

u Marking time and making space

EXCAVATIONS AND LANDSCAPE STUDIES AT THE CABURN HILLFORT,
EAST SUSSEX, 1996–98

by Peter Drewett &
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with contributions by
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The Caburn dominates the lower Ouse valley in East Sussex. Its use and significance have waxed and waned but its unique dome shape against the skyline must have helped define peoples' sense of place throughout time. This article, based on the first three field seasons of the Society's project, examines the surfaces of the hill, the use of space on the hill and through time. In prehistory the Caburn may have been a special place, perhaps a sacred hill, while in post-Roman times its strategic location was utilized in times of threat.

INTRODUCTION: WHY AND HOW By Sue Hamilton & Peter Drewett

From the beginnings of antiquarian interest in Sussex, the Caburn (Fig. 1) has attracted attention. Some ten years before his classic excavations on the Cranborne estates in Dorset, Major General Augustus Lane Fox (later Pitt-Rivers) excavated a section through the rampart on the northern side of the hill and emptied 40 of the pits that were visible as slight hollows in the interior during September–October, 1877 and in July, 1878 (Lane Fox 1881). Forty-seven years later two medical doctors, Eliot Curwen and his son Eliot Cecil, while working on the recognition and interpretation of prehistoric field systems and enclosures on the Downs, turned their attention to the Caburn. In October 1925 they started a four-month season which lasted until January 1926 (Curwen & Curwen 1927). Given the probable meaning of ‘Caburn’ as ‘cold fort’ (Coates 1998), a winter excavation was an interesting choice of season. They excavated two trenches in the interior and one to the south-east of the entrance passage. In addition, they excavated the remaining 99 depressions within the enclosure. Following great leaps forward in our understanding of the Iron Age, and particularly its ceramics, through the work of Sir Mortimer Wheeler, Christopher Hawkes and many others during the 1920s and 1930s, the Caburn was ripe for re-examination only some 11 years after the Curwens’ project. This 1937–38 project was jointly directed in the field by Dr E. Cecil Curwen, G. P. Burstow, and Dr A. E. Wilson, who went on to prepare the reports for publication. In 1937 the main entrance to the enclosure was excavated together with a section through the rampart on the north side and a small cutting on the southern side. This was

followed by a series of 11 trenches through the ramparts on either side of the entrance passage and a small area within the enclosure (Wilson 1938; 1939).

Although a broad sequence of use of the hill from the Late Bronze Age onward was established by all this work, doubts on the date of specific elements of the earthworks on Caburn and relationships between earthwork elements have been expressed (Avery 1993). In addition, the archaeology of the hill has continued to develop with its use as a strategic place in World War II. Perhaps even more significant, changing theoretical perspectives, particularly over the last ten years, required a new look at what enclosed spaces may have actually meant to Iron Age people.

Our field methodology was specifically designed to be as non-intrusive as possible. Whole surfaces were examined and topographically surveyed using a Wild TC1610 Electronic Theodolite with integral EDM (by Alastair Oswald and David McOmish of the RCHME) and geophysically surveyed using a Geoscan RM15 which was downloaded in the field by way of a DX4/75 laptop and Geoplot 2 (supervised by David Combes of the Sussex Archaeological Society). Four small trenches within the enclosure and three outside to the north were excavated to answer specific questions derived from previous excavations and particularly from the topographical and geophysical surveys. The area between Caburn and Ranscombe Hill revealed no topographic features so was test-pitted to investigate potential evidence for activity on this significant approach ridge. The human use of Caburn was placed in its local environmental context by working in conjunction with an associated project set up to examine the pollen from the area (by Martyn Waller of Kingston University) and land mollusca (by Kirsty Adams). All of our excavation



Fig. 1. Aerial view of Mount Caburn from the east. (Crown Copyright: Cambridge University Collection.)

trenches were hand dug. The final field element of the project examined the social use and construction of space within and around the Caburn. The character of the space within the enclosure was examined using an intra-visibility study, while inter-visibility studies investigated the Caburn as a regional topographic feature which may, through its monumentality, have facilitated visual connections between other sites and places. Alongside these diverse field studies, the extant Caburn archives (Barbican House Museum, Lewes), particularly the substantial quantities of pottery and other artefacts from the Curwens' excavation (Curwen & Curwen 1927) were re-examined.

This article is deliberately *not* a traditional field report. Instead, it is part of an ongoing dialogue with and about Caburn, with full publication to take place at the end of the current research project. For this reason, possible contradictions between elements of interpretation presented

by different contributors have not been ironed out to create a single 'interpretation'. It should be read in conjunction with previous articles on the Caburn back to Pitt-Rivers (Lane Fox 1881), and will be continued in future articles. On completion of the project the site archive, including artefacts, images and words will be deposited in the Museum of Sussex Archaeology, Barbican House, Lewes.

LOOKING AT SURFACES

1. THE GROUND SURFACE: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EARTHWORKS

By Alastair Oswald

This summarizes the RCHM report, available through the National Monuments Record, but excludes the World War II emplacements (*see* Sampson below). For terms and locations lettered see the site plan (Fig. 2).

The original hillfort, comprising only the inner rampart,

enclosed an almost square area of 1.9 hectares (4.7 acres). The ramparts follow the contours on the north and south side, but on the east and west, slope downwards to the south, so that the earthworks are visually prominent from that side. The inner rampart, *c.* 0.4 m high, has a slight internal quarry hollow, not recorded previously. The ditch is 7 m wide and 0.9 m deep. The rampart and quarry hollow terminate at ‘a’, 15 m west of the gateway (‘g’). Wilson (1939) argued that beyond that point, the bank had been levelled in order to enlarge the later outer rampart. He inferred that its original course might correspond to a ditch (revealed in trenches I and IXb), which partly underlay the outer rampart and continued as far as the gateway. This remains plausible, but does not explain the terminal in the quarry hollow, nor the unusual form of the early gateway as Wilson (1939, fig. 2a) interpreted it. The gateway (‘g’) was clearly the entrance during the hillfort’s later use, but the original gateway may have been at ‘a’.

The inner rampart seems to continue around the summit as a scarp, a slight accentuation of the natural slope. However, this may partly or wholly represent quarrying associated with the construction of the outer rampart. The line of the inner rampart on the north is continued equally plausibly by the outer earthwork on the south (Lane Fox 1881).

Wilson identified three constructional episodes in the outer rampart, of which the earliest was Iron Age, but later than the inner rampart. On the northern side, the bank is *c.* 8 m wide and 0.7 m high. However, it widens gradually before narrowing abruptly at ‘a’, supporting the possibility of an earlier gateway. Although not made explicit, the Curwens’ survey (Curwen & Curwen 1927) hinted that the outer ditch might represent two phases. Wilson therefore interpreted it as entirely contemporary with the Iron Age rampart, rather than with one of the later enlargements of the bank. The new survey suggests the massive ditch was a recut, possibly of medieval date. The base has a pitted appearance suggestive of unfinished gang-work construction. Where apparently almost completed, towards the west, it is 2.0 m deep, with steep sides and a level base. The face of the rampart and side of the ditch together stand *c.* 4.5 m high. The supposed medieval recutting of the outer ditch apparently almost eradicated another rampart, which survives for 40 metres west of the gateway. The position of the slight bank perhaps indicates the small size of the outer ditch prior to the recutting. Again there is a slight change of the size and alignment in the bank at ‘a’. The Curwens depicted this earthwork, but it has never been accounted for: it may represent a counterscarp, a third rampart, or a hornwork.

The slight counterscarp of the recut ditch maintains

regular dimensions, except at ‘a’ where it is enlarged. This may result from the incorporation of a pre-existing earthwork, encountered in Wilson’s trench XIII and interpreted as a ‘low barrow’. There was evidence for a palisade on the counterscarp, despite the apparently unfinished condition of the ditch, which hints at another phase of re-use.

Around the southern slopes of the hilltop, the outer rampart is formed by a slight enhancement of the natural slope, which, together with a minimal bank, creates a face 3.5 m high. There is no evidence for a ditch at its base, implying that material was simply tipped down the hillside. As noted above, this material may have been produced by the construction of the inner scarp/rampart.

The outer ditch is probably associated with a scarp up to 9.5 m high across the end of the combe to the north of the hillfort. There is no stratigraphical relationship between the two earthworks, but the scarp also has an unfinished appearance and cannot really represent material from anywhere else. The scarp has usually been interpreted as the dumping of excess spoil, but it extends further than previously recognized, especially to the east. It may be associated with another earthwork (‘b’), since the intervening gap corresponds to the section of the outer ditch where the recutting was apparently least complete. This may indicate that an outermost circuit was planned.

It remains uncertain whether there was an entrance at the north-western corner of the hillfort. Deliberate levelling may account for the apparent terminals in both ramparts and ditches. Outside the hillfort, a hollowed trackway (‘t’), depicted as such by Pitt-Rivers (Lane Fox 1881), cuts through the scarp (‘s’) heading initially towards the top of the ramparts. It may have been the reason for the levelling.

The interior of the hillfort is pock-marked by about 170 slight depressions, up to six metres across. Excavation has shown most to be pits, mostly of Iron Age date. The large pit (labelled on the Curwen plan as a shaft), 10.0 m in diameter and 1.4 m deep, is of Roman date (Curwen & Curwen 1927, pl. I).

Also within the hillfort interior are several low scarps, which are suggestive of prehistoric lynchets and follow the contours within the hillfort. One becomes a slight bank for a short distance, apparently ruling out a geological origin.

Some of the slight earthworks to the north of the ramparts appear to predate the supposed medieval remodelling of the hillfort, while others postdate it. A series of scarps extending approximately north–south appear to be overlain by the eastern end of the scarp (‘s’). These may be part of a Romano-British field system to the north-east of the Caburn. This is visible on aerial photographs, supporting the idea that the scarp and recut ditch are medieval.

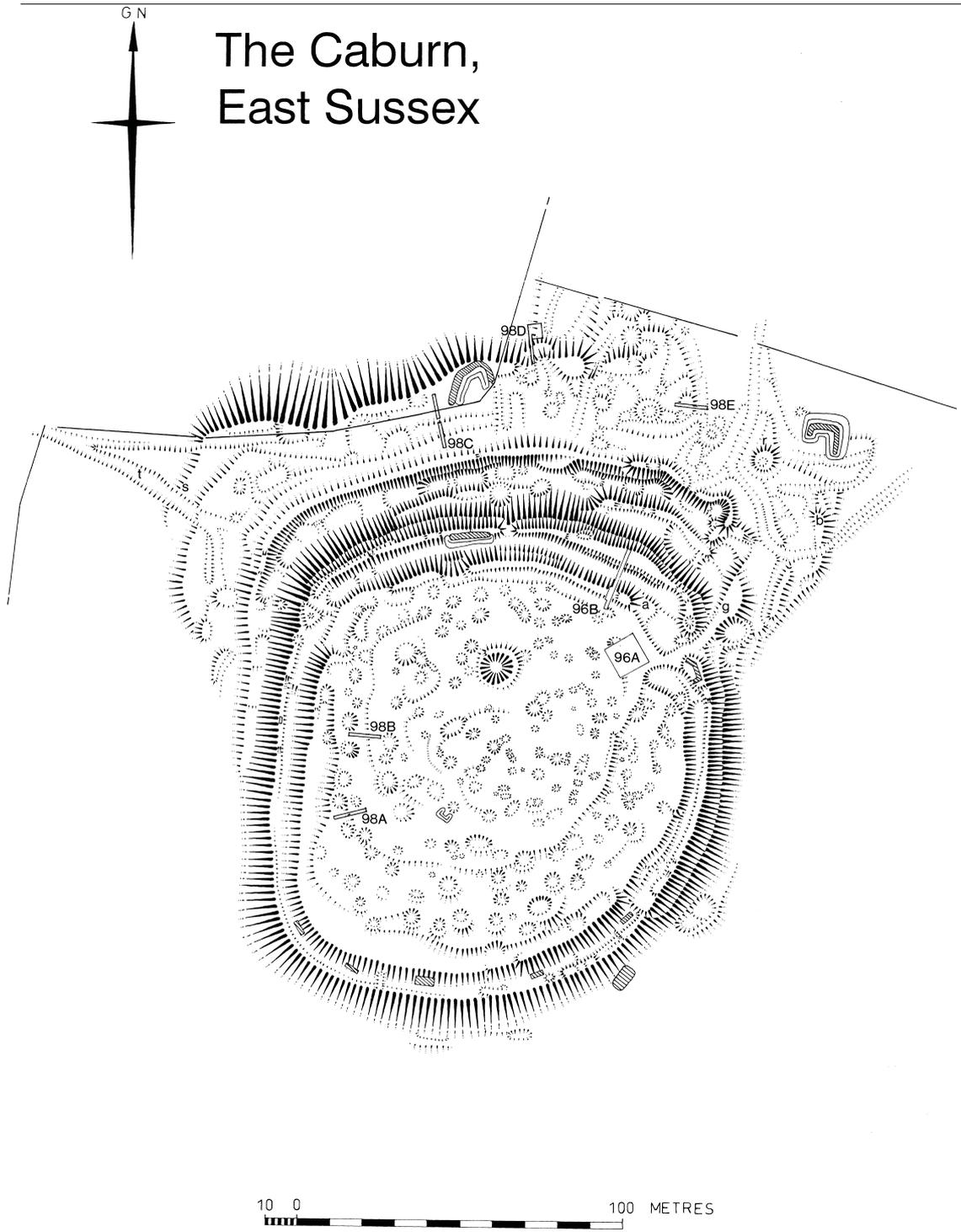


Fig. 2. Plan of the earthworks on Mount Caburn, reduced from the original survey at 1:1000 scale. (RCHME Crown Copyright.)

