

FWP23

Fyfod: towards a first draft of (early June 1995)

Chapter 3

FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY: the Data and its Place

The primary archaeological evidence in the field was acquired using conventional methods, mainly fieldwork integrated with research in library, archive and air photographs. This activity preceded, ran concurrent with, and continued long after, the set-piece excavations (Chaps. 4-7 *below*); the purpose and location of all those excavations followed directly from questions raised by the fieldwork. It is also true to note, however, that the excavations themselves sharpened up perceptions and stimulated some very specific further fieldwork and air photography.

Looking back at the methodology and its implementation from the end of the project, it can be seen that, initially unconsciously but latterly with awareness, coverage of the study area has varied widely but fairly consistently. This dimension to the results of fieldwork can be recognised as a human factor - the way in which the investigators worked, - emergent in the later C20 rather than anything to do with the original formation or long-term survival of the actual archaeology. The application of fieldwork in the study area can be best expressed graphically, both as a model and in practice (fig.), Three zones or bands of intensity of investigation represent the initial core of the project on the high downland where in effect all the archaeology was surveyed and where all the excavations occurred; a surrounding band where comprehensive, systematic fieldwork and site/area specific metrical survey occurred; and a peripheral band where fieldwork has been only partial and selective, with no metrical survey.

The results of this approach will be described from north to south on the basis of current land-use i.e. in presenting the evidence, as distinct from the ways in which it was gathered, we wish to introduce another filter. The reason for this is that it is the state of the land, not the archaeology as such, which by and large influences the condition and method of recognition of the various artificial elements of the landscape. In large part, then, the field archaeology manifests itself to the contemporary observer as a direct result of how it has been treated since its formation. We are very conscious of this in this project which has been so heavily dependent in its data-acquisition on the two methods of detailed fieldwork on the ground and detailed mapping and study of air photography. Our proposed `land-use` approach to handling (as distinct from acquiring) the evidence, therefore, grows out of the very nature of the evidence itself and our records of it in our study area. We recognise, however, that in general it happens to reflect the `ecological` or `habitat` principle independently utilised by Darvill (1987) in addressing the management of the nation`s archaeological resource (further discussed *below* p. 00).

Using this principle, the methods of discovery and record, the means of survival and present state of the monument, and its future management, are all approached through a biological perspective as if the cultural `thing`, the site or artefact, were dynamic if not actually natural. One looks at, records and assesses a burial mound, for example, as if it were a beech tree or even a butterfly. Such a perspective can be adequately justified in the sense that the archaeological site, far from being the static product of just human activity or even of the interaction of Man and Nature, is where the two meet in a dynamic and changing relationship which certainly continues to affect the site in the present. What we can see, record and interpret now is of course very much the result of the interplay between cultural and natural forces but it is, as Chapter 12 will discuss, a dynamic interplay which continues to change.

That said, the following is a brief description and discussion of the field archaeology of our study area as recorded between 1959 and 1989. It also includes some data, not surprisingly some of it of critical significance, resulting from what was intended to be only checks in 1995 during the preparation of this *Report*. The record began and has continued up to the time of writing primarily as a product of observation in the field, but air photographic, cartographic, documentary and bibliographical sources have been researched right from the start too. At a rather late stage in the writing-up, never mind the active research phase of the project, we have absorbed a mass of data from both RCHM (fig. 00) and the Wiltshire County Council SMR. We have also found some key information on aerial photographs not previously seen: some taken by O.G.S.Crawford in June, 1924, and some taken by RCHM in March, 1995.

Our first trawl of landscape and library around 1960 `exploded` the then known amount of archaeology in our study area (Bowen and Fowler 1962). In similar fashion, our own inventory and knowledge have been enormously enlarged in assembling and assessing `new` information, much of it other people`s, during the preparation of this text. We can be quite certain of one thing. As over the last 35 years, so even within the next decade will the factual basis for understanding and managing the archaeology of our area change yet again. Furthermore, it would be no surprise were that change to be drastic, qualitatively as well as quantitatively.

