

## **FWP27a**

### **ABSTRACTS - LBA/EIA (RJ - 17/06/95)**

*n.b. all page numbers are shown in bold italics and within square brackets.*

*ALLEN MJ pers comm (Results from coring on Piggledean Bottom)*

A soil core from Piggledean Bottom produced abraded Beaker sherds associated with mollusc remains which indicated an open country environment. This phase had been preceded by a layer dominated by molluscs of a shaded environment. This is linked to Gingell's interpretation (below) that the first major clearance of the area was during the EBA.

*ALLEN T et al 1984 (IA houses in the Upper Thames Valley)*

LBA: houses of post ring type: eg. Shearplace Hill, Ilford Hill, Ram's Hill and Black Patch.

EIA: most ring forms still dominate - Rough Ground Farm. There may also be ring-groove, trench built houses.

MIA: use of drainage gullies and stake built houses without post rings.

*BARRETT 1976 (Deverel-Rimbury)*

Using radiocarbon dates and metalwork associations Barrett suggests the D-R tradition lasts until the 11th century. However the evidence from excavations at Burderop Down do not support this (see Gingell 1980).

*BARRETT 1994 (Study of Wessex Neo and BA monuments from social perspective)*

Emphasises the importance of barrows as markers on the landscape, even after their period of use. This may be as an alignment of boundaries or trackways.

*BARRETT & BRADLEY 1980 (BA settlement in South Wessex)*

A revised date for the end of Deverel-Rimbury is given as the 10th century BC. A number of LBA EIA sites are identified by the use of post D-R wares, e.g. Eldon's Seat (Cunliffe et al 1968). The settlement of the Marlborough Downs is thought to fit in to this post D-R sequence. This LBA-IA period is characterised by the continued establishment of large linear ditch systems which themselves are associated with, although earlier than, some hillforts. LBA-EIA sites include: All Cannings Cross, Cold Kitchen Hall, and finds in Meyrick's collection found on Marlborough Downs.

Early hillforts with relevant evidence include: Battlesbury, Casterly, and Lidbury (Grinsell 1957: 118, Cunnington 1923: 39).

*BARRETT, BRADLEY, GREEN 1991 (Cranbourne Chase, Interpretation) [227-242]*

BBG support what is essentially a "prestige goods model" put forward by Rowlands (1980). This model is very generalised, identifying the importance of kinship within all alliances in the LBA/EIA. BBG suggest it is important to see this model on a local scale and so test against the material from CC.

The LBA sees a change in the monumentality of death, burial moves to within the domestic sphere becoming associated with fertility, eg. Gussage All Saints, where burials were found within the grain storage pits.

BBG favour a model similar to that of Woodward in that there is a communal mobility (contra Drewett 1982 & Gingell 1992). They do not feel the ecological factor is as important to stress and in good post-processual style they favour a more socially orientated approach, whereby the underlying theme in the LBA is:

"The renegotiation of age and gender status and of local political alliances based upon kinship ... established through the control of agricultural forces and the organisation of domestic space" [239]

The momentum of social reorganisation has a direct bearing on the pace of settlement regeneration and abandonment.

BBG believe that the form of metalwork deposition in CC does not wholly support Rowlands' model in that it is not indicative of an economy based on the distribution of prestige goods. BBG favour a kinship alliance based on the ritual preparation and consumption of food - ie. feasting.

*CUNLIFFE 1984 (1A Wessex)*

[13] The dates for ODX & XI fit into Cunliffe (BC) "Earliest Iron Age" ceramic styles: 800-550 BC. This pottery is a distinct break from the D-R pottery which came before. Initially the styles are widespread and highly decorated - possibly indicative of a strong regional identity.

Economically, the EIA also sees a number of developments in intensification and specialisation, eg. - the extraction of salt and shale from Kimmeridge

- Hengistbury Head nr. sources of Iron Ore
- All Cannings Cross - bone tools
- Potterne - bronze Working.