A possible trackway heads towards the putative entrance at 'a', but seems to have been superseded by a branch which diverges towards the gateway ('g'), portrayed as a track by Pitt-Rivers (Lane Fox 1881).

A round barrow ('r') c. 9 m in diameter and 0.6 m high appears to have been looted. Three circles which are portrayed by Pitt-Rivers as probably representing unexcavated pits, were misinterpreted by Grinsell as barrows (Grinsell 1934, 227, 266).

2. THE UNDERGROUND SURFACE: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE CHALK SURFACE AS REVEALED BY RESISTIVITY SURVEY

By Peter Drewett & Sue Hamilton

Geophysical surveys produce images (Fig. 3a, b & c) which can only be interpreted in the context of existing geological and archaeological knowledge of an area. Surveys on chalk generally reveal only archaeological features and superficial geological deposits such as clay-with-flints and greater depths of colluvium. Additionally, this survey appears also to have located geological changes within the chalk deposit itself.

The surface of the chalk within the enclosure of Caburn (Fig. 3a) matches well the topographical survey of the ground surface. The edge of the Middle Iron Age enclosure was touched on by the survey in several places (Fig. 3a, 'd'). Within the enclosure the many pits excavated by Pitt-Rivers and the Curwens are visible (Fig. 3a - three examples are marked 'a'). Also visible is the large pit, perhaps of Romano-British date, excavated by Pitt-Rivers (Fig. 3a, 'b'), and the site of a possible round barrow some 30 m in diameter which is no longer visible on the surface. These, clearly archaeological, features lie on a background of roughly concentric rings of higher and lower resistance around the top of the dome-shaped hill (Fig. 3a, 'c' indicates part of the arc of one ring). In places these roughly match the lines of lynchet-like features located on the topographical survey (Fig. 2), but in other places the relationship is less clear. Some may represent very slight positive and negative lynchets, while others could reflect underlying variations in the chalk deposits.

The chalk surface of Ranscombe ridge (Fig. 3c) appears to show no archaeological features except a track, perhaps of recent date, leading towards the Caburn (Fig. 3c, 'b'). The many lines of higher and lower resistance (Fig. 3c, e.g. 'a') almost certainly reflect variations within the tilted underlying beds of chalk. Somewhat similar geological features are indicated on the chalk surface to the north of Caburn (Fig. 3b, e.g. 'd'). A World War II gun position is clearly visible at 'b', while 'c' is the line of a modern fence. The survey extended northwards over Barrow 6 (Fig. 6). It showed the mound as a mass of high resistance perhaps indicating a mound of flint nodules surrounded by a ditch

(Fig. 3c, 'a').

3. USING THE SURFACE: INTER- AND INTRA-SITE VISIBILITY

By Sue Hamilton

The Caburn's steep profile provides an obvious choice for a phenomenological analysis, that is monitoring the physical impact of the hill's topography through the actual bodily experience of being on the hill or looking towards the hill. The essential morphology of the hill would have been constant through the Holocene, although its mantle of vegetation would obviously have varied. The distinct domed configuration of the hill on which the Caburn is situated poses questions about the topographic viability of the site for certain types of use. The earliest hillfort (Middle Iron Age) has been traditionally interpreted as a defended settlement with a farming economic base (based on finds such as plough shares, bill hooks, spindlewhorls, loom weights: Curwen & Curwen 1927). This interpretation prompts practical questions such as: i) do the 'ramparts' provide effective defence; ii) would 'everyday' settlement activities within the enclosed space have been largely viable; and iii) would the interior have been appropriate for agricultural activities?

The space-syntax of the Caburn interior was assessed using an *intra-visibility* study. The remit of this study was to monitor the maximum distance over which co-ordinated activities *could* have taken place on the site. This was assessed on the basis that basic communication between people and individuals is difficult when it is impossible to see the heads and arms (both significant signalling devices) of each other. The maximal distance over which it was possible to observe the upper body of a person was measured from selected fixed points of maximal visibility at different locations across the site. The results (Fig. 5) clearly indicate the site would not have functioned well at an inter-personal level, because of difficulty in observing persons over distances of greater than 40 metres. Similarly, it would have been difficult to co-ordinate *in situ* defensive strategies. For instance, it is impossible to observe either the rampart circuit, or the ground immediately at the base of the hill, from any fixed point on site. This opens up the issue of what the Caburn was *actually* used for, given its range of Middle Iron Age 'domestic' 'agricultural' and 'weaponry' finds (Curwen & Curwen 1927; Hamilton 1998). This is further discussed below in the context of the pit finds.

The *inter-site visibility* study indicated that the Caburn has specific locational features in common with the other Sussex Middle Iron Age hillforts (Cissbury, Torberry and the Trundle). In contrast with Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age hillforts which are in liminal locations on the south

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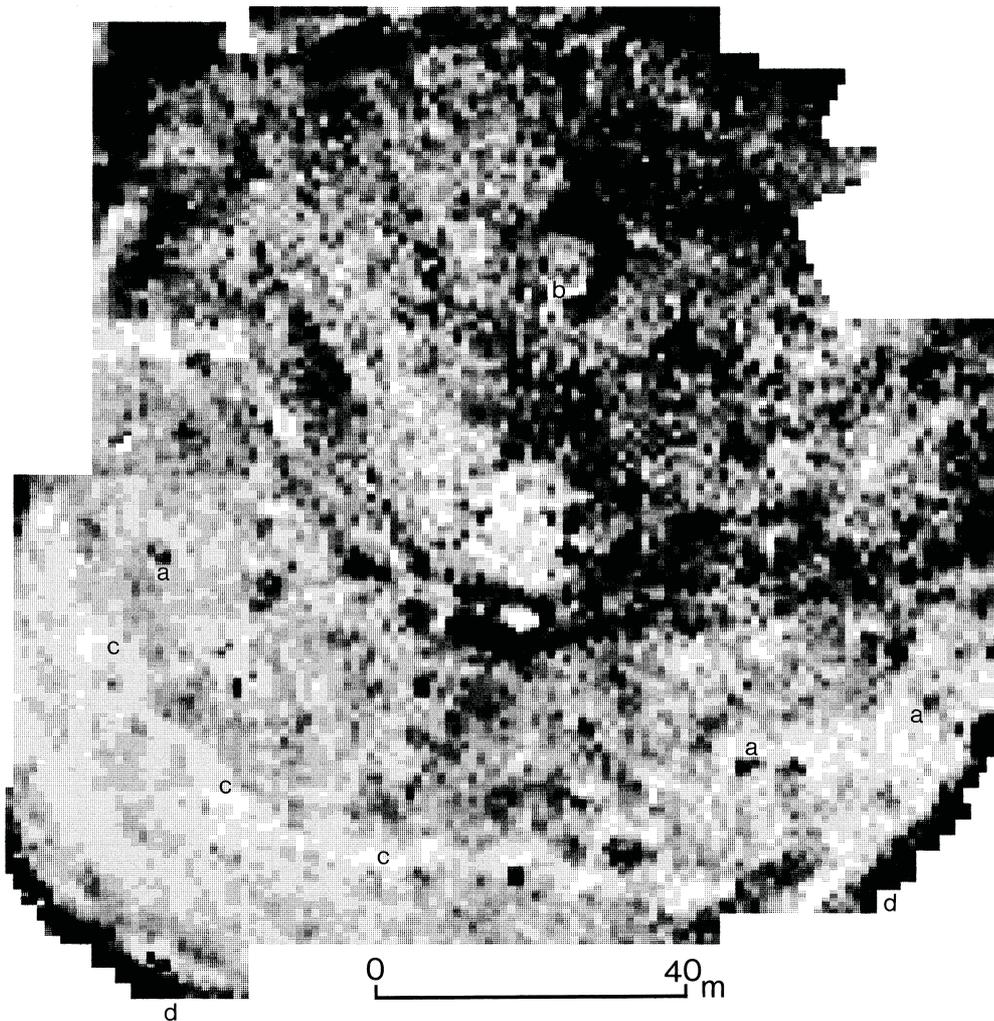


Fig. 3a. Resistivity survey of the interior of the Caburn enclosure. (Image produced by David Combes.)

and north edge of the South Downs, the Middle Iron Age hillforts are centrally placed in downland blocks (Hamilton & Manley 1997). They visually dominate topographic regions but are *not* inter-visible with each other. This suggests that the Middle Iron Age hillforts are predominantly concerned

with the *internal* co-ordination of their regions. From a distance looking towards the Caburn, the ramparts do not obscure the hillfort interior, because they are situated downslope. Instead, they monumentalize the hill and its interior. This suggests that the Middle Iron Age rampart

was more concerned with providing a focal landmark for surrounding communities than with physically protecting the enclosed interior (Hamilton 1998).

THE RANSCOMBE RIDGE

By Sue Hamilton

The Ranscombe ridge is a narrow connecting saddle of land between the Caburn and its immediately adjacent block of downland to the west (Fig. 6). This adjacent block is architecturally separated from the Caburn by a linear bank and ditch (with a single entrance) positioned at the western end of the ridge (Fig. 6), with its ditch facing towards the Caburn. There is evidence that the bank was revetted, and finds of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery came from the lower fills of the ditch (Burstow & Holleyman 1964). This feature may belong to a category of earlier 1st-millennium BC land boundaries known as cross-ridge dykes.

The Ranscombe ridge has been under pasture through living memory, and consequently has been unavailable for fieldwalking. It seems likely that under these circumstances any artefact and sub-surface features on this ridge would be *in situ* and undisturbed. Given the ridge's topographic importance in linking the Caburn to a wider landscape, and the presence of a cross-ridge boundary coeval with the 1st-millennium BC use of the Caburn, a strategy of investigation was developed. A grid of 50 m squares was laid out over the ridge. Twenty shovel test pits (0.5 m \times 1 m) were then sequentially laid out at 50 m intervals (Fig. 4). These were small sampling pits to test the potential distribution of finds across the ridge. For each pit, one half was shovel-excavated to the natural, and the bulk sieved for finds (1 cm square mesh). In the other half of each pit the stratigraphic section exposed by the 'bulk sample' was then utilized to determine the excavation and sieving of the remaining material by spits (Table 1: Spit 1 = worm-sorted horizon; Spit 2 = the first 7 cm of unsorted material above the natural; Spit 3 = the remaining sediment or the next 7 cm of sediment above the natural). The aim of this was to test the degree of stratigraphic disturbance (in fact minimal) that the

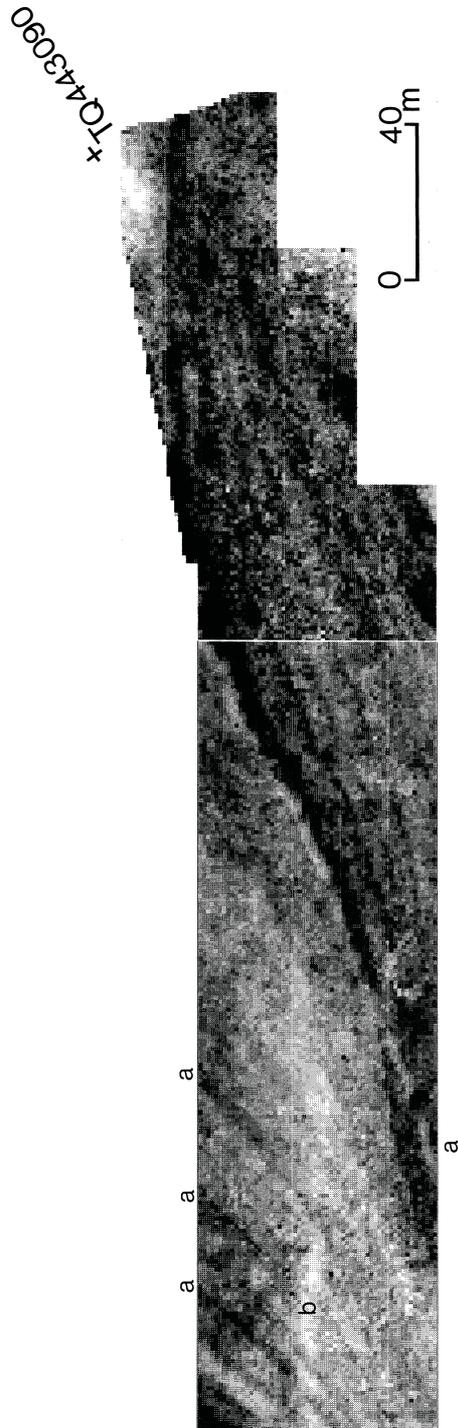


Fig. 3b. Resistivity survey of the area north of the Caburn enclosure. (Image produced by David Combes.)

material had undergone.

