

**FWP35**

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## **Chapter 2**

### **AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND CARTOGRAPHY: AVEBURY, OVERTON AND FYFIELD DOWNS**

#### **Introduction**

At the start of the writing up and archiving phase of the project early in 1995, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England was commissioned to produce an archaeological air photographic transcription map of Fyfield and Overton Downs at a scale of 1:10,000. The map became available in June, when its unpremeditated and immediate use was to underpin an archaeological appraisal of the Ridgeway on the west of our study area and selectively to illustrate key points in the *Ridgeway Assessment Report* (Fyfod 1995, FWP 30). The map itself, however, was not published.

The whole map is published here exactly as received from RCHME (fig. 2.1), together with the same map used as a base for showing the distribution of ridge-and-furrow (fig. 2.2; *and see below* p. 00). In fairness it must be stated that both maps were drawn as overlays meant to be used on the current OS 1:10000 maps. The first and second maps are combined as the base for an annotated version but at a scale of only 1:25,000 (fig. 2.3). This map includes contours and shows the position and context of some of the main sites discussed later in this *Report*. It uses letters to identify the four woods on the Downs, so useful for locational purposes, and it divides up the area into 22 Blocks. These are used in the following discussion, and elsewhere in the volume, for identification purposes, so it must be stressed that these Blocks are descriptive units, not completely arbitrary in terms of the air photographic (AP) data displayed but definitely not based on archaeological or historical criteria. The three maps are also used later (11.0) as the base for a discussion of the conservation management of the area.

The two archaeological maps are used here as a source of evidence in its own right. This chapter is in effect a description of what the map shows together with a commentary in the light of general knowledge of the archaeology of the area embraced within the air photographic cartography. We use RCHM's zoning (fig. 2.3) for convenience, but our discussion is an independent essay. RCHM's own *Report* which accompanied the maps is, suitably edited to avoid duplication, reproduced here (*below* p. 00). The full *Report* is in the Archive.

## The cartographic boundaries

For logistical as well as archaeological reasons, the area for air photographic (AP) study was tightly defined. While its core area centred on the same core area as that of the Project overall, it was significantly different from that covered during the fieldwork. In particular, whereas ground survey stopped as a matter of convenience at the historical, parochial boundary now followed by the Ridgeway, AP cartography was specifically requested of the west-facing slopes of Avebury Down on the W side of the Ridgeway. This was to play to air photography's strength, by asking it to use the evidence from crop-marks i.e. to explore an archaeology which has been largely destroyed as earthworks because Avebury Down, unlike the scientifically-precious grassland areas of Overton and Fyfield Downs, has been largely brought under arable. The aim was to place the well-preserved field systems and other remains on that old grassland in their wider archaeological context by linking earthworks to crop-marks in the more or less continuous plough-zone of arable W of the Ridgeway. That the map has achieved with great success, for a continuum of evidence, irrespective of its state of existence and visibility on the ground, can now be seen from the foot of the western slopes, up and across the Ridgeway, and then eastwards across the Downs and beyond Fyfield's eastern parish boundary on to Manton Down and into Clatford Bottom in Preshute parish.

The map, then, includes a major extension of the Project study area to the west; and its eastern edge too runs beyond the Project's eastern boundary. On both sides, although the terrain is familiar, the archaeology has not been examined on the ground at all systematically, so both areas fall within Zone 3 of the Project's methodology model (fig. 1.0). The edge of the map on the west is, however, archaeologically arbitrary - the sort of archaeology shown here continues, though less and less clearly as the land flattens out in an area of permanent arable. To the east, however, the map's representation of a field archaeology which fades out is broadly correct. Some sites, earthworks and finds have been recorded either side of, roughly, grid line northing 16, but the archaeology there is not comparable with the field evidence within our study area. The change is particularly marked for much of this eastern area is old grassland (or recently converted to arable) where such evidence, had it existed, is likely to have been visible. So there appears to be at least a change, perhaps a real boundary of some sort, roughly co-inciding with the eastern marches of the AP map. The implied change in historic land-use makes it seem unlikely that Preshute Down has ever been cultivated, at least in regular fields or for any length of time, or even inhabited to any significant extent (*below* p. 00 for note on the area from SMR data).

To the north, the boundary of the area examined was more arbitrary but, to an extent, seems to co-incide generally with a zone of archaeological change. The northernmost point required was marked by the kink in The Ridgeway: the

northern tip of Fyfield parish (at the NW corner of Block 15, fig. 2.3). But an extension northwards (Block 16) was made to include Wick Farm and its surrounding earthworks when the extent of settlement earthworks and the significance of this isolated area in relation to Lockeridge and the Templars was realised (*below* p. 00). The cartographic `blanks` to E and W of Wick Farm merely represent areas not examined. The sparsely occupied area (15) southwards towards Totterdown Wood was, however, looked at. It is under plough but this high land is capped with Clay-with Flints and therefore unlikely to be particularly revealing of cropmarks. Equally, such a subsoil may well have inhibited activity there in the past; nothing is now visible on the ground and no sherds etc. were picked up in casual field-walking. On balance, it seems probable that the AP map reflects some sort of land-use reality in its relatively sketchy representation of an archaeology E of The Ridgeway across the northern reaches of West Overton and Fyfield parishes.

The southern boundary of the area mapped was quite deliberately drawn at the modern A4 road. Much of its length here is along the Roman road westwards from London to Bath, locally from *Cunetio* (near Marlborough) to *Verlucio* (Sandy Lane near Chippenham). The projection (Block 22) south of both the A4 and the Roman road was precisely to try to identify the course of the latter (see *below* p. 00). The A4 marks a general and abrupt land-use change, from arable on its north to pasture on its south in the valley bottom; so AP was likely to be less effective S of it anyway, a supposition which Block 22 bears out. Furthermore, the modern valley surface is relatively recent (post-medieval) as well as unresponsive to underlying archaeology in AP terms. Nevertheless, it must remain an ambition to see the southern half of the study area likewise mapped, if only to compare with what we can see N of the A4.