Similarly Wessex had the attraction of being within the contact zone to Amorica

[14] A number of settlement types are indicative of the period.

a) Hilltop sites: ?{Bozedown, Martinsell, Walbury, Bathampton Down Brindon Hill}? All have round houses and four post structures which may offer a number of interpretations. Either as above ground grain stores or as fodder ricks. BC favours the second since he believes the sites are large scale communal cattle corrals.

- b) Densely occupied and heavily fortified sites: Lidbury and Budbury.
- c) [18] Settlements enclosed within bank and hedge and/or bank. Occupation area of between 1-3ha - a similar style of settlement continues into the MIA. Many sites have a large number of storage pits eg. Old Down Farm, Hants., simple large circular house with 26 storage pits. Other sites include: All Cannings Cross, Longbridge Deverill Cow Down, Potterne, and Old Down Farm. BC suggests a social system based around single or extended family units living in farmsteads with communal pastoral centres based in hilltop enclosures, he admits this is a fragile and over simplistic hypothesis.

[30] BC identifies a "reordering" of the landscape: 550-400 BC when stress in the economy resulted in the building of hillforts and the subsequent attacking of their defences. This change can be summarised as follows:

Earliest IA (800-550) -

- a) communal ordering of the landscape
- b) social organisation based on the rhythm of stock management
- c) elite resident in defended fortlets with control over the redistribution of rare commodities
- d) non-elite in a variety of settlements

Early IA (550>) -

- a) hillforts with corn storing potential
- b) importance of defence
- c) centres of manufacture and exchange
- d) farmsteads optimised to utilise a range of resources

In other words the "elite" taking over the land? Rather than owning metal.

[39] The appendix lists sites in Wessex known to yield Earliest IA pottery, a total of 39 are listed and referenced.

*CUNLIFFE 1991 (Iron Age Communities)*

[385] The landscape of the 2nd millennium was typified by discrete blocks of square "Celtic Fields". During the early 1st millennium this territory was reappropriated on a massive scale and divided by a new system of linear boundaries which put at least some old arable out of commission. By the 6th century hillforts were built acting as nodes within this linear ditch system. Socially this can be identified as a change from a system of scattered family units to one involving much greater social control. The period between 1000-500 BC was one of "major economic transformation". There are very few sites from this period which have been substantially examined with the exception of Black Patch (Drewett 1982, see criticisms in Barrett et al 1991). The main economy represented was one based on emmer and spelt wheat and beans. Livestock consisted of sheep and cattle, the cattle outnumbered the sheep 2 to 1.

[532] BC's model for the EIA landscape has changed little since 1984 ie. linear earthworks and hilltop enclosures indicating an increase in stock/land management. Three tiers of site are now identified:

strongly defended - sites on ridge ends: Budbury, Lidbury.

no defences - All Cannings Cross, Potterne.  
ditched enclosures - Little Woodbury, Old Down Farm.

*DREWETT 1982 (Model of Downland economy based on Black Patch)*

Excavations at Black Patch revealed hut platforms and an enclosure set within a system of rectangular fields, C14 dated to 1070-830 bc.

Drewett identified nine definite and three possible south Downland LBA sites. Each of which he studied using a form of site catchment analysis. His conclusions were that each consisted of a self sufficient unit (contra BBG 1991). Who is right? The answer to this question determines how "localised" the economy of each settlement can be predicted.

*GINGELL C 1980 (Interim report on work on Marlborough Downs)*

Gingell contributes to the argument over the chronology of D-R ware. The site of Burderop Down revealed D-R ware with what Barrett considers to be post D-R ware and metalwork dated to 9th century. Clearly D-R has a long chronology stretching from the MBA to late LBA. A number of other sites excavated (summarised in Gingell 1991) revealed both Beaker and D-R suggesting two phases of activity in the area.

