FWP49

file 4edfyf.doc. rewritten in almost final draft to 11.iv.96 when printed out at 10800 wds. A few points to check/amplify but archaeologically this is it.. Copied to AC/GA. pjf

CHAPTER 4

EXCAVATION: EIGHT SITES ON OVERTON AND FYFIELD DOWNS

The nine sites are as follows, listed in their order of description (fig. 4.00):

4.A.i. OD II: Neolithic *polissoir/*medieval stone quarry
ii. OD III: Neo/BA occupation/mod. stone clearance wall
iii. OD I: Beaker occupation/BA linear ditch
4.B TD VIII: BA linear ditch and fields
4.C TD IX: BA linear ditch and fields with ard-marks
4.D FL I-III: 'Celtic' field lynchets
4.E TD I-III: Roman field system
4.F Overton Down Experimental Earthwork: IA/RB material
4.G Down Barn post-Roman enclosure on RB occupation and prehistoric sequence
4.H Delling enclosure: post-medieval settlement

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological excavation was a key part of the methodology used in the project. In concept, it was always the hand-maiden of both the main objectives and other lines of enquiry, though at times its own prerogatives temporarily took over (*see below* Chaps. 5-7). Initially, however, each project excavation was planned to answer specific questions arising from fieldwork, mainly to elucidate sequence and function in trying to understand the workings of the landscape at various times, and therefore its evolution.

In the event, excavation was confined to the downland over the northern part of the two parishes (fig. 1.00). They occupy some 26 sq. kms. (*c* 2590 ha.; 6400 acres) of which less than a hectare (*c* 2 acres), that is about 0.03%, were excavated. Excavation, in other words, quantitatively fell somewhat short of the size of areas routinely examined in the 1980-90s and did not begin to approach the objective of total excavation of a parish which this author has long felt desirable if we really want to change perception of what actually went on in the English landscape. A different excavation strategy to that followed here could have produced totally different results. Several similar excavation programmes to that described here (Chaps. 4-7) could be profitably pursued in other parts of the study area; and indeed other lines of enquiry could well be pursued in the Fyfod core area itself. The point is touched on again in Chap. 12 (p. 00).

Excavation was, clearly, highly selective in this project, not only in its size, absolute and relative, but more particularly in its targets. It was used specifically to date, and to examine the structure of, fields, a key relict element of the

downland landscape; and to investigate the nature of some other features related to fields and land-use. Although environmental investigation and sampling at 1990s standards was not undertaken, the environmental dimension was conceptually there from the start, not least because of the influence of the Experimental Earthworks Committee in general and Professor G. W. Dimbleby and his then post-graduate student (now Professor) J. G. Evans in particular (reflected throughout Jewell 1963 and Bell *et al.* 1996; *see* also Fowler and Evans 1967, and Evans 1972, 318-22). Logistically, the main excavation effort went into fairly extensive work on three settlements, respectively of late prehistoric, late Roman and medieval date, which together provided a useful chronological and functional range across the landscape (Chaps. 5-7). Here we first report briefly on eight other excavations which, like the big ones, were conceived as small intrusions but, unlike the big ones, stayed small. They all provided, as was intended, critical evidence about phases of landscape development. Five of them (4.A-4.E) were carried out directly by the project team; one (4.F) was carried out by others in pursuing other but related objectives in the project's core area (involving this author in another guise, not least as director of excavations); and two (4.G, 4.H) were executed by others as a direct result of Fyfod fieldwork and on the project's suggestion.

A longer, more detailed version of this text exists in the Archive. Several other archaeological excavations have been carried out in the area and its immediate vicinity, both before and since 1959 when the first project trench was cut (Cutting 1 on site WC, *see* Chap. 7). They are listed and briefly summarised at the end of this chapter.

4.A Overton Down North (Pls. 4.00, 4.00; figs. 4.00-4.00)

Three small excavations were carried out close to each other at the N end of Overton Down (fig. 00). Each one examined a different feature or structure and had specifically different objectives, so the locations could have been labelled three separate sites; but together they investigated the possibility that each feature was related within an the area with a certain homogeneity i.e. that fragments of a former complex might have survived. The point was not proven but there seems merit in treating the three excavations together as an investigation into a single site, Overton Down North.

The three features still exist (1996), undisturbed since their partial excavation. In the roughly chronological order in which they will be described, they are a split block of sarsen stone believed to be a Neolithic stone axe-sharpening bench (cutting OD II); a short line of sarsen stones immediately W of the last (OD III); and a bank and ditch passing a few metres to the south which was sectioned slightly uphill (cutting OD I; all fig. 4.00). The bank and ditch was subsequently also sectioned further east on Totterdown (TD VIII and IX, fig. 3.00).

4.A.i Neolithic *polissoir* (OD II)

'...investigations carried out [around *polissoirs*] in the hope of discoveries have always proved unrewarding' (Lacaille 1963, 193)

The stone was discovered by Inigo Jones in 1962 and reported on, after 'repairing to the spot under his conduct', by Lacaille (1963, 191) whose phrase so assuredly links the discovery to another Inigo Jones (Ucko *et al.* 19**) and Fyfod to the antiquarian tradition. Lacaille's (1963) description and discussion are so good, with excellent illustrations, that they need not be repeated here. It is important, however, to appreciate that the *polissoir* or sarsen bench had been split N-S. Its western part of unknown size had been removed at some unknown date (though reasonably imagined as C19-20, King 1968). On the one hand it seemed a remarkable stroke of fortune that the polished and grooved patch at the stone's SE (Pl. 4.00) corner had survived the stone-breakers' destruction; on the other, one wonders what was on the perhaps larger part of the stone which has disappeared. It should be additionally recorded that close and repeated examination of the bench has shown that much of its upper surface has in fact been polished; and that the 'focal patch' is itself the product of time, for some grooves cut others, and some cut through previously polished areas. Two other polished, recumbent stones have also been noted further south on Overton Down (info. G. Swanton), but long-term if unsystematic observation of thousands of sarsens makes it unlikely that such stones are common now. With so many thousands removed or partly-removed, it can now never be known, however, whether such stones were formerly common.

