A survey of the enclosure known as the ‘Bow Hill Camp’ was carried out by a team from the Chichester and District Archaeology Society between February and May 2006. The encircling bank and ditches were mapped and two major features within the enclosure were also recorded. Other visible features within the enclosure were inspected but were deemed to have no archaeological significance.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Bow Hill in the county of West Sussex is approximately 12 km northwest of Chichester. It is located centrally at the narrowest part of a ridge of Upper Chalk at a height of 206 m above Ordnance Datum (O.D.) and is visible from Chichester and the coastal plain. The site lies within the heavily wooded National Nature Reserve of Kingley Vale which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) owing to the extensive yew tree woods (Taxus baccata). The top of the ridge is home to many monuments which are listed in the Chichester District Historic Environment Record and include Neolithic oval barrows and round barrows and cross-ridge dykes thought to be Bronze Age in date. The enclosure known as Bow Hill Camp is located at NGR: SU 82561164. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, WS701, and has National Monument Record number SU81 SW19. It also has a Chichester District Historic Environment Record number CD577, and associated cross-ridge dykes are numbered CD578, 579. The exact nature of this enclosure is poorly understood and the survey is the first part of an investigation to better understand both it and its place in the Bow Hill landscape.

METHODOLOGY

The site was cleared of scrub. Survey control was established using a Trimble series 5600 Total Stations EDM; the positions of the survey pegs are shown in Figure 1. A base station was established close to the centre of the enclosure with foresight and backsight stations located on the inner rampart at the northeast and southwest corners. Further pegs were inserted in the surrounding bank at approximate 15-m intervals and their positions fixed using the EDM. All the data were downloaded using Trimble ‘Geosite Office’ software and plotted onto ‘Permatrace’ through an AutoCAD interface. All subsequent archaeological data were collected manually using tape and offset methods.

Levels were established after bringing down a base point from the nearby triangulation station approximately 700 m due south of the enclosure. The height of the triangulation station was 206 ±0.5 m from the current Ordnance Survey map (the benchmark now missing was 206.55 m). The height of the trackway immediately outside the enclosure entrance was measured as 190.2 m, which corresponds with the height for this point (624 ft/190.2 m) shown on the 1912 map.

PREVIOUS WORK

The rich archaeology of Bow Hill has been the subject of numerous studies through the years (for example Harcourt 1868), but surprisingly little has been published on the enclosure. The scheduling document describes the enclosure as a ‘Hilltop enclosure of presumed Late Bronze–Early Iron Age date comprising a raised, level, sub-rectangular platform of c. 0.5 ha surrounded by a rampart up to 2 m high and 2.5 m to 7.5 m wide’. A second description describes the site as ‘standing alongside an old green way running from West Stoke following a hard level terrace along the edge of the scarp’. The site was described as an irregular rectangle with sides measuring 45 paces (north), 60 (south), 75 (east) and 85 (west). It covers approximately one acre and appears to be Roman (an attribution due to the curved corners) but the author believed it to be pre-Roman (Allcroft 1916).

In these early reports mention is also made of the cross-ridge dykes associated with this enclosure; especially the bank and ditch which runs from the...
complex pattern of ditches in the southwest corner of the camp. This dyke also forms the southern rampart of the enclosure. The dyke is unusual in that it slopes down the hillside with the ditch on its upper side and comprises a ditch 7 m wide and 0.5 m deep with a bank 3 m wide and 250 mm above ground level (Curwen & Curwen 1918). The bank is currently heavily overgrown and eroded.

**EARLY MAPS**

The area of Kingley Vale has been mapped over time to show changes of ownership and use. Searches by members of Chichester & District Archaeology Society (CDAS) in the West Sussex Record Office brought to light four maps, the earliest dated AD 1623 and drawn by Thomas Kington.

The Kington map shows four properties converging at the place of the enclosure: Stoughton Common Downe (to the northwest), The Farne Downe (southwest), Mr Smith’s Downe (southeast) and Binderton Downe (northeast). A triangle of trackways was also shown including a drove road. The western track forming part of this triangle appears to cut inside the enclosure. The boundary between the Stoughton Common Downe and Farne Downe appears to coincide either with the cross-ridge dyke which includes the southern enclosure bank of the Camp, or possibly a second dyke some 50 m further south. The quality of the map is such that the exact position of the boundary is ambiguous, and it is not possible to definitely ascribe the boundary to one or other of these dykes. It seems likely that this area was used for sheep pasture during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the cross-ridge dyke may have separated the common from privately-owned land. The map does not show the green way described by Allcroft (1916).