*GINGELL C 1992 (LBA on Marlborough Downs)*

A recent monograph which studies the Late Bronze Age landscapes of the Marlborough Downs, encompassing Fyfield and Overton. A wide range of methodologies were employed including selective excavation and extensive use of the Meyrick collection. The results indicated a large surviving LBA landscape with earlier, although less intensive, Neolithic and EBA activity.

INTRODUCTION - **[3]** Physical background of the area with particular emphasis on soils, underlying geology and geomorphology. This affected BA farmers in two ways: 1) There were two regions of relatively level land suitable for cultivation: hilltops at 800' (244m); and the valley bottoms, low intervening ridges and the gentle lower slopes (more extensive on south aspect of valleys). Clay with flints (difficult to cultivate and dry in summer) on the peneplain may be the reason for extensive BA cultivation of the lower slopes, leaving the more difficult soils in pasture or wooded. 2) Importance of extensive cover of sarsens. These were concentrated in the valley bottoms and gentle slopes, precisely the two areas where most of the BA activity occurred. There must have been a substantial amount of clearance which has since been destroyed by recent mechanised farming.

Recent work of importance to be found in Barrett & Bradley 1980 and Barrett, Bradley & Green 1991 - Cranbourne Chase; and Richards J 1990 - Stonehenge Environs Project.

EXCAVATIONS - **[7-14]** Bishops Cannings Down - open Bronze Age settlement.

Structures: two post built round houses, diameters of A: 5.94m and B: 7.80m. A total of 11 other post holes were located. Note: a number of these paired which is characteristic of BA and particularly IA sites [for drying skins etc.]. House B predates house A and it is taken that changes in the layout of B are improvements? Parallels drawn with Iron Age houses from Moel y Gaer (Guilbert 1982a Fig 3.1) and (Gingell 1982 fig 5-7) ie. houses with open porches more likely to face south, while houses with inturned porches more likely to face east. A number of ditch features lie close by but their relationship to the site has not been established.

Spatial: finds appear to be concentrated within area of houses, although larger items found outside. The position of a number of Kimmeridgean Barrel Urns close to the supposed position of the wall suggests this area was used for storage and/or sleeping??

Finds - a small number of Bronze pieces, a large amount of late early to MBA pottery, particular reference being made to the Kimmeridgean barrel urns which it is posited were used for grain storage under the eaves of the building.

- **[14-31]** Dean Bottom - BA ditched enclosure with evidence of local terracing. Features included: series of Beaker pits with infilled occupation debris, later ditched enclosure with internal rectangular buildings constructed from sarsen footings (lack of wood due to MBA clearance of the area), and nearby Dew Pond interpreted as having a LBA date.

- **[31-38]** Rockley Down - bank and ditch enclosure of BA date with similar "buildings" as Dean Bottom.

- **[38- 59]** Burderop Down - for details see INTERPRETATION below.

ANIMAL BONE (Mark Maltby) - **[141-142]** The faunal assemblages from the sites indicates the use of both cattle and sheep. Sheep were culled at all ages and many appeared to reach maturity. The cattle evidence was more interesting in that there was clear evidence for dairy exploitation

MOLLUSCAN EVIDENCE (Michael Allen) - **[148-149]** Neolithic clearance is identified but is interpreted as being only in a local context, all of the mollusc samples they are found only in a archaeological context. The EBA may mark a greater amount of more general clearance however the evidence is again site specific. The MBA sees periods of landscape regeneration which is followed by clearance phases in the LBA and EIA. The evidence only represents what occurred at sites and cannot give a definitive answer until there is a major program of off-site sampling.