This is merely a summary of the small excavation in 1963 which followed up the discovery of the *polissoir* in an area which was being critically examined anyway (*above*, Chap. 3, 'window' 1). The *polissoir* was, after all, probably one of the earliest visible features on the downs and some information about its context would be useful in a landscape sense.The main objective was to explore the possibility of Neolithic activity/settlement beside or near it.

Four small cuttings were excavated on three sides of the stone, but none on the W where a block of sarsen had long been removed (fig. 4.00). No structures or significant features were found in plan and the stratigraphy was consistently straightforward (Pl. 4.00, fig. 00 with layer details in caption). Layers 1 and 2, essentially what were to become the so familiar topsoil of humus underlain by worm-sorted flints, were disturbed, probably by rabbits as much as the sarsen-breakers. The material appeared to be redeposited on top of an earlier ground surface, inferentially of medieval or earlier date (*see below*). At the N end of the sarsen bench, however, the lip of a pit or trench was partly excavated. It showed clearly in plan as a feature dug into the top of an old but undated surface at the level of the disturbed top of the Clay-with-Flints; it was filled with flinty, clayer humus similar to that into which it was cut. In the top of that filling was a heavily weathered sarsen *c* 60 x 45 cms and a cluster of smaller, broken sarsen stones. The hole was at least 45 cms deep, its bottom as excavated marked by an

increase in the density of flints. The evidence, though incomplete, suggested very strongly that the feature excavated was part of a hole dug to support the the *polissoir* as an upright stone. The excavation was stopped, however, because enough had been done to demonstrate that, whatever the structural interest (which others may wish to explore), the immediate vicinity of the *polissoir* seemed unlikely to contribute significantly to our landscape objectives.

In a sense the most interesting landscape point to emerge from this small exercise was represented, not by Neolithic revelations but by a half-penny of King John (1197-1206, identified by the late Hugh Shortt, then curator of Salisbury Museum). Near it was an iron wedge; both were found in layer 2 at a depth of *c* 15 cms. The wedge exactly fitted the wedge-marks along the split W edge of the recumbent stone, the *polissoir*, which for reasons unknown was left by the stone-breakers. There was also at 20 cms depth half of an iron horse-shoe, probably of late or post-medieval date. This somewhat unexpected evidence seemed to indicate active stone-breaking *c* 1200 at the time that people were living not so far away at Wick (*above* in Chap 3) and possibly beginning to occupy *Raddun* (*below* in Chap. 7); with perhaps later visits too.

Earlier activity was indicated by 20-30 flint flakes (*see* Everton flint report) including 3 micro-flakes, 8 sarsen chips and a sarsen 'flake'; but there was no spread of stone debris of the sort that one might expect from stone-axe manufacture. Polishing roughouts would not, however, leave much material. Only the sarsen material even hinted at the possibility of stone axe-manufacturing, and to remark thus is special pleading since sarsen axes are rare (CHECK this statement with ?Isobel Smith/ TWA Neo. expert?). More interesting is the possibility that the stone, then much larger than now, once stood upright. A larger excavation around its N end would be necessary to settle the matter but, if it was once a standing stone, presumably that was before it was used as a *polissoir*. Such a sequence would contrast with polished sarsens re-used in the West Kennet Avenue and in the West Kennet long barrow (Burl 1979, ++, and Piggott 1963, %%).

Excavation OD II did not, then achieve its initial objectives, rather bearing out Lacaille's expectations in the opening quotation and supporting his interpretation that such *polissoirs* were likely to be 'open places' (1963, 193). It produced two unexpected results, however, of considerable landscape interest some 4000 years apart. A somewhat squat upright stone *c* 2.10 m. tall and 1.80 m. wide may well have stood here in early-mid-Neolithic times before it was laid flat to use for polishing - perhaps grinding might be a better word? - stone axes, presumably in the 3rd millennium if not earlier. And this same spot is then witness to sarsen stone-breaking being under way by at latest the late C12/early C13.

4.A.ii Stone structure (cutting OD III; Pl. 4.00, figs. 4.00, 4.00)

Slightly uphill of and just a few metres NW of the *polissoir* is a somewhat irregular line of sarsens, then unclear in form and nature but now interpreted as the remains of a former clearance boundary of land to the north (*above* Chap. 3, p. 00). At what was thought to be its ENE end in 1963, when the feature was obscured by bushes, brambles and nettles, a small embanked depression appeared to be associated physically with visible 'wall' stones at a slight suggestion of a bend towards the *polissoir.* Had the point been as clear then as now, this small excavation would not have taken place. It was meant to be a single cutting merely to check whether any structure existed which might be, or have been, related to either or both the *polissoir* and the Beaker occupation which by then was known to exist in OD I (*below*).

The main excavated feature, the 'embanked depression', was a pit which cut everything else including the topsoil. It was almost certainly recent (fig. 4.00): a Home Guard or other military origin seems most likely. It seemed to be the source of a line of 'cob' which ran W-E through the original N-S cutting and N-S through the W-E extension, as if passing through a right angle. This chalky material, which looked like a wall foundation with 'spill' to either side, proved to be but a few centimetres thick and to lie on top of a former topsoil i.e. it was the upcast from the bottom of the pit where it cut into Chalk below Clay-with-Flints.

