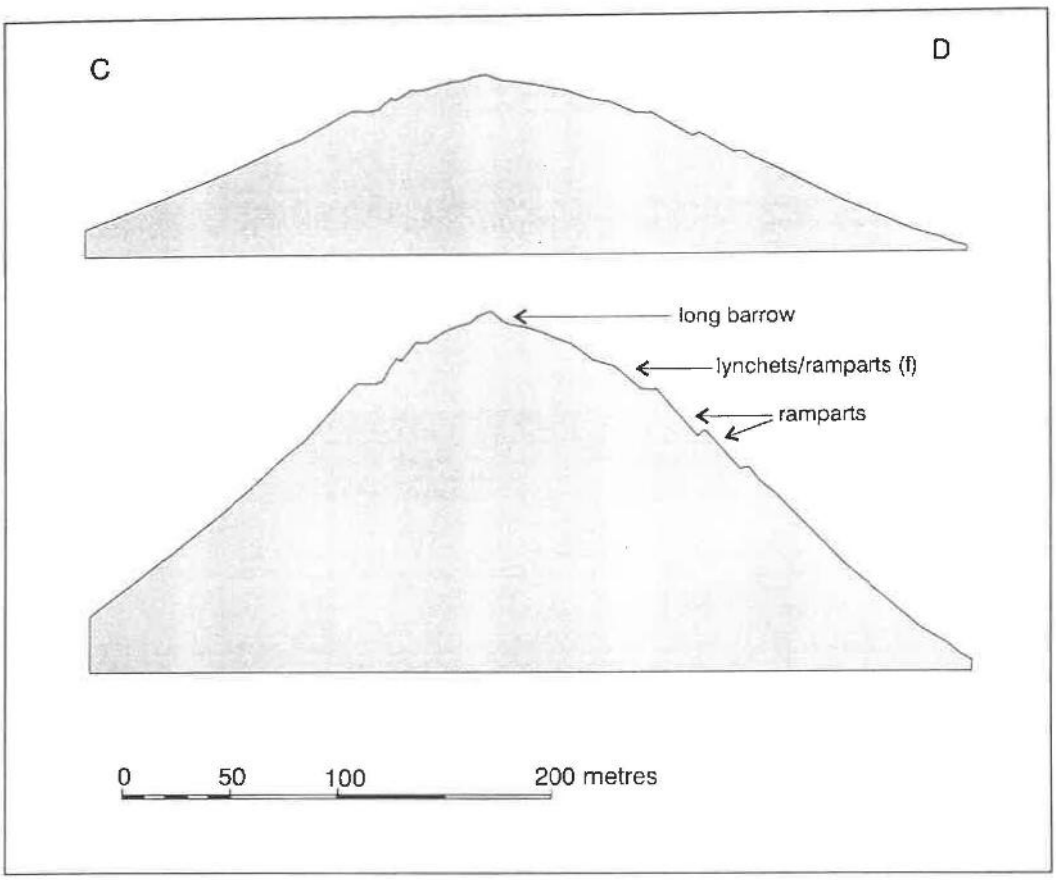

Figure 22: Profile through the hillfort spur, showing the possible lynchets/early ramparts (f) and the later ramparts

the natural slope (see Figure 22). Around much of the interior, a quarry hollow 10m wide on average, called the area path by Gardner (1928), runs immediately inside the inner rampart, its depth ranging from 0.3m to 1.5m, depending on the steepness of the natural topography and the size of the adjacent rampart bank. On the northern and eastern sides of the spur, where the slopes are steepest, the quarrying has resulted in a steep internal scarp up to 6m high, which in plan (and when seen from below) has the appearance of a third rampart. The actual bank of the inner rampart is generally only up to 5.0m wide and 1.0m high, and in places considerably smaller, though its outer face ranges between 9.0m and 14.0m in height. This almost certainly indicates that if anything the bank was surmounted by a timber palisade rather than a more complex 'box' rampart. The base of the quarry hollow, sheltered by the palisade, was apparently a favoured location for houses (see below). The outer rampart results from the digging of a ditch up to 4.0m wide, and probably not much more than 2m deep below the surface, at the foot of the outer face of the inner rampart. Again, the bank is generally less than 1.5m high, and in places (particularly on the western side of the spur) only 0.5m high, but its outer face is up to 12.0m high. At the northern end of the hill, a section through the upper part of the outer rampart is exposed in the northern face of the largest marl pit (Figure 23). From this, it would appear that following the accumulation of a thick turfline above one rampart (not necessarily the earliest, simply the lowest visible phase), the bank was increased in height by 0.4m. Interestingly, though the section is fresh and clean, there is no trace of any palisade slot or other

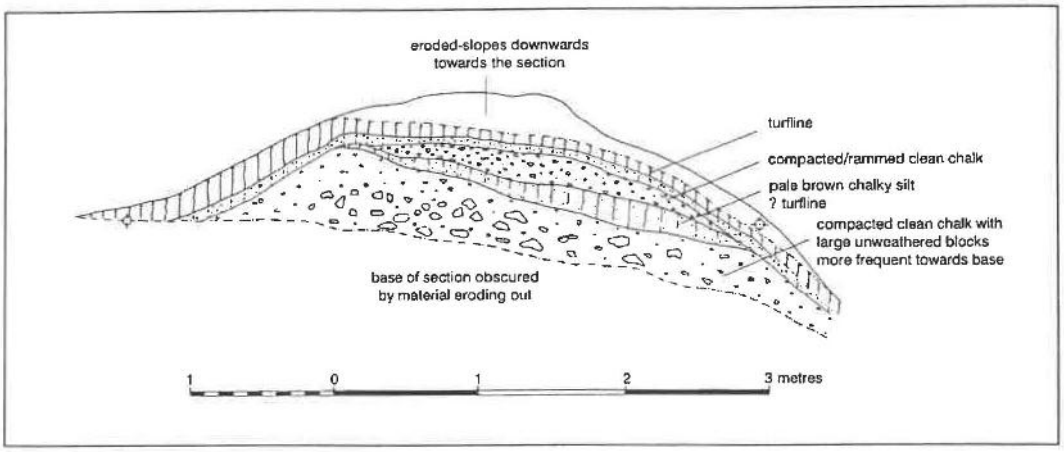

Figure 23: Section through outer rampart exposed in Post-Medieval marl pit

structure associated with either phase of the rampart. The counterscarp seldom has a bank associated with it and presumably results from the digging of a very small ditch at the foot of the outer rampart, which survives on the surface only as a level terrace.

Larger banks and ditches were dug in two places, due partly to the more gentle nature of the natural topography. At **h**, the earlier rampart following the **hillfort spur enclosure** seems to have turned awkwardly to continue along the contours of the western side of the hill, and this is reflected in the subsequent re-modelling. The internal quarry hollow is larger, forming a ditch up to 12.0m wide and 1.2m deep, and the ramparts make a sharp turn to ascend the contours obliquely, in a series of three large steps, (this genuinely seems to be the original form of the earthwork, rather than the product of erosion, which is quite severe at this point). The outer ditch, which is enlarged here to 7.0m wide and 1.0m deep, diverges from the base of the rampart bank; as noted above, the resulting berm may reflect the fossilization of a Neolithic outwork. This angle change is also one of the few places where the counterscarp is formed by an actual bank.

The stretch of the ramparts which extends between the southern **gateways**, running across the relatively level southern end of the spur, is the most massive earthwork on Hambledon Hill. The quarry hollow becomes much larger, increasing in width to between 14m and 22m, and in depth to between 1.0m and 3.0m. In places, it shows clear signs of having been dug as a series of conjoining sub-circular scoops, which were subsequently re-used as house platforms. The possible **pond**, discussed in detail below, probably also provided material for the construction of the ramparts. The very steep-sided inner rampart ranges between 15m and 20m in basal diameter, and between 1.5m and 6.5m high, with an external ditch up to 10m wide and 2m deep. The bank may represent more than one episode of construction: a rabbit hole at ST 8460 1232 seems to cut through a very thick layer of dark occupation debris, containing sherds of early Iron Age and possibly Neolithic pottery (see Appendix iii). This may represent material re-deposited during the heightening of the rampart, possibly contemporary with the addition of the **gateway annexe**. The outer bank, which originally had no associated ditch and was certainly later re-modelled as part of the gateway annexe, is c.12m wide and 1.8m high. The outer faces of both ramparts are more prominent.

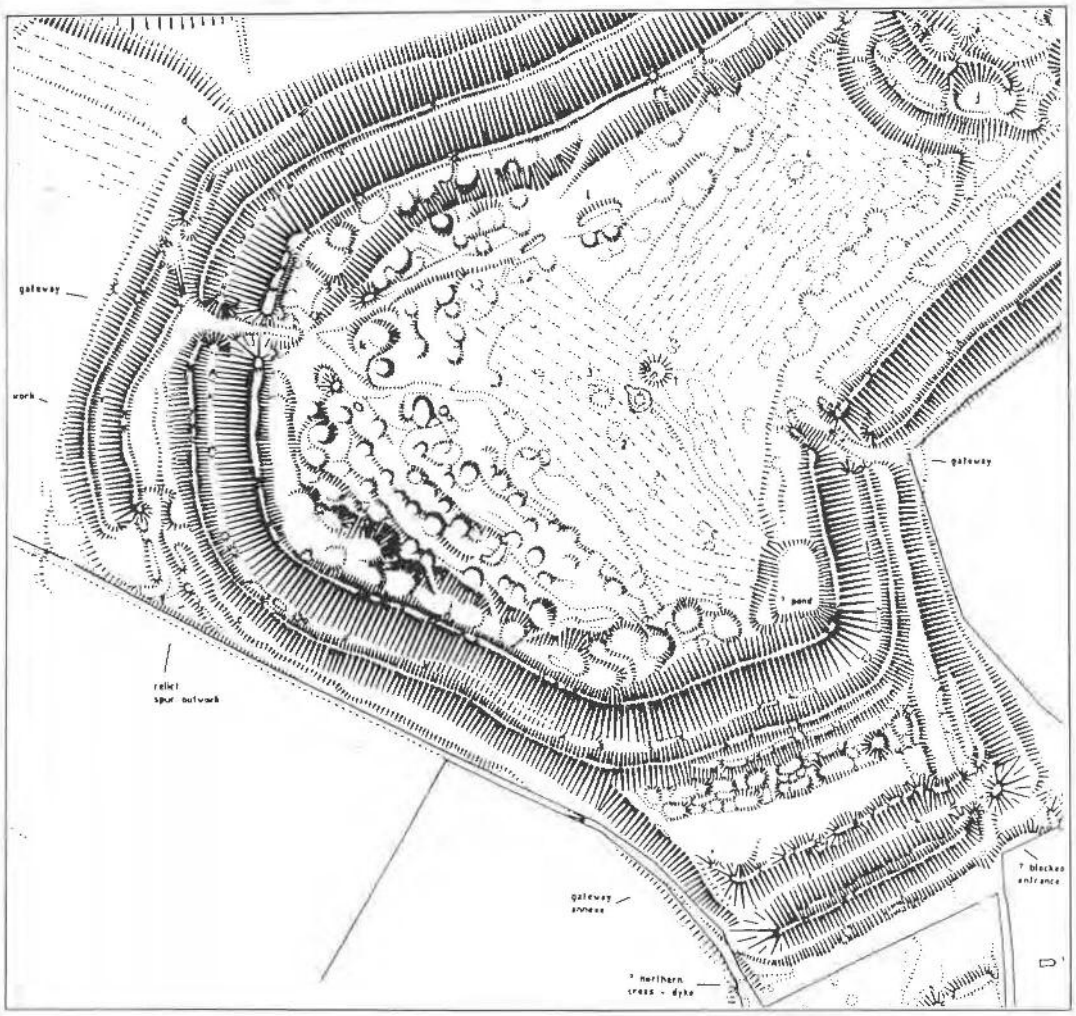

Figure 24. The southern gateways

The original forms of the south-western and south-eastern gateways (see Figure 24) are very similar to each other, and typical of many Iron Age hillforts across southern Britain. The ramparts increase gradually in size towards the entrances, ending in slightly bulbous terminals. The inner rampart banks increase to some 15m in basal diameter and 3.0m in height externally, and the associated ditches to between 8m and 12m in width and 3.0m in depth. The outer banks diminish in height to 0.3m, but swing inwards around the terminals of the ditches to create a funnel-like approach. The entrances themselves are 3.0m wide and are worn slightly lower by erosion, presumably both ancient and modern. On the interior, inturned banks flank the gateway to create an elongated passage. These earthworks are much better preserved at the south-eastern gateway, where they extend for up to 10m and are up to 0.8m high.

The south-western gateway was later strengthened by the addition of a '**hornwork**', which extends for *c.*100m southwards from the outer rampart (see also Figure 9). The junction between the two earthworks has been somewhat damaged by a more recent trackway, which has resulted in the erosion of the bank and the partial in-filling of the ditch. The hornwork comprises a bank and ditch of similar proportions to the outer rampart, with a substantial counterscarp bank up to 2.2m high externally. At the southern end of the protracted approach

thus created, an in-turn in the terminal of the hornwork bank and a corresponding sub-rectangular mound projecting from the base of the outer rampart bank almost certainly indicate the position of an outer gate structure.

Access to the south-eastern gateway from the north does not appear to have been hindered in the same way, perhaps due to the steepness of the natural slope. Gardner's suggestion that the strip lynchets on the eastern flank of the hill were part of an elaborate approach from that direction (Gardner 1928, 50) must be dismissed; these earthworks may have existed in a slighter form in the prehistoric period, as mentioned above, but are probably largely a product of Medieval agriculture (see below). The principal approach to the south-eastern gateway, at least in the latter stages of its development, appears to have been from the domed central summit

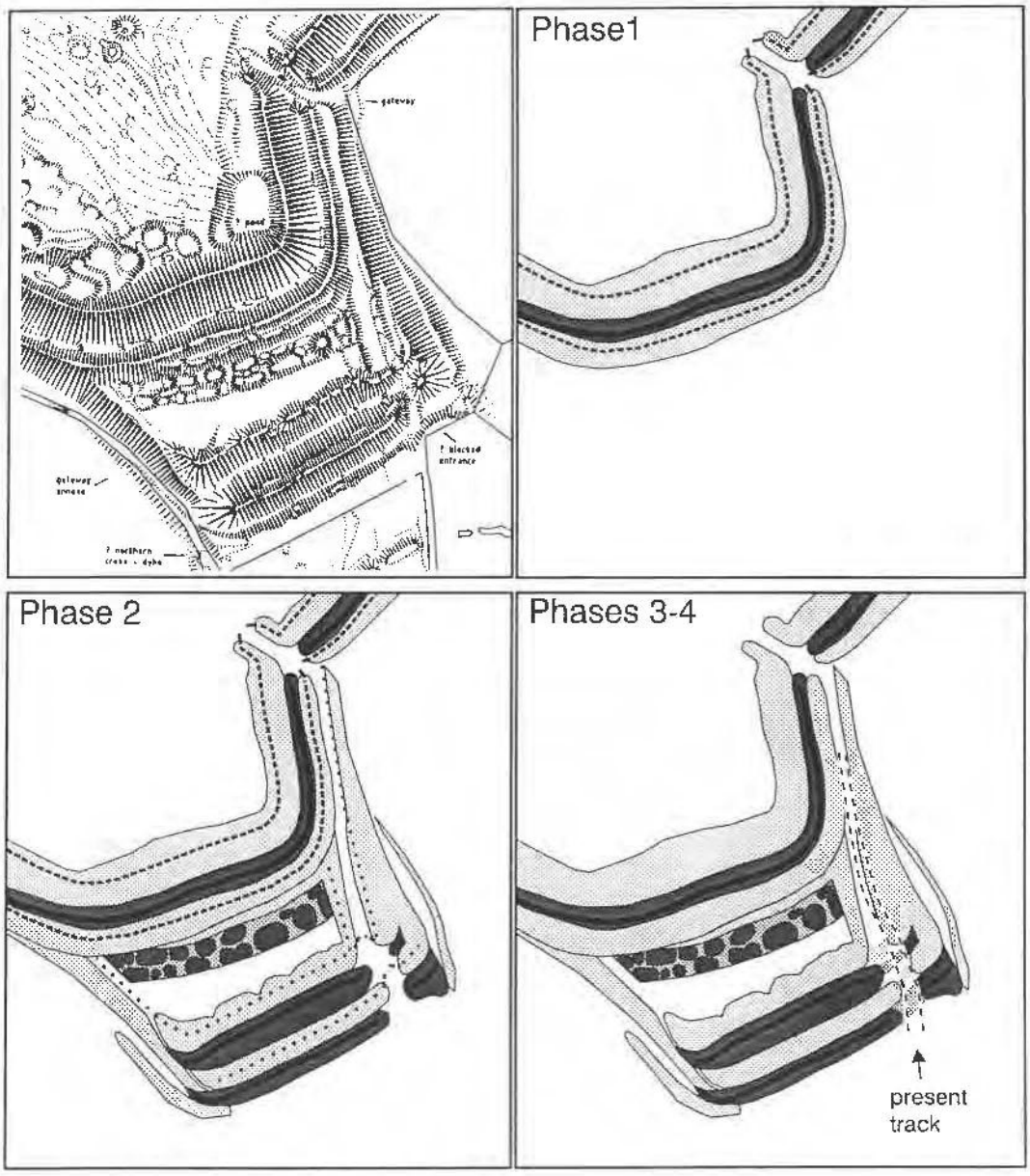

Figure 25: The 'gateway annexe'

to the south occupied by the main causewayed enclosure, via the **gateway annexe**. These earthworks exhibit a very complex sequence of development, and in their final form are so confused that Gardner expressed doubt as to whether access from that direction had ever been possible, a doubt which presumably influenced his misinterpretation of the strip lynchets (Gardner 1928, 51). As a whole, the gateway annexe encloses a very small level area (only 0.1ha) in relation to the size of its earthworks; this must indicate that its primary purpose was to fortify the approach rather than to create a useable enclosure. The two new ramparts of the annexe span the lowest point of the slight saddle connecting the hillfort spur to the domed central summit, and may also have overlain or destroyed the earthworks of the possible Neolithic **northern cross-dyke**, as described above. Either or both of these factors may have influenced the siting of the additional ramparts, and explain the curiously broad berm (between 10m and 16m wide) separating them from the rest of the hillfort. It is possible to recognise three phases of modification in the development of the annexe, though these may not represent the complete picture (see Figures 25 and 26).