In conjunction with this test-pitting, and using the same grid frame, a geophysical survey of the ridge was done (D. Combes, Fig. 3c). Additional shovel pits focused on geophysical anomalies (Fig. 4, Pits A–G, J–M). None of the latter evidenced stratigraphic or artefactual reasons for the anomalies, excepting Pit A which confirmed the presence (compacted deposits) of a track running to the entrance of the Ranscombe cross-ridge dyke.

The finds from the shovel pits are listed in Table 1. There is a thin scatter of later prehistoric struck flint and fire-cracked flint across the ridge, but other finds were negligible. Only eight sherds of pottery were recovered. The majority of these were Middle Iron Age. The greatest number of finds occurred in pits at the Caburn end of the ridge (e.g. Pits 1, 2, 14, 15, G), and to a lesser extent at the Ranscombe end (e.g. Pit A). The implications are that this may have been an area of pasturage, since it lacks archaeological evidence for any form of *in situ* settlement activity. This stands in stark contrast to the quite considerable

concentrations of 1st-millennium BC and later pottery collected from ploughed fields north of Caburn (Biggar 1984).

Additionally, the presence of *porospaera* (chalk, ball-like concretions, natural to the chalk) was monitored for the shovel pits. The Curwens' excavations noted the recurrent presence of these in the Caburn pit deposits (Curwen & Curwen 1927, 'Table of Pits'), and it was of interest to establish how common they were in the area's chalk stratigraphy. A large number of the Ranscombe shovel pits produced *porospaera*, suggesting that they were not hard to come by or necessarily deliberately curated.

USING THE FINDS:
THE CABURN ARCHIVE
By Sue Hamilton

1. CABURN'S 1ST-MILLENNIUM BC POTTERY

The Caburn is a type-site for three major phases of 1st-millennium BC pottery traditions in Lowland Britain (Cunliffe 1991). The Caburn pottery provides the main basis for dating and sequencing the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age use of the site. Our ongoing work aims to define better the chronology, content, and characteristics of its prehistoric ceramic assemblages. To date, our excavations (of 1996 and 1998) have recovered c. 2500 1st-millennium BC pottery sherds, and have added to the range of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age forms known from the site.

The Caburn's emergence as a ceramic type-site commenced with Hawkes' (1939) analysis of the pottery from Wilson's (1938; 1939), and the Curwens' excavations (Curwen & Curwen 1927). This work isolated 'Caburn I ware' relating to 'earlier Iron Age occupation' at the Caburn, and 'Caburn II ware' associated with 'later Iron Age occupation' (Hawkes 1939). Subsequently, Cunliffe (1991) used the Caburn pottery as a type-site for three phases of 1st-millennium BC regional pottery traditions, namely: i) the Kimmeridge–Caburn tradition (Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age); ii) the Caburn–Cissbury tradition (Middle Iron Age); and the Caburn–Saltdean tradition (Late Iron Age).

Caburn's Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery

'Caburn I ware' is characterized by bowls and jars with angular shoulders, neck, and shoulder cordons, and finely incised geometric decoration on rims, necks and shoulders. This decoration includes chevron, herringbone, and zigzag hatched ribbon designs (e.g. Hawkes 1939, fig. E). Our analysis of this pottery (both from the archive and the recently excavated material) indicates that the 'ware' encompasses several fabric variants.

The fine wares are dominated by two types:

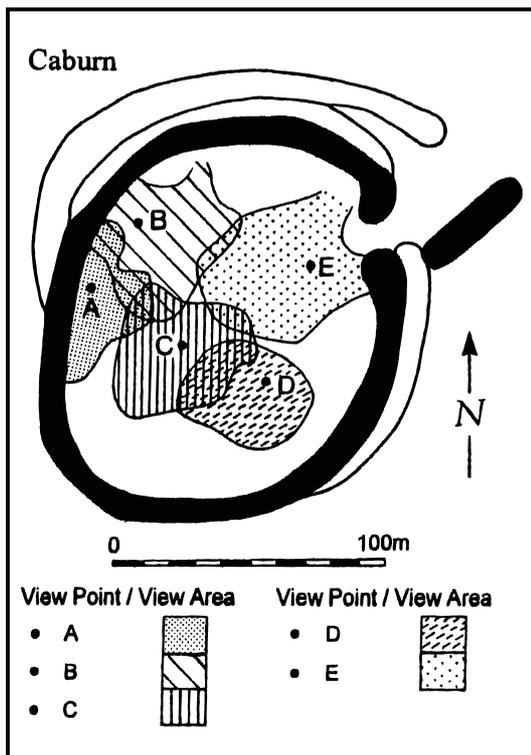


Fig. 5. Intra-visibility map of the Caburn interior. (Simplified from Hamilton 1998, fig. 9; see this publication for more detailed explanation.)

The Caburn and environs

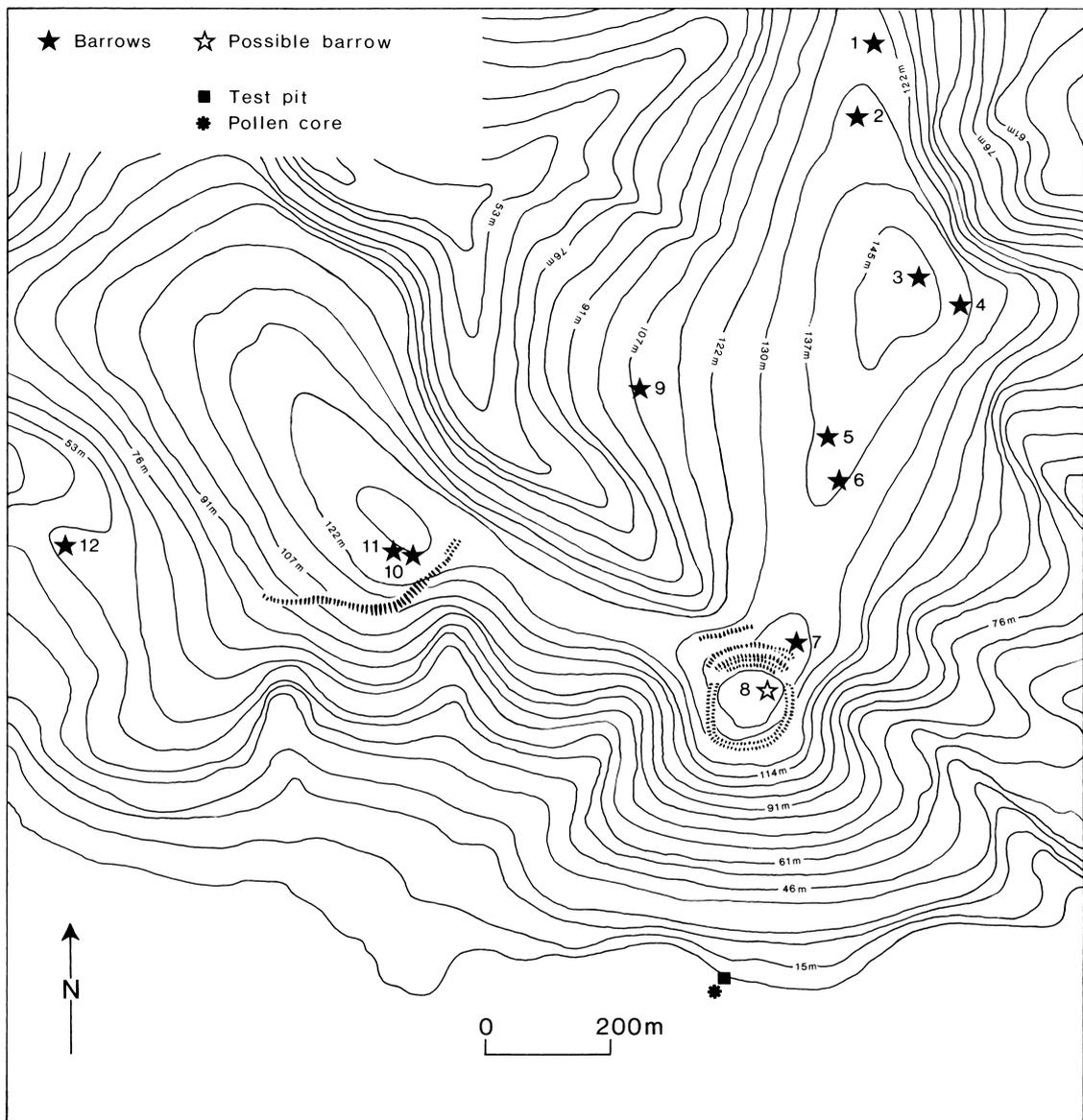


Fig. 6. Location of round barrows around Mount Caburn.

i) an oxidized fabric containing abundant medium-sized quartz sand and some pisolithic iron oxides. This fabric often has a orange, burnished slip/surface remaining. It is the most abundantly present Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age fabric on site and is what Hawkes typified as 'Caburn I ware'; and ii) a dark, unoxidized fabric with abundant pisolithic

iron oxide inclusions. Surfaces, where preserved, are black and highly burnished. The coarse wares occur in a range of fabrics including: i) flint-gritted fabrics; ii) a fossil shell fabric; and iii) fabrics which have flint grits and some pisolithic iron oxides.

Cunliffe suggested a date range of 750–550 BC (i.e. Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age) for his 'Kimmeridge–Caburn'

Table 1. Summary of ‘shovel pit’ finds from the Ranscombe Ridge. (Shovel pits not listed lacked finds.)

Pit	BS	S1	S2	S3
1	1F*	1fcf	1F*	0
	2fcf	2F+	1F+	–
2		1ESW	1P(PM)	–
	3Ph	1F	2Ph	0
	2F	1F+	2F+	–
3	1P(MIA)	1fcf	1P(MIA)	–
	1Ph	1B	1F*	0
4	3Ph	0	1F+, 1fcf	2Ph
5	1F	2F, 1fcf	1fcf	0
6	1B*	1Ph	0	1P(PM)
	1F+	1B+	–	–
	2Ph	–	–	–
7	4Ph	1fcf, 1F+	1Ph	0
8	8Ph	2fcf	2Ph	0
	2F	1Bn	–	–
	3Bn	–	–	–
9	2Ph, 1F	1F, 4fcf	1Ph	0
10	2Ph, 2fcf	1Ph, 2fcf, 2F	0	0
11	4fcf	1F+	2Ph	0
12	3Ph, 4F*	1F*, 2F	3Ph, 2F, 1B	0
13	4Ph, 5F	2F*, 1F+	1fcf, 1B*	0
	1 tessera	2fcf	–	–
14	2Ph, 2F*	2B*, 2F*	1B	0
		1P(EIA)	–	–
15	3Ph, 1B*	1Ph, 16Bn	1Ph, 1F*	0
	1P(MIA)	–	–	–
16	1Ph, 2fcf, 2B, 3F	0	1fcf, 2B, 1F	0
17	7Ph	2F	2F	1Ph
	1fcf	1B	1B*	–
	6F+	–	–	–
18	3Ph	0	4Ph	1Ph
	1F	–	–	–
	1fcf	–	–	–
19	1F*	0	1Ph	0
	3F	–	–	–
20	2fcf	1B, 1F	1B, 1F*	0
		1Bn	–	–
A	8Ph, 1fcf	3Ph, 1fcf	8Ph, 2fcf	0
	1Bn, 2F*	1Bn	8t, 2F+	–
	1P(EIA)	–	–	–
B	0	2Ph, 1F+	2Ph(e)	0
C	5Ph, 2sh	1fcf, 3fcf	1Ph	0
D	1Ph, 1fcf	2Ph, 1fcf, 3F*	5Ph	0
E	1Ph, 3fcf	0	1Ph	0
F	2Ph	0	1Ph	0
G	Ph, 4fcf	7fcf, 1F+	4F, 2fc	0
	1B*	1P(MIA)	1Ph	–
J	3Ph, 1fcf	0	1B*	0
L	4fcf, 4F*	1Ph, 3fcf	2fcf	0
	1P(R)	2F	–	–
M	1Ph, 2F, 1F*	1fcf	0	0

Stratigraphic key: BS = bulk sample; S1–S3 = Spits 1–3. See text for further explanation.

Finds key: * = thick flint flakes/blades; + = fine flint flakes/blades; B = flint blade; Bn = animal bone/tooth; fcf = fire-cracked flint; F = flint flake; P = pottery sherd; Ph = *porosphaera*; Sh = shell; EIA = Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age; MIA = Middle Iron Age; R = Roman; PM = post-medieval; ESW = East Sussex Ware.

traditions. For Sussex, in addition to ‘Caburn I ware’, he included assemblages from Highdown Hill, Hollingbury, Kingston Bucu, Stoke Clump, Thundersbarrow Hill, and the Trundle (pre-hillfort assemblage) in this pottery grouping. Many of these assemblages are stratigraphically mixed/insecure, with the Caburn and Hollingbury (Hamilton 1984) and Thundersbarrow Hill (Hamilton 1993) having the best stratigraphies. The pottery from Hollingbury, Stoke Clump (Cunliffe 1966), and the Caburn is more highly decorated and includes carefully executed incised decoration and finer, denser, quartz and iron oxide-rich fabrics. These may lie at the end of the ‘Kimmeridge–Caburn’ sequence, and a date as late as the 6th century BC onwards is currently suggested for these traditions (Barrett 1980; Hamilton 1993). This would place the activity associated with ‘Caburn I’ pottery at the Caburn at the beginning of the Early Iron Age, rather than the end of the Late Bronze Age. Until this chronology is better defined, and for the purposes of the present text, this phase and its pottery is referred to within its broadest possible chronological limits, that is Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age.