The short length of three stones exposed showed the sarsen wall to conform to the description above: a line of single sarsens side by side, partly under the chalk 'cob' and with a pile-up of material from the pit on their N side. The stones themselves sat on rather than in a flinty layer between the top of the Clay-with-Flints and the bottom of the former topsoil, suggesting that their placement was not too long ago i.e. after the formation of the characteristic worm-sorted layer 2. A line of sarsens roughly placed at the edge of marginal land clearance in the C18 or C19 is a distinct possibility, though the line of sarsens was undated archaeologically.

Nevertheless, 24 separate finds-contexts were recorded in this small excavation, 13 of them 'flint flakes' in layer 2 or the top of the Clay-with-Flints. A sarsen flake occurred in the last; and a leaf-shaped flint point,a beautiful implement, occurred in layer 2 right at the S end of the cutting. Overall, here was the same sort of material in a similar context to that in OD II, suggesting that the area was indeed one of activity in one or more phases during the 3rd millennium +/- a century or two (*see below* OD I).

From OD II and III, therefore, tiny excavations close together around the 244 m. (800 ft.) contour, enough evidence was produced to hint at the following phases in the development and use of this particular local landscape:

i. Standing stone: early/mid Neolithic
ii. Axe-grinding bench, and some flint/stone-working: mid/late Neo
iii. Flint-working/?occupation: late Neo/EBA

vi. Sarsen-breaking: *c* AD 1200
vii. Military activity: ?1940s

The sequence seems reasonably secure; the dating is partly supposition; the numbering of the phases is in anticipation of OD I in section A.A.iii immediately *below*:

4.A.iii Linear ditch (OD I; Pl. 4.00, figs. 4.00, 4.00)

This linear feature was and is a bank and ditch for much of its length and has been interpreted as a track at least in parts (F.4 in Bowen and Fowler 1962; Lacaille 1963, 190: 'credibly part of an ancient trackway'; discussed above in Chap. 2, p. 00, Chap 3, p. 00, and *below* pp. 00, 00). It was important to examine its structure or structures, and to date it and its phases, because it stretched W-E right across the N part of the study area and was related *en passant* to a number of features. It therefore provided a crucial horizontal datum in landscape terms, with a potential for both functional and chronological information. 4 ft. wide cuttings in such a wide landscape were clearly not going to answer all questions, for the chances of finding stratified and dateable evidence were small; but it was hoped that by placing them carefully in the light of fieldwork some relative dating and possibly structural evidence might be established. In a conscious pattern of controlled variation, OD I was placed close to the highest point of the bank and ditch's course on Upper Chalk, immediately E and slightly down-slope of the Ridgeway (fig. 3.00). It was also not far from the *polissoir*. TD VIII was meant to provide a marked contrast, testing whether morphological form varied with topographical and geoligical situation. It was cut *c* 0.5 km. E of and below OD I, on Clay-with-Flints and SW-facing at a point where clearly defined, stone-walled fields were laid off south from the bank (*above* in Chap 3, Pl. 3.00, fig. 3.00). TD IX was higher up the slope of Totterdown, again on Clay-with-Flints but carefully sited to test the field deduction that the ditch continued up-slope under a 'Celtic' field after the track along it had turned off to the SE (*above* Chap 3, p. 00).

This part merely describes the excavations through the bank and ditch, beginning with OD I close to the two excavations just described (fig. 4.00); and then, after a brief discussion of the north end of Overton Down, moving on to the other two cuttings through it on Totterdown (TD VIII and IX; *below* p. 00).

OD I: excavation showed the slight remains of a bank to survive on the S side of the ditch. Its rear was marked by a sarsen stone at the foot of the slight superficial rise, and by the end of a tenuously-surviving old ground surface. In it and its erosion products at the rear were 3 flint flakes five, probably Beaker/EBA, sherds. The ditch to the N was 1.34 m. deep below the OLS, cut entirely into Chalk though presumably it had originally cut through a thin layer of Clay-with-Flints. The main features of the ditch filling were the relatively large amount of humic, not chalk, deposit, and the near-horizontal layer of chalk lumps across the

upper part of that humic material (fig. 4.00). This was interpreted at the time as the surface of a trackway laid in the top of what at the time would have been a slight linear depression physically but may also (still?) have been a boundary. The same zone contained a Beaker sherd, two flint flakes and an iron nail. The first were presumably residual at that level, weathering out from the ditch sides; the last is a small piece of evidence on which to hang a landscape but it does not stop the trackway level being Romano-British, as was guessed at the time, and now part of a major re-organisation evidenced over the whole of the study area (*above* Chap 2, p. 00, *below* Chap. 10, p. 00).

The landscape and structural sequence evidenced in this cutting is therefore of a Beaker activity area cut through by a long ditch and covered by its bank. At the foot of Avebury Down to the W this same ditch cuts through some 'Celtic' fields (VAP insert ref no.) so a post-Beaker horizon is not perhaps surprising. Conversely, other fields in the same area are laid off from it (fig. 2.00; *cf* ditch/fields relationship in vicinity of cutting TD VIII *below,* p. 00). After a long period of deposition, the line of the ditch at OD I was probably re-used as a track after receiving a chalk surface, probably (though not so-dated independently here) *c* AD 100. The earthwork grassed over and has remained undisturbed at this point ever since (though quarried away a few metres to the W).

This evidence and its interpretation can be merged with that from OD II and III *(above*) to suggest a local landscape sequence for this northern end of Overton Down:

i. Standing stone: early/mid Neolithic
ii. Axe-grinding bench, and some flint/stone-working: mid/late Neo
iii. Flint-working/?occupation with Beaker pottery: late Neo/EBA
iv. Boundary bank and ditch (+? field wall): MBA/LBA
v. Trackway along BA boundary ditch: *c* AD 100
vi. Sarsen-breaking: *c* AD 1200
vii. Field-clearance and arable to north C18-19
viii. Military activity: ?1940s

This area clearly has a high potential for producing further information about several matters, its main significance probably lying in its hints of activity and structure in the (fourth?) third and second millennia BC. These small excavations have been suggestive rather than conclusive but together, and at minimal cost, they provided an outline of landscape sequence in a fairly unpromising-looking *locale* towards the higher northern limits of the study area.