### **The archaeology as shown on the air photographic map (fig. 2.1)**

#### ***Distribution***

The main impression is of the outlines of an extensive enclosed landscape made up of small parcels, presumably fields. This landscape stretches N-S over 4.5 kms from Monkton Down to Seven Barrow (or Overton) Hill and from Green Street at the foot of the Marlborough Downs 4 kms eastwards to Clatford Down. The area involved is of some 18 sq. km. (c 4500 acres or 7 sq. miles). As recorded, the `ancient` landscape it is not continuous but the triangular SE zone where the linear remains are sketchy coincides fairly comprehensively with the permanent arable, medieval and modern, of the tithings of East Overton, Fyfield, Lockeridge and Clatford (Check: is this last a tithing, within Preshure ph.?). In other words, that area is a `zone of destruction` in terms of its pre-medieval earthworks and such has been its continuous ploughing that it is almost completely devoid of crop-marks too. The cropmarks that do show are almost entirely of ring ditches, presumably until proved otherwise of round barrows. Some of the linear features probably result from medieval cultivation so, in terms

of the AP archaeology in relation to earlier patterns, the record is even sketchier than appears to be the case.

Nevertheless, the clear implication of the map is that this ancient landscape was to all intents continuous. It stretched effectively from the map's bottom left hand corner (Block 4) at the barrow group above West Kennet Farm to the barrow group on the westward spur of Monkton Down at its top left hand corner (Block 1), a distance of 4 kms. The Beeches, 3 kms. ESE, is the name of the plantation (D, at the northern end of Blocks 13 & 14) marked at the top right hand corner of the recorded archaeology on Manton Down. From it stretches a spread of earthworks and cropmarks SSE across Block 14 for another 3 kms. to the two barrow groups respectively in Blocks 20 & 21. They occupy the coombe floor and the high ground on either side of the entrance to Clatford Bottom. From there it is 4.5 kms. back westwards to the West Kennet Farm barrow group, defining an area c 14 kms square,

#### *The 'blank' areas*

Within that area some of the 'blanks' on the map are archaeologically genuine. The main ones are the two 'fingers' of dry coombe coming in a NW direction up into the downland from the Kennet valley. The line of the more westerly, Piggledean, is picked up by the boundary between Blocks 18 & 19, and 6 & 8: it follows the centre of the coombe floor up to Down Barn and then curves N as it fades out between 7 & 8. The entrance to the more easterly, Clatford Bottom, has already been identified (*above*): Its course can similarly be picked out by the continuous boundary line as far as Delling Copse (B). Basically, neither of these topographical features contain earthworks across them, though they all have individual features in them. All were and are used as communication routes; the westerly one was certainly used as sources of sarsen stones and in the C20 are more clear of stones and have become better grazing land probably than at any previous time.

The 'blank' (Blocks 9 & 10) north of the linear ditch across Totterdown is also real: there is no field system there and the cropmarks that have been picked up are likely, at least in part, to be of medieval origin (as in Block 15 too). The landscape there may have been more featureless in RB and prehistoric times than the map suggests. Otherwise, the 'blanks' are very small and, while some, like that in the middle of Totterdown (at the junction of Blocks 10, 11 and 12), are known from fieldwork to be correct, others probably reflect deficiencies in the AP. The little area showing nothing between The Delling (immediately NW of the number '11') enclosure and Wroughton Copse (C), for example, certainly contains earthworks of the surrounding 'Celtic' field system.

#### *Linear features*

Visually, the skein of complexity on the map seems to be held together by linear features. Essentially these are of two types, ditches and tracks. They are not necessarily as distinct as that statement implies, certainly not as earthworks now and not necessarily even functionally in former times. Ditches were sometimes also used as tracks and much used tracks tended to be come hollowed out and end up looking like ditches.

The main ditches are those in Block 1 and Blocks 2/9/10. The former has only been studied on AP for present purposes. Suffice to say it runs up the floor of a dry coombe, dividing fields on either side. It probably existed successively on two slightly different lines running SW (from the figure `1` of Block 1), but with a common line rising up the N face of the coombe towards the top of Monkton Down. The more southerly arc of its line on the coombe bottom would appear to be the earlier. At its SW end it becomes markedly a ditch, probably in part because it has also been used as a track. It is referred to as such in an Anglo-Saxon charter (*below* Chap 9, p. 00). Instead of following the coombe floor towards East Farm in Winterbourne Monkton, however, it climbs on to the low rise S of Avebury Down Barn right at the edge of our map. The spine of the rise is occupied by a still-fine barrow group, past the N edge of which runs the second ditch (*see next para.*).

The second, longer ditch in Blocks 2/9/10 runs for at least 3 kms. from its junction with the first ditch just off our map S of Avebury Down Barn, eastwards past the S side of South Farm and across the northern parts of Overton Down and Totterdown to Old Totterdown in Totterdown Wood (A in Block 10). It has served as a track both at its W end, where it feeds into the first ditch/track (*above*), and over much of its eastern length E of The Ridgeway (*below* p. 00).

It also divided fields and both cut them and was overlaid by them. It seems to be a boundary between fields on both of its sides towards its W end (W of the `2` in Block 2). W of them, and N of the Avebury Down barrows (Check the name of these at 113710), it bounds fields to its N alone; while E of The Ridgeway, there are no fields related to it at all in Block 9. Fields are laid off to its S alone in Block 10 and then, while fields to the S continue further along it, there is also a suggestion of fields on its N as it climbs towards Totterdown Wood.

W of The Ridgeway as the ditch reaches the bottom of the slope near South Farm in Block 2, it cuts through field boundaries (VAP zzzzzzzzzz) even though the map does not make this clear. What the map does convey, however, far better than any one AP, is that in Block 2 on the west-facing slopes the elongated fields there are laid out oblivious to, and overlying, the linear ditch (*below*). Clearly a considerable time-depth lies within these observations, with fields earlier, contemporary with, and later than the linear ditch (*below*).