Caburn’s Middle Iron Age pottery

Hawkes’ ‘Caburn II ware’ is characterized by straight-sided saucepan pottery which typically has a bead rim, a projecting bead foot, and shallow tooled decoration. The decoration includes tooled curvilinear and scroll designs (Hawkes 1939, fig. K), also tooled pendant arcs highlighted by impressed dots (Hawkes 1939, fig. L:32). Apart from the Caburn, few saucepan pottery assemblages of any size are known from Sussex. At the Caburn the stratigraphically earliest group of saucepan pottery is from beneath the inner rampart (Hawkes 1939, fig. H17, 19, 20). These traditions have a broad Middle Iron Age dating of c. 400–150 BC. Saucepan pottery at the Caburn occurs in both quartz-sand fabrics, and fine flint-gritted fabrics and, in this respect is highly similar to the saucepan pottery from East Sussex sites such as Bishopstone and Slonk Hill (Hamilton 1977; 1993). A fabric with

shell inclusions (possibly oolitic) is also present at the Caburn in saucepan forms. This is currently under investigation, and suggests connections with exchange networks further west (e.g. Dorset or Somerset) where oolitic wares are more characteristic of the Middle Iron Age.

Caburn's latest Iron Age pottery

Several names have been ascribed to East Sussex's latest Iron Age pottery traditions. These are: 'South Eastern B' (Ward Perkins 1938); 'Eastern Atrebatian' (Cunliffe 1991) 'Late Caburn-Saltdean' (Cunliffe 1991, 90); East Sussex Ware (Green 1980); and Cooking Jar Fabric (Green 1980). The pottery fabric is distinguished by its soapy feel (E. C. Curwen 1937; Hardy & Curwen 1937, 255; Parsons & Curwen 1933, 170) and its grog inclusions (Green 1980). Its characteristic forms include large wide-bellied vessels with painted or, more commonly, incised eyebrow decoration. The ceramic tradition continues for several centuries into the Roman period, and is established towards the end of the 1st century BC (Hamilton 1993). It is difficult to distinguish the early chronology of the tradition, and at the Caburn this is problematic for isolating the nature and extent of Late Iron Age, pre-Roman activity.

2. REASSESSING THE 1ST-MILLENNIUM BC ARCHIVE

The Caburn has a substantial artefact archive. The largest collection of finds comprise the contents from the Curwens' excavation of 99 pits (stored at Barbican House Museum, Lewes). As part of the present project the finds from these pits were reassessed. This reanalysis has already been published (Hamilton 1998), and a brief summary here suffices. Recent work suggests that finds from Iron Age pits (presumed originally to be storage pits) cannot be simply seen as 'rubbish', given that many pit deposits have distinct combinations, selections, and sequences of finds (Hill 1995). The Caburn's pit finds include distinctive placements in the base of pits. These variously comprise sighted weapons, knives and razors, loom weights, human remains, and a *selected* range of animal parts/types, notably skulls, horse bones, dog bones, wild boar's tusks, wild mammal bones, and bird bones. A case has been made that the contents of these pits have the character of ritual deposits rather than that of straightforward domestic rubbish. If this is the case, then these pits, as the major recognized prehistoric features within the Caburn hillfort enclosure, suggest an interpretation of the site as a large-scale, possibly centralized, community storage (the presumed original use of the pits), *and* a locus for rites of deposition. This reassessment of the 1st-millennium BC pit-finds archive prompted two avenues of further analysis: i) a questioning of the primary use of the site for domestic or defence purposes (explored in the intra-

and inter-site visibility studies (see above); and ii) a consideration of the range of 1st-millennium BC artefact deposition contexts. Did the Caburn, for instance, have 'ordinary rubbish' as well as 'ritual rubbish'?

USING CABURN

1. MESOLITHIC TO MIDDLE BRONZE AGE: 8000 BC–1600 BC

By Peter Drewett with an environmental contribution from Sue Hamilton & Martyn Waller

Utilizing peat deposits located at the southern base of the Caburn, a pollen diagram has been constructed for the Caburn (see Figs 6 and 18 for location of pollen core). This provides a temporally and spatially precise record of vegetation change on the Caburn chalkland during the mid-Holocene, archaeologically the Mesolithic to the earlier Bronze Age (*c.* cal BC 5150–1850) (Waller & Hamilton in press). Subsequent to this time, and postdating the peat deposits which provide the pollen sequence, the area immediately south of the Caburn became subject to marine incursion, and remained waterlogged through the Roman period (*see* Adams below). The pollen core is exceptional in providing a post-glacial pollen vegetational record for the chalk. The chronology for the core is provided by four AMS radiocarbon dates. The references to the Caburn's vegetation in this section are therefore directly based upon this pollen information.

The Ouse Valley in general, and the Caburn block in particular, show a remarkably low density of artefacts attributable to the Mesolithic, particularly when compared to the Cuckmere valley to the east. Although these distributions may be skewed by post-depositional factors and collection bias, the Caburn block in particular does appear to be an area of low Mesolithic activity of the type that left archaeological traces. The dominant dome-shaped hill of Caburn cannot, however, have gone unnoticed by Mesolithic hunters and foragers and may indeed have been a place of some significance, particularly when moving inland up the River Ouse from its mouth. At this time, the Caburn would have been well-wooded.

From the beginning of the Neolithic, *c.* cal BC 4450 human interference is evident in the Caburn pollen diagram. High peaks in lime pollen suggest woodland management, perhaps the coppicing, pollarding or shredding of lime. By *c.* cal BC 3750, an elm decline and the presence of cereal grains suggest limited planting in woodland clearings at the base of the Caburn slope. Subsequently, from *c.* cal BC 3450 there is woodland regeneration and the establishment of yew woodland which is largely maintained for 1400 years. Whether or not this dark wood capping of an already dominant landmark developed a special meaning to Neolithic people in the area is open to question, but the single broken leaf-shaped arrowhead from Trench E, 1998,

Context 9 is the only certain Neolithic artefact from Caburn.

If the Caburn yew wood had developed a special meaning during the Neolithic, this may partly explain the distribution of Early Bronze Age round barrows on the Caburn block. The line of barrows (Fig. 6:1–8) could perhaps be seen as marking a way to the Caburn from the north. From this direction the Caburn is not visible until Barrow 3 is reached, although each barrow can be seen from the next along the line.

2. LATER BRONZE AND EARLY IRON AGES

By Sue Hamilton

The palisade enclosure

The earliest settlement at the Caburn was probably surrounded by a palisade enclosure. Both Pitt-Rivers' and Wilson's excavations suggest the possibility of pre-rampart post-holes encircling the hill. Pitt-Rivers located post-holes under the earliest (inner) rampart (henceforth Rampart 1) in his trench across the north ramparts (Lane Fox 1881, pl. I). Wilson's cutting II, although proximate to Pitt-Rivers' trench, failed to locate further pre-rampart post-holes (Wilson 1938). However, cutting XIA (Wilson 1939, 196) across the inner, north rampart encountered further post-holes under Rampart 1. These were interpreted as belonging to the pre-rampart period 'as they were sealed by a turfline before the rampart was built' (Wilson 1939, 196). The post-holes, which produced 'Caburn I' pottery, only appear in his general plan (Wilson 1939, fig. 1, cutting XIA, post-holes 1 & 2). Our excavations ran immediately alongside Wilson's cuttings XIA and XIB across the north ramparts, stopping short of the outer ditch of the outer rampart (Trench B, 1996, Figs 2 & 10). These 1996 excavations further confirmed the presence of a pre-rampart palisade under Rampart 1. On the west side of Trench B, 1996 (Fig. 11: Context 32, fill 33), a substantial straight-sided post-hole (30–38 cm diameter ∞ 0.5 m deep) was located below the pre-Rampart 1 buried land surface (Fig. 11: Context 28). This post-hole produced a total of 13 Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age sherds including two conjoining sherds from a shoulder cordon decorated with a line of oblique, incised slashes. Another similarly located post-hole occurred on the east side of Trench B, 1996 (Context 23, fill 24: not illustrated). This produced one sherd of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery, but here it was not possible to distinguish a land surface, and thus to ascribe the post-hole conclusively to a pre-rampart phase.

Pre-hillfort activity

The buried soil horizons under Rampart 1 (Trench B 1996, Fig. 11: Contexts 26, 28 & 31) produced 71 sherds of Late

Bronze

Age/Early Iron Age pottery, thus indicating that the site was palisaded (*see above*) and in use during the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age prior to the construction of the hillfort. These sherds included 'Caburn I' forms such as fine cordoned bowls with delicate incised geometric decoration. Other evidence of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age activity at the Caburn comprises: i) a cremation burial with 'Caburn I' pottery under the counterscarp bank on the outer edge of the Rampart 1 ditch (Wilson 1938; 1939); ii) post-holes possibly relating to two houses ('Hut A' and 'Hut B': Wilson 1938; 1939); iii) surface concentrations of 'Caburn I' pottery (Wilson 1939; Trench A, 1996, Fig. 7: Contexts 3 & 9); and iv) pit fills dominated by Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery (Curwen & Curwen 1927; Hamilton 1998).

'Huts A and B'

Wilson identified these putative 'huts' on the basis of a limited number of post-holes which do not form particularly clear configurations (Wilson 1939, fig. 1). 'Hut B' is particularly tenuous, 'comprising' two post-holes and 'marks on the ground running from them' (Wilson 1938, fig. 3). The finds from the 'Hut B' are, however, wholly in keeping with a range of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age activities and include two whetstones and a spindle whorl (Wilson 1939, pl. VIII:36, 40, 41), a Kimmeridge shale bracelet (Wilson 1939, fig. X:44), part of a quern, and 'a quantity of iron fittings' (Wilson 1939, 196).

Wilson's cutting I through the rampart gateway area additionally encompassed a small area of the interior to the west. The latter produced an arc of post-holes and 'pot-holes' (Wilson 1938, fig. 3: contexts 32–42), and clusters of 'Caburn I' cordoned pottery (Wilson 1938, 188, figs 3, and 14:1,3,8 and 9). These collectively provided the basis of Wilson's 'Hut A'. The 'pot-hole' and 'post-hole' features were planned, but no dimensions are given for the depth of the features. Trench A, 1996 was positioned to re-excavate and extended westwards Wilson's 'Hut A' site, with the aim of clarifying the structure (Figs 7 & 9). Our re-excavation of Wilson's trench located several irregular, backfilled small hollows *c.* 10–15 cm deep which are absent from Wilson's plan. These were possibly produced by Wilson 'testing' for features (Trench A, 1996, Fig. 7: Contexts 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34 & 35). There was also a cluster of dumped flint nodules from Wilson's backfill (Fig. 7, Trench A, 1996: Context 14). No 'new' post-holes were discovered in this area. Post-holes 20, 21, 22, 26, 33 (Trench B, 1996, Fig. 7) probably correlate with Wilson's post-holes 37, 33, 34, 39, and 41 respectively (Wilson 1938, fig. 3). The post-holes are flat-bottomed, mostly of oval plan (e.g. 43 ∞ 34 cm for Context 22) and penetrate the natural chalk to 22–31 cm

Trench A 1996

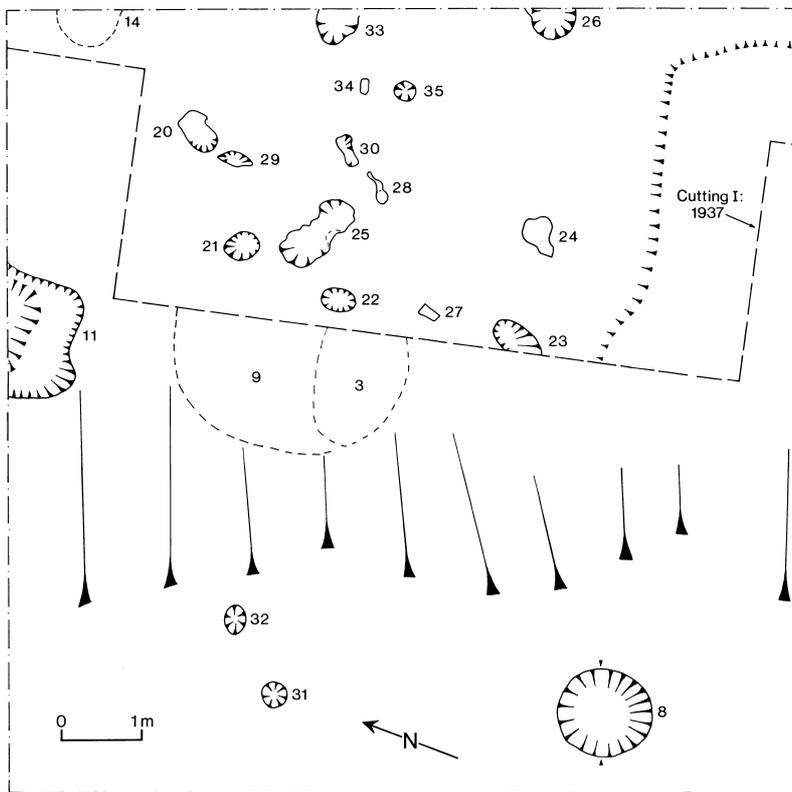


Fig. 7. Plan of Trench A, 1996.

depth. Wilson's 'post-hole' 36 (Wilson 1938, fig. 3) correlates with Context 23 from the Trench A, 1996 excavations (Trench A, 1996, Fig. 7). This hollow is irregular in plan with an extremely uneven base, and is best interpreted as a natural hollow. Wilson's backfilled 'post-hole' 41 (Trench A, 1996, Fig. 7: Context 26), is truncated by the 1996 excavation trench, but is some 36 cm deep and appears to be a somewhat large feature for an ordinary post-hole. Possibly it is a post pit of a porch attached to 'Hut A', or a storage/work scoop within, or outside 'Hut A'. If an arc is drawn through post-holes 20–22, and 33 (Fig. 7), it would create a circular 'house' structure of at least *c.* 4 m diameter. In addition to 'Hut A', two unrelated, shallow, possible post-holes were located in the previously unexcavated section of Trench A, 1996 at some distance from, and unrelated to, 'Hut A' (Trench A, 1996, Fig. 7: Contexts 31 & 32). These post-holes were both straight-sided, being 22–31 cm deep, with diameters of 40–60 cm.