The first phase, which was never finished, may have involved the heightening of the main inner rampart, but most clearly comprised the enlargement of the existing outer rampart bank and the construction of two new lines of rampart. The unfinished ditch is a typical example of its kind, and is very well-preserved. Initially, a continuous, regular depression or 'marker ditch' some 13m wide and 100m long was dug. This is no more than 0.2m deep where it is most clearly evident between the deeper scoops, and was probably formed by the removal of the turf and topsoil. Subsequently, within the limits of the marker ditch, a series of some sixteen contiguous, and in some cases conjoining, oval and sub-circular pits was dug. These vary between

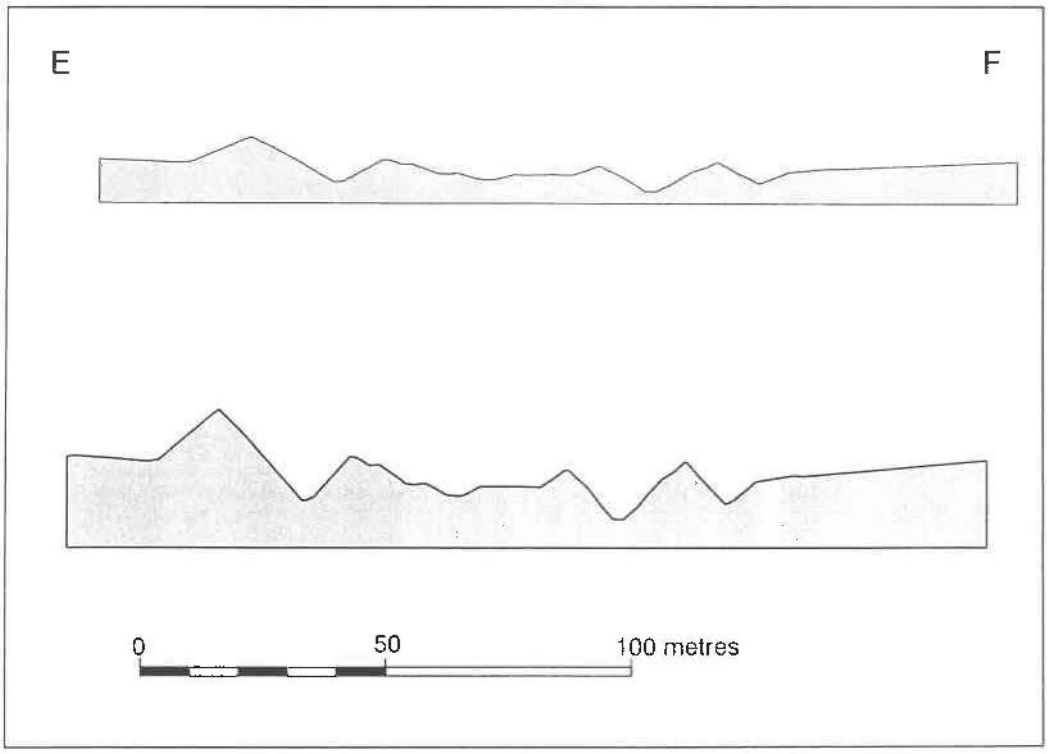

Figure 26: Profile across the gateway annexe

4.0m and 11.0m in diameter and between 0.4m and 1.5m in depth. Some of the resulting spoil forms the bank which overlies the outer rampart bank for 90m, and was clearly the first stage in increasing the height of the pre-existing earthwork. Part of the spoil may also have contributed to the innermost bank of the two new ramparts, which also shows clear signs of being unfinished (Gardner seems to have interpreted this as mutilation resulting from the creation of the present track). The bank comprises several distinct mounds and has an irregular appearance along the whole of its length. In general it is 10.0m wide and up to 2.2m high. Towards its southern end a 'ramp' ascends the inner slope obliquely, presumably to provide an easy path for those delivering the spoil. The external ditch appears much more finished, but has a number of minor irregularities along its base.

The outer of the two new ramparts appears almost entirely finished; it is uncertain whether this indicates that work was started on the outermost defences first, or whether the rampart represents an entirely separate earlier phase in the construction sequence. The bank is *c.*12m wide and 2.8m high, and the external ditch 10m wide and 2.5m deep. At its western end, a slight counterscarp bank up to 0.3m high extends around the terminal of the ditch and survives fairly well along the line of the **track**. The two ramparts are connected to the main defences of the hillfort by steep scarps 6.0m high on average. At the western and eastern ends of the two new ramparts, the inner ditch terminates at the edge of the natural scarp, while the outer turns and continues as a level berm.

The form of the **blocked entrance** associated with this unfinished phase, which has been clarified for the first time by the recent survey, is of great interest. On the western side of the entrance, a bank 0.8m high on average defines the end of the unfinished ditch and extends from the rear of the inner of the two newly created ramparts to the base of the pre-existing main outer rampart. This bank, together with a slighter bank up to 0.2m high along the edge of the accentuated natural scarp on the northern side of the blocked entrance, creates a passage-like terraced defile 150m long leading to the south-eastern **gateway**. For 80m of its length, the approach is overlooked by the main ramparts of the hillfort, in a manner similar to a conventional hornwork. The present track runs along the summit of the slighter eastern bank for some distance, leading Gardner to interpret the bank itself as 'modern mutilation'.

In the second phase of the development of the gateway annexe, the entrance into the unfinished bi-vallate annexe was blocked, and it is probably this modification which confused Gardner. Though some hillfort entrances were blocked in the Iron Age, it seems quite likely that this modification was made during the Civil War, for reasons presented in Section 4. The causeways across the two ditches were partially removed, although the position of the inner one can be clearly seen as a fairly pronounced scarp in the base of the ditch. Banks up to 1.2m high -considerably smaller than the rampart banks - were thrown up across the intended entrances. This resulted in slightly irregular earthworks (particularly evident in the inner rampart. Interestingly, there is no evidence that there was ever any attempt to block the main south-eastern gateway itself.

In the third phase, the blocking earthworks were themselves partially levelled into the ditches to facilitate access, although the banks both survive as residual earthworks. This levelling was

presumably carried out at a fairly recent date, as suggested by Gardner, though prior to 1886 (Ordnance Survey 1887). The resulting gap in the earthworks, which remains the usual route for vehicular access into the hillfort, lies some 7m to the east of the blocked entrance originally associated with the unfinished gateway annexe.

The hillfort interior

The interior of the hillfort as a whole has an area of 12.3ha (30.4 acres), not allowing for the significant difference made by the variable gradient, which is particularly steep at the northern end of the spur. Earthworks survive exceptionally well throughout the interior, the vast majority being related to the very dense later prehistoric and perhaps Romano-British settlement (see Figure 17). The new survey has recorded traces of 365 possible building platforms, though the true figure may have been as high as 400, almost twice as many as were portrayed by the earlier RCHME survey. All but a few of the platforms are circular, usually formed by the digging of a semi-circular cut into the slope of the hill and the creation of a matching semi-circular apron or terrace downhill from it. Consequently, those platforms located on the steeper slopes are generally more pronounced as earthworks, their uphill scarps surviving up to a height of 2.0m. The majority of the newly identified platforms are very slight, in many cases having been located on more level ground and subsequently further diminished by the Post-Medieval ploughing, which did not extend onto the steepest slopes. It is generally impossible to distinguish between houses and non-domestic buildings from surface evidence alone, and it is possible that the use of individual buildings varied over time. Some of the smallest platforms may in fact be infilled pits, but this could be more readily confirmed by geophysical survey techniques. Many of the house platforms show differential vegetation growth, with circular patches of nettles and thistles at their centre. This may well indicate continued high phosphate levels in the underlying soil, which is frequently equated with human domestic activity and/or dung from enclosed livestock. In many cases, earthwork preservation is such that it is possible to identify slightly sunken paths extending for a few metres, (presumably) away from the entrances of the buildings. This may be significant in terms of indicating human occupation, but excavation would be required to have any confidence in this level of detail. However, the term 'house platform' is generally used and will be retained throughout this report for convenience.

Several crude patterns can be recognised in the morphology and distribution of the house platforms. In the central and northern sections of the spur, the majority of the platforms are larger on average, between 8m and 12m in diameter. The house within the platform excavated by Mercer, which may be included in this group, was dated conservatively to the sixth to fifth centuries BC (Brown in Mercer and Healy in preparation). It is unclear whether the larger houses, whose distribution pattern lies broadly within the area of the earliest hillfort, are actually contemporary with its construction, or whether they represent an unenclosed settlement pre-dating the construction of the first phase of ramparts. The excavated house had a diameter of 7.5m (implying a floor area of almost $24m^{2)}$. Many of the platforms at the northern end appear spatially isolated, with no indication of how they may have related to each other, but there are two or three instances of platforms which appear to be grouped in pairs. In the central part of the hillfort spur, to the north of the **long barrow**, a slightly hollowed trackway 4.0m

wide on average can be traced for 90m running north-south straight along the top of the ridge. At its southern end, it seems to have divided, part continuing along the top of the ridge towards the long barrow, and part descending the western slope of the spur obliquely and continuing for a further 30m, apparently towards the western end of the **early rampart**. Backing on to both sides of the trackway are large house platforms, comparable in size to those on the northern end of the hill, each enclosed by an embanked compound. Six or seven compounds can be identified, the largest measuring approximately 30m by 20m, and perhaps containing two house platforms. The enclosing banks, which may have supported hedges or palisades, are most pronounced adjacent to the trackway, where they measure up to 5.0m wide and 0.5m high. It is worth noting in passing that despite the intensive use of the interior of the hillfort, the long barrow seems to have been respected, and has not been damaged by any of the later house platforms.

In contrast to the large, isolated house platforms on the northern part of the spur, in the southern third of the hillfort they are smaller on average, 5m to 8m in diameter, and are frequently laid out in close proximity to each other, in rows which follow low terraces running along the natural contours of the hill. This pattern is particularly clear to the south-east of the south-western gateway. A hollowed trackway which enters through the gateway divides immediately, passing to either side of platform k. One route heads northwards for at least 95m in the direction of the western end of the early rampart, perhaps to join up with the track mentioned above, and the other heads eastwards up the slope for at least 80m. This latter track appears to serve a series of five or six terraces, on each of which lie between four and eight house platforms.

In the southern part of the interior, the main exceptions to this pattern are located in the quarry hollow immediately inside the inner rampart. These house platforms are generally slightly larger, though the difference is quite pronounced alongside the southernmost stretch of rampart, where the larger examples are 10m to 12m in diameter. In some cases the house platforms are located within compounds formed by banks extending at right angles inwards from the inner rampart bank and continuing for some distance up the side of the quarry hollow scarp. These occur most clearly on the western side of the southern and central parts of the spur, where there are at least seven separate compounds. The perpendicular banks appear in every case to overlie the rampart bank. The sections of the quarry hollow divided off in this way are between 14m and 33m in length, the largest probably containing two large house platforms. There are a number of ramps descending the scarp of the quarry hollow, which probably provided pedestrian access to the various buildings.

A few house platforms are worth singling out for individual attention. What appears to be an exceptionally large platform (j), c.14m in diameter, has been cut into the eastern end of the early rampart, one of a number which re-used the bank in this way (see Figure 19). The bank around the rear of the platform, which rises to almost the same height as the rampart bank, has been misleadingly portrayed on previous earthwork plans as an integral part of the main earthwork; in fact, it seems to represent a massive modification to what may have been a gateway through the disused rampart, as described above. It is noteable that the floor of the platform has no nettle or thistle growth. The unusual form of the platform and possible significant siting

may indicate that the structure was non-domestic, and perhaps not even a building as such at all.

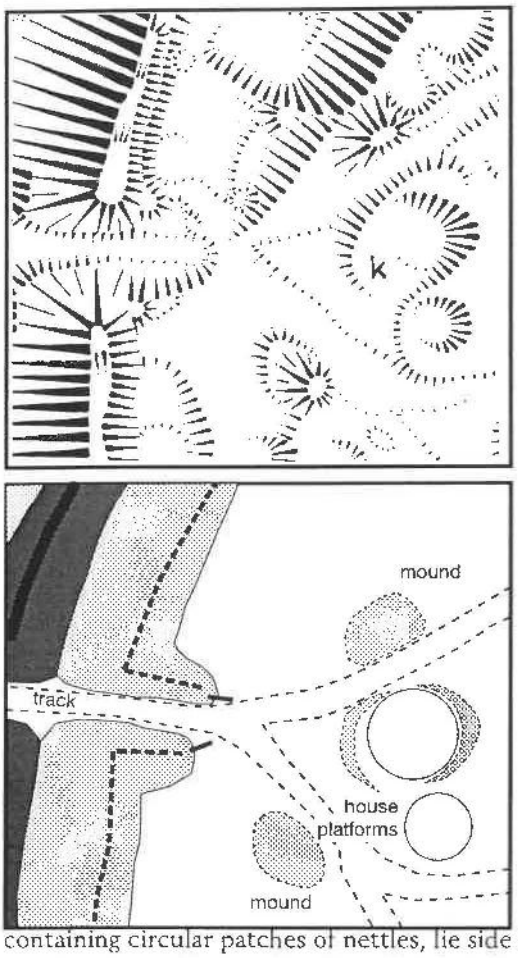

Figure 27: Building platform overlooking the south-west gateway

A second large building sited in an apparently important location is represented by platform k, at the apex of the fork in the trackway which enters the hillfort through the south-western gateway (see Figure 27). The platform is *c.*11m in diameter, and raised on a frontal apron 1.2m high, which would have lent the building (perhaps as much as 7m tall) an imposing aspect when approached through the gateway below it. In addition, the platform is flanked by two mounds, one on the opposite side of each track. The mounds are both oval, 14.0m long by 8.5m wide and up to 1.0m tall. While it is impossible to prove that these related to the house platform rather than the tracks, they are without parallel elsewhere in the interior of the hillfort.

Building complex l is extremely well-preserved and is one of only a few examples on Hambledon Hill where it is possible to recognise a number of buildings which may have formed parts of a single unit (see Figure 28). A pair of house platforms of similar size, both 5.0m in diameter and both containing circular patches of nettles, lie side by side, fronting onto a single 'yard'. This area is some 14m long by 5m wide, enclosed by a bank up to 0.4m high, which may have supported a hedge or palisade. Interruptions at each end of the bank around the 'yard' presumably represent entrances. Immediately to the rear of the pair of main platforms, lie two smaller and much slighter circular platforms 4.0m in diameter. These appear to have been associated with the main pair of buildings, and may have been ancilliary structures of some kind. The relationship of complex l to the trackway leading from the south-western gateway is uncertain, but it appears to interrupt the track and may therefore be a relatively late construction.

A possible **pond** lies in the south-eastern corner of the fort, against the base of the inner rampart, in an area where no house platforms are evident (see Figure 24). The feature was recorded on Charles Warne's sketch of the south-eastern gateway (1872), and less accurately by the Ordnance Survey First Edition 25-inch map (1887). The depression is now dry, but supports different vegetation and becomes damp in winter. Significantly, it has in the past produced evidence of being lined with clay, when digging was required to remove a vehicle which had become stuck (personal communication from Mr K Barton, farm manager). The depression is

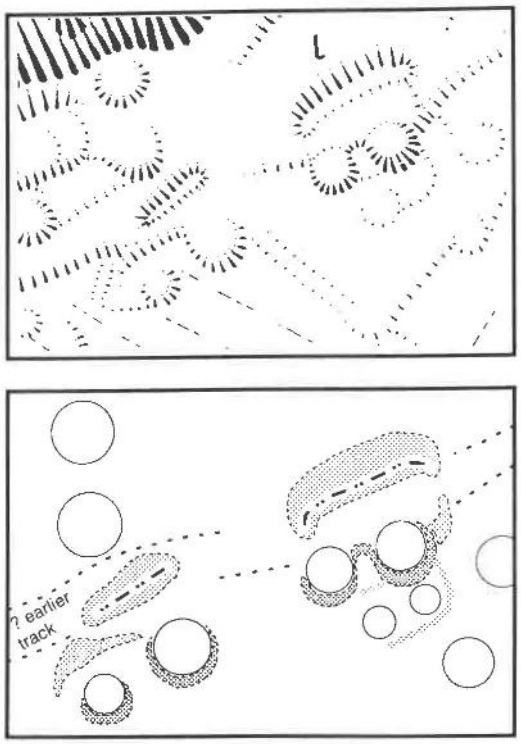

Figure 28: Possible later building complex

sub-rectangular, 30m long by up to 22m wide, with a maximum depth of 1.2m. The bases of the slopes which form its sides are slightly rounded, consistent with water erosion, and its north-western end shelves gently. Originally, the hollow was probably dug to provide material for the inner rampart, which is considerably more massive at this point, perhaps requiring more spoil than the ditch alone was able to supply. Although it is possible that it was constructed or modified after the Iron Age, and even quite likely that it was used as a pond in the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods, the fact that the depression was never integrated into the rest of the quarry hollow suggests that it is of Iron Age origin and may have been planned as a pond from the outset.