Of the tracks, the odd one out is clearly The Ridgeway, the only major one running N-S. It is also clearly later than and completely unintegrated with the

older landscape(s) it overlies and cuts through. In its enclosed form, as shown here, it is also very late (*below* Chap 9, p. 00). In its unenclosed form, it veered to W and E of its present confined line, a fact evidenced by bundles of wheel ruts and hollow-ways to either side, and outside, its present boundaries. Such are particularly clear as earthworks (not shown on the map) in the old grassland of the relatively steep slope beside The Ridgeway's eastern fence to N and S of the barrow half way along the W side of Block 9. The slightly curved line on the map across the angle SW of the junction of Green Street and The Ridgeway is also a former course of the latter, interestingly running along a line of old field boundaries.

The next youngest way, now labelled the A4, is, like the other main through-routes, for W-E traffic. Whatever its origins may have been, it became an engineered toll road in the C18 (GET the exact date), in part in our study area on the same line as the Roman road and in general hugging the N edge of the Kennet flood plain at the foot of the downs. Although serving similar functions to the Roman road along the same corridor, in time the two are separated by Green Street, the route E from Avebury across the downs. Green Street, so persistently and wrongly labelled 'Herepath' by OS (*below* p. 00), ceased to be a through public road in 1815, the official moment at which it was superceded by the valley toll road (subsequently the A4). Like The Ridgeway, the actual 'Herepath' of the Saxon Charters, Green Street cuts across the earthworks of the ancient field systems. It is, however, linked to one of the 'old' trackways running through the earthworks. The arc of hollow-way curving across the S part of Block 9 runs out of the NW/SE axial arrangement of fields a little further S on Overton Down, and then cuts through field remains on both sides of The Ridgeway. It runs into the present fenced line of Green Street down the slope towards Avebury. That Green Street was much-used is indicated archaeologically by an impressive 'bundle' of hollow-ways (not on the map) on the E-facing slope down into Stoney Valley immediately S of and inside Delling Copse; and further E too, the two continuations of the route are clearly marked by rutting and cuts through and over lynchets. The map shows Green Street going to and stopping at Wroughton Copse (C) but it continues eastwards across Blocks 12 and 13 before trending SE towards Manton House and down into Barton Coombe and Marlborough. An alternative route, and at least latterly called Green Street, took a line ENE from Delling Copse higher up to Manton Down just E of The Beeches (D) and then SE across Barton Down and Marlborough Common.

Preceding all these was the Roman road across the S of the map. Its line either side of The Ridgeway has long been known and indeed the darker line on the E was still a fine upstanding earthwork, an unploughed *agger*, into the early 1960s. Eastwards, its line is well-established by the evidence underlying this map. It definitely passes in front of North Farm, its alignment either side firmly indicating that it is beneath the modern A4 which seems to curve back to pick up the older line at this point. Indeed, what was almost certainly the ditch along the N side of the Roman road was observed and recorded by G. Swanton early in 1996 during

works to make a new entrance to North Farm. This would place the Roman road beneath the present A4, at this point probably changing from an *agger* to a stone-reveted causeway.

Over the next 500 m to the E, a causeway, presumably Roman, carries both roads - Roman and A4, - across the chord of a re-entrant indicated by the contour line on the map. The stretch is across deposited material, probably once damp and seasonally marshy. At its E end, the AP evidence is ambiguous, though each and both of the lines of continuation imply that the causeway is indeed Roman. The faint traces suggesting the road continued uphill N of the A4 are unconvincing in themselves and the line is unlikely because it would have demanded a major causeway across the mouth of Piggledean and a repeat 1.5 kms further E across the mouth of Clatford Bottom. No evidence exists elsewhere for a Roman road on this alignment. Far more suggestive are the (equally faint) marks heading slightly ESE across Block 22. In the first place, they explain the slight bend in the modern A4/Roman road at the E end of the markedly straight stretch from North Farm; and secondly they head straight for what used to be a large ditch or hollow-way (now filled in) S of Fyfield Church, a line along which runs the boundary between Fyfield and Lockeridge tithings (*below* Chap. 9, p. 00)

Othwise, the landscape is full of shorter stretches of now abandoned trackway, some of considerable antiquity. Most visible on the map are those integral with, or fitting into, the SW/NE and NW/SW axial field system (*below*). Essentially the somewhat wobbly outlines of a sort of grid are apparent. On the W, a 250 m length of trackway cuts SE-NW across from The Ridgeway to Green Street in the NE angle of Block 2. Two kms to the NE a long stretch of hollow-way running SE from Totterdown Wood (A) through Block 12 and well into 13 is roughly parallel and, in between these two on the edges of the ancient landscape, a similar track runs the length of Overton Down on roughly the same axis. It begins beside - even coming out of but the point is uncheckable without excavation, - the linear ditch immediately W of The Ridgeway at the E edge of Block 9. It then runs down the spine of Overton Down via two right-angled bends defined by stone edges and past a RB settlement. The track turns SW into a large RB settlement, Overton Down South (*below* Chap 3, p.00), as the southerly of two main tracks aligned NE-SW across the SW-facing slope of Overton Down. It almost certainly joins with its counterpart on Fyfield Down in Block 12, its line then indicated by the division between Blocks 11 and 12 immediately W of Wroughton Copse (C).

A pair of trackways in Block 5 is now entirely evidenced only by AP. The context of both has been destroyed by bulldozing and ploughing. Both lie essentially W-E, quite markedly different from the others so far noted even though each one curves with the lie of the land slightly to the WNW west of The Ridgeway. Their association appears to be with an extensive settlement in Block 5. The more northerly, in addition or alternatively, links with a long bank running E to join with

a ditch coming out from the entrance into an EIA enclosed settlement (see *below* Chap. 3, p. 00).