4.B Linear ditch continued, **Totterdown** (TD VIII) (Pl. 4.00, fig. 4.00)

The linear ditch sectioned in OD I *above* as part of a localised complex was further examined in its own right as a significant landscape feature. It was next examined with a single trench across the ditch and its slight bank on its south at

a point, roughly a third of the way up the SW-facing slope of Totterdown, where 'early' stone-walled fields appeared to be laid off from it (*above* Chap. 3, p. 00, fig. 3.00; and *cf* comments on ditch/field relationships in previous section).

Remains of the bank were very slight, represented by a thickening of a layer of small fints and a single sarsen stone lying on disturbed Clay-with-Flints at the 'front' (fig. 4.00). Two (EBA?MBA? CHECK) sherds came from this disturbed layer, which was cut by the inner edge of the ditch. Its dimensions were similar to those in cutting OD I, though here it was cut into Clay-with-Flints, not Chalk. The filling was uncomplex, indicating a long process of deposition in its progression from coarser soil with large flints in its pointed base to a fine brown (wind-blown?) soil beneath the topsoil.

Unexpectedly, given its remote position, the ditch produced seven stratified artefacts. Three sherds, all ?E/MBA urn, and a flint flake occurred in the primary fill among the large flints low in the point of the ditch bottom. Almost certainly this material weathered out of the Clay-with-Flints subsoil, probably in the first few years after the ditch was dug. Two further sherds, respectively on and just above a tip-line, may have been similarly derived and come to rest on a temporary surface stabilised during the ditch's depositional development. The same could be said about both of the next artefacts higher in section, a sherd and a flint flake. The last lay slightly up-slope to the north, and could have come from the outer, northern ditch side; but all the other artefacts almost certainly derived from the south, either weathering out of the disturbed subsoil or - a different scenario, - from post-construction activity on the bank. The two sherds under the bank incline interpretation towards the former.

This cutting sugested, therefore, that some E/MBA activity occurrred here which was subsequently overlaid and cut through by a bank and ditch. Given the landscape nature of the Fyfod enquiry overall, the evidence is not surprisingly interpreted further in terms of an area of manuring for cultivation, perhaps in fields, becoming more orderly with a new bank and ditch marking the edge of cultivation and, if they did not already exist, fields being laid out systematically from it. The sherds obviously provide a *terminus post quem* for this change which, in the complete absence of any later dating evidence, hint that it may well have occurred around the middle of the 2nd millennium BC.

4.C Linear ditch continued, **Totterdown** (TD IX) (Pl. 4.00, fig. 3.00)**I**:

The same bank and ditch was also sectioned higher up Totterdown, again where Clay-with-Flints overlay UpperChalk. The cutting was planned as much to demonstrate that the feature existed at this point as it was to date it; for the

'obvious' earthwork had ended (on OS) and its apparent continuation had swung off to the SE (*above* Chap 3, p.00, fig. 3.00).

The bank was relatively well-preserved, having been respected at this point by the cultivation which had occurred in the 'Celtic' field. Its southern edge had been a sarsen drystone revetment of which some of the lowest two courses remained. From it had collapsed a spread of stones over a very thin layer of flinty soil. In this protective context, four grooves had survived, each scratched into the surface of the Chalk for a depth of *c* 1-1.5 cms. They were slightly asymetrical in profile. The southernmost ran somewhat diagonally across the cutting; the other three were fragmentary but all four were parallel to each other and approximately parallel to the rear revetment of the bank. They failed to re-appear in a small test-pit to their west where the protective context was also absent.

The grooves were interpreted as ard-marks. Their very specific location prompted the thought that they may have been created when extra pressure was applied to the ard during a ploughing-up of the headland alongside the fixed field boundary at this point. In contrast, a few metres to the SW, cultivation within the 'Celtic' field had passed over both the bank and the top of the ditch, the outer edge of the ditch apparently becoming the edge of the field. At the point exavated, the bank's revetment was the field edge, and the creation of a slight negative lynchet at its foot seems to have reduced the amount of cultivable soil and the whole of the Clay-with-Flints subsoil. The underlying Chalk was thus able to 'receive' the ard-marks.

The bank itself lay directly on top of Clay-with Flints, consisting of a matrix of flinty soil with sarsens in it on the south and smaller sarsens on its top in the centre. It had originally been fronted on the ditch side by a drystone revetment but all that remained *in situ* was a ledge cut into the subsoil where it had presumably stood. Flints lay on theledge, trailing down into the ditch behind a a block of the revetment which had slipped down as a small but cohering piece of drystone masonry. The stones had come to rest in the top of the main filling in the ditch centre, a brown, stone-free humus equivalent to the similar material in OD I (*above)*. Below it was a layer of flinty soil and, in the rounded ditch bottom, the weathered product of eroded subsoil containing flecks of charcoal. Maybe these reflected a phase of land-clearance by burning before or at the time of the ditch-digging, but what is reasonably clear is that the banks stood, drystone walled to both back and front, for some considerable time. The collapse of the front revetment was certainly relatively late in the ditch's depositional history, and perhaps absolutely too. Indeed, in the light fof evidence specifically from FL I (*below*) and generally, the possibility exists thatn the stone structural elements may relate to the early RB phase. Three sarsen stones and a heap of sarsen chippings also lay high in the filling along the ditch's outer edge, presumably remnant of some 'late' sarsen-breaking. Subsoil seemed to have been 'weeping' into the ditch until late in its depositional sequence but the indications were that grass finally grew over the filling a long time ago. No artefactual or other

evidence for absolute date came from the cutting. That the ard-marks appeared to be related to the bank suggested the bank and ditch were prehistoric, and no evidence countermanded that.