On the north-western extremity of the hillfort spur, the recent survey identified a **mound**, apparently artificial, covering an area of approximately 1070m^2 (see Figures 21 and 29). The mound is very spread, with a maximum height of approximately 0.7m, and is consequently very difficult to distinguish from the natural topography. It appears to have been sited on a slight natural rise, overlooking the very steep scarp above the quarry hollow of the inner rampart. Although not as dominant a location as the eminence on which the possible barrow 5 stands, the rise commands wide views across a broad arc to the north-west; equally, the profile of the mound itself is visible on the horizon from much of the surrounding landscape. The mound has been damaged slightly by the Post-Medieval ploughing, which has cut into the softer material, creating a series of slight lynchets in its south-eastern side. More importantly, it has also been cut into by three relatively small house platforms. The possible significance of this mound will be discussed further below.

'Celtic' field systems

Two main areas of probable prehistoric fields were recorded: on the slopes north-west of the south-western gateway and around the northern end of the hillfort spur. It seems likely that some evidence of prehistoric agriculture has been erased by Medieval and later ploughing.

The field system north of the south-western gateway is not extensive, but is fairly well-preserved. Two banks up to 0.3m high descend the steep natural slope perpendicularly from the hillfort, with slight scarps extending away from them at right angles, defining fields of different sizes. Though there is no stratigraphic relationship between the banks and the ramparts, the field system is later prehistoric in character. Below the south-western gateway the alignments of the largest lynchets, which are probably of Medieval date, and some of those

associated with the Post-Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, suggest that they overlie earlier field boundaries.

The 'Celtic' fields around the northern end of the hillfort spur are well-preserved and in places exhibit a fairly complex development. Like those described above, the largest earthworks are the banks running perpendicularly away from the hillfort, which are up to 0.5m high and 5.0m wide. In three cases, the banks can be seen to overlie the counterscarp bank of the Iron Age ramparts (contra RCHME 1970, 82-3), suggesting that they either originated or were re-modelled late in the prehistoric period or in the Roman period. The scarps which extend away from the banks define around fifteen possible fields, all less than 0.5ha in area. Some 130m north of the **coombe**, one small field or enclosure clearly overlies another. At the northernmost end of the spur, two scarps which are very difficult to distinguish from the steep natural slope must pre-date the construction of the ramparts, if indeed they functioned as field boundaries at all. This suggests that there is considerable chronological depth to the field system.

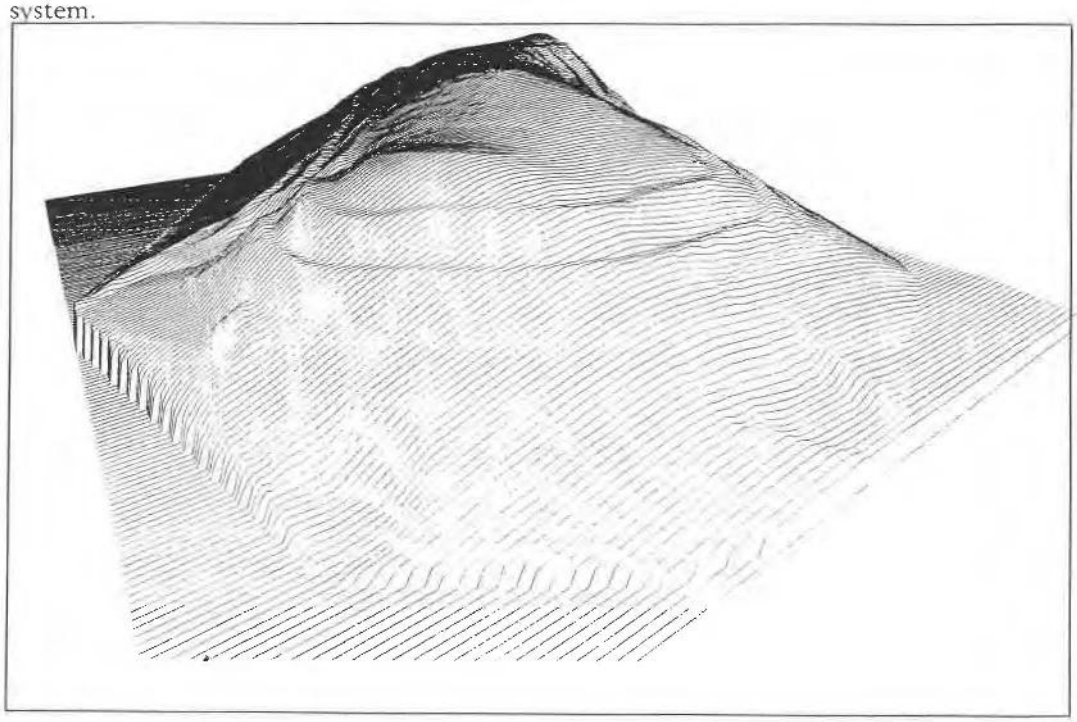

Figure 29: Digital ground model of the northern end of the hillfort spur, showing the location of the mound

The Early Medieval period to the Second World War (400 AD - 1945)

Plate 5: The western end of the gateway annexe - erosion caused by livestock (RCHME: Crown Copyright reserved. Negative number AA96/2863)

Anglo-Saxon inhumations

Early Medieval activity on Hambledon Hill is evidenced by the fourteen Anglo-Saxon inhumations found during the excavation of the bank of the Stepleton enclosure. As mentioned above, it is possible that graves were also dug into some of the other prehistoric earthworks, particularly the barrows. There are no earthworks which can be positively identified as early Medieval.

Medieval strip lynchets

A number of lynchets are characteristic of the Medieval period. The best preserved are the two strip lynchets up to 5.0m high, which descend the eastern flank of the hillfort spur obliquely in a sinuous curve which extends for 300m. Gardner (1928) interpreted these as a prehistoric terraced trackway approaching the south-eastern gateway of the hillfort, but this seems improbable given that they do not seem to be aligned on the gateway and virtually fade away some distance below it. Mercer (1986) suggested that the lynchets might be part of a possible Bronze Age field system, of which the scarps re-used to create the hillfort (f) might also be part. There is some evidence that the lynchets re-used pre-existing fields: the lower of the two continues southwards in a slighter form as far as the counterscarp bank of the hillfort, and appears

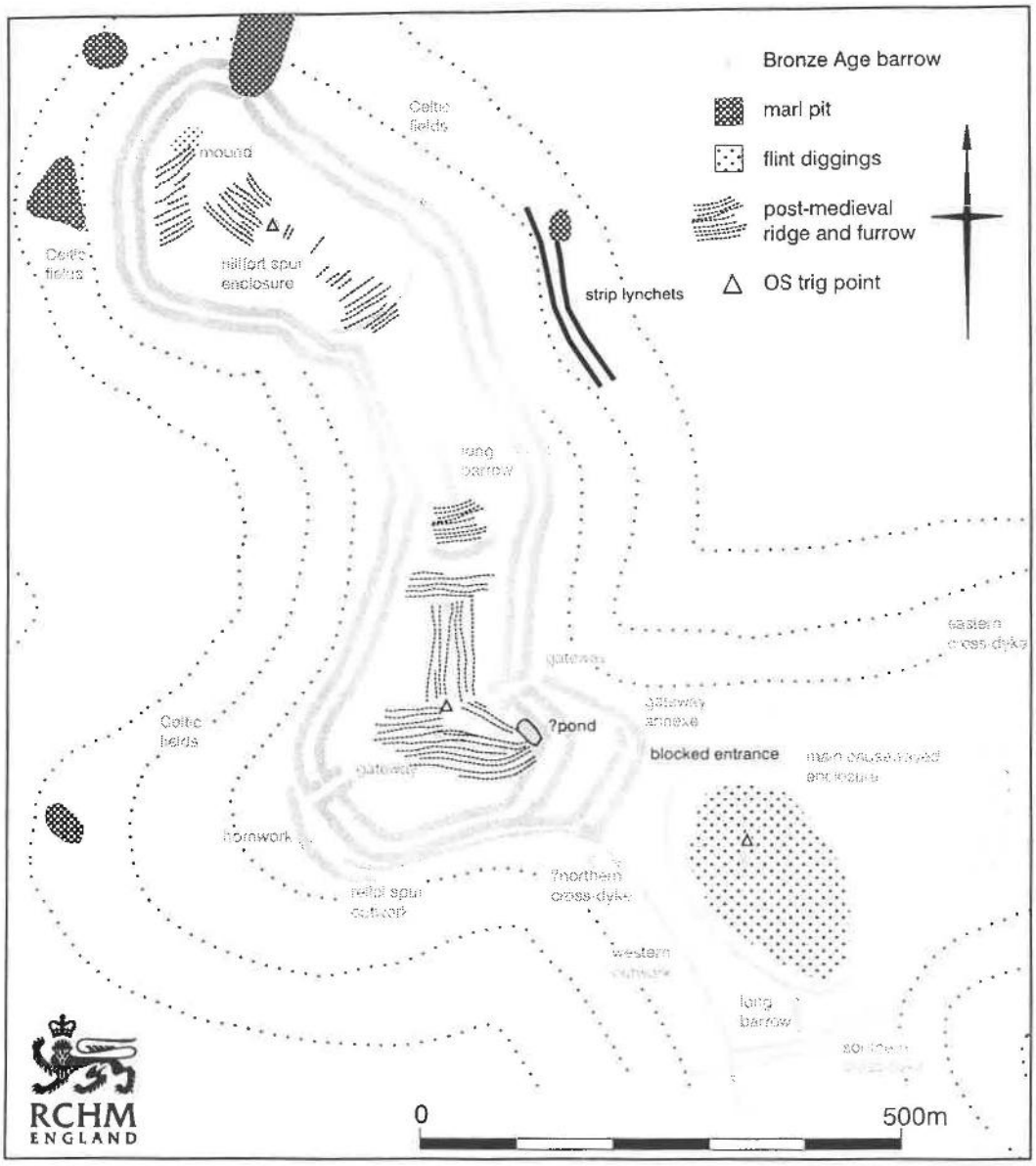

Figure 30: Interpretative plan: Medieval - Post-Medieval periods

to terminate at its northern end on the line of a bank which may be part of a 'Celtic' field system. However, it seems likely that these slighter earthworks for the most part represent the prehistoric field boundaries, and that the massive size of the main lynchets is due to their conversion into Medieval strip fields. Two slight but somewhat broader scarps near the southern end of the strip lynchets may also be Medieval cultivation terraces.

On the spur west of the south-western gateway, an isolated lynchet up to 1.4m high descends the slope obliquely from north-east to south-west. This fairly massive section extends for only 60m, but much slighter scarps suggest that it was levelled for later agriculture, and may originally

have extended for at least 150m. Gardner (1928, 51) interpreted it as an outwork of the south-western gateway of the hillfort, but this is certainly not the case.

A lynchet up to 1.0m high survives for some 200m south of the large marl pit at the northern end of the hillfort spur. A second lynchet of similar size runs parallel to it, but lies outside the limit of the area surveyed. The level terrace between the two may have subsequently provided access to the marl pit. Palmer (in Mercer and Healy in preparation, 19) also recorded a number of strip fields lying below and to the east of the Shroton spur outwork.

Ridge and furrow fields

A total of eight small fields of narrow ridge and furrow cultivation, which have not previously been recorded, were identified in the interior of the hillfort. Most occupy areas where no earthworks were depicted on the earlier RCHME plan; it now seems likely that the apparent absence of prehistoric remains may be due to the levelling of most surface traces , and that sub-surface features may still survive. The most pronounced of the furrows are 0.2m deep, but most are slighter, indicating that cultivation was not prolonged; the fields range from 0.1ha to 0.7ha in area. The relatively narrow width of the cultivation ridges (between 3.5m and 6.0m) suggests that the cultivation is of Post-Medieval date, although Medieval examples are not unknown.

The boundaries of the three southernmost fields are aligned on the largest of the barrows (1), and this relationship seems to account for the relatively good preservation of the barrow (see Figure 24). The southernmost field comprises eight furrows to the west of the barrow and six to its east, extending for up to 150m on a west to east alignment, which exhibit a slight 'reverse-S', characteristic of ox ploughing. A triangular area of only 0.1ha appears to be a remnant resulting from the enlargement of this field. The bank along its southern edge may originally have been a cultivation ridge, but is more pronounced, suggesting that it was adapted to form a field boundary. The third field appears to have been responsible for levelling barrow 4, but the barrow coincides with the northern limit of the field and it is possible that the field boundary was originally aligned on it. The furrows appear to deviate to avoid an earthwork in the middle of the hilltop, but the nature of this feature is uncertain. The western ends of the furrows of the field immediately to the south of the **early rampart** cut into the scarp of the rampart quarry hollow, and the consequent erosion has resulted in a major land-slip at one point. The level base of the early rampart ditch may indicate that it too was cultivated.

Furrows can also be seen to cut into the bank of the Neolithic **hillfort spur enclosure** although the precise limits of the field are uncertain. Another field comprises at least ten furrows on the relatively gentle slope north of possible barrow 5, which maintain a fairly straight alignment but deviate to avoid larger house platforms. A pronounced headland has developed at the north-western (downslope) end of the field. The northernmost field comprises at least twelve furrows on the steep north-western slope of the hill. Those at the northern end of the field appear to have extended further eastwards, cutting into the sides of the **mound**. A negative lynchet up to 0.4m high has developed at the upper north-eastern end of the field, and the positive build-up of soil at the lower end has accentuated the scarp of the Iron Age quarry hollow.

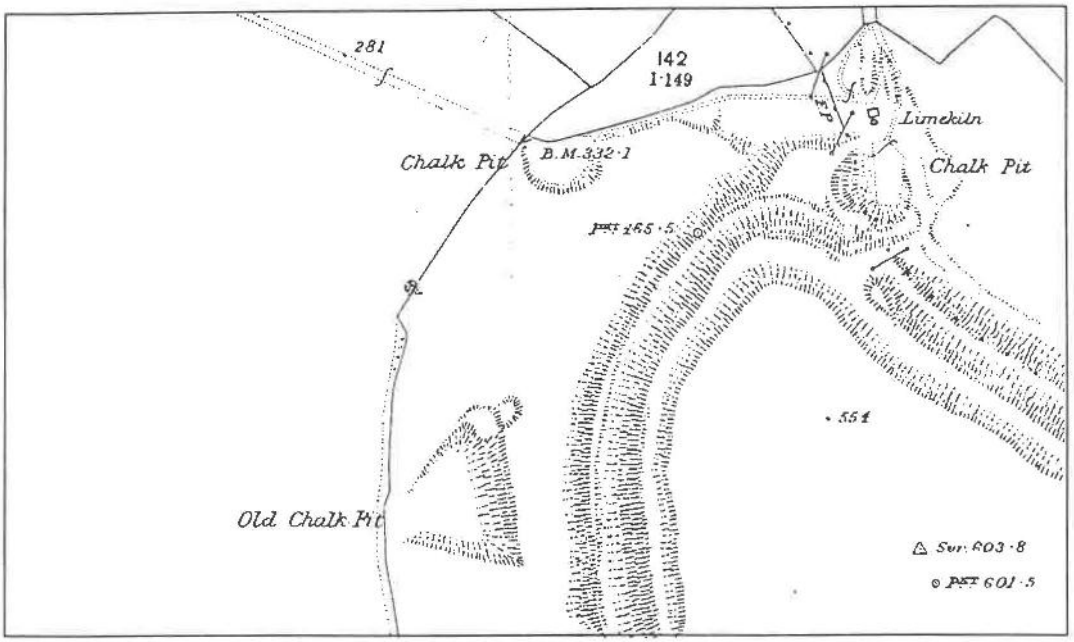

Figure 31: Post-Medieval marl pit and 19th century lime kiln (Ordnance Survey 1887)

The yew wood

Though the interior of the wood was not investigated in detail in the course of the recent survey, it was noted that many of the trees in the central/northern section of the wood are planted in straight lines at fairly regular intervals. This strongly suggests that the wood may have originated as a deliberate plantation and subsequently spread naturally. The age of the trees is difficult to estimate but may be between 200 and 400 years (personal communication from Ian Nicol, English Nature).