### *Fields*

The complex of small rectilinear enclosures occupying most of the map has been demonstrated in several places to be largely made up of fields defined by boundaries. The AP map is essentially depicting an ancient landscape or landscapes, characterised by a network of small enclosed fields. The evidence is sufficiently good to allow that to be a very positive identification, with the clear implication that we are looking at pre-modern field systems.

Within the overall spread it is possible to discern two broad groupings. One, the larger, is of an extensive spread of fields essentially arranged on a SW/NE and NW/SE orientation. The other is a block of fields on a N/S alignment, bisected diagonally by the modern line of The Ridgeway N and S of Green Street. So the first major inference from the gross cartography is that the fields are not arranged at random or in disorderly fashion but are organised and indeed broadly relate to a particular form of organisation, namely an axial one.

### *The SW/NE axial field systems*

The NW/SE axis, on its orientation of 314/134°, goes with the grain of the terrain; whereas its SW/NE counterpart (226/46°) providing the other axis of the same landscape arrangement is `topographically oblivious` (Fleming 000000) and, in its way, more impressive. Allowing a little latitude for very local topographical anomalies, the axes of fields in Block 1 related to the long SW-NE linear ditch there are in general, and in several specific cases exactly, on the same orientation as fields on Totterdown (Block 10), Fyfield Down (12) and, most markedly, on Overton Down (Block 8). That the same axial arrangement continued further E is hinted at by the most clearly defined of the ploughed out remains to the SE, namely the fields above Devil's Den on the SW-facing slope at the S end of Block 14. Rather alarmingly, with only minor adjustment of a projection from it, the line of field boundaries on the axis immediately N of the ploughed out roundbarrow (XXXXXXXXXXXX) could be made out to be aligned on the megalithic long barrow itself. There may indeed be an element of coincidence in all this, but the operation of an axial guiding orientation can hardly be doubted when the same SW/NE axis re-appears over 4.5 kms of field system disposed NW-SE across a landscape of unconformable, and in many cases non-intervisible, areas of terrain.

The SW/NE axis apparently operated not only from NW-SE but also SW-NE. It seems to have conditioned arrangements from the West Kennet Farm barrow group towards the S end of Block 4 right across three humps of downland divided by the two dry valleys as far N as the N end of Block 12. Large parts of the area involved are not intervivable; but it could well be argued that it was doubtless `natural` *sensu* common sense as well as good husbandry to spread



the fields across the SW-facing slopes to make the best of the heat of the sun. On the other hand, a degree of order and, by implication, control going beyond what can reasonably be explained away as `natural` or co-incidence, is evident in the fairly disciplined disposition of the fields across 4 kms of rolling downland. Some features actually line up, but perhaps two features are the most impressive.

One is the way in which blocks of **fields separated in time as well as space** conform to the overall orientation. The other, closely related, is the same point but in relation to **tracks** rather than fields (though the former were often along field boundaries).

### *The S/N axial field system*

Within the prevailing SW/NE and NW/SE orientation of the overall spread of features on the map, the eye picks out an area of differently angled lines, especially around the Green Street/Ridgeway intersection. Closer analysis is able to define a not too fragmentary block of fields defined not only by their different orientation but also by their distinctively rectilinear shape and size. They tend to be 100 m long or longer and 40-50 m wide, not just rather larger than conventional `Celtic` fields but of a different shape with their dimensions in different proportions i.e. roughly 2:1 or more as distinct from the `roughly 50 m square` guideline for a typical `Celtic` field on Wessex Chalk. These are the proportions of the only slightly smaller rectilinear fields on Totterdown, long ago published as likely to be of C1-2 AD date (Fowler 1966, xxxx and 1967, zzzzz; *below* Chap 4, p. 00).

This block, or system, of such fields can be fairly accurately defined, taking the N-S axis and the field morphology into account. To the N, its edge is (as it happens) in the area of the AP map's boundary between Blocks 1 & 2. The W-E field bank just to the NW of the barrow shown there is the most northerly on an axis at right angles to the N/S axis, though it could be argued that the small block of similar fields to its N are part of the same system since its components conform morphologically and the slight change in alignment to the NNE can easily be explained as an adjustment to the local topography as the westerly slope flattens out into a coombe bottom.

The core of the system can relatively easily be seen sweeping south convincingly for 1.5 kms to a field boundary on which is superimposed the line dividing Blocks 3 & 4 immediately W of The Ridgeway. We shall argue *below* for double that length. Its W edge is reasonably clear between `2:1 fields` and `1:1 fields` (see *above*) and in any case seems to be E of the track heading NW towards Green Street: it has `1:1 fields` on both its sides. W down Gree Street is a small area of `2:1 fields` which may be part of the main system, its linking part ploughed out, or an outlier, perhaps similar to the outlying system on Totterdown. The E edge is clearly marked by a bank on Overton Down N of Green Street in Block 9 and S from there the difference in alignments is particularly well-marked, the edge of

the N/S system being probably on the W side of the dry valley above Down Barn, roughly along the line of the division between Blocks 7 & 8. The dimensions of the area thus defined are then c 2.10 kms N-S by 0.6 km (c 2300 x 660 yds.) and the area of the field system 126 hectares (315 acres).