The possible presence of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron

Age houses at the Caburn is important, given that houses of this date are rare in Sussex. This is in marked contrast to the prevalent round-house tradition of preceding Deverel-Rimbury (Middle Bronze Age) traditions in Sussex (Ellison 1978; Drewett 1982b). At Varley Halls, for example, four well-defined Middle Bronze Age houses are chronologically succeeded by a single, far less coherent, Late Bronze Age circular, post structure (Greig 1997, putative Hut 5). The few other examples of Sussex earlier 1st-millennium BC houses/buildings include the Heathy Brow (Late Bronze Age) rectangular (6 m × 4 m) and the round (*c.* 5 m diameter) houses/structures marked solely (i.e. no post-holes) by flint-packed/metalled floors (Bedwin 1982), and the similarly flint-packed bases of five round-houses within the interior of Hollingbury hillfort (Early Iron Age) (Holmes 1984, fig. 3). The sizes of these structures are consistent with that suggested for Caburn 'Hut A', and

it is possible that these less overtly visual structures (in archaeological terms) of the early 1st millennium BC are part of a related change in architecture and household organization in the post Deverel-Rimbury period.

Our extension of Wilson's trench immediately at the back of 'Hut A' located a substantial quantity of *in situ* Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery (Trench A, 1996, Fig. 7: Contexts 3 & 9). The pottery was compacted into the natural chalk surface and incorporated in a dark brown silty material (Context 9). This pottery concentration covered a semicircular area of 1.6 m by 2.9 m diameter and 7 cm deep, and was truncated by Wilson's excavation trench. On its southern side, Context 9 was overlain by a looser, silty deposit, some 4 cm deep. This contained sherds which conjoined with sherds from the underlying Context 9. The pottery from Contexts 3 and 9 is very similar to that recovered from Wilson's 'Hut A' area (Wilson 1938). The former comprised 1724 Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age sherds in 34 clusters. Each cluster related to where larger

portions of pots had fragmented *in situ* post abandonment. The range of forms and decoration suggests the presence of c. 10 vessels. All parts of the pot profiles are present (i.e. rims, bases and shoulders). The vessels are all of one fabric type (orange oxidized fine wares with burnished surfaces and a matrix dominated by quartz and pisolitic iron oxide inclusions). This is an important assemblage of related ‘Caburn I’ pottery. It suggests *in situ* desertion of an area where pots were stored, at the back of (or within) the ‘Hut A’ area. The forms include jars, bowls and cups. This assemblage markedly contrasts with the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery recovered from Rampart 1 and its associated land surface. The latter pottery is considerably more varied in fabrics and forms. Only very small parts of individual vessels were present, suggesting that the rampart area was associated with secondary rubbish spread/accumulation, from a wide area of the site.

Other finds from Contexts 3 and 9 included occasional small pieces of iron of indeterminate form, large struck flint flakes, and burnt flint. The material lacks associated animal bone refuse, emphasizing the categorization or zonation of site activities.

Possible lynchets

Running approximately NW–SE across Trench A 1996 there is a possible negative lynchet (Figs 7 & 8). ‘Hut A’ may have been deliberately positioned in the lee of the feature (Fig. 7). The profile of this curving contour ‘lynchet’ can be seen in section in Figure 8. No finds were associated with the feature, but it is one of several putative contour lynchets recently recognized by RCHME mapping (*see* Oswald above and Fig. 2) within the Caburn enclosure. Potentially such lynchets could be of pre-enclosure (Bronze Age), enclosure (Iron Age), or post-enclosure (Romano-British) date, and they are of some relevance to interpreting the location and use of the Caburn enclosure.

In 1998 we dug two further trenches (10 m × 1 m) within the hillfort interior (Trenches A, 1998, Fig. 9; and B, 1998) to investigate these features. The trenches (Fig. 2) were positioned 20 m apart on the western side of the hillfort. Trench A, 1998 produced 247 stratified sherds of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery, while Trench B, 1998 only produced four stratified sherds (all Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age). Both trenches had approximately 36 cm of accumulation above the natural. The upper part of this accumulation was a 10–30 cm thick worm-sorted horizon (Trench A, 1998: Context 2; Trench B, 1998: Context 2), with the lower 10–30 cm comprising weathered subangular chalk pieces 5–8 cm across derived from natural. Across the middle and downslope part of the Trench A,

1998 there was a broad scatter of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery. Within this there was a semicircular concentration (1.28 m × 0.64 m) of 58 sherds, together with some struck flint, and bone, on the east side of the trench. This pottery comprises coarser and finer flint-gritted wares, oxidized quartz sand fabrics, unoxidized pisolitic iron oxide wares, and three sherds with fossil shell inclusions. Diagnostic forms comprise flat splayed-base sherds (2), an out-turned rim with internal bevel from a coarseware shouldered jar/bowl, finger-squeezed sherds (2), diagonally finger-smear sherds (1), finger-impressed decorated coarseware shoulder sherds (3), sherds from out-turned rims from fine ware bowls (3), and a bevelled rim from a coarseware convex jar (1). This material is notable for comprising a *range* of forms and fabrics, and for predominantly being of coarseware flint-gritted fabrics. The sherds are relatively small and suggest midden material rather than primary deposition. This is all in contrast to the pottery from the ‘Hut A’ area (Trench B, 1996) and further suggests zonation of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age site use and rubbish disposal.

At the west, downslope, end of Trench A, 1998 two possible post-holes were half revealed in plan, each being cut by the trench edge. One was in the north side of the trench (Trench A, 1988: Context 8, not illustrated) and measured c. 23 cm diameter by 19 cm deep. The other was in the south side (Trench A, 1998: Context 10, not illustrated) and measured c. 25 cm diameter by 20 cm deep. Both were oval or circular in plan and were flat-bottomed. Context 10 produced one sherd of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery. Neither post-hole evidenced *in situ* post-packing, although both had concentrations of angular chalk in their fills. The two post-holes cannot be related to a single fence-line being on different sides of Trench A 1998, and the one being 1.7 m downslope of the other. They are, however, of very similar proportions and may relate to two parallel rows of posts set round the hill. If so, they would have to have acted as symbolic markers since there is no sediment/lynchet accumulation associated with either post-hole, which suggests there was no continuous barrier (e.g. hurdle fencing) linking each post. Indeed, the hillslope is so steep that arable agriculture would barely have been viable. Neither trench in fact evidenced lynchet accumulation. All surface undulations mirrored natural undulations in the underlying bedrock. On the basis of this, and the distinct geological banding recognized in the geophysical survey (*see* above), it seems possible that the putative RCHME ‘contour lynchets’ here relate to geological patterning.

3. THE MIDDLE IRON AGE ENCLOSURE (AND LATER IRON AGE ACTIVITY)

By Sue Hamilton

Trench A 1996

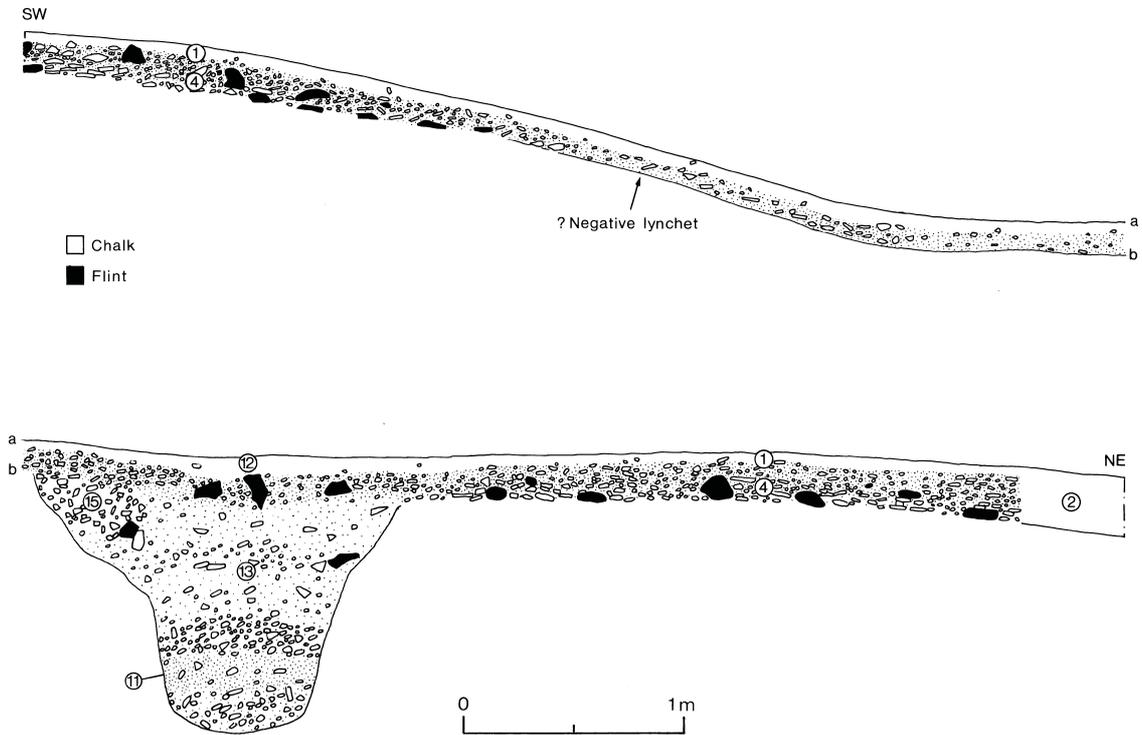


Fig. 8. North-west section of Trench A, 1996.

Rampart 1

Caburn's first rampart (Rampart 1) is dated to the Middle Iron Age predominantly on the basis of its construction being *later than* the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery recovered from: i) the land surface sealed by Rampart 1 (Trench B, 1996, Fig. 11: Contexts 26, 28 & 31; Wilson 1938, cutting II; Wilson 1939, cutting XIA); ii) the material incorporated within its dump structure (Wilson 1939, cutting XIA; Trench B, 1996, Fig. 11: Context 4); and iii) the pottery from the lowermost fills of its ditch (Trench B, 1996, Fig. 11: Context 2).

With the exception of Context 4 (the rampart core), all the 1996 contexts mentioned above produced solely Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery. The rampart core additionally produced four sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery decorated with a tooled curvilinear decoration characteristic of saucepan bowls found elsewhere on the Caburn (e.g. Hawkes 1939, pl. XI:78). The sherds were at the interface with a linear gully. This gully, though initially difficult to

define, was cut through the core of the rampart (Fig. 11: Context 46). The latter sherds, therefore, cannot be treated with total security. Wilson's excavations also suggest the presence of 'Caburn II' ware antedating and within the inner rampart material, although it is not possible to ascertain the precise locations of specific sherds (Hawkes 1939, 241–3).

Under Rampart 1, a worm-sorted horizon of a buried land surface occurred intermittently (Trench B, 1996, Fig. 11: Context 28). This could suggest that the rampart was piled up over, or subsequently spread over, an inconsistent land surface. Where preserved, the worm-sorted horizon had a thickness of 1–3 cm and is under the core of the rampart. It had a friable silty texture, and was coloured mid grey-brown. At the outer margins of Rampart 1, only the underlying unsorted horizon of this buried surface remained (Trench A, 1996, Fig. 11: Contexts 26 & 31). This layer measured *c.* 6–8 cm thick and comprised sub-angular and sub-rounded chalk pieces. This absence of a worm-sorted

A-horizon suggests one of three possibilities: i) turf removal or erosion of the *parts* of the land surface prior to, or during, Rampart 1 construction; or ii) *spread* of the Rampart 1 profile (particularly the inner face) directly on to exposed and eroded surfaces adjacent to the rampart; or iii) differential *in situ* breakdown of the worm-sorted A-horizon as a result of localized bioturbation or soil chemistry.