An eighteenth-century map (Yeakell & Gardner’s ‘Sussex’ First Sheet 1778) clearly shows the pathways identified on the earlier seventeenth-century map and the barrows atop Bow Hill. The field enclosures around Stoughton village are also depicted, very similar to those apparent today. Again the enclosure is not shown. Other archaeological features are included; the tumuli are quite prominent.

The first Ordnance Survey 1 inch: 1 mile map of 1813 also shows Goosehill Camp and the tumuli, but not the enclosure or the green way described by Allcroft. The Ordnance Survey 25 inch: 1 mile map (1874) shows the green way running through to Bow Hill House (now Blackbush House) along the edge of the eastern scarp of Bow Hill and just inside the parish boundary between Stoughton and
Binderton. The enclosure is also clearly depicted on the map with the original, more westerly track to Blackbush House shown running just inside the western enclosure bank and thus through the enclosure, whilst the ‘old green way’ is shown skirting the outer eastern side of the enclosure. In addition, the enclosure is seen to be still in an area of rough pasture with trees appearing between it and the tumuli atop Kingley Vale, a situation also shown on the 1912 OS map (Fig. 1). Today afforestation has proceeded and the enclosure and its associated boundary ditches are within managed woodland.

**RESULTS**

The enclosure is trapezoidal in outline and consists of a single bank with a surrounding external ditch. It covers an internal area of 0.4 hectares. The circuit is broken on the southeastern flank by a single entrance 7 m wide. The inner rampart is largely an insubstantial feature and appears to have been reduced in height and modified in more recent times, though the date of the alteration is unknown. The interior appears to have been raised to bring the level almost up to the top of the bank; this is especially noticeable along the western side. The bank is, however, well-preserved on the northern and eastern sides where it survives to a height of c. 200 mm–0.5 m above the interior ground level. It is particularly pronounced close to the northeastern corner where it attains a height of 0.65 m above interior ground level. Later activity in this area may have resulted in the deposition of soil here from the excavation of a hollow immediately inside the enclosure, thus heightening the bank’s profile at this point.

The bank is also at its widest in the northeastern corner and has a notably flat-topped profile that
varies between 2 m and 3 m in width. Elsewhere, lesser dimensions were noted. To the south, for instance, the bank is a slight, narrow-topped feature c. 1 m wide. Generally, the bank’s basal width varies between 3 m and 5 m. The inner rampart is absent on the west-facing flank, its former course is now demarcated by a small, externally-facing scarp.

A marked break of slope can be seen on the external face of the rampart along the northern and northern end of the eastern banks. Again, this is most noticeable on the east-facing flank close to the northeastern corner where it survives some 1.3 m above the ditch bottom. Likewise, the inner face of the rampart is fringed on occasion by a low, spread scarp 0.3–0.7 m in height, most evident on the western and southeastern arms of the enclosure. This scarp may well be the remnant of the pre-enclosure ground surface or an earlier phase of enclosure, but it is more likely to have resulted from later activity — perhaps from low-level arable activity within the enclosure interior. It is noticeable that it is most easily observed on the western side, on a section of enclosure that possibly overlies an earlier cross-ridge dyke. The scarp here may well represent the surviving element of the earlier linear feature. A cross-ridge dyke extends to the southwest from the southwestern corner of the enclosure, albeit on a slightly different alignment.

At two points near the northwest and the southeast corners there is evidence of slumping probably due to overthrown trees. Further trees are growing along the top and sides of the bank so this is entirely likely. The ditch along the southern edge is carried on in a southwestward direction at the southwest corner, becoming the ditch for the cross-ridge dyke from this point. The associated bank is about 7 m wide with a flat top and appears to start from the junction of the enclosure and dyke ditches. However, this area is complicated by a second outer ditch cut approximately 12–15 m to the west of the enclosure boundary ditch and running parallel with it. There is a small bank running between the two western ditches. It is approximately 3 m wide at the base, has a flat top 1 m wide and turns off the cross-ridge dyke bank at the southwest corner of the enclosure. This runs for 55 m along the western edge until lost in an area of considerable bioturbation due to rabbit burrowing. The outer ditch is shallow, only 100–300 mm deep, about 4 m wide at ground level and 1 m to 2 m wide at the base. It is lost in the disturbed area about 30 m from the southwest corner. However, more significantly it cuts the cross-ridge dyke bank and joins the ditch associated with this dyke about 10 m from the southwest corner.