Marl pits

Five large quarries, probably dug to obtain chalk for the manufacture of marl as an agricultural fertilizer, lie on the flanks of Hambledon Hill. Those to the east and south-west of the hill are considerably smaller (up to 3m deep), and may have been dug piecemeal for local distribution. The three quarries at the northern end of the hill clearly assumed a more industrial level of production. They are not only larger in area, but also cut more deeply (up to *c.*25m) into the hillside and consequently represent a much greater volume of material. An estate map of 1767 indicates that the quarry which impinges on the northern gateway of the hillfort (the others lie beyond the edges of the map) was not much smaller at that date (Dorset CRO b); this suggests that it may have been in use for a relatively long period. This quarry and the smaller pit adjacent to it were the only ones still in use by the late nineteenth century (Ordnance Survey 1887 and Figure 31). A lime kiln which had been built in the base of the quarry by that date survived until 1900 (Ordnance Survey 1901), but was dis-used by 1924 (NMR a). Gardner (1928, 49) interpreted a semi-circular platform, which had been depicted on the Ordnance Survey First Edition (1887) as an outwork associated with the northern gateway of the hillfort; the feature seems to be an amalgamation of more recent features and natural scarps. Where it can be identified at all, the 'platform' seems to have been produced by the dumping of spoil from the marl pit up to the fenceline.

Flint diggings

On the domed central summit of Hambledon Hill, the chalk is overlain by a thin cap of clay-with-flints, containing large quantities of flint gravels. Small-scale extraction pits, presumably dug to obtain flint for building and road construction, etc., are evident across much of the summit on aerial photographs. In the area now under pasture, within the parish of Child Okeford, the extraction appears to have been much more intensive, suggesting that it was carried out on a parish basis (Palmer in Mercer and Healy in preparation). The limit of the distribution elsewhere appears to reflect the extent of the clay-with-flints layer. The flint diggings recorded as earthworks by the recent survey include rectangular, sub-circular and linear pits, generally less than 0.3m deep on the surface, with amorphous slight mounds of spoil lying amongst them. In a number of places, the pits cut into the Neolithic earthworks. A number of trackways, one of which is prortrayed on the Ordnance Survey First Edition 25-inch map (1887) leading to two fairly large 'gravel pits', and others which are visible as earthworks and on the aerial photographs of 1924 (NMR a), presumably provided cart access to the flint diggings. The division of the resources on a parish basis, together with the relatively small size of the individual pits, suggests that extraction may have been piecemeal and extended over centuries. However, apart from the fact that two of the pits appear to have been in use in 1886 (Ordnance Survey 1887), most have a fresh appearance on the 1924 aerial photographs and Gardner (1928, 47) mentions having spoken to the workmen, suggesting that the diggings are predominantly of later nineteenth and early twentieth century date.

Ordnance Survey triangulation pillars

Three triangulation pillars are shown on the Ordnance Survey First and Second Edition maps of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Ordnance Survey 1887; 1901). Only the one at the centre of the causewayed enclosure has been replaced. The second stood on the southern edge of barrow **1**, where a small earthwork was recorded by RCHME (see Figure 16). This comprises an annular bank 7.5m in diameter and 0.2m high, enclosing a circular mound 5.0m in diameter, with a central depression corresponding to the site of the pillar itself. The third stood on the slight rise which forms the northern crest of the hillfort spur, on top of the possible barrow 5. The steep-sided sub-rectangular pit at this point probably results from the extraction of the pillar.

Second World War remains

Only two possible military slit trenches were recorded, both cut into the Iron Age rampart at the southern end of the hillfort. However, a .303 shell case discovered near the south-western gateway indicates that there was probably some training activity in the vicinity. A single anti-aircraft gun, probably for Home Guard use, was sited on the hilltop for a brief period (personal communication from Mr Giles, local resident), but this has left no visible trace. Within the yew wood lies a semi-sunken Andersen shelter, built of concrete with a corrigated iron roof (now collapsing). This was not recorded in detail by RCHME. It is believed locally that the shelter was built for the owner of Hanford House, which has now been converted into a school.

4. DISCUSSION

Plate 6: The northern long barrow and early rampart, with the south-eastern gateway in the middle distance, showing the extent of scrub encroachment prior to clearance in December 1996 (RCHME: Crown Copyright reserved. Negative number AA96/2864)

The Neolithic period

From an archaeological perspective, the Neolithic remains on Hambledon Hill are immeasurably important. Causewayed enclosures constitute some of the earliest surviving evidence for the impact of humans upon the landscape of western Europe. Of fewer than one hundred possible examples currently known in Britain, only eight survive as earthworks to a comparable degree, the remainder having been levelled by ploughing. In addition, the Hambledon Hill site is unusual amongst causewayed enclosures, and therefore particularly important, because of its extent and complexity. Given the importance of the Neolithic monuments, it is arguable that the most important findings of the recent survey are those which support and advance the theories put forward by Roger Mercer and Rog Palmer -several key suggestions have apparently been confirmed.

The identification of a possible remnant of the putative northern cross-dyke is important in its own right, but also contributes to the understanding of the causewayed enclosure complex as a whole. Due primarily to the recognition of different elements of the site at different dates, and their consequent description as isolated 'cross-dykes' and 'outworks', a somewhat confusing impression of the complex has developed and an overview of its plan has only partially been achieved. In fact, although there is no stratigraphic evidence to prove the hypothesis, rather than thinking of the three cross-dykes as separate entities, it is perhaps more appropriate to

consider them as parts of a single circuit, divided into three by the intervening coombes. Likewise, it would seem that the relict spur outwork was very similar in form to the Shroton and Hanford spur outworks, and that these three perhaps defined a third, more-or-less concentric, circuit. On the other hand, Palmer has suggested that the Hanford spur outwork is indistinguishable from the Stepleton outwork, and hints have been recorded by the recent survey that the western outwork and relict spur outwork may be parts of another long linear earthwork. Therefore, it is possible that the outermost earthwork is not concentric at all. If so, however, the various disparate causewayed earthworks, which have often been regarded as unusual features, may instead be components of a causewayed enclosure with multiple circuits, similar in essence to many others. For example, the 'type-site' at Windmill Hill in Wiltshire (SU 087 714) has three widely-spaced, approximately concentric circuits. It is possible that other apparently isolated causewayed earthworks, such as that at Rybury Camp in Wiltshire (SU 083 640), actually formed parts of larger circuits. Closely-spaced pairs of circuits, comparable to the main causewayed enclosure and cross-dykes at Hambledon Hill, are known at several sites, including Whitehawk Camp in East Sussex (TQ 331 048), Orsett in Essex (TQ 651 805) and Barholm in Oxfordshire (TF 090 103). The possible significance of the plans of causewayed enclosures in terms of their development and functions is discussed below.

The siting of the main causewayed enclosure on a summit which both commands panoramic views and is striking when seen from the surrounding landscape is undoubtedly significant. While hilltop sites are to some extent bound to command good views, many early Neolithic monuments (including the Stepleton and hillfort spur enclosures, and many long barrows) appear to be deliberately sited with visibility in mind. From the summit of Hambledon Hill, the causewayed enclosure on Whitesheet Hill, *c.*2.1kms to the north, may well have been visible with the naked eye; intervisibility between sites may also therefore have been an important factor in their siting (Drewett 1994). Indeed, causewayed enclosures are often not visible from the foot of the hills on which they are located (unlike most later prehistoric forts), but can be seen from further away.

The fact that Hambledon Hill is a naturally striking landform may also have influenced the choice of location. It has recently been argued that various forms of Neolithic monument are sited with reference to distinctive natural features, and acted literally as landmarks to guide movement through the landscape (Bradley 1993; Tilley 1995). The advent of agriculture, long regarded as one of the fundamental developments of the Neolithic period, was once thought to imply that society must have rapidly adopted a sedentary way of life (Piggott 1954). However, it is now widely believed that agriculture and the Mesolithic 'hunter-gatherer' way of life may have co-existed for a long period, and that society may have remained highly mobile, perhaps with small groups moving according to a seasonal cycle (Bradley 1987; 1993; Thomas 1991; Whittle forthcoming). This hypothesis may partly explain why almost all causewayed enclosures, including Hambledon Hill, are sited close to rivers (Palmer 1976), which may have acted as natural pathways through the landscape (Ingold 1986); however, it could equally be argued that proximity to water argues in favour of a settled community.

It has also been argued that some Neolithic enclosures in Wales and the West Country, such as Clegyr Boia in South-West Wales and Dorstone Hill in Hereford and Worcester (SO 326 423), seem to have been sited in relation to Mesolithic locales, indicating some form of continuity from the earlier social landscape (Tilley 1995). Although the nearest extensive Mesolithic site to Hambledon Hill lies 3.5kms to the north-east (Wymer 1977, 71), a small number of unspecified Mesolithic artefacts were recovered by Sieveking and Erskine's excavations (Farrar 1951, 105-6). Given the dramatic appearance of the hill discussed above, it seems reasonable to assume that it may have been regarded as a significant landmark by hunter-gatherers, whether frequently visited or not. On balance, taking the environmental evidence into account, it would seem that Hambledon Hill was somewhat remote from established settlements and cleared areas of the forest, and that the causewayed enclosure was a deliberate new 'foundation'.

While at a broad level the location of the main causewayed enclosure seems to have related closely to the natural topography, the specific relationships of all the earthworks to the natural lie of the land seems awkward, in places apparently almost incidental. This is itself a characteristic which has for long been regarded as typical of early Neolithic enclosures (Curwen 1930, 49). Isobel Smith commented that the whole class of causewayed enclosures, of which all but a few are oval or sub-circular in plan, has '...the appearance of predetermined plans carried out regardless of topography' (Smith 1971, 92). In the light of this observation, the almost triangular plan of the main causewayed enclosure at Hambledon seems to acknowledge the form of the domed central summit to a greater degree than many other sites. However, the course of the earthwork does not follow the natural break of slope and has a vertical range of more than 15m across the contours; it remains unclear whether its northern side is no longer distinct from the steep natural scarp or whether it simply never existed at that point. In the case of the cross-dykes and spur outworks, it would seem that the natural topography alone served to define the limits of the enclosure. The causewayed enclosure on Combe Hill, East Sussex (TQ 575 022) has most in common with this aspect of Hambledon Hill's plan; there, the regular oval inner and second circuits terminate abruptly at the edge of a natural steep-sided coombe.

In terms of its area, at more than 8ha the main causewayed enclosure is relatively large, comparing fairly closely with the outermost circuits of Windmill Hill and Freston in Suffolk (TM 168 380). As a whole, the complex covers an area of *c.*70ha - by far the largest site of its kind in Britain. While the largest known single causewayed enclosure in England, Crofton in Wiltshire (SU 263 626), appears to have enclosed an area of *c.*28ha with one circuit, the inner circuits of many sites enclose less than 1ha (see Palmer 1976). The variability in the length of the individual segments of both the bank and ditch is fairly typical of other causewayed enclosures. The apparently continuous ridge of protected chalk revealed by excavation can be identified on the surface at other sites, such as the north-eastern side of the outer circuit of Windmill Hill and Barkhale Camp in West Sussex (SU 976 126), but may in the latter case be a product of later ploughing regimes. The slight offset which sometimes occurs between the causeways in the bank and ditch is difficult to explain, but is evident at Whitesheet Hill in Wiltshire (ST 802 352) and elsewhere. At other sites, including Barkhale Camp, the segments seem to be precisely commensurate, indicating that the dis-association evident at Hambledon Hill may be deliberate and therefore significant.

While all the causeways might have allowed access into the enclosure, Mercer's excavations showed that some of the interruptions in the earthwork were blocked by wooden palisades (though possibly at a later date). There may therefore have been considerably fewer actual entrances. Mercer's identification of an entrance on the east, located mid-way along a straighter section of the perimeter between two inward-curving ditch segments, seems secure, though the evidence for the gate structure is less so. Possible in-turned entrances also exist on the north-western side of Windmill Hill and the eastern side of Briar Hill in Northamptonshire (SP 736 592). As discussed below, it seems likely that the re-cutting of a short section of the main causewayed enclosure at a was contemporary with the re-cutting of the outer ditch of the southern cross-dyke; the fact that this corner of the enclosure was singled out may indicate that there was a main entrance on the summit of the spur at this point. There are no examples of Neolithic in-turned entrances as angular as the in-turned bank at a, which almost certainly results from later disturbance, but the pronounced off-set at the north-western apex of the perimeter occupies a similar position, hinting that there may have been an entrance at each of the three corners, which equally provide the easiest approaches in relation to the natural topography. The three central, broader interruptions in all the elements of the southern cross-dyke, including the more continuous counterscarp bank, may have been approaches to such an entrance.

The evidence for the environment in which the main causewayed enclosure lay is somewhat ambiguous. On one hand, the species of snails present in the ditch fills suggest that the enclosure was constructed in a relatively small, recently-cleared opening in the woods, and that the clearing was gradually enlarged, culminating in a sudden rapid expansion of open grassland in the early Bronze Age (Bell and Johnson in Mercer and Healy in preparation). This sequence would concur with the evidence from many other sites (Evans 1971, 64; Thomas 1982). However, if Mercer's estimate that between twenty and forty thousand mature oak trees would have been required for the timber elements of the complex is reasonably accurate, this might perhaps imply an extensive clearing at a relatively early stage in the Neolithic period. The broad range of wood species preserved as charcoal seems to indicate the exploitation of diverse ecological resources, but since it is unclear how much of the wood may have been imported, for example in the form of tools or containers, this need not equate to the immediate environs of the enclosure (personal communication from Philip Austin). The widely accepted suggestion that activity at causewayed enclosures was periodic (see below) may imply that there was some degree of scrub re-growth in the intervals between visits. The extent to which vegetation may have obscured lines of intervisibility has been debated (Drewett, Rudling and Gardiner 1988; Drewett 1994), but the siting of the monuments (including the northern long barrow, which may well be the earliest monument on Hambledon Hill) argues strongly that they were intended to be seen; the initial clearance of the surrounding forest may in fact have had the effect of drawing the eye to the monument itself.

Given that the Stepleton enclosure does not survive as an earthwork, and was in any case totally excavated by Mercer, the recent survey cannot contribute directly to the interpretation of that part of the site.

The date of the hillfort spur enclosure remains uncertain, but on balance Mercer's proposal that it is of Neolithic origin seems credible. The only firm evidence recovered so far is that its ditch was almost levelled prior to the construction of a round house, the ceramic assemblage from which includes a sherd of late Bronze Age or early Iron Age 'furrowed bowl' (Brown in Mercer and Healy in preparation). The act of levelling itself may be significant in terms of dating, since the infilling of ditch segments with clean chalk rubble, apparently almost immediately after they were dug, has been recorded on a number of Neolithic causewayed enclosures. The character of the fill in the hillfort spur enclosure ditch may be contrasted with the inner ditch of the causewayed enclosure at The Trundle in West Sussex (SU 877 110), which was thought by the excavator to have been partially levelled in the Iron Age (Curwen 1928). There, the ditch exhibited a thick turf-line above the Neolithic deposits, and the apparent deliberate backfill overlying this was silty chalk rubble, with moderate quantities of abraded Iron Age pottery.

The lack of evidence for intact causeways, both in the earthwork and the excavated section, does not rule out a Neolithic date, especially since the base of the ditch was slightly segmented: the enclosures at Wasperton in Warwickshire (SP 270 584) and Bury Hill in West Sussex (TQ 002 120) are apparently almost continuous, while Court Hill in West Sussex (SU 898 137) has only five causeways (this too has previously been thought to be continuously ditched). Promontories such as Dorstone Hill and Birdlip Camp in Gloucestershire (SO 924 150) were apparently enclosed by virtually continuous earthworks similar to cross-ridge dykes. On the other hand, it is worth noting that the slightly segmented construction technique, which Mercer pointed out is a widespread early Neolithic characteristic, is not unknown in the ditches of late Neolithic henges and later prehistoric earthworks. Deep, sharply V-shaped ditch profiles are very unusual amongst early Neolithic enclosures, the majority being fairly shallow and U-shaped or flat-bottomed, like those of the main causewayed enclosure. The re-cut of the southern cross-dyke is admittedly V-shaped, but much shallower, and has parallels at The Trundle (Curwen 1931) and elsewhere; it may in any case be of later date (see below). Likewise, the ditches of later Neolithic henges, such as Mount Pleasant near Dorchester (SO 710 899), while sometimes much deeper and steep-sided, are generally also U-shaped in profile. One possible parallel is the so-called 'outer ditch' of the enclosure at The Trundle (Curwen 1931), which was 2.8m deep and fairly V-shaped, though its profile is not as sharp as the ditch at Hambledon Hill, and there is evidence that it was causewayed.

The earthwork survey has added more weight to Mercer's suggestion that the hillfort spur enclosure is of Neolithic origin. Firstly, it has confirmed his observation that the earthwork pre-dates the probable lynchets (f) which in turn pre-date the earliest hillfort. However, this need not in itself imply a Neolithic date, since the longevity of the lynchets is open to question (see below). Secondly, the survey indicates that the earthwork was probably not a simple cross-dyke as has sometimes been suggested, but actually formed a complete enclosure, whose awkward relation to the natural topography and incorporation of a natural coombe are distinctively Neolithic characteristics, as discussed above. The hillfort spur enclosure is remarkably close, in terms of area, outline and relation to the topography, to the Neolithic causewayed enclosure underlying the Iron Age ramparts at Maiden Castle (SY 689 885). The

almost accidental relationship of the enclosure to the head of the natural coombe again finds a close parallel with the enclosure on Combe Hill.