Wilson's excavations indicated that Rampart 1 was of dump construction and lacked timber revetment (Wilson 1939: cutting XIA). Occasional hollow imprints within the chalk rubble suggested that in places this dump was haphazardly consolidated by laying down tree branches (Wilson 1938, fig. 4: cutting II). Today, Rampart 1 is clearest on the north side of the enclosure (Figs 1 & 2). It appears to have been destroyed in the present gateway area by subsequent reconfiguration of the 'defences', and there are only scanty remains of Rampart 1 on the steep southern slopes of the hill (*see* Oswald above). Here Wilson's cutting II excavations revealed a steep (now concealed) V-shaped ditch filled with fairly large rubble, which he suggested as having slipped from the now almost untraceable Rampart 1 (Wilson 1938, fig. 10: cutting II). The silting of the ditch is sealed by a turfline containing Romano-British pottery, and covered by dump material relating to a later, now substantially eroded, but still visible, rampart (Wilson 1938). The latter exists downslope of the filled ditch (now a 'terrace') of Rampart 1.

Our re-excavation of Wilson's cutting XIA area (Trench A, 1996, Figs 2, 10, 11 & 12) confirmed that here the core of Rampart 1 rampart was a domed dump of chalk and flint rubble *c.* 31 cm high and *c.* 2 m wide. This dump is dominated by self-supporting, irregularly sorted and orientated sub-angular chalk pieces (Trench B, 1996, Fig. 11: Context 4). The upper 15–18 cm of this core had a humic matrix and was more finely sorted due to weathering and soil development.

A possible post-hole (18 cm diameter \approx 15 cm deep) showed up as a sub-circular shadow on top of Context 31 (the buried land surface) in the outer edge of the rubble core of Rampart 1. This 'shadow' (Trench B, 1996, west-facing section of Rampart 1, Context 41: not illustrated) was just discernible in section, and appeared above the rubble core (Context 4) and below its upper layer (Context 3). This suggests the possibility of intermittent fencing along Rampart 1, and is perhaps analogous with Wilson's post-hole 1 in Rampart 1 (Wilson 1938, pl. I: cutting II). The feature is unassociated with datable finds.

Two round-bottomed, linear ditches or trenches cut through the upper, humified, part of the body of Rampart 1 (Trench B, 1996, Context 3) and into its rubble core (Trench B, 1996, Context 4). The stratigraphically earlier one



Fig. 9. Trench A, 1998, from the east and the wider landscape. (Photo: P. Drewett.)

(Trench B, 1996, Fig. 11: Context 46) is a linear cut *c.* 1 m wide running along the southern (inner) side of Rampart 1. This linear feature can be seen in both sides of the rampart section and therefore ran along the rampart for at least one metre. The fill produced three sherds of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery. A subsequent linear cut, *c.* 0.5 m wide and 30 cm deep (Trench B, 1996, Fig. 11: Context 12), appeared to cut Context 46 and produced eight sherds of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery in a range of flint-gritted, iron oxide, and quartz sand fabrics. This cut has the same west–east alignment, parallel to the rampart, as the previous linear cut (Context 46), and similarly penetrates the rampart core, and the buried land surface below (Trench B, 1996, Fig. 11: Context 26). This second trench or ditch has packing (Trench A, 1996, Fig. 11: Context 45) against its southern edge. The packing produced two Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age sherds, one of which was a rim. Both of

these features are clearly later than the construction of Rampart 1 (being dug through it). The pottery which they contain may be residual, and both linear features are perhaps the product of later activities on the site of Rampart 1, such as the construction of additional palisade trenches at the time of the construction of the later, outer rampart.

The ditch of Rampart 1 in Trench B 1996 was c. 8 m wide and c. 2.7 m deep. Eleven episodes of fill were recognized (Trench B, 1996, Fig. 11: Contexts 8, 9, 10, 11, 20, 25, 27, 35, 36, 37 & 40). All of these appear to be the product of natural sedimentation, and there is no indication that the ditch was recut. The primary fill (Trench B, 1996, Fig. 11: Context 27) produced two sherds of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery (black burnished iron oxide ware). The second (Context 25) and third (Context 20) lacked pottery, but the fourth fill (Context 11) produced 53 sherds of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery in black, burnished pisolitic iron oxide ware, coarse quartz sand fabrics, and fossil shell fabrics. These sherds exhibited quite a wide range of forms including a small cup/jar with a slight bead rim, and an in-turned, bevelled rim from a convex jar. The fifth (Context 10) and sixth (Context 40) fills each produced one sherd of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery. The only other ditch fills which produced pottery were the tenth fill (Context 9) which produced one sherd of Late Iron Age/Early Roman East Sussex Ware, and the final fill which produced two residual sherds of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery. The sixth fill of Wilson's ditch (Wilson 1938, pl. IV: trench XIIB) produced Roman pottery. This, together with the finds from Trench B, 1996 (Context 9), suggests that the greater part of the upper half of the ditch fill relates to Late Iron Age and later sedimentation.

Pits

The Caburn pits, as described in the Curwens' 'relic tables', are not consistently the classic round and oval shapes characteristic of many Iron Age pits. Many of the pits are described as rectangular, and some, more oddly, as pyramidal and triangular (Curwen & Curwen 1927). The latter might suggest that at least some of their shapes are a product of their excavation method. Trench A, 1996 and Trench B, 1996 encountered a total of three pits.

Pit 11, Trench A, 1996 was clearly filled with excavator's backfill and perhaps is Curwens' Pit 43 (Curwen & Curwen 1927, pl. I). This pit is described in Curwen's relic table as being rectangular (Curwen & Curwen 1927). The pit had a small amount of remnant, unexcavated fill (Trench A, 1996, Fig. 8: Context 15) and would have originally been oval or circular, rather than rectangular. This 'unexcavated' fill produced seven East Sussex Ware sherds suggesting a Late Iron Age/Early Roman date for its

upper fill.

The southern end of Trench B, 1996 (Fig. 11: Context 5) truncated a pit which corresponds with excavated Pit 41 on the Curwens' plan. As excavated in 1996, the lowermost fill (Context 30) was a loosely consolidated deposit which contained 11 sherds of Early Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery. The upper fill (Context 6) contained 50 sherds of 3rd-century AD grey ware (M. Lyne pers. comm.) and a small number of sherds of Late Iron Age/Roman East Sussex Ware. No mention of pottery is made in the relic table for Pit 41, and we must presume that if we are dealing with backfill, this pottery is unconnected with the feature.

The Caburn pits excavated by the Curwens were dug in horizontal spits and their finds thus ascribed (Curwen & Curwen 1927). On the gross basis that the lowermost deposits must have largely been deposited before the middle deposit, and the latter before the uppermost deposits, a coarse sequencing of finds deposition and their associations can be attempted (*see above* discussion and Hamilton 1998). The discovery of an unexcavated, previously unrecognized, pit in Trench A, 1996 (Figs 7 & 13: Context 8) was therefore important in facilitating a more informed assessment of the stratigraphy and morphology of the Curwens' pits. Pit 8 was cylindrical, 93 cm in depth, and 14 cm in diameter. It was relatively straight-sided and only evidenced erosion around its upper edge (Fig. 13). This suggests that at the end of its primary use (food/grain storage?), it did not remain open for long. The fills have relatively steep angles, suggestive of rapid backfill/dumping. The lowermost fill (Trench A, 1996, Fig. 13: Context 19) was almost sterile of finds, producing only four sherds of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery. The middle fills (Trench A, 1996, Fig. 13: Contexts 17 & 16) produced of small pieces burnt bone (unidentified), a small rectangular piece of sheet copper alloy, a potin coin, 44 sherds of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery, and 15 sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery including two rim sherds from a saucepan bowl. Saucepan pottery traditions continue down to the 1st century BC and these Middle Iron Age fabrics are probably contemporary with the potin coin.

The finds from Pit 8 imply that significant quantities of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age midden material must have been present within the Caburn interior, for it to become subsequently incorporated with Middle Iron Age material. The possible mixing of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age and Middle Iron Age pottery in the Caburn pit fills has long been recognized (Hamilton 1998). It has implications for the potential symbolic importance of remnant/curated rubbish. The evidence for rapid backfilling confirms a tradition of *deliberate* deposition. Only parts of

pots are present (with an emphasis on rims and bases). The copper sheet alloy, and potin coin might be considered to be special deposits (*see* Rudling below). Thus, the contents are clearly selected, rather than mixed/random domestic rubbish.

The upper profile of the Pit 8 deposits suggests that the pit was either not wholly backfilled or after backfilling sank (NB the rabbit hole through the upper fill, Fig. 13). The presence of quantities of Late Iron Age/Roman pottery in the upper fills of many of Curwens' pits also suggests that the pits were never fully filled during their primary (mostly Middle Iron Age) phase of deliberate filling (Hamilton 1998). The later activity that this pottery represents needs to be more fully assessed in our ongoing research. The amount of clearly ascribed Late Iron Age material (pottery) is small. There is somewhat more Roman pottery. No domestic structures, in the Caburn's interior, or evidence of rampart construction, can currently be related to *in situ* Roman activities, but the Caburn does appear to have been situated within a landscape of Romano-British agricultural use (*see* Drewett below).

Pits and potin coins: a report on a new potin coin find from the Caburn

By David Rudling

The 1996 excavations at Caburn yielded another chill-cast high-tin bronze (Cu/Sn) Class 1 potin coin (from Pit 8, Context 16, Fig. 13). Eleven such coins have been found at the site during previous excavations (Haselgrove 1987, 461-5). The new discovery (Fig. 14) weighs 0.99 g and has on the obverse a head to the right, with a pellet in the eye circle; and on the reverse a bull butting left, above an exergual line (Reference: Allen 1971, Type L).

In East Sussex, 20 potin coins have been recovered from archaeological excavations. Most of these coins (17) were found at two sites: Mount Caburn (12) and a Late Iron Age settlement at the former Eastbourne College of Arts and Technology site (hereafter ECAT), St Anne's Road, Eastbourne (TQ 604 997) (5). At both sites most of the stratified coins were recovered from the fills of pits. In the case of the Caburn, eleven of the potins (including the 1996 discovery) were found in pits, while the twelfth was an unstratified find from the top of the north outer rampart (Haselgrove 1987, 464-5).

The Caburn potin found in 1996 was recovered from Context 16, an upper, but sealed deposit within Pit 8 (Trench A, *see* above). Hamilton has undertaken a study of the contents of pits on the Caburn, and has suggested that there is evidence for 'intensive structured deposition . . . in pits and gateway entrance areas' (Hamilton 1998, 38). She further suggests that 'highly special deposits' include such things as wild animal bones, human remains, tools, weapons, and coins (i.e. the Caburn potins).

Trench B 1996

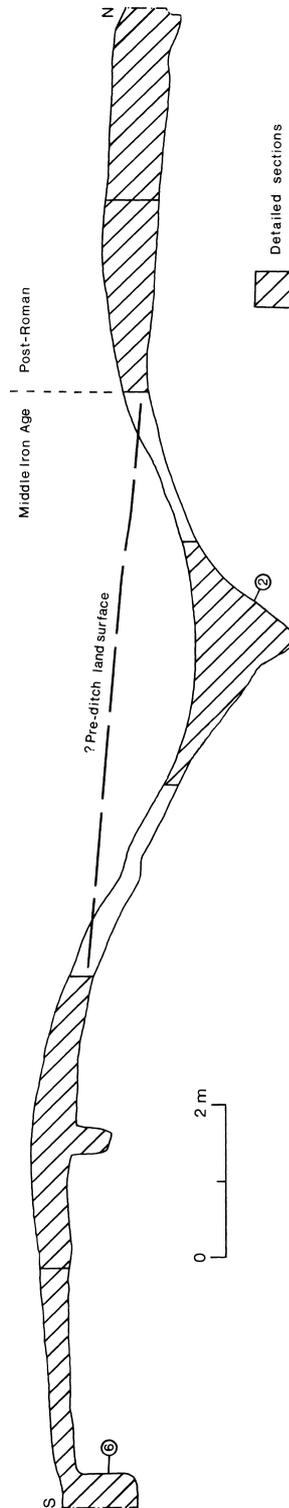


Fig. 10. Trench B, 1996, profile of the Caburn north rampart, and locations of the detailed section drawings.

Trench B 1996



Fig. 11. Sections of Middle Iron Age rampart bank and ditch, Trench B, 1996 (see Fig. 10 for locations of sections).



Fig. 12. Middle Iron Age rampart bank and ditch and post-Roman rampart bank, Trench B, 1996. (Photo: B. Roberts.)

At ECAT one Class I potin coin was recovered from each of four Iron Age pits (in at least one case from a primary fill, Context 506). A fifth potin at ECAT was found in an Anglo-Saxon grave. Some of the Iron Age pits at ECAT had similarities to the pits excavated at the Caburn and were found to contain finds (such as human bones, metal objects, and quernstones) which are thought to be ritual deposits (Christopher Greatorex, pers. comm.). The stratified potin coin finds from ECAT may thus, as suggested for the Caburn, be votive deposits.

The three other excavated potins from East Sussex include two possible Class I potins from the middle fill of a late Iron Age pit (716) at a settlement site at Bishopstone (Bell 1977, 129–31), and a single example from a secondary context in a lynchet at Bullock Down (Rudling 1982).