SUMMARY (Rosamund Cleal) - **[151]** **ENeo**: settlement sparse, more intense in Avebury region (Smith R W 1984). **LNeo**: barrows and pottery along with mollusc evidence suggesting intensive land clearance. **[152]** **EBA [Beaker]** - much smaller scale than around the major monuments however this may well be the result of limited excavation (see Allen M J 1988 and recent pers comm). Dean Bottom has Beaker settlement associated with land clearance, sheep rearing and crop production. Cleal suggests that the Beaker material is a result of minor activity not connected with the

establishment of field systems (for Gingell's opinion see below). **[153] Middle to late BA:** majority of sites and pottery from this period. Cleal suggests the major sites are not contemporary (contrast to Gingell?) and identifies a sequence of: Bishops Canning Down - Dean Bottom - (?Rockley Down) - Burderop Down. First major use of the landscape is associated with the use of Deverel-Rimbury ware, the pottery is densely gritted with heavily rimmed bucket or barrel forms and globular urns.

INTERPRETATION (Gingell) - The guts of this interpretation suggest that the first major land clearances occurred with the Beaker pottery; major settlement occurred during the middle to late BA and from then declining rapidly.

**[155]** Beaker pottery is found across the area, particularly under lynchets and ditches (cf Fowler 1975: 29). This pottery is associated with the first clearance of the area in the EBA along with a number of field boundaries. Compared to the shift in settlement identified by Burgess (1983) in the EBA of northern England.

Latest date for settlement provided by large sherds of LBA pottery found during fieldwalking. Their large size, lack of abrading, and quantity, all go to suggest heavy manuring of fields just prior to their desertion.

IA material is sparse and Gingell cites ODX and XI as unusual when compared to the rest of the Downs. R/B wares suggest further major cultivation in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD with the presence of Savernake pottery.

Form of BA settlement: series of farmsteads encompassed within ca. 20ha blocks of fields with the settlements as little as 0.5km apart. These are known as the Ogbourne Enclosures. **[156]** Main features include: enclosed by bank and ditch

high up in their respective field systems

trackways running into higher pasture

3 of such sites had adjacent ponds

The subsistence relied on crop production close to the settlement (higher lynchets on fields and more pottery suggesting a greater amount of manuring), sheep husbandry based on the exploitation of higher pastures (faunal evidence, trackways, and poorly formed lynchets on higher downlands), and dairy production in lower valleys (faunal record suggests over-wintering of cattle, while only low valleys would provide sufficient water to sustain cattle, however if in low ground in summer who manages the crops?). This system is difficult to confirm because only the central sites survive well, beyond that is conjecture.

**[157]** One anomalous site exists at Burderop Down - unenclosed

high ridge location

post built structures

surfaced with burnt sarsen

fragments

no associated field system

Suggested as a temporary trading/craft village situated on the Ridgeway. This combines with the rest of the settlement evidence to produce a social system centred around family farms held by freeholders.

*[158]* Decline in BA settlement: by 1000 BC the population of the valleys is increasing as a result of the improved productivity of the Downlands (Barrett 1980). By 800 BC the settlement pattern is shifting to foot-of -scarp and scarp-crest locations. The lower valley slopes have become areas of large scale grain production which is stored over winter in large pit silos. This occurs as a result of economic considerations and not necessarily as a consequence of local environmental factors. Evidence for this is based on the amount of LBA pottery associated with freshly manured fields, had their been a decline in soil productivity it is more likely their would have been a shift in subsistence prior to any shift in location.

*HAWKES 1994 (Longbridge Deverill Cow Down EIA round house)*

A major round house, 60m in diameter within a D-shaped enclosure, c. 600 BC. The article concentrates on the use of domestic space, particularly the porch area, with some imaginative reconstructions.

*JOHNSON 1980 (LBA in SW England)*

This is a comprehensive survey of the settlement sites, hoards, and surface finds found in SW England. An appendix at the back lists a large number of sites where both BA and IA material is found, these include hillforts, settlements and fields, and occupation debris.

*RCHME (BOWEN) 1990 (Bokerley Dyke)*

The dyke is identified as being of MBA date by guilt of association. It acted as a direct alignment within the landscape up until the late Roman period when it was last improved, consequently leaving the deposits found during Pitt-Rivers' excavations.

Its function is difficult to establish but Bowen suggests it is a major cultural boundary - ie. the differing morphology of linear ditch systems between the east and west of the dyke.