In general, the bank and ditch appeared from excavated evidence from three cuttings to be later than Beaker/EBA (Cuttings OD I, TD VIII) and earlier than RB (OD IX). The absence of EIA pottery from all cuttings may be significant, suggesting the linear boundary belonged to an early phase of landscape development. This too is hinted at by the association with a block of stone-walled fields at the foot of Totterdown, independently suggested as 'early' on morphological grounds. Overall, the bank and ditch as a long land boundary was not closely dated but is most likely to have originated in the mid/late 2nd-millennium BC. Its functions, first as a boundary feature and, more circumspectly, as a RB track, seem more certain.

4.D. 'Celtic' field lynchets, Fyfield Down (FL 1-III) (Pls. 4.00,4.00; figs. 4.00, 4.00)

Introduction
By 1961 it was clear that the initial reason for excavating WC (Chap. 7) i.e. to date the underlying 'Celtic' fields, was not going to be helpfully illumined there. So it was decided to tackle the matter head on by excavating one or more large lynchets at the sides of 'Celtic' fields. After considerable inspection, one was chosen more or less in the middle of Fyfield Down (and of Maj. Allen's famous air photograph (*frontespiece*)) in the belief that it was clear of medieval cultivation. It was recognised that logistically the excavation would be akin to sectioning a hill-fort rampart, even though the largest lynchet on the Down was deliberately avoided. That chosen was nearly 3 m. high. lying N-S along the W side of a field and just N of its SW corner. The trench through it was 15.3 m. long (FL I), with an addition through the lynchet uphill on the E side of the 'Celtic' field (FL 2; fig. 4.00). The line of examination was extended 25.80 m. further E to a test pit (FL 3) in the top of the nearest ridge of ridge-and-furrow lying N-S in the 'Celtc' field adjacent to that sectioned (fig. 4.00). It was intended that this line of examination would illuminate, as well as chronology, the questions of why and how such large lynchets had accumulated on a slope of only 3º. Four small cuttings were also excavated right on the corner of the 'Celtic' field itself to elucidate the main structural question arising from FL i (FL 4, 5). The whole exercise was carried out over the first fortnight of August, 1961 (Bowen and Fowler 1962, 105, Pl. IIA; Fowler and Evans 1967).

The excavation
FL I was excavated by hand, layer by layer. The soils varied in their proportions of chalk, humus and flint but essentially they all consisted of small granules and had clearly been pulverised to varying degrees. Fig. 4.00 makes the main stratigraphical points graphically. To provide a time-frame for it immediately, layer I/top of 2 contained a scatter of shrapnel fragments, presumably of late

1940s vintage (*above* Chap. 3, p.00); layer 2, the worm-sorted flinty residue from layer 1, contained a scattering of EIA and RB sherds, mainly the latter.The bulk of the cultivation may well, then, have taken place by soon after AD 100, by which time the top of the lynchet, essentially the present ground surface, had reached it existing height above the old ground surface. The question of dating is discussed further *below*.

Below layer 2 was as much as 1.20 m. of accumulated deposits (*see* caption to fig. 4.00 for layer descriptions). At their base, lying directly on solid Upper Chalk, layer 6 was a light brown soil with flints and layer 7 was a dark ginger soil with flints, small chalk lumps and flecks of charcoal. The last was presumably a disturbed, probably cultivated, old ground surface. Under it and cut into Chalk was a shallow depression filled with light brown soil, flints and chalk lumps, probably a tree-hole (Evans 1972, fig. 120; similar to one carefully excavated and similarly interpreted at the Overton Down experimental earthwork 1992, Bell *et al* 1996, 76-77, 140, figs. 7.12, 7.13).

Well down the slope of the scarp forming the front of the lynchet, and very near the present grass surface, was a small drystone wall (*cf.* TD IX *above*). All the rest of stratification was related to it. Layers 3, 4 and 5 had piled up behind it, but in each case the crest of each layer was well back from the wall itself. An increase in the amount of humic material immediately behind the wall characterised the deposit between layers 3 and 5: perhaps it resulted from turf and topsoil developing and then buried in a protected niche immediately behind the wall.

The wall itself stood on a ledge only 15-25 cms. wide at the W end of layer 7. It consisted entirely of smallish sarsen stones, characteristically 30 cms. across, all broken and packed around with large flints making up the body of the structure. A sarsen saddle quern was built into the bottom course (fig. 0.00, 00?). The wall had tipped forward a little, not surprisingly in view of the 1.5 m. of ploughsoil which had accumulated behind it. Yet it had never been a large structure, for no tumble or collapse lay to its front nor was there any sign of robbing. Two or three courses at most probably constituted its original form. It would not therefore have kept animals in or out so its most likely function, if not just decorative, was perhaps tenurial, marking the edge of a property as well as a field.

Layer 7 stopped immediately W of the wall, below it being the steep slope of bare Chalk in the negative lynchet. Some material from the wall and behind it had slipped in but westwards the stratification was topsoil on Chalk.

Slightly more than 100 sherds were retrieved from FL I, all small and many abraded. Their presence can in general be regarded as the accidental by-product of manuring. Even those explicable in the lynchet as derived from the OLS may have arrived there originally with manure in fields earlier than those of the 'drystone-wall' phase. The sherds range in date from possibly Neolithic to

2nd century AD, with nothing later (reCHECK this when receive final TWA pot rpt.). In general, the sherds became earlier with depth. Layer 7 seemed to be a prehistoric ground surface, probably cultivated in the 2nd millennium BC if not earlier. Interpretation then envisaged it being disturbed (again?) in the mid-1st millennium when the visible field system of the 'drystone wall' phase was laid out (Bowen and Fowler 1962, 105).