From N-S, the `archaeological habitat zones` in which the various man-made features exist are:

- T. `Old grassland`, essentially the NNR area of Fyfield and Overton Downs.
- U. `New arable`, created out of `old grassland` mid-20th century or later
- V. `Old arable`, essentially the former open fields and old enclosures of the estates/manors/parishes of Overton and Fyfield on the south-facing slopes of the north side of the Kennet valley

W. `Bottom-lands`, the valley bottom of largely uncultivated meadow, water-meadows, flood-plain and immediately above where the extant settlements lie with gardens, closes and (some old) enclosures

X. `Old arable`, as V. *above* but on the north-facing slopes on the south side of the Kennet valley

Y. `New arable`, as U. *above* but S of the R. Kennet

Z. Woodland, essentially West Woods and adjacent patches of woodland and clearings therein

Although this zoning developed internally to the project, we are happy to acknowledge that it co-incides almost exactly with the model independently generated and illustrated by Evans *et al.* (1993), *fig. 42*.

*Some of the sites etc. are noted here for the first time, as far as we know, but rather than give them new numbers tagged on to the morphological categorisation used in our first interim report (Bowen and Fowler 1962), we use new SMR numbers (indicated by an asterisk *) provided by Wilts. CC SMR. Many of the sites have acquired a respectable bibliographical pedigree of different numbers over the last century, conveniently brought together more or less up to the point in time when the Fyfield project began in VCH (1957). We therefore quote the main reference and the VCH number where available, since that gives an easily accessible entree to the site bibliography; and, in addition, we cite subsequent authoritative references or at least, if there are several post-1957, we provide the main one, usually the latest, which gives others between VCH (1957) and the 1980/90s. The whole is laid out in a Concordance, below p. 00-00).*

Zone T: old grassland

`Old Chapel long barrow` and adjacent Wick Farm earthwork enclosure: the ref. is Barker, C.T., `The long mounds of the Avebury Region`, WAM 79, 1984, 17 re `Old Chapel long barrow`, quoting Stukeley: get the original ref - see BLO GM 231, fo. 224 or fo. 10 ; and Piggott WAM 147, 62: as illus. p. 17 in WAM 79, Stukeley shows the megaliths of the lb. AND the bank and ditch of the Wick Farm e/w enclosure. REST OF SITE TO BE DESCRIBED HERE, FLAGGING IT AS EX-FYFIELD PH. but within study area i.e. the DMV and the E/w enclosure Later: there`s more to this than meets the eye and perhaps others have realised. Barker`s illus. from Stukely clearly shows the lb. outside, and probably partly overlaid by, a bank and ditch. There is no reason to doubt this is the Wick Farm/Old Chapel earthwork shown on OS and visited by pjf as early as 1960 (note on old 6 in. map); nor to doubt Stukely`s own description that the lb lay immediately NW of the e/w. This would mean that the view in his illus. is of the NW corner of the e/w from the W. I have not yet seen Stukely`s orig. or the repro. of fol. 224 by Piggott in WAM 1947 , but Long`s (1862, pl. IV) repro. of Stukely`s `Abury, in its original state...` clearly shows in a perspective view `Temple downs` top right bearing a rectangular enclosure with a trapezoid-

shaped area delineated on its NW corner: presumably a schematic indication of Old Chapel/the lb, which are illustrated in detail elsewhere in his book (NB for elsewhere in Ch. 3 and 9: it also shows `Roydon` and `The Hakpen hill`).

It is incredible therefore that everyone -OS, VCH/LVG, Barker etc. - places the lb about 0.5 km` away **SOUTH WEST of `Old Chapel` at SU 12907290**. The clue might well be that Stuk. apparently refers to the `two great stone works upon it` i.e. upon Temple Down. Does this mean 2 lbs? That, at any rate is what we seem to have: the one in the literature at 129729, seen as the barrow illus. by Stuk. but not actually anywhere near it; and the one by the Old Chapel e/w at NGR which Stuk. actually described and illustrated (tho` I just wonder if by any chance he could have been illustrating the remains of a Templar chapel?)

693. The Ridgeway

689. Low scarps of field system, probably med. but check with my notes at GS

Zone U: new arable

Manton Down long barrow SU14787135 (long shown out of position on OS maps, at 15137140: is it now correct on latest OS 1:10K sheet just acquired [if not ask for £32 back that the map cost]. Also check that have got it right in relation to CFs to be written up from AP plot. Best a/c is in Barker 1984, 12-13, from which summarise Atkinson`s otherwise unpub. 1953 excavations (publicat. forthcoming per TWA - check). Posy. also use plan, Barker p.12??? The new point about it is that it is within a CF system and it is just poss. that fields and lb. are contemp.: fields and lb seem to be integrated, with lb. at NE corner of CF.