It is suggested, however, that this system of N/S rectilinear fields was considerably larger. Its 600 m width probably stretched for another 1.5 kms to the S as far as the Roman road, giving it a total length N-S of 3.6 kms embracing 196 hectares (490 acres). The air photographic evidence for this suggestion is not too strong, for there are only two lengths of N-S field bank on the correct alignment in Blocks 6 and 5. The long bank in 6, however, though slightly off-line, is probably of the system, with a characteristic long field cut by The Ridgeway to its west. There are hints of similar fields in the zone to the Roman road southwards, though it is characterised by the complexities of not one but two settlements, both almost certainly of EIA and RB date rather than just the one or the other (see below Chap 3, p. 00). The relative sparsity of cropmarks, however, which makes the suggestion of so extensive a N/S field system difficult to sustain, is almost certainly the result of continuous cultivation of the area between the two settlements for a millennium or more. It contained the permanent arable, latterly called North Field (CHECK), of West Overton (*below* Chap 9, p. 00)

The single most important piece of evidence about this N/S field system, however, is that its axis is exactly at right angles to the Roman road on the E side of Overton Hill. This supports the suggestion that the field system came as far S as the road as a continuous block 3.6 kms long. Clearly, it also strongly indicates that the system is of Roman or later date, with a major implication for the claims of The Ridgeway as 'the oldest road' (*below* Chap. 9, p. 00). We return to consider chronology after considering the other major component of the air photographic map after ditches, tracks and fields, namely barrows.

### **Barrows**

The area has long been known to contain many barrows, especially round ones. The long barrows are well-known but few in number. Both types are considered in *Chapter 3* and all relevant examples are listed in Appendix 1 (*below* p. 00). Here we wish primarily to consider round barrows as groups and in relation to the field systems and ditches/tracks already discussed.

The AP map brings out three facets of the round barrows in the area. The first is their sheer number, emphasising the point made by Gingell (19\*\*, fig. 96). He shows more than on our AP map, in fact, for his record included antiquarian and other information which does not necessarily show on AP; but conversely, a few 'new' ones have been picked up for our map e.g. a single one S of the Headlands settlement complex to add to the North Farm Group in Block 17, and

another half dozen to increase significantly the size of the group on the W side of Clatford Bottom in Block 20.

The second point is the number of groups and their siting. Eleven groups (A-K) are identified on fig. 00, all of three or more barrows. Some of the pairs of barrows, even some of the singletons, will turn out to be groups with further evidence, so 11 is a minimum number. Even so, it is a very high number for an area of 16 sq kms (6½ sq miles): approaching 2 per sq mile which is comparable with (GET figs for S Dorset Ridgeway and Stonehenge area in RCHM DII). Given that number, however, visually the striking figure about the barrow groups on the map is their disposition: with the exception of the group just S of the linear ditch in Block 2, all the groups are peripheral to the great spread of ancient landscapes depicted on the map. In part, this might be explained by local topographical reasons. The group either side of the entrance into Clatford Bottom, for example, is sited on local spurs and would have looked impressive when viewed from below (all are now ploughed out so that is a supposition). Similarly, the similarly-sized West Kennet Farm group is prominently positioned on a local spur, a point which can still be appreciated for the effect is heightened by tree clumps on surviving mounds. But it seems unlikely that all ten groups developed for that reason alone, and slightly more complex reasons might well be sought in the relationships of the groups to the fields themselves.

The groups are not just at the edges of the field systems. In three cases (A,E,F) they are approached by trackways coming to them through the fields. Tracks are primarily necessary in such contexts, not for through traffic but quite specifically to lead stock to and from pasture without the beasts being able to get at the crops growing in the fields between settlement and the feeding grounds. The hint is of an integrated landscape, working fairly basically in agrarian terms but nevertheless with recognised and ordered arable, grazing and funereal areas. The pattern described here implies either that the fields could only stretch so far without trespassing on to the grounds of the ancients or that the burial grounds are where they are because they developed on the edges of the regularly farmed land. They lie on the interface between arable and pasture, between enclosed fields and unenclosed grazing, or even between infield and outfield (see below Chap 10, p. 00). Whatever the functional significance of the relationship between fields and barrows, the map demonstrates with particular clarity the existence of a spatial relationship, one which is most unlikely to be the result of chance. It also has clear chronological implications, whichever interpretation is preferred, and it is to the time dimension in the AP map that we now turn.

### **Chronology**

The map bears numerous evidences of *relative* chronology. Biggest of all is that the N/S field system is overlaid across the NW/SE field system. Indeed, the latter only survives on Overton and Avebury Downs where patches of its former extent stick out, as it were, from underneath the former. Thus we see the edges of the

NW/SE system surviving on Monkton Down in Block 1 and all along the scarp of the Downs W of The Ridgeway mainly between the 150 and 175 m contours. Just N of Green Street in the SW segment of Block 2 Ap has picked out as cropmarks what appears to be an outlying system of N/S fields overlying fields on the NW/SE alignment. The same appears to be so immediately above the 175 m contour in Block 6: a visually sharp juxtaposition of boundaries on incompatible alignments.

The long linear ditch across Blocks 2/9/10 cuts through fields on the NW/SE alignment in 2 and acts as the boundary to presumably contemporary fields laid off from it on Totterdown in 10. About 140 m SW of the SW corner of Totterdown Wood (A) the ditch passes under the curved lynchet shown on the map (suspected of being part of an EIA enclosed settlement, *see below* Chap 3, p. 00) and c 100 m further SW is clearly overlaid by the trackway taking off from it to the SE (*see* Chap 3, p. 00). That trackway itself bounds a set of rectilinear fields on the SW/NE orientation and seems closely related to a markedly straight and prominent bank heading SW and overlying those fields. The fields themselves overlie other fields on a slightly different alignment NE of the NE side of Delling Wood (D), so there is clearly a considerable time-depth represented by the earthworks on Totterdown as plotted from AP. Fieldwork bears this out (*below* Chap 3, p. 00).

Five other areas are visually significant in terms of relative chronology on the AP map. Three are discussed in terms of fieldwork as well as AP evidence *below* in Chapter 3 but they must be mentioned here since the AP map illuminates aspects of relative date in its own right. Two, which we deal with first, depend almost entirely on AP evidence. All are discussed in order SW-NE across the map.