Re-examination of the stratification, contexts and all the pottery indicates, however, that layer 7 was in fact of late EIA/early RB surface. Sherds 63, 67, 46 and 65 in particular, are all unequivocally RB; and equally unequivocal are sherds 46, on the surface of layer 7, and 83, a rim of an everted rim jar actually under the wall. One of the major implications is the obvious difficulty that there would seem insufficient time between, say, later CI and mid-C2, for lynchets up to 3 m. high to accumulate on a 3º slope as a result of 'normal' cultivation. But to say as much begs the question. Perhaps, in abnormal circumstances of widespread, State-controlled land-exploitation by conquerors, a certain amount of digging and levelling off was undertaken in order to make better fields to begin with. The little wall could well be explained as a marker line in such a scenario. The point is further discussed *below*, p. 00. At this juncture, the 'drystone-wall' phase of fields on Fyfield Down is taken as fitting in with the locally widely-attested period of rapid and substantial landscape re-organisation towards the end of CI (*above* Chap 2, p. 00; *below* Chap. 11, p. 00).

FL2 sought to establish merely whether a drystone wall existed on the other side of the same 'Celtic' field; so it was much shorter than FL I and located where, by analogy, such a wall should be. The remains of a wall were found as predicted, much more disturbed than in FL I but of the same size and form. It rested on an OLS and an accumulation of chalky soils had piled up behind it.

FL 3 was merely a test pit to see if the soil was a greater depth at the centre of a rig in a pattern of ridge-and-furrow. It was not. The topsoil was 20 cms deep, the usual thickness above the Chalk, though here without a flinty layer 2. Two implications were that the latest, presumably medieval, ploughsoil had been flint-free, and that the undulations of the ground surface reflected, or were reflected by, similar undulations in the surface of the bedrock.

FL 4 and 5 (fig. 4.00) were simply to check the presence or otherwise at the 'Celtic' field corner of the drystone wall found in FL I. Only one course of a former wall existed in FL 4; it did not bend round the field corner to the E and, although the evidence was inconclusive, if it continued at all it went straight on southwards. There was just the possibility of a gap, perhaps a gateway, in a southern continuation (FL 5), though the point excavated is shown as damaged by traffic ruts in Allen's 1934 air photograph (*frontespiece*); but then perhaps the downland track went for that point because the obstacle of a lynchet was absent.

Conclusion

This little exercise on Fyfield Down succeeded in dating the 'Celtic' field lynchets and the fields they bounded to a beginning and period of use associated with drystone walling of the late CI AD. Clearly, however, earlier phases of activity, almost certainly cultivation, had occurred in the same area. Nevertheless, these famous Fyfield Down 'Celtic' field lynchets are of early Roman date and were, at least in part, built. At an early stage, with drystone walling just showing among arable fields, the landscape would have looked totally different from the grass-covered downland sheep-runs and horse-gallops of today.

4.E Romano-British field system, Totterdown (TD I-III) (Pl. 4.00, figs. 4.00, 4.00)

A distinct field system isolated early in the project was planned and published (Fowler 1967). Four small cuttings were excavated through one field and three of its boundaries; another cutting was excavated through a field boundary some way away for contrast (fig. 4.00). The boundaries were slight, low banks or lynchetted banks rather than simply lynchets, showing nothing like as clearly on the ground as in Professor St. Joseph's superb air photograph. The aims of the excavation was, as usual, to date the field system and to see if their boundaries contained any structure.

Cutting II (?) in the middle of a field provided the baseline against which to compare the sections through the field boundaries. It showed a straightforward three-layer stratigraphy on Clay-with Flints, with the top of that subsoil disturbed in layer 3. Essentially, all the field edge cuttings showed similar evidence, notably in the insertion of an extra layer between 2 and 3. This was taken to be the remains of a bank or the slight accumulation of ploughsoil against it. It may even have been just the piling up of soil against and on nothing more than an unploughed strip , that is a baulk, between arable plots. In cutting ?? in particular it looked very much as if the 'bank' effect was largely being created by such a baulk, accentuated by a furrow cut through the then-existing topsoil to either side of it. Other than such possibilities,, the field boundaries contained no structure.

The dating evidence was reasonably clear. The cuttings indicated that a scatter of prehistoric pottery (but again no EIA sherds) underlay the area, hinting that probably BA cultivation had occurred in the area. The field system itself was dated by a small number of early Roman sherds, one or two of them from particularly significant contexts (fig. 4.00). There was no material of later date.

Probably the plan is wrong in indicating the long straight, NW-SE bank as being part of the original layout; that was of long rectilinear fields on a NE-SW axis. Their boundaries appear now on air photographs (Pl. 2.00, fig. 2.00) to underlie the larger NW-SE bank which nevertheless, even if structurally later, still seems to respect the overall RB arrangement (*above*, chap 3, p.00).

4.F The site of the Experimental Earthwork, Overton Down (Pls. 4.00, 4.00; figs. 3.00, 4.00)

Excavation here was not part of the Fyfod project nor was it carried out to address questions about the local landscape. Nevertheless, preparation of the ground for the construction of the earthwork in 1960 involved stripping overburden down to the surface of the Upper Chalk, and on five subsequent occasions (1962,1964, 1968, 1976 and 1992) a proper archaeological excavation of the earthwork has been conducted (Jewell 1963, Bell *et al.* 1996). Although that has been done for other purposes, quite a large area has been excavated down to subsoil surface. No archaeological features were visible on the site before work began, however, and none have so far been found during the excavations. A small amount of archaeological material has nevertheless been recorded. Its relevance to Fyfod lies in the fact that the earthwork itself lies within the field archaeology of Overton Down, a point that was appreciated from the beginning (Fowler in Jewell 1963, 64-66). It was concluded there that 'the earthwork ... is sited near the edge of successive arable fields ['Celtic' and medieval] which, though separated in time by a millennium, ended along approximately the same ill-defined line."