647 Barrow

688. Settlement and field system, probably EIA &/or RB, showing beautifully on Crawford AP in 1924 and 1952 AP, and still surviving as earthworks when this project began. Downland broken up and earthworks overploughed from c1960 onwards

160: Roman road, *Aquae Sulis ad Cunetio*. Now taken out of cultivation after some 30 years of being overploughed, it is still visible as a low spread *agger*. In 1960 it was a sharply upstanding earthwork but cultivation annually went a little further up its sides until, despite its Scheduled status, ploughing went over the top. Its actual route E from Ridgeway needs discussing: is it under A4 in front of N Farm, and does it go along hollow-way S of Fyfield church or to the N of the village (AP evid. rejected by CS?)

402,556,401,400,120,122,403,121 SORT THIS LOT OUT WHEN GET SMR CARDS. BASICALLY THEY ARE BARROWS, incl. the RB and AS ones excavated by IFS and DDAS. Summarise the results (with X-ref to Chap. 8 where envir. evid. is summarised)

657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663: the seven barrows of `Seven Barrow Hill`, in a rough line S-N except for the northermost, 663, which is offset to the E; all immediately E of The Sanctuary (159) (in West Kennet ph.). S of 159 is 610, marked as `Site of` on OS but actually surviving as a visible swelling in the arable; it might well be considered the southermost of the `Seven Barrow` group, slightly offset to the W like 663 is to the E at the N end. N of 159 is a pair of barrows, 611 and 612. The former was completely destroyed before the area became the site of the Ridgeway Cafe, now removed in the interests of amenity, conservation and aesthetics by its new owner The National Trust.

Zone V: old arable

Devil`s Den SU 15206965 Barker 1984 13-14: summarise his a/c. This is just outside Fyfield ph. but within our study area; but simple short entry since we didn`t actually do anything but worth recording that, as Stukeley observed, the barrow is on a slight knoll just to the S side of centre of the dry valley it occupies i.e. it is not strictly on the valley floor; but, that said, it is most unusually right down in a valley, distinctively different from most of the other lbs hereabouts which are on high (th` not its neighbour Temple Bottom)

108. Two standing stones in the `old` hedgeline marking one version of the AS boundary immed. SW of Down Barn

B.1; VCH E.229; SMR 203/674/675; AM 822, now SM 21763. `Headlands`: settlement complex, so-named (by us) after reference to this area in ASC /// (*below* Chap. 9). Known entirely from AP, backed up by some field-walking. Consists of :

203. A slightly oval ditched enclosure c 150 m NW-SE x 120 m SW-NE, approx. 1.5 ha. (3.7 acres) in area, well within the `Little Woodbury` range and virtually identical to OD X/XI (*below* p. 00). Entrance and `antennae`, however, uncharacteristically to NW (cf. Bowen and Fowler 1966, fig. 1). Full extent visible on RCHM 1995 AP and many pits and other dark features showing on CUCAP CE 053 etc. The enclosure itself is divided almost equally NNW-SSE by the tithing boundary, earlier the estate boundary between West and East Overton. Indeed, it can be argued that this boundary, here on a low bank bearing hawthorn and other scrub-like species, and originally documented in the C10, swerves NW as it climbs from the Roman road to the south in order to dissect, perhaps even bisect, the EIA settlement enclosure. How old the boundary? Presumably the enclosure was visible as an earthwork when it was crossed? Or was some concept of tenure and property still alive when the boundary sought out its line across an already flattened ancient marker. Another interesting aspect, especially given the mirror-like quality of Headlands compared to ODXI, is that here again is an example of an EIA site being abandoned but living on in some different mode which still nevertheless influenced the land arrangements round about - for over 2000 years, it might be noted, for the AS boundary across

it still survives and indeed stands out as a remarkable line of bushes growing in an ocean of arable to either side. The only reason for its being there and surviving is history and tenure.

674. Three sides of rect. ditched enclosure AP

675. Rect. ditched enclosure, probably around RB villa which shows reasonably clearly on CUCAP. A ditch clearly runs between 203 and 675.