The identification of the possible northward continuation of the western outwork is of great significance, if it proves correct; however, the interpretation relies on rather slight evidence. There are two aspects of its plan which suggest a Neolithic date: on the positive side, the alignment of the scarp accords well with the extent of the western outwork and relict spur outwork. On the negative side, it diverges from the lines of both the track, suggesting that it is not entirely the product of erosion, and the outer rampart, suggesting that is not an Iron Age counterscarp earthwork. In addition, elsewhere the berm between the outer rampart and counterscarp is level (probably representing an entirely silted slight ditch), but the space between the outer rampart and the putative Neolithic earthwork preserves the natural slope of the hillside. The tentative identification of fragments of a comparable Neolithic earthwork extending northwards from the relict spur outwork is based on equally slight evidence. If correct, this would not only suggest that the eventual series of earthworks was intended to enclose the whole hill as Mercer has argued, but would also add weight to the theory that the hillfort spur enclosure is indeed of Neolithic origin.

One of the most important results of the survey is the confirmation of the chronological relationship between the southern cross-dyke and western outwork, as expressed by Figure 8. The western outwork in fact truncates the terminal of the cross-dyke, though it also bends slightly to respect it, as discovered by Mercer's excavation trench (WOWK82, area 4). The vestigial traces of the putative northern cross-dyke seem to indicate a similar chronological relationship between it and the western outwork. The relationship between the possible northward continuation of the western outwork and the relict spur outwork is less clear. While the fact that the newly identified earthwork descends the contours to meet the relict spur outwork suggests that it is a later addition, the two earthworks join smoothly enough to appear contemporary. Equally, the northernmost stretch of the Stepleton outwork appears to change its alignment very slightly to approach the Hanford spur outwork, but no stratigraphic relationship was detected between the two features during excavation, and the finds from both date broadly to the earlier Neolithic period. Perhaps the most convincing evidence that the Stepleton and western outworks date to a later period than the spur outworks is the strikingly different attitude to spatial logic implied by their linear, non-concentric form. The linearity seems to stem from an intention to integrate the disparate earthworks.

The western outwork is in turn slighted by a re-cut of the southern cross-dyke's outer ditch, the fill of which (where excavated by both Bonney and Mercer), contained only earlier Neolithic bowl style pottery. The re-cutting seems to be associated with a slight counterscarp bank, which has fewer causeways through it (the main three seem to be connected with the putative entrances through the cross-dyke). The counterscarp bank associated with the cross-dyke is therefore very similar to the 50m long continuous stretch of counterscarp bank (a), associated with the main causewayed enclosure. If the two re-cuts can be assumed to be contemporary, this would provide a stratigraphic 'bench-mark' between these two elements of the complex. However, although the re-cut contained only earlier Neolithic pottery, there is slight evidence

that it post-dates the accumulation of a plough-soil layer (personal communication from Frances Healy). Therefore the Neolithic pottery may be residual, and the re-cut may be of later date, perhaps resulting from the re-use or re-modelling of the original earthwork as, for example, a later prehistoric cross-ridge dyke.

The extension of the outer elements of the cross-dyke to the west of the western outwork (**b**) has a number of points of interest. Firstly, the earthwork extends for an inexplicably long distance down the steep natural slope, and is comparable in this respect to the cross-dykes at Whitesheet Hill. This recalls the awkward relationship of causewayed enclosures to the natural topography, as discussed above, and would seem to rule out a much later origin. Consequently, it is difficult to understand the western outwork in terms of the more functional defensive role which has been proposed by Mercer. It is arguable whether this indicates that the existence of the western outwork was disregarded, either because it was disused (or even no longer known about), or whether the extension of the cross-dyke was intended to incorporate the western outwork in some sense. The 'reversal' of the earthwork at **b**, by continuing the line of the counterscarp of the cross-dyke, rather than the outer bank, is remarkable, but as yet no explanation can be offered.

The lack of any firm stratigraphic relationships between the individual earthworks (apart from the evidence that the outer circuit of the Stepleton enclosure was cut by the Stepleton outwork), has so far prevented the establishment of a chronological framework of any precision. The broad date ranges provided by the radio-carbon determinations overlap to too great a degree to allow individual features to be dated more accurately than generally to the earlier Neolithic period. The dates so far obtained from various contexts range from 5220±110 BP (calibrated 4340-3780BC) [laboratory reference HAR 2370] to 4110±80 BP (calibrated 2910-2470BC) [HAR 2041]. The earliest dates fall somewhat earlier than the modal range from causewayed enclosures elsewhere in southern England, but compare closely with the suggested date of 3800 calibrated BC for the earliest enclosure underlying Maiden Castle (Sharples 1991, 253). The majority of dates, clustering around the period between 3650 calibrated BC and 3100 calibrated BC, are fairly typical.

The function of causewayed enclosures is likely always to remain a subject of debate. The most recent theories have tended to stress the actual creation of the monument as a key aspect of its function (Smith 1971; Bradley 1984; Evans 1988a & b; Thomas 1991; Bradley 1993; Edmonds 1993). In the context of a landscape without a monumental tradition (at least in terms of earthworks) the construction of large enclosures, an undertaking in which whole communities must have participated, would presumably have been regarded as a significant act. Mercer has suggested that the earthworks might have taken at least a million worker hours to construct, and this may be a conservative estimate given the number of re-cuts, and the amount of timber-felling and wood-working involved (Mercer 1980, 59-60). The human skulls found at Hambledon Hill and many other causewayed enclosures, usually either on or just above the bases of the ditches, have often been regarded as a direct reflection of the activities carried out within the enclosure, but may in part be explained as foundation deposits, commemorating the important event of creation (Whittle 1988, 202). The evidence for backfilling ditch segments

almost immediately after their construction, and for subsequent episodes of recutting, seems to indicate that the sites were visited periodically and that they may have been selectively 're-created' on each occasion. There is some evidence, at Hambledon Hill and elsewhere, that the visits took place in the autumn: the bone assemblage contains relatively high proportions of young animals while the presence of hazelnut shells has been noted frequently elsewhere eg Haddenham in Cambridgeshire (TL 417 737) (Evans 1988b). This intermittent sequence of construction may go some way to explaining the variability in the number of circuits (generally between one and three). It is possible that many enclosures began as single circuits and were enlarged subsequently (Evans 1988a). The minor irregularities evident in the plan of the main causewayed enclosure and similar monuments, including the variation in the length of ditch and bank segments may be because individual segments of the ditch were the responsibility of sections of the wider community or even families, or that different parts of the monument were re-worked by groups visiting at different times (Mercer 1980, 36; Thomas 1991; Bradley 1993; Edmonds 1993). The wide range of 'special' deposits found in causewayed enclosures includes imported stone axes, chalk objects, red deer antlers, articulated parts of animals, human and animal skulls, as well as (presumably) many organic objects which have not survived. This variability suggests that deposition was governed by an idiosyncratic symbolic code, which would seem to be consistent with the apparently piecemeal constructional technique (Thomas 1991; Whittle 1995). At the same time, however, the participation of small groups in the creation of a communal monument may have served to bind them together socially. Thus the act of creating the enclosure may have been important both as a medium for and an expression of social cohesion.

The motivation behind the construction of enclosures, as opposed to other forms of monument, has long been debated. Early discussions of what may have gone on within the enclosures favoured functional explanations, such as permanent settlement and stock control (Curwen 1930; Piggott 1954). Current theories interpret the interrupted earthwork primarily as a symbolic boundary of the central space, and the peripheral zones enclosed by the other circuits (Evans 1988a). A single enclosure may have encompassed a number of different functions, some perhaps considered sacred and others 'secular', though this distinction is likely to have been blurred in prehistory (Edmonds 1993, 106-7). Different functions may have been appropriate to different parts of the site, according to a set of symbolic rules (Whittle 1996, Figure 7.25). Neither the activities themselves nor the rules governing the use of the spaces necessarily remained static over time; indeed, given that the site remained in active use for more than a thousand years, it would be surprising if they did. This may help to explain the existence of certainly two and possibly three separate, but approximately contemporary, enclosures on the hill. Mercer has pointed to a qualitative difference between the finds assemblages from the main and Stepleton enclosures, and the total absence of finds from the ditch of the hillfort spur enclosure argues that this too may have functioned differently. Unfortunately, it is not possible as yet to assess the importance (perhaps fundamental) of chronology in the development of this pattern. Whitesheet Hill may be similar in its plan, although there, only the causewayed enclosure is known to be of earlier Neolithic date. The suspicion that the adjacent slight continuous enclosure and possibly an enclosure underlying the nearby Iron Age hillfort may be

of Neolithic origin has yet to be tested by excavation. The distribution of the three enclosures on Hambledon Hill, the main causewayed enclosure on the central summit and the other two on the tips of the spurs at opposite ends of the complex, invites the interpretation that the main causewayed enclosure was the focus of activity, but this need not necessarily be the case. Mercer has suggested that the character of the finds assemblage from the Stepleton enclosure, together with the evidence for wooden structures, indicates that this part of the site may have been more domestic in function, though there are problems with this interpretation. In the light of the widespread practice of carefully selecting material for deposition in various features cut into the ground, it is arguable to what extent the finds assemblage in the ditch can be treated as a direct reflection of the activities carried out nearby. For example, rich organic midden-like material, containing bones which often represent the best meat-bearing parts of the carcass (Legge 1981), has been found at Hambledon Hill, Windmill Hill and a large number of other causewayed enclosures. This may indicate either that feasting took place within the enclosure, or that it was considered appropriate to bring midden material from settlements elsewhere to deposit at the enclosure (Smith 1971, 100). At Hambledon Hill, and at Hembury in Devon (ST 113 030), it would seem that clean grain was imported to the causewayed enclosures, since there is virtually no chaff present, though the cleaning of grain is an activity which might be thought to be characteristically 'domestic'. The same fundamental objection has been applied to the theory that causewayed enclosures were centres of trade and exchange. Imported items froms from Cornwall, Cumbria and Central Europe are certainly present, but the fact that they were deliberately deposited in the ditches actually indicates that they were not intended for re- distribution (Drewett 1977, 224). Even if the exchange of a small number of prestige items did take place, it does not necessarily follow that causewayed enclosures functioned as centres of trade or exchange.

Further doubt that enclosures were permanently settled must arise from the fact that very few causewayed enclosures in Britain have provided convincing evidence for structures. This may be due in part to the slightness of the surviving traces, particularly on Hambledon Hill where ploughing and perhaps *in situ* solution of the chalk have taken place. Four or five substantial timber longhouses were excavated within the causewayed enclosure at Darion in Belgium, and considerable numbers are known from enclosures in central Europe (Whittle 1988) but in Britain as a whole fewer than thirty possible longhouses are known. Given the semi-nomadic way of life discussed above, it is possible that any occupation which occurred within the enclosure was brief, and that the houses may have been lightweight and portable, similar for example, to the *tipis* of North American Indian tribes or the *yurtas* of central Asian nomadic pastoralists. Substantial timber longhouses may have been the exception rather than the rule (Bradley 1993, 8), and their use may have been reserved for communal social or ritual activities rather than domestic purposes (Topping 1996).

The Stepleton enclosure is one of only a few early Neolithic enclosures where there is convincing evidence for defence, in the form of more substantial timber-laced and reveted earthworks, at least one episode of burning and destruction, and several adult males who appear to have died in combat. From this it follows that the enclosure may have functioned - on occasions - as a fortified refuge. Mercer has suggested that the difference in the relationship of the Stepleton

and western outworks to the natural topography results from their more pragmatic defensive, less symbolic function. However, there are differences between the two outworks: the former is a double earthwork, which approximately follows the natural contours, but lies some 10m back from the natural break of slope. The latter is a single earthwork, which follows the contours closely and clearly exploits the natural break of slope. However, in both cases the causewayed ditch construction technique was still used, even though it would have been possible in the case of the western outwork to quarry laterally to produce a sheer face in the natural chalk. Palmer (in Mercer and Healy in preparation) has suggested that the quarry hollows along the upper edge of the scarp may have been dug to create a level terrace for a bank, yet their siting in effect reduces the height of the scarp which would have been an effective barrier. The other best-known examples of defended sites -Carn Brea in Cornwall (SW 684 408) and Crickley Hill in Gloucestershire (SU 927 160) - like Hambledon Hill exhibit evidence for burning and large numbers of leaf-shaped arrowheads. It has been suggested that these incidents may indicate that the function of causewayed enclosures evolved over time, perhaps as the powerful connotations of the earlier monument were appropriated by an emerging elite struggling to maintain control over increasingly limited resources (Renfrew 1973; Bradley 1984, 25-33). However, it has also recently been pointed out that the instances of burning evident at the Stepleton enclosure, Crickley Hill, and Haddenham in Cambridgeshire may be ritualised warfare or symbolic acts of destruction rather than attacks (Thomas 1991, 66).

Many causewayed enclosures are thought to have functioned as arenas for the acting out of rituals associated with death, and it is this function more than any other for which Hambledon Hill has become famous. Early analyses of the main causewayed enclosure commented on the proximity of the two long barrows (Gardner 1925), but it was through Mercer's excavations that the intensity of the site's involvement with death became clear. Although human skeletal material has been found on most early Neolithic enclosures, the quantity from the main causewayed enclosure is far greater than any other yet excavated in Britain. It has been estimated that there may have been a 'dead population' of approximately 350, based on the minimum number of individuals recovered from all levels of the 20% of the ditch which has been excavated. From this evidence, it has been suggested that the central part of the enclosure functioned as a mortuary enclosure, where excarnation of corpses took place prior to the removal of selected bones for burial, perhaps in the adjacent long barrows. Mercer's interpretation is based not only on the quantities of human bone, but on the character of the assemblage: large quantities of bone fragments are present, and marks resulting from animal gnawing were found in some cases. However, it is difficult to assess the level of variation concealed within the long period over which the enclosure was used. As mentioned above, a large proportion of the human remains, in particular the defleshed skulls, which are over-represented (Edmonds 1993, Figure 3.3), may have been deliberately placed as offerings. Male and female are almost equally represented, but there were two complete infant burials, and a disproportionately high percentage (approximately 60%) of skeletal material from children. This too would appear to result from deliberate selection, but it nevertheless seems significant that a wide age range is represented. The apparently egalitarian treatment of the dead may reflect the genuine structure

of the living society (Thorpe 1984), although it may equally result from a conscious portrayal of a more ideal society (Shanks and Tilley 1982, 150).

The precise dates of both Neolithic long barrows remain uncertain, still relying primarily on their morphologies. Excavation of the ditches of the southern long barrow has been able to demonstrate only that it originated at some point in the earlier Neolithic period, and probably went out of use at the same time as the main causewayed enclosure. Initially it was thought that the barrow had contained a single individual, suggesting it to be a later Neolithic 'short long barrow' (Mercer 1980, 43; Bradley 1982, 23; Barrett *et al.* 1991, 52-3; Kinnes 1992, 21), a type which retained something of the outward appearance of earlier long barrows but was effectively a personal rather than communal monument. However, the large quantity of earlier Neolithic bowl pottery in the primary silts of the ditch argues strongly against a later Neolithic date. Furthermore, it is now considered less likely that the few bones recovered do represent one skeleton (personal communication from Frances Healy). On the other hand, it remains possible that the barrow contained a smaller than average number of individuals, perhaps indicating it to be a relatively late type. The unfortunate fact that the bones were recovered from the bulldozed material of the mound precludes certainty. Of the thirty-nine barrows in Cranborne Chase and twenty in West Dorset, only four are shorter than the southern long barrow (Ashbee 1984, Figure 15; Kinnes 1992, Figure 2.2.4). The size of the barrow, and the segmented ditches, which curve inwards slightly around the ends of the mound, are similar in plan to a number of shorter barrows, but it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from the comparisons. The finds from Badshot in Surrey indicate that it was built in the earlier Neolithic period (Keiller and Piggott 1939). Some of the earliest barrows in England are similar in length, for example the first phases of Wayland's Smithy (predating 4770±30 BP; 3650-3380 calibrated BC [I-2328]), though this is not as markedly segmented, and Orton Meadows barrow 2 (predating 4713±84 BP; 3700-3190 calibrated BC [UB 3248]). The final phase of the Wor Barrow in Cranborne Chase (SU 012 173), dating to around 4660±130 BP (3780-2940 calibrated BC) [BM 2283R] to 4740±130BP (3790-3100 calibrated BC)[BM 2284R] and North Marden dating to before 4710±110BP (3780-3100 calibrated BC) [HAR-5544] are also comparable.

The evidence provided by the recent earthwork survey is also inconclusive as to the constructional sequence, indicating either that the barrow was sited in relation to the angle change in the southern cross-dyke, or *vice versa*. The orientation of the barrow seems to be deliberately perpendicular to the linear earthwork. However, it remains unclear whether this is because the barrow was inserted between the main causewayed enclosure and the cross-dyke at a later date, or because the cross-dyke was laid out later in such a way as to respect the barrow. In the light of the evidence presented above, it seems more likely on balance that the barrow was inserted at a somewhat later date, and that its shortness is in part a consequence of the restricted space. In either case, it is likely that the use of both monuments overlapped for a long period - perhaps as much as a thousand years.

