

OD X: ALL OTHER PERIMETER CUTTINGS

The cuttings on this second clockwise circuit of the enclosure perimeter helped define the exact course of the enclosing ditch. None were excavated, except where indicated, below the surface of the bedrock Chalk, typically 9 ins. below the present ground surface under a layer of topsoil and worm-sorted flints (layers 1 and 2). Most were merely sondages or slit trenches designed solely to locate the ditch, and most were dug out, cleaned up, recorded and filled in within a matter of hours.

In that the course of the ditch was defined fairly precisely, along a route which had not been predicted and was certainly not expected, the cuttings were immensely successful at minimum cost. They also produced no addition to the record of features inside or outside the settlement enclosure (*below p. 00*).

X/6 was intended to intersect the ditch if it was curving SW towards XI/B. Nothing was found, suggesting strongly that, improbable though it seemed at the time, the E ditch continued S towards the double lynchet track (fig. 00). Hence **X/7** was cut, locating the ditch and exposing its two edges in order to pick up its alignment.

Two cuttings at SE angle: X8 THIS MIGHT BETTER GO ABOVE IF ITS RECORD, ONCE SORTED, PROVES TO CONTAIN A DITCH SECTION RATHER THAN MERELY A LOCATION OF THE DITCH TOP. THERE CURRENTLY EXISTS A LITTLE CONFUSION BETWEEN THIS AND THE FOLLOWING CUTTING **X/9** !!!!!**SORT THIS SORT THIS!!!!**

: X9

All cuttings in SW quadrant of the enclosure (fig. 5.00):

This rash of sondages and slit trenches precisely defined the course of the ditch along an ostensibly improbable route across a `Celtic` field. In finding nothing but the ditch, they implied that this segment of the enclosure did not contain settlement remains. To emphasise the point, a similar rash of cuttings, however small, in the area of cuttings OD XI/A would certainly have located features other than the ditch. Cuttings X/ ? and ? defined the ditch width by locating its inner edge as well as its outer; all the other cuttings merely located the outer edge at the surface of the Chalk subsoil.

Two cuttings into the Western lynchet (fig. 00) were tiny, merely enough right at the end of the `ditch exercise` when it was apparent what had to happen for the enclosure ditch to complete its circuit. They fixed the presence and course of

the ditch underneath the `Celtic` field lynchet. In so doing, they implied that the location and shape of the later `Celtic` field was pre-conditioned by the western boundary of the enclosed settlement ((*below* p. and fig. <>). They also showed that the field was in use and the lynchet accreting after the ditch had been abandoned as a functioning perimeter to an enclosed settlement.

Inferences from all perimeter cuttings

Environment at the time of enclosure construction

The evidence from the lower ditch fill indicates consistently that the ditch was dug through an open environment (*below* p. 00). This was probably one of arable cultivation for, archaeologically, the indications are that the area was already long-divided up into `Celtic` fields, probably still under plough or only recently abandoned and then perhaps only along the line of the ditch and within the area it enclosed.

The digging of the ditch

The ditch was dug to a fairly consistent profile, characterised by a `slot` or `ankle-breaker` and fairly symmetrical, sloping sides. Originally they were probably at an angle of c 0°, forming a mouth ?3 m wide. There was no direct evidence as to how the ditch was dug, nor was there any firm evidence as to what happened to the material dug from it. At no point did a bank exist or survive as an earthwork, though at two places structural evidence suggested that an inner bank had existed. Even if the ditch material formed a bank, the bank was not found as a structure, nor did the post-abandonment ditch-filling convincingly look as if it came from an eroded or flattened bank. In effect, the Chalk excavated in making the ditch had disappeared. The ditch was either cleared out for an unknown length of time, but probably not very long judging by the lack of evidence indicating this at the base; or allowed to collect the debris from its sides in its base from the moment when it had been completed. Either way, its primary fill as found was of freshly-fractured chalk.

The existence, location and size of an enclosure bank

There was no positive evidence for a bank, though negative evidence suggested that it had existed and that it had been on the inside lip of the ditch. If it existed, it had been c. 4 m wide, constructed on top of a soil profile which had already been disturbed by recent cultivation. Its height would have been influenced by

- i) whether it had consisted only of material from the ditch
- ii) whether it received all the material from the ditch
- iii) whether the material was dumped symmetrically

Assuming all three of those factors to have applied, then, extrapolating figures derived from the Overton Down experimental earthwork (Jewell 1963, 00), the enclosure bank around this settlement would have been some 0 m high. The slight bank *outside* the NW arc of ditch might suggest that the or a bank lay outside the ditch but in general this seems unlikely.

The size, shape and functions(s) of the enclosure

The ditch enclosed an area of 00 ha. (00 acres) in a sub-oval shape with a straight side on the NE 000 m. long. The enclosure contained a settlement area and, apparently, alot of `blank` space (further discussed *below* p. 00)

Entrance(s)

No systematic search for an entrance through the ditch of ODX/XI was made, and no entrance was found; but presumably at least one existed. Along the W side of the enclosure, an entrance is most likely to have been at about `10 o` clock`. Otherwise, the two most likely places were on the NE, between X/4 and East 4, or on the SE between X/15 and ?? to its W. Entrances of EIA settlement enclosures in Wessex are characteristically on the E or SE *cf.* Bowen and Fowler 1966, fig. 1.

The infilling of the ditch

The ditch sections showed marked consistency.....

The disappearance of the bank

Assuming a bank to have existed, the most likely cause of its disappearance is prolonged ploughing over it. It may also have been deliberately levelled or spread. It had almost certainly been effectively flattened by the C1 AD (*below* p. 00) but had probably already been ploughed over at the end of the EIA. Its line was, to an extent, perpetuated on the W by a 'Celtic' field lynchet and, with that of the ditch, by the alignment, accidental or otherwise, of medieval ridge-and-furrow parallel with its eastern course.

Subsequent environmental and land-use history directly inferrable from the primary evidence of the perimeter cuttings

It seems likely that any remnant bank had effectively been flattened by the late-Roman period after cultivation during EIA and early RB times; it was most probably completely removed during medieval cultivation. The ditch began to fill up, apparently through lack of maintenance, during the EIA, and a soil with vegetation developed over it. Its upper two-thirds were later infilled during three distinct phases of cultivation, most probably in the EIA, the C1 AD and the C13.