000. W of that ditch, arranged in a staggered lined to the NW are three rectangular features defined by pit-like blotches: are these timber halls? If so, Neo. or DA?? CUCAP CE053

303. A cross on SMR map, probably the findspot of RB material recorded in VHC (1957), 121. This appears to be a settlement area stretching perhaps between 675 and the Roman road *cf.* Bowen and Fowler 1962, 101, B1

665 (here refined as 665a) and 665b (a new number pro tem but this may be 734 on latest ed. of SMR map) is for two barrows, both showing as cropmarks and known only from AP. The original 665 (now 665a) lies on the E side of the As boundary at a points where it starts to go round three sides of a rectangle before picking up again the general line of its course NNW. An obvious inference is that the boundary did indeed deviate to go round the E side of something, perhaps an enclosure; but so far there is no evidence of such a feature. The ASC refers, however, to two barrows hereabouts and clearly passes between them; so it is satisfactory that RCHM air photography picked up another barrow (665b?SMR 734) c 110 m WNW and just to the W of the boundary

666, 667, 668, 670: round barrows which, together with 734 and 665, make up an irregular linear cemetery of six W and N of North Farm. 667 is remarkably right under the NW corner of the Farm`s domestic surrounds and 668 is in an almost identical situation at the NE corner of the Farm *enceinte*. Even though the present buidings and layout do not appear to pre-date the later C18, again one wonders about possible long-lasting influences of land-markers, especially here where again there could well be an argument that North Farm is the tenorial inheritor of the role played by the Headlands complex, only 500 m to the NW, from the EIA onwards. The other point here is simply about the barrows themselves: theirs is a somewhat unusual position, strung out along the 500 ft. contour low on the local slope and only just above the bottomlands of the R. Kennet.

669. A round barrow, probably to be regarded as part of the same group as last but out of line and further down the slope, S of the Roman road and right on the N edge of the present A4

651, 652, 653: a cluster of three round barrows clumped roughly N-S across the SE slope of a spur formed along the N slopes of the Kennet Valley by the intrusion of Piggledean northwards (*above* p.00). 653 has been completely excavated (Swanton *forthcoming*; and hopefully we can summarise the results [are they in WAM?] and x-reference to its environmental evidence in Chap. 8)

125(a), 125b (new number): a pair of round barrows on the end of the spur formed by Pickledean at c175 m, 125a (formerly 125 on SMR) and the more easterly of the two with 125b c 100 m to the W. The latter was discovered in freshly-ploughed (and more deeply ploughed?) land in Sept., 1994, its presence marked by a slight rise in the ploughsoil but more particularly by several large sarsen stones which had newly been brought to the surface.

Zone W: bottom-land

?long barrow, Lockeridge SU 14936779 (W. Overton ph., G. 24), Barker 1984, 23

Summarise his short a/c - not v. convincing. Should it be in this land-use or is it in `old arable? - CHECK its exact position

The Villages and the Houses and their dating to go in here

Zone X: old arable

Zone Y: new arable

Zone Z: woodland

West Woods long barrow, Barker 1984, 10: summarise his a/c

General points:

1. Long barrows: distributionally the significant thing about the study area is that it is part of a `corridor` stretching S. from N. of Hackpen Hill S to the lip of Pewsey Vale by Knap hill where, with one exception, THERE ARE NO LONG BARROWS of any sort. There is the spaced out group to the W around Avebury, including on the W face of the Marlborough Downs W of the Ridgeway; and there is a not too irregular N-S line from Temple Bottom to West Woods N-S along the E of our core area. But in between, in this very marked gap 13 km. N-S by 3 kms W-E, there is only the `Old Chapel` megalithic barrow, additionally exceptional by being the ONLY barrow in Barker`s map area (except for two on the W tip of Oldbury Hill, which are irrelevant, and Adam`s Grave) which is sited above the 210 m contour. So our study area has a major `negative` which might

be significant: no lps of any sort on the chalk uplands except for `Old Chapel` right in the middle of the corridor. What is this telling us? -

that the Downs were already open in `lb time`? -

that this stretch was still closed by woodland (there`s quite alot of Clay-with-Flints hereabouts on the higher peaks)

that the Ridgeway corridor was already recognised and, for what ever reason, been kept `lb free`?

or that much of the downland was not only open but was already in intensive agricultural use, for grazing and perhaps for cultivation as the new Manton evidence might suggest?

cf these ideas with Bob Smith`s environmental models in PPS which covered the W of our study area

I