The first is the visually prominent complex of features along the E side of the Ridgeway N from the Roman road in Block 5. Sadly, although this major site survived as earthworks into the 1950s, it was flattened by bulldozing and ploughing c 1960 as so much of the supposedly marginal downland was brought back into cultivation. The site is, therefore, known only from AP but fortunately pioneers of the art, namely both Crawford and Allen, photographed it from the 1920s onwards. The record therefore contains information about the complex as earthworks as well as about it as soil- and cropmarks. So effective was the flattening 35 years ago, however, that virtually nothing is to be seen on the ground now. The map nevertheless indicates a clear pattern of a settlement complex made up of three components: on the S, a block of squarish enclosures, perhaps fields, perhaps closes or paddocks, emerging northwards from a disturbed area immediately N of the Roman road; between those enclosures and a double-ditched trackway heading off WNW, a cluster of small enclosures with curving sides but very much giving the impression that they form an entity superimposed on small rectangular enclosures; and then, between that track and another (connected back to Headlands, *see below* next para.) 240 m

to the N, a clutch of eight closes, four each side of a S-N track, with the edge of a field area to the W. This third part of the complex could be seen as respecting the axis of the N/S field system (*above* p. 00). Overall, then, this complex, apparently in large part a settlement area, is close to the Roman road, perhaps even fronting on to it; is integral with tracks linking to another settlement complex only 600 m distant and to an extensive N/S system of rectilinear fields; and incorporates in its middle part curvilinear enclosures which are quite unlike any other enclosures within a complex which is overwhelmingly rectilinear. On AP evidence, too, they appear to be inserted on top of the rectangularity.

*(Suggest we experiment to see if we can prepare at least a schematic version of this AP plan at a larger - 1250? = twice existing - scale; the complex will be illustrated anyway by OGSC's AP)*

The second area requiring attention here is that containing the enclosure shown prominently in Block 17. We have named the site 'Headlands' since it was nameless and the particular area it occupies was referred to as 'up along the headlands' (OR WHATEVER: GET THE EXACT QUOTE) in (one of the two) the C10 charter of (East or West - which?) Overton (see below Chap 9). The main enclosure is still crossed by the tithing boundary between West and East Overton, a line on the landscape at least a thousand years old and now a hedgeline on a slight bank. It is effectively the only above ground feature in a sea of arable to either side. The site, clearly a complex with several phases, has its own little bibliography (Bowen and Fowler 1962, B.1; VCH E.229; SMR 203/674/675; AM 822, now SM 21763) but it has not hitherto been plotted in full and in its context. It is completely flat on the ground and is known only as AP phenomena, backed up by some field-walking.

It consists numerous features clustered W and S of a ditched enclosure. This is c 120 m in diameter NW-SE and SW-NE though slightly apple-shaped in plan, approx. 1.4 ha. (3.5 acres) in area, well within the 'Little Woodbury' range and virtually identical to the enclosed Iron Age settlement excavated on Overton Down (OD X/XI, *below* Chap. 5). Its entrance and one (?) 'antenna(e)', however, is uncharacteristically to the NW (cf. Bowen and Fowler 1966, fig. 1). There, the antenna ditch apparently links to a bank which, further W towards the Ridgeway, becomes one side of a trackway. The full extent of this enclosure only became apparent in 1995 on RCHM AP; it contains many pits and other dark features showing on CUCAP CE 053 and other AP.

The RCHM map shows other features immediately W and S of the 'Headlands' enclosure, some ditched and hinting at rectilinear enclosures, some banks and looking like field boundaries. Further S are barrows of the North Farm group, their position suggesting that this area is on the edge of the ancient field systems (*above* p. 00). Our own interpretation, largely based on CUCAP CE053 (here Pl. 00), is that the complex probably contains a RB villa and timber buildings; but the point here, for demonstrating relative chronology, is that AP alone demonstrates

a complex, in part stratified, of barrows, settlement enclosure, linear ditches, ditched enclosures, rectilinear fields and possible rectangular buildings, all within an area c 400 m square. Unsystematic fieldwalking within that area has produced EIA and RB material, with RB material spreading down the slope towards the Roman road (Bowen and Fowler 1962, 101, B1

Now we turn to the great zone of old grassland to the north where the nature of the evidence behind the marks on the AP map changes from marks in arable to upstanding earthworks. In Block 8 the two parallel tracks on the SW/NE orientation (*above* p. 00) have clear chronological implications. The more northerly is a relatively prominent earthwork for much of its course, both as a double lynchet track and as a hollow-way. It was much investigated in the 1960s since it obviously provides a good datum line across Overton Down (*below* Chaps. 3, 5 & 10, pp. 00, 00 & 00). Its NE end curves NW towards a small round barrow on the E of which is an RB settlement, but here the principle point is that on AP evidence alone it cuts through the underlying fields forming part of the cohesive system covering so much of Overton Down; yet, in being at right angles to the prevailing NW/SE sweep of the field system, it respects, indeed reflects, the SW/NE axis within that system. In its turn is shown as being cut by another track roughly at right angles to it towards its SW end. On the ground, the evidence of these tracks' relationship is far from convincing so, since this is one of many details important in establishing the landscape development sequence, we discuss the point further *below* (Chap. 3, p. 00).

The parallel track c 260 m SE looks, and probably is, similar in many respects, but the two points to make about it here are different. In the first place, unlike the previous track, it is not at all clear on the ground on a much-worn area of Overton Down. Though the possibility of its existence had been entertained, it was only with the production of this map that the idea received sufficient reinforcement to establish its probability - not least because it accords so well with an overall landscape pattern of some antiquity. Because of the wear-and-tear on the downland here, its relationship with fields is not at all clear, but there is a very positive relationship with an extensive RB settlement on its SE side (*below* Chaps. 3, 6 & 8). Indeed, the track seems almost to be integral with it as a road-side settlement. Not only are track and settlement on the same SW/NE orientation up and down the slope here but the latter's plan is intersected by side-roads set off from the 'main road.' The side-roads were remarked on, surveyed and published long ago (Fowler 1966, fig. 00) without any appreciation of their relationship to the 'AP tracks.'