The northern long barrow clearly differs in its size, design and choice of location. This may well indicate that it originated at a somewhat different date, though in the absence of any excavated evidence this cannot be proved. The barrow is the longest of the main set of barrows in

Cranborne Chase, exceeded only by six unusually large examples (Ashbee 1984, Figure 15; Kinnes 1992, Figure 2.2.4) and it may have taken around 7000 worker hours to construct (Startin 1982). Throughout southern England, and in Cranborne Chase in particular, the larger barrows are generally similarly sited, usually in conspicuous sky-line locations, their alignment mirroring the form of the natural topography. In general, the longer barrows are of earlier date, and it is quite possible that the barrow is the earliest monument on the hilltop, perhaps pre-dating the main causewayed enclosure by more than a century. It is perhaps significant that the flanking ditches are segmented (apparently more so than the southern long barrow), sharing the construction technique of the causewayed enclosure complex (Startin and Bradley 1981). This may indicate that its construction is closely contemporary with the causewayed enclosure, and/or that a similar social practice pertained in terms of its construction.

The siting of both long barrows seems to draw on themes of visibility and movement. The southern long barrow would seem to have been sited (or the southern cross-dyke later added) so that people entering through any of the three putative entrances in the cross-dyke would have progressed past the tail of the barrow on the approach to the main causewayed enclosure. The fact that the monument was not visible from afar was perhaps less important than that the spectator was brought into very close proximity with it. The front end of the barrow, which may have been its most sophisticated aspect architecturally, as well as its most important area for ritual activity, seems to have faced towards the enclosure. By contrast, the symbolic power of the northern long barrow (even today) lies in its ability to catch the attention from almost anywhere in the surrounding landscape, particularly the low-lying Blackmoor Vale. However, Tilley (1994, Figure 5.5) has pointed out that the barrow differs from the norm in that it is not intervisible with others in the landscape (although the two on Hambledon Hill are intervisible with each other). The nearest certain long barrows are at Pimperne, and a possible example has recently been discovered by Rog Palmer, slightly closer, at Pimperne Fox Warren *c*.5kms to the east (ST 8896 1134). However, none of these is visible from Hambledon Hill, due to the intervening topography. This may indicate that the northern long barrow was directly associated with the causewayed enclosure and, like the enclosure itself, was isolated in terms of its environs despite its conspicuous siting. Again, the placing of the long barrow on the spine of the hill would have constricted movement, virtually forcing people to file past either side of the monument. In this sense, the siting of the barrow may lend circumstantial support to the theory that the hillfort spur enclosure is of Neolithic origin, since its design would seem to imply that people did move beyond it. The orientation of the front of the long barrow towards the south may indicate that the direction of movement was away from the causewayed enclosure, ie towards the hillfort spur enclosure. The theme of movement past long barrows may be taken to its most extreme in the later construction of 'bank barrows', such as the 500m long example at Maiden Castle, which strongly suggest that the nature of the associated rituals may have been processional. In addition, it is also worth noting that both barrows broadly conform to a pattern of orientation towards an arc between south and east, evident both in Wessex and throughout Europe (Ashbee 1983, Figure 20; Hodder 1990, 142-56; Tilley 1994, 152-3). Taken with the fact that the majority of barrows are aligned along the contours, this suggests that the choice of location may have been quite strictly prescribed.

Hambledon Hill has sometimes been associated with a 'territory', and more particularly with the concentration of at least thirty-seven more long barrows in Cranborne Chase to the east (Barrett *et al* 1991, 54; Cunliffe 1993, Figure 2.6). This does not seem to coincide with the growing evidence that much of the 'local' material at Hambledon Hill originated in an area *c.*20kms to the south-west (Mercer and Healy in preparation), nor with the evidence that the north and south long barrows are visually isolated from the main concentration in Cranborne Chase. However, patterns of movement around the landscape in the early Neolithic, and the physical extent of the areas involved, are little understood. Maiden Castle causewayed enclosure also lies on the fringe of the concentration of long barrows to its west. To some extent, this would seem to concur with the environmental evidence that causewayed enclosures were not central places, but were located on the peripheries of cleared and populated areas. The fertile expanse of the Blackmoor Vale, to the north of Hambledon Hill, may have been such a populated area.

The causewayed enclosure complex has also been linked with the Dorset *cursus*, the enigmatic monument which in the later Neolithic period most closely rivalled Hambledon Hill in terms of its monumental scale (Barrett *et al.* 1991, 58). The south-western end of the monument, which is an embanked 'avenue' extending for almost 10kms through the centre of Cranborne Chase, lies *c.*12kms west of Hambledon Hill. Tilley (1994, 200-1) has suggested that it functioned as a processional route, along which the bodies of the dead were removed for excarnation in the main causewayed enclosure, before being returned for burial in the long barrows in Cranborne Chase (the *cursus* is closely associated with nine barrows). Although it is unlikely to be purely coincidental that two such major monuments lie so close to each other (Barrett *et al.* 1991, 54), the attempt to link them directly may be over-ambitious; there is no convincing evidence either in the alignment or the extent of the *cursus* that it focussed on Hambledon Hill. It seems likely that the *cursus* is of somewhat later date and may have eventually taken over much of the symbolic role of Hambledon Hill.

The possible flint mines on the Hanford Spur may have been dug in the later Neolithic period around the beginning of the third millennium calibrated BC (Mercer and Healy 1995, 18), although there remains considerable doubt that the features are not of much later, possibly Post-Medieval, date. With the exception of the well-known later Neolithic site at Grimes Graves in Norfolk (TF 818 898), the few well-dated flint mining complexes seem to have originated in the mid-fourth millennium calibrated BC, contemporary with the inception of causewayed enclosures. They are generally sited in dramatic, highly visible hilltop locations, unlike the Hanford Spur, and the large quantities of flint-working debris and artefacts present both in the mines and on the surface leave no doubt as to their prehistoric date. On the other hand, flint obtained from deep mines accounts for a very small percentage of most assemblages, and later Neolithic and early Bronze Age tools in particular are characterised by poor quality flint of the sort which could have been obtained from the seam on the Hanford Spur (Gardiner 1990, 131-2). Open-cast extraction and shallow pitting of the kind discovered on the fringes of the early Neolithic mining complex at Harrow Hill in West Sussex (TQ 081 100) is comparable to the pit on the Hanford spur, and may be of later Neolithic date (Holgate 1986; 1991).

While it is difficult to discuss the relationship of early Neolithic monuments to Mesolithic land-use because of the very ephemeral traces of hunter-gatherer activity, life in the Beaker period (latest Neolithic/earliest Bronze Age) was carried on in a landscape already dense with clearly visible monuments with long established traditions of use and therefore symbolic connotations, which later generations could exploit or deny. Bradley has termed this the 'afterlife' of monuments, and it is a phenomenon which affects every successive period (Bradley 1993). Several pits and a re-cut of the outermost outwork of the Stepleton enclosure, all of which contain concentrations of Beaker pottery, seem to be deliberately cut into the Neolithic features. A crouched inhumation in the bank of the innermost outwork of the Stepleton enclosure is perhaps of Beaker or middle Bronze Age date, as may be a second burial on the base of the ditch, which was at first thought to be Neolithic (personal communication from Frances Healy). Similar burials are known in the outer ditch of The Trundle and at Whitehawk Camp. Most importantly, the last identifiable active re-working of the main causewayed enclosure, which comprised the placing of large flint nodules in a linear arrangement along the surface of the silted ditch and appears to symbolise the final 'sealing' of the monument, seems to have ocurred after the introduction of Beaker pottery (Mercer and Healy 1995, 18). However, new dating evidence has recently been produced to show that the date of that introduction may be around the middle of the third millennium calibrated BC - somewhat earlier than has been suggested in the past (Kinnes *et al* 1991).

The Bronze Age

The round barrows are probably the only surviving earthworks of early Bronze Age date; all are moderately sized bowl barrows of the type common throughout southern England. At Windmill

Plate 7: The western end of the early rampart - erosion caused by livestock (RCHME: Crown Copyright reserved. Negative number AA96/2872)

Hill and Whitesheet Hill, large round barrows are sited directly overlying Neolithic earthworks, while at Combe Hill, Barkhale, Robin Hood's Ball and Knap Hill, barrows lie in close proximity to the causewayed enclosures. To some extent, this may reflect the continued association of causewayed enclosures with death. It may also be that the ancient earthworks had become potent symbols, perhaps associated with gods or mythical ancestors, with which powerful individuals were able to affiliate themselves through the contiguous locations of their tombs. In the light of this, it is interesting that all the possible barrows on Hambledon Hill are sited in relation to the natural topography, without reference to the Neolithic monument; their positioning, on the domed central summit and at highly conspicuous points on the summits of slight rises along the hillfort spur, is typical of the vast majority of Bronze Age barrows. When first constructed with freshly dug chalk, the barrows would have stood out clearly, and would, like the northern long barrow, have been visible from a considerable distance. The possible group of three barrows (1-3) is not uncommon. Pairs and small groups may reflect ties between the dead, or common lineage, but may alternatively reflect the conscious association of much later individuals with perceived ancient 'ancestors', similar to the association with Neolithic monuments described above.

Field-walking by Rog Palmer recovered sparse scatters of middle Bronze Age pottery from the Stepleton and Shroton spurs, though it is uncertain whether any of this equates to settlement sites. Much of the hilltop may have been under the plough from the mid-third millennium BC onwards (Palmer in Mercer and Healy in preparation, Figure 4), since ploughsoil was already beginning to accumulate in the ditches at that date, and environmental evidence indicates a sudden reduction in the extent of woodland. The scarp which is possibly a slight lynchet following the line of the main causewayed enclosure may have originated at this period. The evidence for extensive agriculture points to the presence of settlements in the vicinity. The origin of the possible lynchets f is open to question, but the fact that they had developed to a considerable size by the time of the construction of the first hillfort suggests that they may have originated in the middle Bronze Age, in common with many others in Wessex. The lower lynchets in the middle Bronze Age field system at South Lodge in Cranborne Chase (SY 953 174) are located on a more gentle slope, and are consequently more widely spaced, but still stand up to 1.5m high; they are also comparable in their slightly sinuous form (Barrett *et al.* 1991). The imprecise dating of the lynchets on Hambledon Hill has important consequences for the dating of the Iron Age hillfort.

Plate 8: The south-east gateway and gateway annexe (RCHME: Crown Copyright reserved. Negative number AA96/2870)

The late Bronze Age to Roman periods

Though Hambledon Hill has, in recent years, received more attention for its Neolithic remains, the later prehistoric hillfort is equally important. Iron Age hillforts are common throughout Britain, and particularly so in Wessex, but Hambledon Hill is outstanding for its size, complexity, and above all its exceptionally high level of preservation.

Understanding of the development of the hillfort is hampered by the almost total lack of dating evidence, most crucially for the ramparts. The recent survey, building upon Mercer's work, has established a quite detailed relative chronological framework, but without excavation, there are no firm dates around which to fit the sequence. It has been implicit in many previous discussions that each phase of expansion came about after a long interval of stasis, and that the hillfort developed incrementally throughout the Iron Age, but this may be over-simplistic

The pottery from the floor of the only house excavated by Mercer dates to the early Iron Age (late sixth to early fifth centuries BC) at a conservative estimate, but could conceivably be as early as late Bronze Age in date, given the presence of a single sherd of possible 'furrowed bowl' (personal communication from Lisa Brown). The spatial isolation of many of the house platforms at the northern end of the hill is also reminiscent of many late Bronze Age and early Iron Age settlements. There are a few possible examples on the south-western slope of the northern end of the hill of pairs of houses, sometimes sharing a single platform (though distinctly different from building complex I), and these too conform to a pattern which has been put forward for the late Bronze Age (Ellison 1981; Fasham 1985).

If the mound at the northernmost end of the spur is indeed artificial - a possibility which has yet to be confirmed -this too may be of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date. Elsewhere in Wessex in recent years, a small number of superficially similar mounds, of similar and sometimes larger size, have been identified and shown by excavation to be middens, formed by the accumulation of huge quantities of debris from feasting and/or domestic settlements. In all

cases, the middens have high organic contents, and contain enormous quantities of artefacts, including All Cannings Cross pottery and furrowed bowls. They are all apparently deliberately structured and sited in highly visible locations, leading to the suggestion that there may have been an aspect of monumental display in their formation (McOmish 1996). Although a late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date has been established for some sites, the site at Potterne has its origins as early as the eleventh century BC (Lawson 1994). Redeposited midden material of middle Bronze Age date was also found in the ditches of an enclosure at Down Farm in Cranborne Chase (SU 002 148) (Barrett *et al.* 1991) and of early Bronze Age date in one of the ditch segments of the innermost outwork of the Stepleton enclosure. Midden-like deposits are also present in the early Neolithic levels of the main causewayed enclosure. Thus, while a late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date seems most likely, and would be consistent with the other evidence from the north end of Hambledon Hill, an earlier date cannot be ruled out.

It has sometimes been inferred from the dating of the excavated house platform that the earliest hillfort is also of late Bronze Age date, but there is no conclusive evidence to link the house platform with the ramparts. There are some hints that this may be the case: the distribution of the larger platforms, similar to the excavated one, is contained broadly within the earliest hillfort. Gardner's account (1928, 54) of his discovery of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery of All Cannings Cross type stratified 'deep' under the inner rampart certainly proves that expansion continued after that date; however, it is unclear from his description whether the pottery post-dates any phases of rampart construction. Likewise, the discovery of similar pottery in a rabbit burrow in the face of the outer rampart on the western side of the hill, again within the earliest hillfort, is helpful but essentially anecdotal (Gardner 1928, 53).

On the other hand, there is also evidence that the earliest hillfort may not be of early origin. Some of the pottery recovered from the southern rampart of the hillfort during the recent survey seems likely to be of early Iron Age date, when considered in the context of the rest of the deposit (see Appendix iii). Given that the material is almost certainly redeposited, this evidence is again anecdotal in a strict sense, but its presence well to the south of the early rampart may indicate that the early Iron Age settlement was not confined within the ramparts, and perhaps even pre-dates the earliest hillfort. Early hillforts of late Bronze Age/early Iron age date are unusual in Dorset, the most securely dated being Chalbury (SY 695 838), Poundbury (SY 682 911) and the first phase of Maiden Castle (SY 671 884), and for this reason Hambledon Hill is usually referred to as a later 'developed' example (for example Cunliffe 1984a, Figure 2.22). No strictly defining characteristics can be identified in their morphologies, the first being a genuine 'contour fort' and the other two occupying spur ends. However, none of the three has much similarity to the irregular form of Hambledon Hill, except in terms of general locational preference. It is worth noting that at Maiden Castle, the primary early Iron Age rampart followed and to some extent re-used the earthwork of the causewayed enclosure. The deep V-shaped ditch (common to most Iron Age hillforts) is similar in profile and proportions to that of the hillfort spur enclosure. Therefore, while it remains likely that the hillfort spur enclosure is of Neolithic origin for the reasons discused above, it is possible that it was massively re-cut in the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age, prior to the sixth century BC, and that the earthwork actually does represent the first phase in the expansion of the hillfort as formerly

suggested by RCHME (1970). On the other hand, the total absence of finds in the lower fill of the ditch would be extremely unusual in an Iron Age context, particularly given that the excavated section was sited close to the highest point of the ridge, which was presumably the position of any entrance.

In many cases elsewhere in Wessex, early hillforts appear to have been sited at nodal points in late Bronze Age linear ditch systems, often termed 'ranch boundaries' (Cunliffe 1990), but this does not seem to have been the case at Hambledon Hill. Other major settlements in Dorset, such as Eldon's Seat (SY 939 776) and Rope Lake Hole (SY 932 777) were unenclosed at the same period (Cunliffe and Philipson 1968; Woodward 1986).

In summary, the evidence remains inconclusive as to the origins of the hillfort. It is possible that any late Bronze Age settlement was unenclosed, and perhaps remained so well into the Iron Age. If this were the case, the later use of the possible lynchets **f** might have been associated with late Bronze Age and/or early Iron Age settlement; such protracted use might account for their prominence as earthworks.

The unusual form of the ramparts and overall plan of the earliest hillfort, produced by the incorporation of the hillfort spur enclosure and the adaptation of the lynchets **f**, has been noted for its irregularity by all investigators from Gardner onwards. Maiden Castle is comparable in that it incorporates an earlier enclosure, the junction between the early and developed hillforts also being clearly marked by abrupt angle changes. Eggardon Hill (SY 542 947) is perhaps similar in its re-use of earlier lynchets. The eventual awkward plan of the ramparts of Hambledon Hill seems partly to reflect a pragmatically economic attitude to labour, since the re-use of the existing earthworks presumably saved considerable effort. However, there are aspects which suggest that respect for the pre-existing earthworks may have been an equally important factor. In particular, the apparently deliberate preservation of the line of the hillfort spur enclosure, on the eastern side of the hill, is difficult to explain in purely pragmatic terms. The re-use of the rest of the earlier enclosure may have been in some sense symbolically important, given that there are several instances of hillforts (including Maiden Castle, Hembury, Whitesheet Hill and The Trundle), whose design replicates aspects of causewayed enclosures on the same site. Conversely, the fact that the spur, rather than the domed central summit, which in some respects is more defensible, was chosen as the site of the hillfort may reflect respect for the perceived focal point of the Neolithic complex. The position of the **early rampart** is partly a consequence of the extent of the pre-existing lynchets **f**, but the siting does not make best use of the natural topography, lying *c.*1m lower than the ground a short distance to the south (see Figure 20). The siting may therefore be due in part to the intention to enclose the long barrow within the ramparts; the fact that the barrow remained intact throughout the Iron Age must indicate that it was regarded with the same kind of superstition or awe which led it to be called The Giant's Grave in the historic period, another example of the 'afterlife' of the monument.