At the southeast corner the enclosure/cross-ridge ditch runs onto the supposed green way/modern trackway. There is a considerable gully across the track at this point, about 12 m wide but shallow. This may be due to water run-off from the ditch. A second slighter gully runs across the track 12 m north of the first, but it is more difficult to explain this as water run-off from the enclosure ditch as there is a rise between the two. There is a third depression even more slight which corresponds with the northeastern corner of the ditch. The interior of the enclosure has been built up and levelled. The entrance slopes upwards approximately 0.7 m from the trackway to meet this new level. The trackway itself is approximately 190.2 m O.D. whilst the centre of the enclosure is 192.3 O.D. There is a natural fall of about 2 m from south to north across the enclosure. The interior is normally covered in bracken and bramble and this was cleared for this survey. Some trees are also present, mainly yew. They do not appear to form any pattern. Some raised patches were examined and found to be remains of old fires, comprising partially burnt wood and ash. These were not considered further or plotted as they were deemed to be modern. There were two distinct features within the enclosure, namely two hollows in the northeastern quadrant. The smaller hollow is of similar size and shape to the probable overthrown tree-hollows in the ditch and may well be of the same origin. The larger hollow is more complex. Measuring 10 m by 11 m it is a rounded rectangular shape, has a depth of 0.85 m and on the northern and eastern sides is built against the inner side of
the enclosure bank. A hollowed runnel runs into this hollow from the south.

The 1912 O.S. map shows a track which runs into the enclosure from the southwest corner, continues close to the western bank and exits through the northwest corner. There is very slight evidence for this today and any evidence for the trackway outside the enclosure has been lost in the afforestation which has taken place. In addition the exit point at the northwest corner has been severely damaged by animal activity. It is surprising that this trackway forming the westernmost side of the triangle has so completely disappeared as it is evident on most of the earlier maps back to the seventeenth century. A more recent track is visible approximately half way along the northern bank. Spoors suggest this is the result of animal activity, probably deer which are plentiful in these woods.

The well-used modern trackway runs on a terrace which skirts the eastern edge of the camp and does not appear on early maps before the nineteenth century. However, Allcroft (1916, see above) considered that this trackway was an original green way. A second terrace lies approximately 20–30 m to the east from this trackway and this follows the parish boundary between Stoughton and Binderton marked on the nineteenth-century maps. The hollows in the trackway which correspond to the northern and southern ditches around the enclosure may be due to water run-off but could also be due to an infilled former extension of the ditch to the nearby edge of the scarp slope. If these ditches were filled in when the trackway was completed the slight hollows may represent settlement of the ditch infill. Certainly, the outer side of the southern ditch turns sharply at the southeast corner and itself forms a bank alongside the track heading south. It appears that the terrace for the track had been cut and levelled at this point, probably removing the terminus of the cross-ridge dyke. This would benefit from further investigation to ascertain exactly when this main track was built and whether it overlies earlier trackways which may be contemporary with the enclosure.

**DISCUSSION**

The enclosure is poorly understood and worthy of further investigation. Even its age is not known with certainty, although its presence atop Kingley Vale with other Bronze Age structures may be significant. A similar-sized and -shaped enclosure has been excavated recently at nearby Bramshott Bottom and this was found to be of Iron Age date (Anelay 2006). It is also a fact that the enclosure appears at the conjunction of four separate properties in the seventeenth century. Could it have been a pen for animals run on the commons? The green way which only appears on modern maps runs alongside the enclosure to the east and it is on this side that the entrance is found. These findings are inconsistent and give no clue to the true nature of this enclosure. Unless some future excavation is allowed which can confirm the age of this earthwork, the enclosure will remain poorly understood.

**Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank David McOmish of English Heritage who initiated the survey and gave valuable advice during this project. Also thanks are due to the Warden of the estate for clearing the enclosure of undergrowth prior to the survey. The following members of C.D.A.S. gave invaluable help in carrying out the survey and historical research: Ian Allison, Alan Stanley, Nigel Brown, Ian Clarke, Yvette Cook, Mary Haskins, Caroline Scott and Diane Wilson. The assistance of James Kenny and Ian Scrivener-Lindley of Chichester District Council in producing an electronic version of the plan for publication was much appreciated. Last but not least Richard Childs, the County Archivist, gave valuable assistance in locating the old maps in the West Sussex Record Office and Sharon-Michi Kusonoki, on behalf of the Trustees of the Edward James Foundation, granted permission to refer to the 1623 maps drawn by Thomas Kington.

**Author:** N. J. Haskins, Chichester & District Archaeology Society, c/o 19 Anthill Close, Waterlooville, Hants., PO7 6ND.

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