Class 1 potin coins, which are of a broad (c. 17–20 mm diameter), thin module, were first defined by Allen (1936; 1971). They are amongst the earliest coins produced in Britain and are thought to date to the late 2nd or early 1st

Trench A 1996

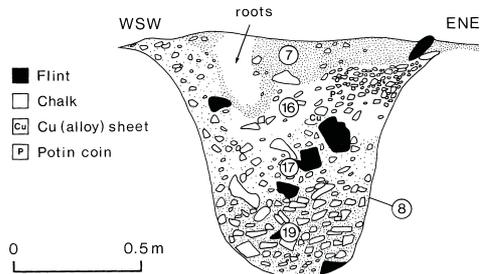


Fig. 13. Section of Pit 8, Trench A, 1996.

century BC (Haselgrove 1987; 1988; Hobbs 1996, 17). The origin of the designs on British potins can be traced back ultimately to 2nd-century BC struck bronze coins of the Greek colony of Massalia (Marseille in southern France). The surfaces of Class I potins appear to have been deliberately enriched with tin in order to give them a more silvery appearance. Their weight ranged from 1–2.8 g, and no strict weight standard appears to have been adhered to (Hobbs 1996, 16).

The distribution of Class I potin coin finds in Southern Britain indicates that they were principally a north Kentish and Lower Thames region coinage (Allen 1971, 137, fig. 33; Haselgrove 1988, 111, fig. 5). The clustering of find spots of potins suggests six separate circulation areas including two areas (i.e. East Kent and the Lower Thames) in the principal zone (Haselgrove 1988, 110–11). One of the secondary zones is in East Sussex, centred on the area between the River Ouse and Eastbourne, and thus includes the Caburn. The East Sussex zone is notable for the absence of the later Class II potins, and Haselgrove (1988, 114) has suggested that its potin supply was derived from the north across the Weald rather than from East Kent.

Although the precise function of potin coins is not known, they may have been used as a token coinage for exchange purposes (Allen 1971, 143; Van Arsdell 1989, 54) or as a store of wealth (Collis 1974, 3 & 7), possibly initially as an alternative to gold coinage (Haselgrove 1988, 119). The hoarding of these coins implies that they were thought to have intrinsic value. It is possible that the precise function/s of Class I potin coins may have varied from zone to zone. Thus whilst such coins may have been produced in Kent as ‘special-purpose money’ (Haselgrove 1988, 100), uses may have ranged from exchange ‘in a restricted sphere of conveyancing’, hoarding (of wealth) or votive offerings. The future excavation of other late Iron Age sites in East Sussex, and a study of all the unstratified ‘stray’ potin finds, may provide further evidence regarding

the function/s of potin coins in this secondary circulation zone.

4. DEFENDING THE HILL

By Peter Drewett with contributions by Cliff Sampson & Martyn Waller

Romano-British use of Caburn was essentially within an agricultural landscape of mixed farming. Although perhaps part of a villa estate, the nearest known settlement is the small farmstead found during road straightening to the west of Ranscombe Farm (Bedwin 1978). The large pit within the Caburn enclosure, excavated by Pitt-Rivers over two days in 1877, produced at least two sherds of Roman pottery. This pit, some '11 feet' deep, also contained pig, cattle and deer bones together with a 'fighting cock spur' (Lane Fox 1881). The somewhat curious size, shape, location and contents of this pit perhaps suggests a votive pit of a type well-known elsewhere in Britain (e.g. Ross & Feachem 1976).

From the Romano-British period onwards there is no further evidence of ritual activity and all further modifications to Caburn appear to have been of a defensive nature. The northern approach to Caburn is the most vulnerable and any attempt at defending the hill would have required the construction of a strong barrier on that side. This was certainly done at some stage (Fig. 2), but the precise sequence and date of the outer bank(s) and ditch(es) remained uncertain following the earlier excavations. In 1993 Dr Michael Avery published a convincing argument that the northern bank(s) and ditch(es) were likely to be post-Roman in date. To test this hypothesis Trench B, 1996, was excavated through the northern bank and three trenches (C, D and E) were excavated in 1998 to examine chalk dumps from the great northern ditch.

Trench B, 1996 was dug through the outer bank but not through the outer ditch, as evidence from Pitt-River's and Wilson's trenches indicated that it contained very little silt, which given the amount of rabbit and worm action on the site, would again produce inconclusive results. The bank section revealed some 75 cm of material above a buried land surface (Fig. 15: Context 34). The core of the bank (Context 29) consisted of medium-sized chalk rubble partly concreted together as the results of calcium carbonate precipitating out as it moved down the profile in solution. Above this, and on either side was more blocky chalk rubble (Contexts 7 & 15). There appeared to be no erosion surface or buried land surface between these layers, so it is likely they are part of the same construction collapsed outwards. This sequence represents the reverse of the natural chalk sequence on the site of the northern ditch, where the surface chalk layer consists of small, periglacially shattered material above large blocky chalk. Above Context 15 the material

became more mixed (Contexts 13/55) with both large chalk blocks and fragments together with mid-brown soil particles similar to the worm-sorted downland soil above (Context 1). Dug through this were two post-holes some 30–35 cm in diameter (Contexts 47 filled with 48 and Context 16 filled with 17). Clearly these postdate the bank material through which they cut and presumably represent a final attempt at redefining the bank. Similar post-holes were located by Wilson in his cutting II in 1937 (Wilson 1938, pl. I), although his section had some 70 cm more depth of bank materials surviving than the 1996 section.

Unfortunately, the buried land surface under the bank(s) contained nothing datable. From above this only one sherd was recovered from Context 34. This was a small sherd of East Sussex Ware of indeterminate Late Iron Age/Early Roman date.

From field observation it is clear that the great northern ditch would have produced far more chalk than was required for the associated bank. This excess chalk appears to have been dumped in the top of Caburn Bottom and also perhaps as mounds to the north of the ditch. In 1998 it was decided to attempt to date this dumping, and therefore indirectly the ditch and its associated bank, by looking for datable material within and under these chalk dumps. Three trenches, C, D and E, 1998 (Fig. 2) were excavated.

Trench C, 1998 (Fig. 2) was excavated from the outer lip of the northern ditch in a northerly direction into the chalk dump in the top of Caburn Bottom. A gap was left in the trench where a new fence had been erected. The southern 7.5 m of the trench, from the lip of the ditch to the fence, consisted of some 30 cm of worm-sorted downland turf and subsoil above a modified chalk surface with clear periglacial stripes running down slope. No datable artefacts were found in this area. South of the fence the trench was excavated for a further 8 m. Chalk rubble was found across the entire



Fig. 14. The potin coin from Pit 8, Trench A, 1996. (Photo: D. Rudling.)

length of the trench. At the southern end of the trench a buried land surface was traced for 1.4 m until it dipped under chalk rubble, which was only sampled to a depth of 70 cm. The chalk rubble had clearly been tipped over the edge of the top of the dry valley. Minor differences in the chalk rubble enabled a division into six contexts all of which can be seen as contemporary. Nine very small pottery sherds were found, eight in the chalk rubble and one in the buried land surface. Five sherds were residual flint-tempered Late Bronze/Early Iron Age sherds. Two sherds from well into the chalk dump (Contexts 11 & 12) were grog-tempered East Sussex Ware, while a sherd from the surface layer of chalk (Context 6) and another from the buried land surface (Context 9) were quartz sand-tempered wares. Unfortunately, both were small, plain body sherds so cannot be closely dated on fabric alone (Gardiner 1992). A medieval date, however, would not be unreasonable.

Trench D, 1998 (Figs 16 & 17) was excavated through the eastern edge of the chalk dump where surface indications suggested it may be at its thinnest. The 12 m trench was 1 m wide with a 4 m square excavated at the northern end. The best preserved section of the dump and underlying buried land surface was at the southern end of the trench (Fig. 17). Here a worm-sorted buried soil horizon (Context 15) lay under some 90 cm of chalk rubble. The chalk rubble consisted of some 30 cm of small chalk rubble (Context 9) above the buried soil horizon. Above Context 9 were large, angular boulders of chalk. This clearly reflects the sequence of chalk dug out of the northern ditch of Caburn and closely matches the chalk sequence in the 1996 bank sequence (Fig. 15: Contexts 29 & 7).

Trench D, 1998, produced 39 pottery sherds of which 22 were residual flint-gritted sherds of Late Bronze/Early Iron Age type and 12 were other Iron Ages types. Most (32) of these came from within or under the buried soil horizon (Contexts 13, 15 & 17). The buried land surface produced no Romano-British or later pottery. The chalk dug from deep in the Caburn ditch and dumped in the area of Trench D (Context 4) contained no artefacts, but the surface chalk and top soil (Context 9) dumped on the buried soil horizon (Context 15) contained two grog-tempered East Sussex Ware sherds, one with traces of curvilinear decoration which is most characteristic of the late 1st century BC/early 1st century AD (Hamilton 1993, 273).

To the east and south-east of Trench D are a series of low mounds (Fig. 2). The most likely explanation for these is that they are simply piles of chalk spilt as chalk was being taken from the northern ditch to the dump in the top of Caburn Bottom. If so, they could also protect datable buried soil horizons which could help date the digging of the northern ditch. Trench E, 1998 was therefore dug across

one of these mounds (Fig. 2). The 10 m by 1 m trench revealed a low mound of some 80 cm of chalk (Contexts 2, 6 & 10) above a buried soil horizon (Contexts 7, 9 & 13). The buried soil horizon produced a wide range of datable material including the tip of a Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead, a small comb-impressed Beaker sherd, seven flint-gritted Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age sherds, six other Iron Age sherds and one grog-tempered East Sussex Ware sherd. A small post-hole towards the eastern end of the trench produced five further Iron Age sherds while the chalk dump itself produced no datable material. The buried lands surfaces in Trenches D and E, 1998 were sampled for pollen but pollen preservation was extremely poor (M. Waller).

If we assume the great northern ditch was dug to produce material for the bank (Fig. 15) and that excess chalk was dumped in the top of Caburn Bottom (Trenches C and D, 1998, Fig. 2), with some being lost on the way (Trench E, 1998) then the presence of East Sussex Ware in or under the chalk dumps in each trench suggests we are dealing with fortification of the site during or after the Romano-British period. The most likely period for this type of fortification is perhaps after the appearance of Viking raiders on the south coast towards the end of the 8th century or alternatively during the 11th to 12th centuries. Archaeologically the question of the date of the northern ditch remains.

The World War II features on the Caburn By Cliff Sampson

Among the prehistoric banks and ditches of the Caburn can be found the remains of World War II earthworks. A good guide to their whereabouts, on and immediately around the site, is the RCHME plan on which these features have been marked by diagonal hatching (Fig. 2). These World War II features are in two groups, one in the southern sector of the hillfort, the other group in the northern sector. In the southern part there is a line of small slit trenches (foxholes), most of them along the inner side of the rampart. In the northern sector there are two larger three-sided positions, one to the north-east and the other to the north. Behind this northern position lies a short, straight line of trench. Just south of the entrance to the hillfort, in the north-east can be seen another, but smaller, three-sided trench. On the ground most of these features can still be identified by depressions in the surface and/or by changes in the vegetation (Fig. 1).

The southern line of trenches offers good concealment from view and some cover from possible enemy fire from below. At the same time they allow excellent observation and wide fields of fire in arcs from the west, and then

Trench B 1996

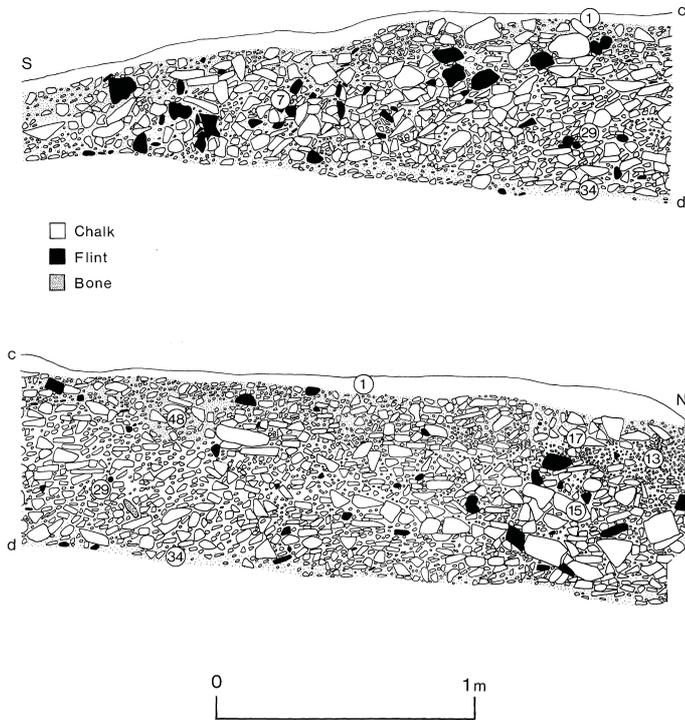


Fig. 15. Section of post-Roman bank, Trench B, 1996.

southwards and round to the east, in particular towards the south where the flat valley of the meandering river Ouse, (with its road and rail routes to the port of Newhaven), runs down to the sea. South of the hill also runs the main east–west road and air routes. At their closest, they are within 360 m, and this is within the effective range of the rifles and machineguns of the period. Starting from the western end of the southern line of trenches there are two small trenches then a larger one. The two small ones are about the right size for two riflemen, the larger for the three men of a Bren group plus one; this would make a total of eight, the usual number for an infantry section (the Bren gun was the standard light machinegun of the British army in WWII). The rest of the southern line of trenches is again made up of two small trenches and a larger one. These could have held another eight-man infantry section, and two such sections form half a platoon. The larger trench was just

below the lip of the outer side of the rampart, possibly to gain a better view of this area which is, in comparison with the other trenches, somewhat masked by the rampart's edge. The white chalk soil would have been a giveaway unless removed, or covered with mud, camouflage netting or other material.