With the extension of the hillfort to enclose the whole spur, the morphology of the ramparts becomes more familiar, and therefore somewhat easier to date, although it is possible that intermediate phases are concealed. The multivallate *glacis* style ramparts are comparable to

those in the later phases at Poundbury, Maiden Castle, Hod Hill and South Cadbury Castle in Somerset (ST 628 252). The in-turned passage gateways are similar to those at Hembury, Hod Hill, Badbury Rings (ST 964 030), Yarnbury in Wiltshire (SU 035 403), and many other hillforts. Both features are characteristic of the middle Iron Age, dating to between the fourth and second centuries BC (Cunliffe 1991, 320, 333).

The earthworks added to the south-western and south-eastern gateways - the hornwork and gateway annexe - may be contemporary with each other. Both are characteristic of the late Iron Age, possibly the later first century BC or the first century AD. It has frequently been observed that the hornwork protecting the south-western gateway is very similar to the one at the north-eastern gateway of Hod Hill, which was thought by the excavator to have been built in the face of Vespasian's advance in 43 AD, and in parts left unfinished as a result of his attack (Richmond 1968). The similarity need not imply that the two hornworks are precisely contemporary, but it seems likely, on the basis of other examples at Badbury Rings, Banbury Hill (ST 790 119) and elsewhere, that they are of approximately the same date. Given that the more elaborate south-eastern gateway annexe represents an investment of tens of thousands of worker hours, it seems unlikely that the initiation of its construction can be related to the Roman advance. However, since it is comparable to the latest pre-Roman Iron Age additions to Maiden Castle, it is possible that the abandonment of the work was caused by the occupation. The unfinished section of rampart and ditch is important in understanding Iron Age construction techniques. Initially, a sort of 'marker ditch' appears to have been created, probably by removing a strip of turf and topsoil. Within this, the pits of variable size and depth suggest gang-work, similar to the classic unfinished hillfort at Ladle Hill in Hampshire (SU 479 568). Unlike that site, however, there does not appear to have been any 'double handling' (Hogg 1975, 54-5) of the spoil, which was dumped in mounds directly on the line of the intended rampart. The form of the ramparts elsewhere, which from below suggests impregnable strength and a vast expenditure of labour, would actually have involved less effort than some hillforts with superficially less impressive earthworks, due to the advantages of the natural topography. For example, due to the more gentle topography of Hod Hill, the ramparts of that hillfort, which enclose *c.*21ha, necessitated the digging of a far deeper internal quarry, with larger banks and ditches. By comparison, the work involved in digging shallow quarries and ditches, and in constructing simple dump ramparts by tipping the material downhill and accentuating the natural slope, is not immeasurably greater.

By the late Iron Age, the tribe of the Durotriges is generally agreed to have been militaristic, and hillforts such as Hod Hill were certainly used as defensive strongpoints, slowing Vespasian's advance. However, the existence of hillforts earlier in the Iron Age cannot necessarily be assumed to indicate that warfare was endemic, as has frequently been asserted from the nineteenth century onwards. In recent years, it has been observed that the defences of many hillforts, especially in Wessex, are 'over-developed' and to a large extent constitute architectural displays of power (Cunliffe 1984a, 30; Bowden and McOmish 1987; 1989; Evans 1992). The periodic enlargement of the area and defences of the hillfort may therefore have been expressions of communal wealth and political strength, without necessarily reflecting any increase in warfare, or population pressure. As with the Neolithic complex, the dramatic

topography of the spur may have had more than simply military attractions: the freshly dug chalk on the steep slopes would have made the monument conspicuous over a great area. In many parts of Wessex, hillforts (like the earlier causewayed enclosures) are intervisible, thereby displaying their power to each other. Significantly, Hod Hill and Hambledon Hill are not intervisible despite their proximity, though this could have been achieved through siting the hillfort on the domed central summit. However, the hillfort is visible from forts on the fringes of the Blackmoor Vale, such as Banbury Hill (ST 790 119) and the promontory fort at Sturminster Newton (ST 784 134). In many respects, the defences of the hillfort are quite unlike the walls of Medieval castles, though from the nineteenth century onwards they have invariably been discussed as though they were identical. It has been pointed out that the process of defending bi-vallate hillforts has been poorly thought through, and that in some cases sustained defence would have been infeasible, due to topographic location and/or aspects of the hillfort design (Bowden and McOmish 1987; 1989). For example, though the steep-sided spur is clearly defensible, most of the interior is visible from the domed central summit, offering attackers a considerable advantage. Gardner, though he continually stressed '...the requirements of defence', correctly observed that on the east, the foot of the hill was invisible from the summit of the outer rampart (Gardner 1925, 50). More importantly, the outer rampart would actually have obscured visibility from the inner, as well as being physically inaccessible from it, and could thus have given cover to attackers, rather than hindrance. Visibility might to some extent have been improved by the added height provided by timber 'box-framed' ramparts, but there is no evidence that these existed on Hambledon Hill, except perhaps on either side of the south-western and south-eastern gateways. It is frequently assumed that dump ramparts supported timber palisades (for example, as portrayed in English Nature's current guide leaflet), but this may not always have been the case. The section through the outer rampart exposed in the northern face of the largest marl pit gives no hint of any built superstructure. Similarly, the positions of some of the transverse banks enclosing the compounds on the western side of the hillfort overlie the bank of the inner rampart in such a way as to suggest that there may not have been any palisade to retain them. If not absent completely, there may have been some other form of barrier: the enclosure at Thorpe Thewles in Cleveland (NZ 407 246) is one of the few sites where it has been possible to discern traces of a hedge surmounting an earthwork (Heslop 1987), but they may have been widely used as defences, as well as in partitioning hillforts internally.

Similarly, the complex designs of the south-western and south-eastern entrances obviously had strategic functions, but may also have been intended to display architectural elaboration, perhaps with symbolic significance (Bowden and McOmish 1987; 1989; Hill 1995a & b; 1996; Parker-Pearson 1996). It is perhaps significant that the additions to both gateways seem to overlie Neolithic earthworks, which the bi-vallate ramparts had originally avoided. The need to incorporate the earlier earthworks may partly explain the broad level berm which separates the ramparts of the gateway annexe from the main ramparts. At the gateways themselves, the more massive rampart terminals and deeper, wider ditch terminals, in which special deposits of various types are frequently found, are typical of most hillforts, emphasising the point of crossing into the interior (Hill 1995a). The orientation of the gateways, which on the eastern side of the hill

relates awkwardly to the topography, conforms to a bi-modal east - west pattern found widely amongst hillforts (Parker-Pearson 1996). The protracted, confusing approach created by the outworks and multiple gateways, generally considered to be defensive in purpose, may have equally been intended to overawe those entering, and to emphasise the special status of the interior (Bowden and McOmish 1987; 1989). The elaboration exhibited by the approach to the south-eastern gateway seems to be particularly characteristic of hillforts in Dorset, such as Eggardon Hill, Rawlsbury Camp (ST 768 058) and most obviously Maiden Castle.

To what extent settlement, permanent or otherwise, was a function of hillforts, has also been debated (Stopford 1987; McOmish 1989; forthcoming; Hill 1995b). Due partly to the recognition of the impact of Post-Medieval ploughing in the interior, and more significantly to the different aim of the 1959 RCHME survey, the recent survey has recorded over 150 more building platforms, bringing the total number to at least 365. At first sight, it would seem that such a large number of possible structures, many with evidence for high phosphate levels, is good evidence that the hillfort was 'proto-urban' in character. It is widely agreed that in the late Iron Age Dorset saw the abandonment of some hillforts, and the refurbishment of others to form what can only be described as 'towns' (Sharples 1991, 259-64; Cunliffe 1991, 104-8). The spatial arrangement of the southern end of the hillfort, with regularly-spaced small buildings, trackways and possibly a pond, would seem to constitute prehistoric 'town planning' (Guilbert 1976, 314), consistent with such a late Iron Age re-organisation. The quarry hollow, partly sheltered by the adjacent rampart, seems to have been a favoured location for larger buildings, as at Danebury hillfort in Hampshire (SU 323 376) (Cunliffe 1984b; Cunliffe and Poole 1991). The small compounds defined by earthen banks (probably surmounted by fences or hedges) reflect a careful organisation of space. The settlement on Hod Hill is superficially similar to the southern part of Hambledon Hill, and the town-like character of that settlement in the late Iron Age has been confirmed by excavation (Richmond 1968). The 'Celtic' field systems, whose use in most cases appears to post-date the ramparts, may imply settlement in the late Iron Age and/or sub-Roman periods. The widespread ocurrence in the region of querns made from the Child Okeford greensand source, including several fragments noted within the hillfort by Cunnington and during the recent survey, suggests that the hillfort may have been a 'central place', responsible for the distribution and re-distribution of goods. Though little weight can be placed on an isolated find, a late Iron Age coin recovered in the excavation of the southern long barrow might also be seen as a sign of local economic importance. Dominating the Stour Valley and Blackmoor Vale, Hambledon Hill may have played some role in controlling trading contacts from further away; the Stour flows into the sea at Christchurch Harbour, where Hengistbury fort controlled a major late Iron Age port, trading with the Continent (Cunliffe 1993).

On the other hand, there are some signs that settlement was not as intensive as it at first appears. It is interesting to note that deep hollow-ways have not formed around the entrances of Hambledon Hill, despite the steep gradients and constricted passages. Also, in considering earthwork evidence it is important to bear in mind the potential chronological variation which is concealed. The densely settled appearance of the hillfort is the end-product of perhaps hundreds of years of construction, and the only excavated house had not been replaced or its platform

re-used since the early Iron Age. Even accepting the existence of many contemporary structures need not imply permanent settlement. Occupation may have been seasonal, for example due to pastoral transhumance, or more intermittent, for example for safety in times of war. The two unusually large buildings (j and k) are also unusual, perhaps associated with important individuals or events. In Cranborne Chase and large parts of the rest of Wessex, small enclosures with circular structures undifferentiated in size are the norm throughout the Iron Age (McOmish 1989; Barrett et al 1991). Both the large buildings were apparently sited for visual impact, and seem to have made deliberate use of the symbolic importance of gateways, discussed above. The crescentic bank around the rear of platform j may have 'sealed' the entrance into the early hillfort, with the structure perhaps itself occupying the site of the gateway. Similarly, platform k, with its flanking mounds perhaps supporting timber superstructures of some kind, appears to have been sited to dominate the gateway and the fork in the trackway. It is tempting to interpret these buildings as the residences of high status individuals, reflecting the increased stratification of late Iron Age (or perhaps sub-Roman) society. However, comparable buildings are absent even from extensively excavated hillforts such as Danebury (Cunliffe 1984b; 1995; Cunliffe and Poole 1991), and the identification of the so-called 'chieftain's house' at Hod Hill - a building only slightly larger than most of the others - rests on slight evidence (Richmond 1968). There are other possible functions: platform j lacks nettle growth, possibly indicating that it was non-domestic, for example a meeting place. Platform k, with its imposing approach possibly flanked by structures of some kind, is reminiscent of certain late Iron Age and sub-Roman shrines.

The impact of the Roman invasion on Hambledon Hill is uncertain, but there is no evidence that the ramparts were slighted, as at Maiden Castle, or re-used, as at Hod Hill. It seems likely that occupation in some form may have continued, since Aubrey mentions the discovery of Roman coins (some of which were of fourth century AD date, according to Cunnington), while Cunnington's excavation recovered a considerable amount of Roman pottery and other artefacts, and Mercer's a single possible sherd of 'black-burnished' ware (Brown in Mercer and Healy in preparation). It is possible that the final form of the putative late Iron Age 'town plan' is of post-conquest date, since the tradition of building roundhouses remained current into the late Roman period (Hingley 1989). While it is perhaps misleading to pick out individual buildings, complex l, together with a small number of similar compounds, stands out as being different in terms of its organisation, and appears on the very slight stratigraphic evidence available to be relatively late in the sequence of occupation. Comparable examples of apparently paired structures are known at Salmonsbury hillfort, Gloucestershire (SP 173 208), of first century BC date (Dunning 1976), and at the high-status enclosure at Coveney, in Cambridgeshire (TL 480 425), of first century AD date (Evans 1992). A number of paired roundhouses are of later Roman date, and the arrangement has been interpreted as evidence for the continuity of late Iron Age social structures (Hingley 1990). At Hambledon Hill, the few compounds of this type lie in a fairly small area, and the remainder of the interior may already have been deserted. At Cissbury hillfort in West Sussex (TQ 139 080), several small, dispersed Romano-British enclosures were built, with associated fields (perhaps laid out somewhat earlier), while urban settlement re-focussed on the nearby town of Chichester. Hambledon Hill may have been gradually abandoned in much the same way.

The Early Medieval - Post-Medieval period

Plate 9: The western ramparts, seen from the south (RCHME: Crown Copyright reserved. Negative number AA96/2868)

Excavation has proved that several hillforts in the South-West, including South Cadbury, Poundbury and Badbury, were re-fortified soon after the end of Roman rule, perhaps in response to the invading Saxons. The earthworks give no hint that this was the case at Hambledon Hill. Known early Medieval activity is limited to the fourteen inhumations in the bank of the Stepleton enclosure discovered by Mercer's excavations. The appropriation of the symbolic power of existing earthworks, discussed already in the context of Bronze Age burials, was very common in the Anglo-Saxon period. Cemeteries frequently developed around long barrows and round barrows, and secondary burials in the original monuments can often be distinguished easily by the presence of iron weapons. This practice was so widespread that we might expect it to be the case with the northern long barrow, and possibly with some of the round barrows. The existence of the inhumations discovered by Mercer does not necessarily imply that there was settlement on the hilltop itself, but it is likely that some of the nearby villages have their origins in the Anglo-Saxon period.

The interpretation of later Medieval activity on the hill relies primarily upon the absence of diagnostic earthworks. While cartographic evidence demonstrates that the fertile alluvium in the valley bottoms was heavily cultivated in broad strip fields, only the flanks of the hill seem to have been ploughed. The preservation of the prehistoric earthworks indicates that the site was neither intensively ploughed, nor damaged by significant scrub encroachment, between the time of its abandonment and 1964. Analysis of the evidence provided by the *Domesday Book*

suggests that much of the chalk downland in Dorset was under pasture at that time (Darby 1967, 127 and Figure 27). The available Post-Medieval cartographic evidence (Dorset CRO b etc) certainly depicts very little scrub on the hilltop. The lack of re-growth almost certainly indicates that the hilltop was grazed quite heavily, and was probably regarded as common land. This pattern of land-use made best use of the fertile alluvium of the valley bottoms and the thin topsoil of the chalk hilltop; some downland hillforts, such as Yarnbury and Danebury, became the sites of summer stock fairs. As already stated, the putative pond appears to have been created initially during the late Iron Age, since it was kept separate from the rest of the quarry hollow. However, it is quite possible that it was maintained or even remodelled in the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods to facilitate grazing. The gently shelving north-western end of the depression would have allowed easy access for livestock. The common ownership of the land is also consistent with the small-scale marl quarrying, and perhaps with the origins of the flint gravel quarrying which continued into the twentieth century.

The recognition that almost half the interior of the hillfort has been affected by a brief episode of ploughing, despite numerous claims to the contrary in the past, is chiefly important because of the consequences for the survival of the prehistoric earthworks. Though there is some evidence that the field pattern changed, the slightness of the earthworks suggests that the episode of cultivation was brief. The narrowness of the ridges is often considered a Post-Medieval characteristic, in contrast to the broad Medieval strip fields mentioned above, but examples of Medieval narrow ridges are not unknown. The use of such steep and infertile land, together with such small fields, could perhaps be taken to indicate that the cultivation resulted from the land shortage in the Napoleonic period. However, the ploughing seems to pre-date the construction of the penannular earthwork associated with the Ordnance Survey triangulation pillar, which may well be of Napoleonic date. Such earthworks were sometimes formed to prevent the disturbance of the pillar by ploughing (Welfare 1979), which may indicate that this was still a possibility at that time. The passing comment by John Aubrey, quoted in Section 2, may indicate that the cultivation is of mid-seventeenth century date, but an earlier date cannot be discounted.

It has already been tentatively suggested that the gateway leading into the gateway annexe may have been blocked in the Civil War, when the gateway was held unsuccessfully against Cromwell's cavalry by a force of local 'Clubmen' on 4th August 1645. Attributing precise dates to earthworks is seldom possible with confidence, but the contemporary account makes clear that the skirmish took place at this entrance, and the annotation 'Cromwell's Gap' on the map redrawn for General Pitt-Rivers in 1884 (Dorset CRO a) may refer to a popular nick-name, perhaps part of a local oral tradition of the story. The earthworks seem consistent with a Post-Medieval origin: the blocking is much less substantial than the rest of the rampart, and was apparently never intended to be any larger, but would have been effective in preventing a mounted attack. Furthermore, the fact that only the gateway annexe was blocked, leaving the main gateway open, suggests that the threat was perceived as being imminent rather than general.

The thorough and apparently deliberate slighting of the ramparts at g is also of interest in this context, since the modification has a somewhat military appearance. The position and gradient are at odds with the development of a trackway, and there is no reason to connect the modification with the development of the adjacent marl pit. The Civil War conflict was ended through a surprise attack by a detachment of Cromwell's troops which ascended the hill from the north, but it is obvious that they would not have needed to carry out any earthmoving in achieving this. The assumption that General Wolfe trained his troops on Hambledon Hill in 1745 has never been substantiated, and is unlikely to be confirmed by field archaeology. However, it seems unlikely that all the training was carried out at Shroton Lines 0.5kms to the north-east (ST 847 134), given the proximity of the physical and strategic challenges offered by Hambledon Hill. On the other hand, in view of the subsequent siege of Quebec, it seems reasonable to suggest that the training may have involved an assault on the hill and perhaps the construction of practice earthworks.