Fyfield Down itself is clearly a fourth area with considerable evidence of relative chronology. Especially is this so of Wroughton (or Rowden) Mead, the small area immediately E of Wroughton Copse (C) which visually stands out on the map as having a greater density of marks than round about. The area generally, and the Mead specifically, are discussed in considerable detail *below* (Chaps 3, 7, 9 and

10, pp. 00, 00, 00, & 00), but here we would note three points particularly pertinent to AP evidence as mapped.

First, the general orientation of the landscape arrangements from NE-SW is reinforced not only by the trackways passing W of Wroughton Copse but by the placing and orientation of the Copse itself. The E side of the Copse in fact runs along a `Celtic` field bank and its W side is constrained by a southward continuation of the trackway coming down the slope from the N. In other words, as this map for the first time illustrates, the placing and the shape of Wroughton Copse, were preconditioned by local land arrangements already of some antiquity. It is part of the `ancient` SW/NE landscape orientation.

The second point about this area is that locally the components of the landscape are not by any means exactly on the overall alignment. Indeed, as the map brings out, the core of the well-known Fyfield Down `Celtic` field system diverges NE and E of Wroughton Copse on to two local arrangements nearer to N/S in their orientation on either side of a minor dry valley (*below* Chap 4, FD lynchet excavation, p. 00).

Nevertheless, the consistency in the basic arrangement is re-inforced by the fragments of NW-SE field boundary exactly on the alignment underlying other earthworks S and SE of the Copse. The third AP point here concerns those other earthworks. They significantly contribute to the density and complexity of the AP transcription here and the AP brings out their relative lateness since they clearly overlie earthworks of the field system. As discussed *below* (p. 00), the particular characteristic of this area is that it contains both medieval and post-medieval settlement remains. On the map they are most clearly indicated by the outline of the large triangular enclosure SE of the Copse and, with it, the two small conjoined round enclosures and the triangular enclosure immediately to their N (Site WC *below*, Chaps 7 and 8). The rectangular (Delling) enclosure in the `blank` area 200 m W of the Copse is also post-medieval (*below* Chap 3, p. 00).

The fourth particular area of note in terms of its AP evidence of relative chronology lies to the NE yet again, on Manton Down. Again, the matter is one of relationships between fields and other features, in this case a long barrow and a small rectangular enclosure. The fields are those just inside the `Limit of (AP) survey` SE of The Beeches (D) and at the N end of Block 14. They lie on the distinctive NNW/SSE orientation (*above* p. 00). At the NE corner of one of the fields in the core of the system lies the traditional site of the Manton long barrow, a position which, though disputed, there seems no reason to doubt, not least on AP evidence (*below* Chap 3, p. 00). The fields would appear to acknowledge the barrow's presence and are presumably later than it (though, strictly-speaking, they could be contemporary too).

In contrast, a small rectangular enclosure 300 m SSW of the long barrow seems to be integral with the system: it is not only amid the fields and on a field

boundary, perhaps even placed at a fields' junction, but it is orientated with them and, c 50 m to its W, a linear ditch which seems to bound the block of fields and express its axial arrangement. The evidence allows the interpretation that fields and enclosure are likely to have been contemporary. Gingell (198X, fig 96) incorrectly shows the enclosure within its own larger earthwork enclosure and, almost certainly correctly (though not so mapped on our map), relates both fields and small enclosure to an eastward continuation of the ditched trackway crossing the northern slope of Fyfield Down (*above* p.00).

### ***Ridge-and-furrow*** (fig ££)

The last general point to make in this appraisal of relative chronology is that some of the downland bears ridge-and-furrow, everywhere overlying other earthworks. Here we are concerned only with this phenomenon surviving as earthworks i.e. slight undulations on the surface of the ground, in grassland. We are not discussing ridge-and-furrow as a whole, nor its economic, tenorial or historical significance (*cf* Chaps 9 & 10, pp 00 & 00). Its distribution overall can almost certainly be best understood within the framework of parishes and tithings, but its survival has much to do with subsequent landuse.

Eleven groups of ridge-and-furrow are detected on fig. 00. The large one in Blocks 17, 18 & 19 contains the slight cropmark remains in the permanent arable of the Overtons and Lockeridge, and the whole of the group in Blocks 4 & 5 is similarly now under crop (or recently restored grass) though formerly marginal grassland (*above* p. 00). Since The Ridgeway marks the boundary between Avebury and West Overton, the long row of ridge-ends butting up to its W side presumably relate to happenings in Avebury parish; but the six small patches E from The Ridgeway as far as Headlands (*above* p. 00) complementarily 'belong' to West Overton. The two patches SW and NW of the EIA enclosure are in the permanent arable, making the W-E alignment of the northern patch of some interest since it lies across the southerly slope. Three of the other four patches are actually among what were the earthworks of a probably extensive, rectilinear RB settlement, a settlement on which a later settlement might well have obtruded (*above* p. 00). It is conceivable that some functional/chronological relationship might have existed between these independently observed evidences of a relatively 'late' settlement and adjacent, similarly relatively late, ridge-and-furrow. Could the latter conceivably represent some local cultivation around a post-Roman/medieval farmstead?

The two groups of ridge-and-furrow to the N of Green Street have not been studied on the ground or documentarily but presumably represent marginal cultivation at the eastern end of, respectively, Avebury and Winterbourne Monkton parishes (CHECK THIS). That to the N is presumably related to Wick Farm, and the slight remains to the SE similarly probably relate to Temple Farm.