[NB the following detail, taken from publications, is OK as far as it goes but there is a fair chance that it can be supplemented in the immediate future. Some certainly, all possibly, of these sherds actually exist, and I should be able to examine them myself. The 1992 material is coming to me mid-May, the rest earlier]

The following data are extracted from Jewell 1963, Dimbleby and Jewell 1966 and Bell *et al.* 1996, amplified by subsequent examination of much of the material
:

1960: six sherds were found during the digging of the earthwork's ditch but are not otherwise contextualised. Of four identified, two of coarse flint-tempered fabric are LBA?, 1 grog-tempered and burnished is EIA?, and one of BB1 fabric is RB.

1962,**1964:** no archaeological finds are recorded in Jewell and Dimbleby 1966

1968: 'archaeological object' is one of the symbols on the published section (Bell *et al.* 1996, fig. 4.4) but not a single one was found in the earthwork proper. The sole such object was a sherd of thick, probably grog-tempered RB pottery at the bottom of the topsoil immediately beyond the outer lip of the ditch. That context is equivalent to bottom of layer 1/top of layer 2 on OD XI (*below* Chap 5, p.00). In view of the 'excavation' results from 1976 and 1992, the 1968 and earlier excavations were, from an archaeological point of view, almost certainly defective.

1976: 8 'archaeological objects' were recorded but are otherwise unidentified. Seven were under the bank: four clustered on the interface between the old (1960) land surface and the base of the turf stack, and three were in the flinty

layer 2 at the base of the old topsoil. The eighth was in a turf overhanging the inside edge of the ditch i.e. it had been in the 1960 topsoil on the berm.

1992: archaeological 'finds' came 'principally from the ditch and the stone accumulation at the base of the soil south of the ditch' (layer 2). They included 13 struck flints; one piece of RB pottery and, at the bottom of the topsoil almost 2 m. outside the ditch's outer lip, a piece of tile; 3 pieces of prehistoric pottery, respectively in the base of the profile outside the outer ditch edge, near the bottom of the ditch, and in the turf stack; and two bones, one calcined and one unburnt, from a turf within the turf stack.

Two subsoil features were examined and interpreted as tree-holes, not solution features. That under the berm was covered by an old land surface and contained 'a mollusc assemblage indicating shaded conditions.' An analogy with the hole under the lynchet in FL I is drawn (*above* p. 00; Bell *et al.* 1996, 76-77, 140). All three such features, though natural, are likely to be among the earliest items in the landscape discussed in this report, belonging to a woodland phase before the downs were significantly cleared of tree-cover. They predated all other structures and, judging by the absence of the otherwise apparently ubiquitous flint flakes from their fillings, human activity as represented by worked flints.

Overall, the ground disturbance involved in constructing and monitoring the experimental earthwork has resulted in virtually no archaeological damage - an amazing feat given the nature of its general situation - and, consequently, no significant addition to knowledge about the archaeology of the area. It suggests a low level of non-occupational activity on the spot the earthwork occupies. The artefacts recorded incidentally in conducting the experiment can be best explained by infrequent, or largely non-domestic, manuring of a lightly-used, perhaps locally marginal, area - in effect an interpretation similar to that initially suggested at the beginning of the Fyfod survey. The area, located as far as one can see on earthwork evidence between structural remains of field systems, may indeed have been retained as a patch of pasture in the increasingly organised landscapes from the 2nd millennium BC onwards.

4.G The Down Barn enclosure, Overton Down (Pls. 4.00, 4.00; figs. 4.00, 4.00, 4.00)

This particular earthwork enclosure is described in its landscape context *above*, Chap. 3, p. 00. Trapezoidal in plan, it lies across the bottom of the narrowing dry valley just uphill of Down Barn, with old pasture upslope to its immediate north on Overton Down and permanent arable similarly sited to its south. The former contains, only 100 m. distant, late Roman site OD XII (Chap. 6); the latter may well have been continuously under cultivation since the 10th century AD (Chap.

8).The enclosure's northern ditch cuts along a narrow terrace, or double lynchet track, on the coombe's north side, apparently a continuation down the dry valley of the RB track running right across the Overton Down landscape (figs. 2.00, 3.00). A round pond lay outside an entrance on the enclosure's southern and downhill side. Inside, a low platform lay against the bank on each of the long sides. The whole site has been smoothed over by some form of light cultivation in the early 1970s, so the sharpness of the earthworks and some of the critical detail existing when surveyed in the early 1960s has now gone; but the site is still visible (Pl. 4.00), and damage appears to be only superficial.The position, shape and size, and relationships of this enclosure, suggested it was 'late' in the local landscape sequence and likely to be of considerable significance. This has proved to be the case.

Excavation has occurred twice since the enclosure's discovery in November, 1961, on both occasions with this author's encouragement in the hope of advancing the Fyfod project. Firstly, J.Scantlebury with boys from Marlborough College Archaeological Society started a fairly ambitious trial excavation on four afternoons a week through the summer term of 1962. The work was not renewed but enough had been done to establish the basic stratigraphy. Furthermore it was related to a Roman horizon which predated or was contemporary with the enclosure, a crucial point which has now been clarified (*below*). An interim report was published (Scantlebury in Fowler 1963, 349-50). A second excavation was carried out in 1995 in circumstances described *below.*

The 1962 excavation

The following is a summary of the published interime report (Fowler 1963, 349-50), with interpretive interpolations by this author in [square brackets].