In the northern sector the rest of the World War II trenches have more than enough room for the two other sections which would make up a platoon. The two larger three-sided positions (fields of fire in three directions) also appear to have been dug as infantry positions because the upcast from the trenches was dumped at the rear of these features, rather than in front. This gives a low parapet height which would allow defenders to fire (in particular down the slope) with a minimum of exposure.

The north-eastern feature offers good observation over Caburn ridge, and over the village of Glynde with its road to the north. At a distance of about 700 m it is still within effective machinegun range. Looking eastwards, to the north of the South Downs, the ground is flat and open and some 9.5 km away runs the river Cuckmere, which was one of the defensive 'stop lines' fortified against the expected German invasion in 1940. The River Ouse was another of these 'stop lines' based on rivers which would form obstacles, particularly to tanks. This north-eastern position also offers a good view of stretches of the main east–west road (the A27) and the

railway running parallel to it. However, this position has a steeper convex slope to the south-east which forms an area of 'dead ground' where enemy troops could approach unseen. This is covered by the small position just south of the hillfort entrance from which this area of dead ground would be exposed to view and small-arms fire.

To the north, the second large three-sided position appears to have been situated to cover the Caburn Bottom dry valley, which would otherwise form another area of dead ground. To the south of this position there is a short length of trench just behind the main rampart of the hillfort. Each of the larger positions is therefore supported by a smaller one, and each pair of features was probably intended for an eight-man section.

All of these trenches, north and south, appear to amount to an infantry platoon's area with each position visible from, and supported by, at least one other, their

interlocking fields of view and fire covering nearly 360 degrees. Only to the west, away from the expected lines of German advance in 1940, is there a gap in this system. It has been said that there was an anti-aircraft position on Caburn, yet the two large features (in the northern sector) do not look like the usual circular gun pits for artillery use. However, there may have been some kind of anti-aircraft mounting for a Bren, or another type of light machinegun, to defend the site from low-level aerial attack. *Alternatively, the large white scar in the interior of the hillfort, clearly visible on aerial photographs for some years after the war (e.g. Fig. 1), may have been an anti-aircraft position tidied up after the war (P. Drewett).*

These comments have been based on the typology and layout of the features on this site and not on eyewitness accounts or excavation evidence. Other explanations are possible. For example: the difference in style between the trenches in the northern and southern sectors might indicate different periods of construction. They can also be explained as the result of differing requirements in each sector, such as the southern sector being more exposed to view from the high ground to the south. The positions might also have been dug during training exercises after the ‘invasion’ period.

It is interesting to see how closely the World War II features follow the ramparts of the hillfort enclosure. This demonstrates the lasting potential of this hilltop site for observation, and the importance in defence strategies of knowing where the enemy forces might be at any time.

5. ERODING FOOTSLOPES

By Kirsty Adams

During August 1997 an 88 cm deep, 1-metre square test pit was excavated at the base of the south-facing convexo-concave hillslope of the Caburn with the aim of establishing when, and under what conditions, the known colluvial sediments were deposited (Fig. 18).

Marine clays (sandy silt) occurred in the base of this pit (Context 5). These were overlain by 5 cm of silty clays of high organic content (Context 4), which are interpreted as



Fig. 16. Section of post-Roman chalk dump, Trench D, 1998. (Photo: P. Drewett.)

relating to a lowering of the water table leaving a brackish, or a river/floodplain, environment. It is suggested that these two phases, on the basis of the evidence from the pollen core and its radiocarbon dating, relate to the Iron Age and Roman periods. Above these deposits were 19 cm of sediments with a high percentage of larger particle sizes indicating a higher-energy erosional environment. This sediment is interpreted as having resulted from erosional processes operating on the south side of the Caburn slope (Context 3). Owing to the homogenous nature of the latter, it is felt that their deposition was probably quite rapid. Above this, there is a 19 cm deposit with large chalk clasts (Context 2) suggesting erosion of now-exposed bedrock upslope. The upper context (Context 1) is an 18 cm deposit of disturbed ground which is interpreted as the result of soil creep and ploughing.

The stratigraphic evidence, together with the molluscan sequence, therefore suggests that during the Iron Age and Roman periods the southern base of the Caburn was surrounded by a watery environment. Subsequently, from the evidence provided by stratigraphy, molluscs, and pottery, three phases of erosion (relating to arable agriculture?) can be suggested. The first (Context 4) dates to the early medieval period (with residual Roman and medieval pottery sherds being present) when initial loss of the hillslope took place following a primary phase of de-vegetation. Subsequently (Context 3), molluscan evidence suggests the establishment of grassland, followed by a further erosion event associated with middle and late medieval pottery. The third erosional event comprises a very coarse colluvial deposit (Context

Trench D 1998

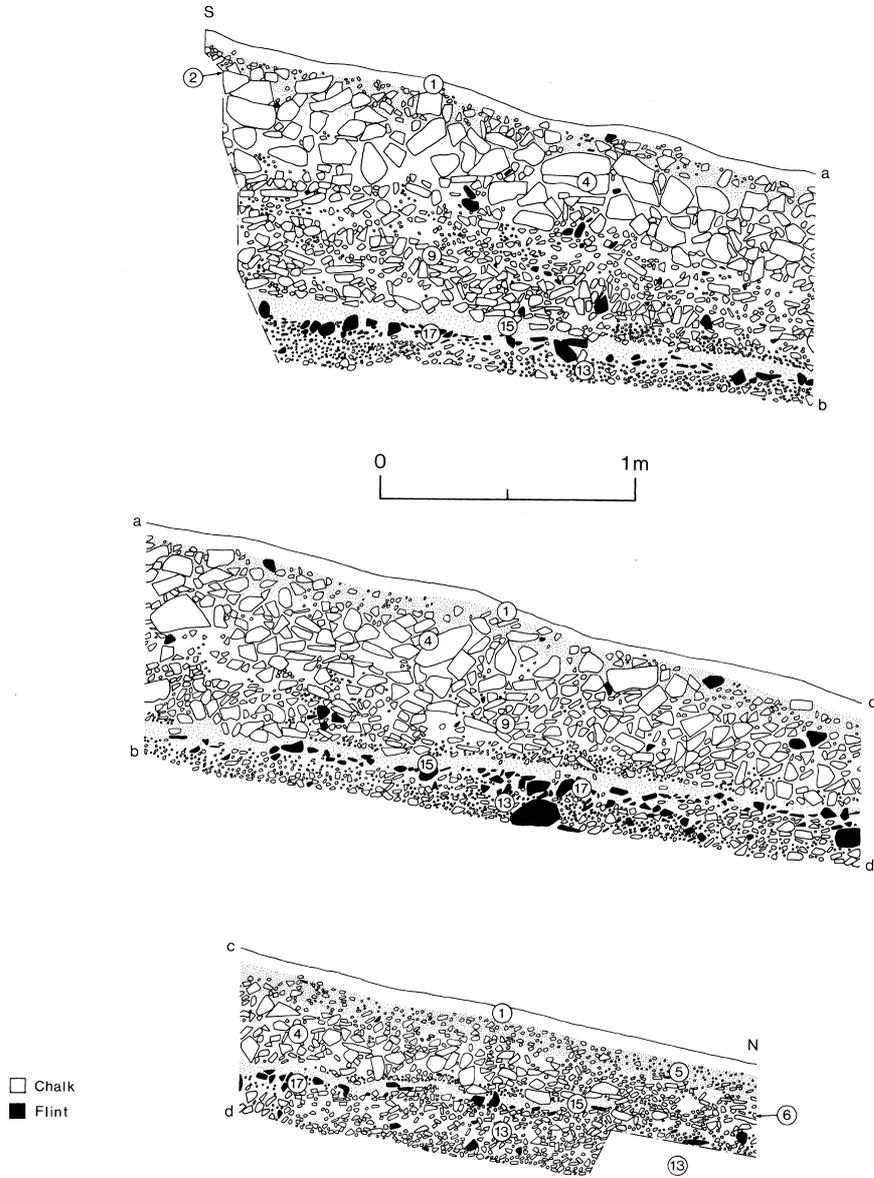


Fig. 17. Section of post-Roman chalk dump, Trench D, 1998.

2) and again appears to follow the establishment of grassland. This is dated to the late medieval/early post medieval period on the basis of associated pottery.

CONCLUSION: THE CABURN — FROM SACRED TO PROFANE?

By Sue Hamilton & Peter Drewett

If it had been with a different painter, on a different day, would it have still been there, or something else entirely? (Philip Gross, 1996. *A Cast of Stones*).

This article is a record of many debates and analyses of the Caburn, as well as our work over the past three years. As Haselgrove notes the Caburn is ‘A more complex site than is generally allowed’ (Haselgrove 1987, 461). There is nothing straightforward about the above discussion. It is multivocal, multifocused, and could be characterized as ‘present interpretation as active apprehension’ (Shanks 1992, 208). The debates, new views, and changing perceptions of its surface and use include i) new mapped features in the Caburn’s interior (Oswald and McOmish); ii) the first post-glacial pollen history for a chalk hill in southern Britain (Waller); iii) the Caburn ramparts as monuments (Hamilton) *versus* the Caburn ramparts as observation points (Sampson); iv) the redating of the Caburn I pottery (Barrett; Hamilton); and v) the redating of the outer, northern ramparts (Avery; Drewett). The major conflicts in the site’s interpretative history include Wilson’s and the Curwens’ vision of the first 1st-millennium BC site as a defended settlement *versus* the current emphasis on it as a symbolic centre place and ritual area.

The final publication will no doubt smooth out some of these issues. In three seasons a gamut of conventional and unconventional methodologies has been applied to the Caburn. Our final conclusions will be based not only on all of these, but on investigating the Caburn in the context of other contemporary sites.

The Caburn has a remarkable archaeological biography. Its various excavations, from Pitt-Rivers to the present, mark time in terms of changing archaeological strategies of recovery and interpretation, fuelled by changing theoretical perspectives and fashions. The Caburn is a visual locale, which by reason of its topography marks its own space in the landscape. Part of its biography as a place is how that space continuously reinvents itself. The list includes: i) *untouched space* (Mesolithic/Neolithic); ii) *referenced space* (the Early Bronze Age line of barrow which runs towards the hill: Fig. 6); iii) *used and monumentalized (sacred?) space* (Late Bronze/Iron Age use and enclosure); iv) *defended space* (late Roman/post-Roman). For the present, this is the narrative we offer.

Acknowledgements

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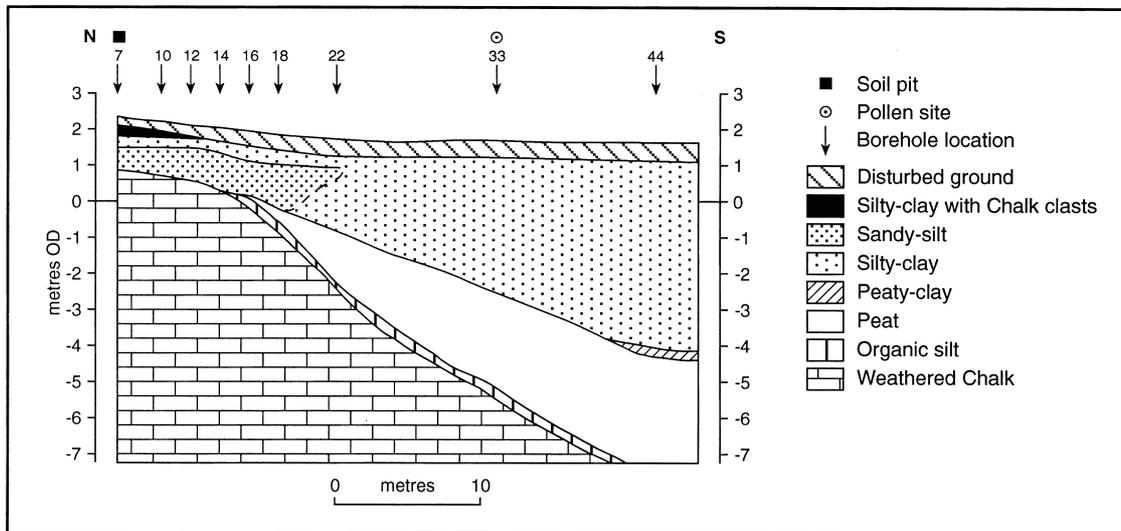


Fig. 18. Schematic lithostratigraphy of the Glynde valley at the foot of the Caburn. Distances along the horizontal axis are in metres away from the major break of slope.

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