That leaves five groups which are archaeologically - though not necessarily historically, - of the most interest as ridge-and-furrow visible on the ground and invariably overlying earlier earthworks. The group on Overton Down covers c 29 ha. (72 acres), its furlongs fitting into the skeleton of the ancient landscape as was long ago observed by Crawford (1928, Pl. XIX). Sometimes the ridge-and-furrow over-rides `Celtic` field lynchets, usually those lying SW-NE, but it usually respects the earthworks on the NW-SE orientation. It markedly respects the double lynchet track through the old fields on the SW/NE axis and it also stops short of the track on the same axis beside the Roman settlement, Overton Down South. It is not obviously associated with any contemporary settlement nearby, though it is possible that one lay at or near Down Barn (see above, p. 00, and *below* Chap. 3, p. 00 where there is a detailed examination of much of this area). It is noticeable elsewhere that ridge-and-furrow respects RB trackways (: note for chap 10 discussion: was OGSC right after all? - i.e. that the `ribs` were RB. Or can this respect be explained simply because the tracks were big, or did they continue to mark some boundary line still operative, like the parish/tithing boundaries in med. time?).

The other four groups lie to the NE on higher downland. On Fyfield Down, where the evidence has long been familiar but ignored on Allen`s famous air photograph (Pl. <>), ridge-and-furrow covers c 13 ha. (31 acres) in two blocks, N-S immediately east of Wroughton Copse and W-E on the east of the Down where it runs out on the side of a minor side-coombe. Its N edge is beside the RB trackway and its W edge respects the trackway descending to the Copse. Its S edge just E of the Copse lies immediately N of the C13 settlement (WC in Chap. 7) with which it was presumably associated. It is the only group of ridge-and-furrow on the Downs with such a satisfactory association and chronological horizon.

Immediately NW of the Fyfield Dwn group is another on Totterdown. It lies on the other side of the SW/NE axial trackway just referred to and either side of a NW/SE trackway within the same axial arrangement. A further patch of ploughing on the N of the parallel trackway to the N may be within the same group. Again the furlongs lie on the two orientations, NW-SE and SW-NE. The ridge-and-furrow covers almost exactly a quarter of the area of that on Overton Down, 7 ha. (16 acres). No definite settlement associated with it has been found, but it is a possibility that the (CHECK) ?C18 farmstead of `Old Totterdown` has earlier origins (see below Chap. 9, p. 00).

On Clatford Down, between The Beeches (D) and the NW-SE trackway across the N reaches of Fyfield Down, is another group of ridge-and-furrow. It is again in two furlongs oriented respectively NNW-SSE and WNW-ESE. The area involved is again roughly 7 ha. (16 acres). Most, but not all, of it lies in Preshute, on the E side of the Fyfield parish boundary; but the boundary line as depicted on OS 1:10000 does actually lie across the ridge-and-furrow. A context for this evidence

of cultivation may well be provided by what is assumed to be a settlement in The Beeches where C13 pottery has been recorded (see below Chaps 3 & 9).

To the SE, the last group of ridge-and-furrow overlies earlier fields and a small rectangular enclosure (*above* p. 00) on Manton Down. The remains were in old grassland until mid-century but are now largely ploughed out in an area which has much-changed. It has not been examined critically on the ground but the AP evidence suggests that the ridge-and-furrow may well have been an outer extension of the permanent arable further S on Clatford Down. It does not necessarily require its own settlement. Though high on the Downs and a relatively long way (*c* 3 kms) from the valley settlements of Clatford and Manton, this group is not far from settlements at Manton House, probably not old, and Rockley, present in 1086. (CHECK this last entry somehow: VCH???? - it is suspect since the area lies just outside my ken and I don't know its tenurial or other history).

Perhaps the most important points about the ridge-and-furrow are two. The fact of its existence high on the downland is now demonstrated beyond doubt. Though this is now a common-place, it was not even perceived as such when the project began and its recognition was one of the early break-throughs in understanding this landscape. The second point is that, given its existence, it not only is not ubiquitous but is quite clearly disposed on the landscape in a non-random pattern of patches. This suggests some accommodation might well be found with documentary evidence discussed elsewhere (see below Chap. 9, p. 00).

### ***Absolute chronology***

Clearly the AP map as such can say little about actual dates; and this is not the place either to anticipate or make assumptions about detailed evidence to be presented and discussed below. Within the framework of relationships outlined above, however, simply from the AP and earthwork evidence it is perfectly apparent that we are looking at a composite, complex and long-lived landscape. Monumentally, the earliest features depicted here are the long barrows, presumably of the 4th millennium though none are closely dated here by excavation. The round barrows, generally of the period 2500-1500 BC, and the map contains hints that the organised landscapes it pieces together began to appear in that period, probably after rather than before *c* 2000BC. The fragmentary NNW/SSE field system (15.5°: here and below the three oriented landscapes described on the AP map are distinguished by the degrees W of N of their main axis) may well represent the remains of that `Early/Middle Bronze Age` landscape, though in cultural terms it seems more likely to be `Middle/Late BA` and chronologically of *c* 1500-900 BC. The long linear ditch across the N of Overton Down and Totterdown should fit in here. The great spread of NW/SE` (46°) landscape is from the EIA onwards (*c* 600 BC) up to and including the C1-2 AD when the trackway system through the fields reached its developed form, not

least to connect new settlements like Overton Down South. It was in later C1 too that the N/S (7°) field system stretched N from the new Roman road on Overton Hill, perhaps with an outlying block to the W where Green Street was later to run and certainly contemporary with another block of Roman fields on Totterdown. The final major phase of activity as illustrated by AP evidence was in medieval times when areas of downland, outside the permanent arable, were cultivated. This is demonstrated by surviving ridge-and-furrow, at its best on Overton Down, where it is not independently dated, and on Fyfield Down where a context in at least the C13 is firmly indicated by association with a settlement of that date. Later phases of land-use are neither very obvious nor widespread in terms of AP evidence, but farming continued and is indicated by a few sites such as the Delling enclosure. More recently race-horse-training has become a main function of the Downs. It too has a characteristic archaeology as recorded from the air but, in the interests of graphic clarity, it is one which has been omitted from these maps,

This discussion has dealt primarily only with air photographic evidence as mapped over the northern part of our study area. We now turn to the field archaeology of the whole study area, from all sources.