In relation to the creation of the linears Bowen suggests a LBA/EIA date which is possibly slightly earlier than that put forward by Cunliffe. Their function is not clear but they are associated with the dyke, barrows and the later hillforts.

*ROBINSON 1984 (Wessex: IA landscape and environment)*

*[1]* The BA is identified locally by major land clearance which began to have a major localised effect from at least 3000 BC onwards, eg. the site of Itchen Floodplain nr. Winchester which had pollen evidence for major land clearances radiocarbon dated to 3650 BC. By 1000 BC the pollen record shows evidence for major cereal cultivation with a total percentage cereal pollen of 1-4%. Rob. also identifies the linear ditch



systems as being part of the reordering of the new landscape along with an intensification in farming practices.

**[3]** The IA sees a more concentrated population, this is supported by the beetle and pollen evidence which identifies a landscape of an increasingly open nature. This intensification can be observed in two ways: by the use of grain storage pits to make use of surplus, and the appearance of hill colluvium at this time (Bell 1981: 79-81; 1982: 135-6). **[4]** Rob. does not believe this soil loss made a major impact initially since there is still a continual settlement of the chalklands, compensation may have been made by exploiting heavier soils. During the IA woods had become managed resources (poss. earlier!!) the only natural woods being left being that on heavier soils or in inaccessible areas.

**[6]** When compared to a similar study of the Upper Thames Valley it is possible to identify a core area of settlement within the Hampshire chalklands which had more resilient soils to survive the continuous cultivation since the LNeo/EBA. Rob. visualises an arable mosaic across a network of "Celtic Fields", the distribution depending on the local soil depth and degree of slope - woods and coppices covered the less manageable and inaccessible locations. **[7]** For this reason Rob believes that environmental factors were not a determining factor in social change. They had an effect but it was not as catastrophic as some writers have suggested. In summary: the region "possessed large areas of productive agricultural landscapes which retained their importance into the Roman period."

Rob. summarises the evidence for climatic change during the LBA/EIA: a slight deterioration to cooler and wetter in 1250 bc then a more rapid change between c. 850-650 bc at which time the max deterioration was reached. Conditions began to improve between 400-450 bc. Such estimates are far from perfect and for other opinions see (Lamb 1981, Turner 1981, Barber 1981). Certainly, there is a worsening in the climate between 1000-600 bc, resulting in a reduced growing season of about 5 weeks. **[8]** The result of this may include the increased development of peat from the LBA>. The result of such changes is difficult to know, Rob. is sceptical if they would have made much of a difference to the south of England. The strands of wheat grown during this period: Emmer and Spelt, would have been perfectly capable of growing in such an environment. The excess water may in fact have been a blessing (look up some of Gordon Hillman's articles on cereal production).

*WOODWARD 1991 (South Dorset Ridgeway) [147-154]*

WW favours an early soil erosion phase from the LBA→ with direct economic impact on settlement. His identification of an open heathland environment are open to question since he relies on only one site with associated C14 date.

The social system identified is one dominated by a ruling elite living in major hill top enclosures, although there are no direct examples in the study area. On a smaller scale, headman's huts can be recognised as paired structures eg. Rowden. One hut is used for food prep etc. while the other is for living space. However, gender relations are ignored in this interpretation and may leave room for a more ethnographic

orientated approach. These huts are set within field systems, singly or in pairs, and on negative lynchets.

Woodward therefore identifies a dispersed settlement with little rebuilding, indicative of a mobile economy with no extended family residential family units within an ordered farming regime.

Also identifies a number of sub-rectangular enclosures which are by association M-LBA, however, they may be later. Their function is unclear - some have no internal structures, others have hut circles eg. Rowden. Another concentration of activity in the landscape is represented by flint scatters, thus representing further evidence for a mobile economy?

WW concludes by describing change as being gradual and mostly conditioned by environmental factors.