Conclusion

Plate 10: The eastern end of the gateway annexe and 'blocked entrance' (RCHME: Crown Copyright reserved. Negative number AA96/2865)

Each of the individual monuments on Hambledon Hill is important in its own right, and the Neolithic complex and Iron Age hillfort can justifiably be claimed to be of international importance. However, the site is more than the sum of its parts: it exemplifies the concept of the landscape as a 'palimpsest' - a testament which each successive generation over-writes without entirely erasing the earlier traces - and as such is difficult to rival anywhere in Britain. In a region which was so widely farmed in the Medieval period, and which has seen dramatic agricultural intensification since the Second World War, the preservation of such a long sequence of human activity is simply extraordinary.

5. SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The earthwork survey of the Neolithic features and the interior of the hillfort was carried out by Alastair Oswald, with Paul Pattison, Peter Topping and Moraig Brown from RCHME's Cambridge Office. Control points and hard detail were surveyed using a Wild TC1610 Electronic Theodolite with integral EDM. Data was captured on a Wild GRM 10 Rec Module and plotted via computer on a Calcomp 3024 plotter. The details of the earthwork plan were supplied at 1:1000 scale with Fibron tapes using normal graphical methods. The survey of most of the Iron Age ramparts and other earthworks on the exterior of the hillfort, together with all the ground modelling, was carried out by Simon Probert of RCHME's Exeter Office, primarily using Leica System 200 Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) equipment, and plotted via computer.

The air photographic evidence was analysed by Carolyn Dyer of RCHME's Aerial Photographic Unit.

Ground photographs were taken by Alun Bull of RCHME's Cambridge office.

The archive plan was drawn up by Alastair Oswald, and the computer based illustrations in the report were finished by Trevor Pearson of RCHME's Cambridge Office.

The historical and archaeological background was researched by Martyn Barber of RCHME's National Monuments Record. The pottery recovered from the surface was kindly examined by Dr Lisa Brown, and Alex Bayliss of English Heritage provided assistance with the radio-carbon dates. The report as a whole was written by Alastair Oswald and edited by Peter Topping.

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The site archive has been deposited in the National Monuments Record, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ (ST 81 SW 10).

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7. APPENDIX i: GAZETTEER OF SITES AND MONUMENTS

Monument name	NGR	NMR number	SAM number
Main causewayed enclosure (parent record)	ST 8492 1226	ST 81 SW 17	Dorset 269
Eastern cross-dyke	ST 8510 1225 ST 8505 1242	ST 81 SW 62	
Southern cross-dyke	ST 8479 1202 ST 8497 1207	ST 81 SW 63	
Northern cross-dyke	ST 8470 1227	not given	
'Relict' spur outwork	ST 8443 1223	ST 81 SW 60	
Shroton spur outwork	ST 8543 1215 ST 8536 1240	ST 81 SW 64	
Hanford spur outwork	ST 8482 1180 ST 8486 1170	ST 81 SW 71	
'Western' outwork	ST 8467 1225 ST 8482 1198	ST 81 SW 61	
Hillfort spur enclosure	ST 8435 1290	ST 81 SW 59	
Stepleton enclosure	ST 855 115	ST 81 SE 52	
Northern long barrow	ST 8452 1265	ST 81 SW 11	
Southern long barrow	ST 8489 1206	ST 81 SW 18	
Round barrow (?group)	ST 8452 1241 ST 8451 1239 ST 8452 1238	ST 81 SW 12	
Round barrow	ST 8451 1249	ST 81 SW 56	
Round barrow	ST 8483 1224	ST 81 SW 57	
Round barrow	ST 8431 1289	ST 81 SW 58	

Monument name	NGR	NMR number	SAM number
Stray find: stone hammer and bronze spearhead	ST 84 12	ST 81 SW 13	
Stray find: bronze axe	ST 84 11	ST 81 SW 21	
Stray find: bronze pastave	ST 84 12	ST 81 SW 33	
Hillfort	ST 8451 1270	ST 81 SW 10	Dorset 14
Celtic fields	ST 842 123 ST 846 122	ST 81 SW 23	
Celtic fields	ST 841 129 ST 841 130	ST 81 SW 65	
Stray finds: Roman date	ST 845 126	ST 81 SW 66	
Strip lynchets	ST 8461 1293 ST 8469 1270	ST 81 SW 24	
Marl pits	ST 8411 1294 ST 8430 1310 ST 8412 1227 ST 8464 1290	ST 81 SW 67	
Flint diggings	ST 849 122	ST 81 SW 68	
Ridge and furrow	ST 8452 1237 ST 8451 1244 ST 8453 1251 ST 8453 1260 ST 8442 1284 ST 8429 1291 ST 8422 1291	ST 81 SW 69	
OS trig point earthwork	ST 8452 1239	ST 81 SW 70	

8. APPENDIX ii: MANAGEMENT OBSERVATIONS

In addition to the earthworks themselves, the RCHME survey also recorded various forms of damage to the site (mainly the Iron Age hillfort). These are indicated on a separate plan and comprise:

1) damage by burrowing animals (rabbits and badgers)

2) erosion by livestock and humans

3) 'natural' water erosion, now fully healed in almost every case

4) encroachment by woodland and scrub

5) antiquarian and archaeological excavation trenches, all fully healed

1)The significant instances of burrowing are mostly confined to the western flanks of the hillfort, and in some cases are severe enough to threaten major structural damage to the ramparts in the short to medium term. At the southern end, a large area is now mostly inactive, but has already led to a severe landslip (see Plate 4). In addition, the displaced chalk constitutes an aesthetic problem which is not unimportant given the highly visible nature of the site. The disturbance of the soil has led to the growth of nettles, which sometimes conceals new burrowing activity, as well as overwhelming downland flora. There are remarkably few rabbit burrows within the hillfort, partly due to the lack of cover provided by vegetation. Where noted, however, they are likely to be causing considerable damage to the sub-surface archaeological deposits; for example, the two or three burrows on the interior of the southern rampart produced Iron Age occupation material.

2) Erosion by livestock principally takes place in three areas: at the western junction of the early rampart and the later ramparts (see Plate 7), at the western junction of the outer rampart and the gateway annexe (see Plate 5), and around the upper edge of the large marl pit at the northern end of the hill. In the first two cases, the erosion is clearly due to the fact that there is no level way through the earthworks, as there is in each case at the eastern end. There appears to be no way of preventing this erosion taking place and remedial action is also difficult given that the route will certainly continue to be used. At the second location, however, some form of temporary fencing may be necessary occasionally, for example after scrub clearance, since the erosion seems likely to worsen. Around the edge of the marl pit the livestock erosion is relatively unimportant from an archaeological perspective, given the damage already caused by the quarry itself. However, in the long term it may lead to further damage.

Erosion on footpaths used by visitors (as well as livestock) affects the tops of the outer rampart and, to a lesser extent, the counterscarp bank (see for example Plates 7 and 9). This follows a pattern found on all major hillforts and must be regarded as inevitable. Remedial action is possible (for example, at Hod Hill, the dumping of a low bank of chalk along sections of the path appears to have been very effective for the most part, and downland flora have become established; the 'chicken-wire' technique which has been used widely in recent years appears to be fairly effective, though less so on chalk sites); however, the erosion problem is not yet severe, due to the small numbers of livestock and visitors to the site. The only area in which

erosion by visitors is of real concern is at the northern end of the hill where the footpaths ascend from Child Okeford. The small steps which have been cut will encourage visitors to take established routes; however, this will clearly aggravate the erosion on those particular tracks in the course of time. At Cissbury hillfort (West Sussex), the construction of small concrete steps has failed to prevent erosion in the vicinity, but that site also receives far greater numbers of visitors.

3) Numerous minor patches of 'natural' erosion were noted in the course of the survey. These can be distinguished as triangular scoops which bite into the crest of the steepest scarps, and are typical of erosion caused by water and natural slippage. In almost every case, the depressions have healed and need no further management. One major slip appears to result from water run-off caused by two Post-Medieval plough furrows in close proximity at the edge of the quarry hollow scarp. Some of the patches of erosion at the northern end of the hill must be the 'toboggan runs' referred to by Gardner in the 1920's, suggesting that eroded areas are capable of healing fully in approximately fifty years. The 'terracettes' (see for example Plates 6 and 9) are frequently noted by members of the public on the steeper slopes, but are entirely natural (caused by soil creep) and represent no threat to the monuments.

4) Vegetation can be divided into two more-or-less distinct types: hawthorn woods with occasional mature ash trees, more rarely hollies and yews, and light scrub comprising isolated hawthorns, elderberry, briar rose and brambles. Aerial photographs indicate that during the twentieth century there has always been a sparse scatter of hawthorns on the hilltop (see Plate 2), but this has probably become more established as grazing diminished. The woodland on the eastern side of the hill is demonstrably of Post-Medieval date. The current clearance programme, which is being carried out carefully and skilfully, will certainly improve the preservation and appearance of the archaeological and ecological resources in the medium term. However, there are several areas of particular archaeological sensitivity where the clearance techniques adopted on the ramparts will be less appropriate: the interior of the Iron Age hillfort, the Neolithic relict outwork, the western outwork, and the putative remnant of the hillfort spur enclosure at **e**. Although removal of the small amounts of scrub in all these areas is desirable in the long term, cutting to ground level without poisoning will only serve to promote root growth, and should therefore not be undertaken. Removal of the material from the site before burning would also be important in these areas.

9. APPENDIX iii: POTTERY REPORT

(by Dr Lisa Brown)

In the course of the survey, a small assemblage of pottery was recovered from the upcast of a rabbit burrow towards the top of the southern rampart (ST 8460 1232). The deposit, where visible in the side of the burrow, is of considerable depth, and comprises fairly homogenous dark, humic soil containing large quantities of other occupation debris, including burnt flint and stone, two river-washed pebbles (sling-stones), numerous bone fragments and several single teeth (sheep and pig), which was not collected. Although not diagnostic, the general nature of the material, particularly the sling-stones, suggests an Iron Age context, perhaps containing residual Neolithic sherds.. It may represent material re-deposited during an enlargement of the rampart. (A Oswald)

Eleven sherds representing a maximum of six vessels were examined, all of which are undecorated, small body fragments in moderately abraded condition. Three fabrics were identified:

1) Oolitic limestone-tempered ware. Two joining sherds. Slightly smoothed surfaces.

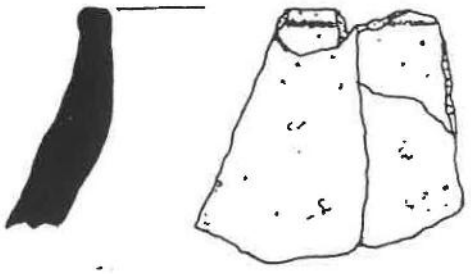
2) Flint-tempered ware. Six sherds of which five join. The clay is of a very finely sanded, compact nature and the flint inclusions appear to be non-calcined, ill-assorted and sometimes weathered, and of frequent occurrence within the matrix. The clay tends to laminate and the sherds have fractured along the laminae. Smoothed but not burnished surfaces.

3) Smooth, very finely sanded (probably glauconitic) compact clay with little or no visible temper. Three sherds. Two sherds smoothed, one burnished with possibly intentional red finish.

The six joining flint-tempered sherds represent part of the upper portion of a vessel, including a small segment of rim. Although the reconstructed fragment is small and the original form of the vessel must remain in doubt, it appears to represent a closed-mouth vessel with a simple slight out-turned (see below). The fabric resembles flint-tempered ware of Neolithic date from the site, which was subjected to thin-section analysis and reported on by Tim Darvill. The shape of the fragment also suggests a Neolithic vessel form. The oolitic limestone-tempered sherds could be either Neolithic or early Iron Age. The fabric was in common use in both periods in the region (eg at Maiden Castle) and this particular fragment bears no diagnostic features. The use of the fabric is rare in the late Iron Age and, although present in Roman ceramic tradition, would have a very different finish in that period. The sand-tempered fabric could be of almost any date, but the structure and finish of the sherds would almost certainly rule out a late Iron Age date. The small sherd with the possible red finish (which could not be confirmed as haematite-coated without further analysis) is a curved wall sherd from a small vessel, possibly a furrowed or scratched-cordoned bowl, but again, possibly a Neolithic type.

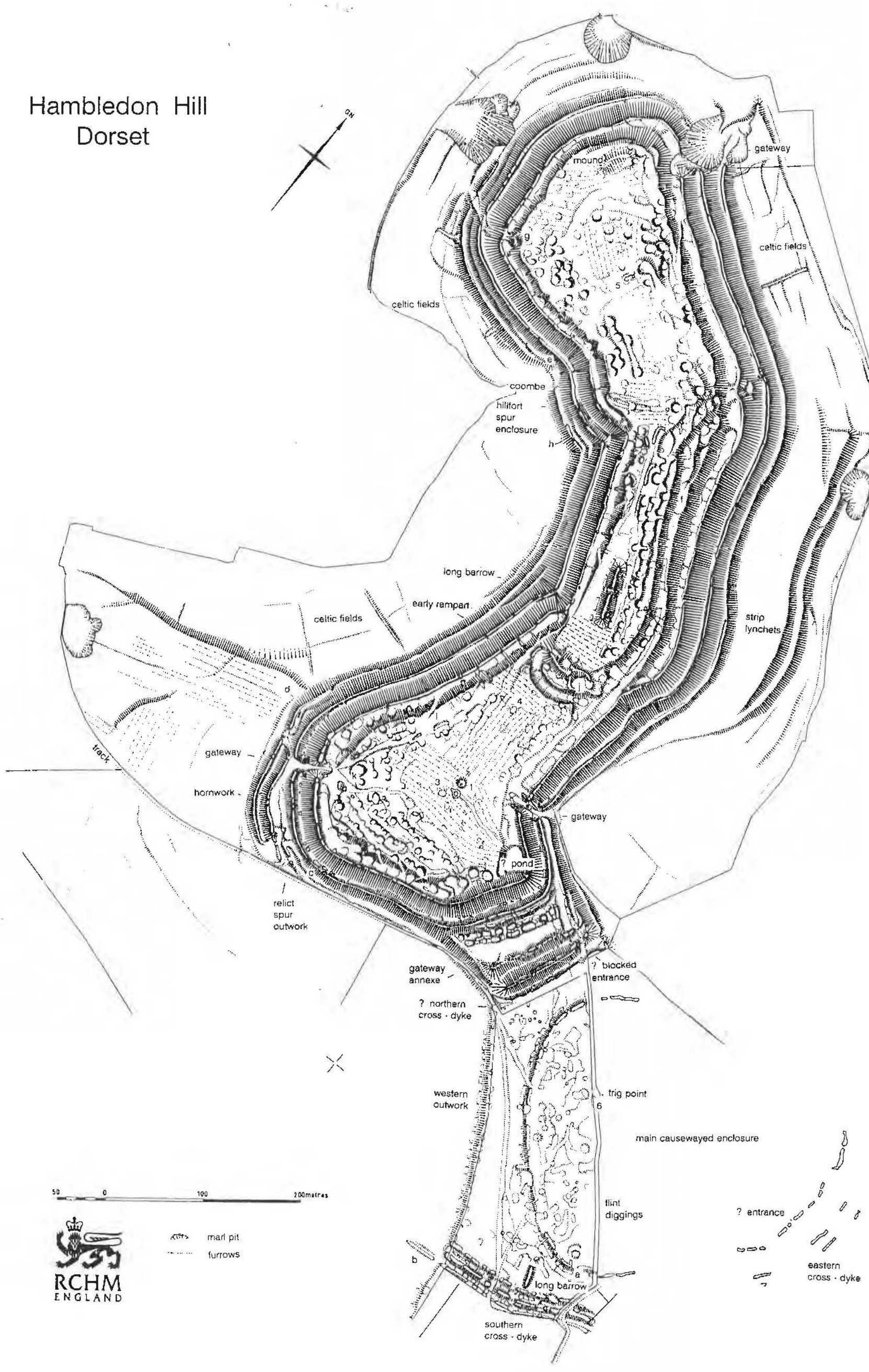
If all the sherds are contemporary, it is most likely that the assemblage is of Neolithic date. In view of the other finds noted in the deposit, mentioned above, there is no reason to suggest a date later than the early Iron Age for the latest material, perhaps the eighth - seventh centuries

BC if the red-finished bowl is of All Cannings Cross type. There is certainly nothing to point to a late Iron Age date. Assemblages dating from the middle Iron Age onwards in the region of Hambledon Hill tend to be dominated by Wareham/Poole Harbour wares and there is little likelihood of that fabric being totally absent from even a small assemblage such as this.



Flint-tempered sherd

Hambledon Hill
Dorset



RCHME earthwork plan, surveyed at 1:1000 scale (reduced)

The National Monuments Record contains all the information in this report – and more: original photographs, plans old and new, the results of all RCHME field surveys, indexes of archaeological sites and historical buildings, and complete coverage of England in air photographs.

The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England gathers information on England's heritage and provides it through the National Monuments Record

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