A grid of 10 ft. squares was laid out across the centre of the enclosure but was not completely excavated; and a section was cut through the enclosure bank and ditch on the SW. The ditch was *c* 1.20 m. deep, V-shaped and cut through a humic layer into the Chalk. The bank was merely a low spread of soil and occupation material. Within the enclosure, all over the area excavated, was a rubbly spread of occupation material, "rich in pottery, bone and iron" but without evidence of a substantial structure. "Traces of what may be a small hut were found, defined by two parallel lines of small broken sarsens with a floor of packed chalk between" but the "complete ground plan" was not recovered. [This is the only record of this 'structure', the exact location and stratigraphical context of which are unknown. There is no good reason, however, to doubt the existence of a feature as described. It description now reads similarly to that of the also somewhat ambivalent 'Building 5' subsequently excavated on the adjacent Site OD XII though only recognised in post-excavation analysis (*below* Chap. 6, p.00). This feature was probably in the central area of the western 'platform'. The doubt about its context is only whether it was associated with or laid into the (here apparently late RB) occupation level. The 'platform' itself is now known to be post-Roman (*below*), and so too would be this 'structure' if it was actually on, rather than covered by, the 'platform'. It is one of two possible excavated

structures recorded by the 1962 excavation (for the other *see below*) from inside the enclosure, though a "possible building" was descried in the slight earthworks on the 'platform' on the E side of the enclosure. The critical evidence has now been smudged out but re-interpretation of the plan (fig. 4.00) would suggest the earthworks in question may have been residual elements of the terrace-way, not a building.

The 1962 excavation produced "large quantities of pottery and a considerable amount of animal bone, of which a high proportion appears to be sheep, iron nails, three very eroded bronze coins and the pin of a bronze brooch." Among the pottery were "a fairly soft red ware", a "rather harder, light grey ware", and a "black ware". The last was subdivided into a wheel-made fabric with "a fine burnished surface", and a much more gritty fabric, "apparently hand-made" (This sounds like BB1 and BB2. -pjf). Recognisable forms in this black ware included "low-sided dishes and fairly straight-walled pots with a characteristic outer flange just below the rim". The conclusion was that "the whole assemblage would fit quite well into a late Romano-British context towards the close of the 4th century or possibly rather later." "Two or three stray medieval sherds" were also found.

The occupation layer rested on "a sterile layer of fine, dark brown earthy clay, some 3 ft. [0.90 m] thick at its deepest point and thinning out towards the sides of the valley." [Scantlebury was not to know this but the material was remarkably similar in appearance and texture to that in the upper centre of the linear ditch across Overton Down North and Totterdown, as exposed in cuttings OD I and TD VIII, *above* p.00]. Two suggestions were made. One, that this layer [illustrated here in Pl. 4.00 from 1995] might "represent a flood deposit in the valley bottom", a preference for this interpretation being expressed because of "the archaeological sterility of the layer" [now known not to be the case, *see below*]. Second, that the soil accumulation in the coombe bottom was "the result of accelerated soil creep and rain wash from arable fields on or immediately above its sides" [an interpretation now tending to be preferred, *below* Chaps. 9 and 10, pp. 00, 00].

Beneath this thick humic layer was another rubble layer lying on the Chalk. It apparently contained "a grouping of large sarsen boulders suggesting some form of rectangular structure" [but again this was not followed up and this published phrase is the only record]. From the layer came about half-a-dozen "sherds of undecorated, coarse pottery, rich red-brown in colour and containing a large amount of crushed chalk." [PJF saw some pottery from this layer at the time and seems to recall that one or two sherds might have been 'Beaker' while thinking that in general an EBA phase was probably being indicated].

Unfortunately, the excavation was uncompleted and the records of it disappeared. Considerable efforts to trace them, and/or the excavator, failed. When, therefore, in a remarkable return to the project's origins, a site was needed in 1995 for a small-scale training excavation to follow up an adult

education archaeology course for Bristol University, it was suggested that the 1962 cuttings be re-emptied and their sides cut back to record what was known to be, from memory, a particularly important sequence not just about the enclosure but about the landscape's evolution.

The 1995 excavations

The 1962 excavation plan had been surveyed on to the original field survey at the time so it was possible to relocate the trenches exactly. Furthermore, the outlines of the actual trenches were momentarily visible before new growth of the very, very short, sheep-grazed grass over the site early in 1995. Under the direction of the tutor (and co-landowner) , Gill Swanton emptied the trenches of the main NE-SW cutting with a mechanical back-acter. Work to clean up and record the archaeology proceeded during the first part of 1995. So much data and material were recovered that a full excavation report is now being prepared for publication by the director elsewhere (probably in *Wilts. Archaeol. Mag.*). Meanwhile she has provided full access to the evidence and material to enable the following note to be prepared with particular reference to the matters germane to the Fyfod project i.e. this is a highly selective note by PJF, not GS. We are especially grateful for the photograph of the section (Pl. 4.00), published in preference to a drawn section which, it was agreed, should not be abstracted to go with a short note rather than the full report; for the use of Dr. Sheail's environmental report (STILL TO COME?); and for access to the all the excavated material.

The new excavation essentially confirmed the main points in the interim report. It produced, however, two major chronological differences (*below,* Mesolithic and early RB), and alot more archaeological detail with which we are not particularly concerned here. Stratigraphically, in the centre of the dry valley the coombe floor of solid Chalk lay some 1.5 m. below the present surface, creating the need and the opportunity to explain those 1.5 metres in terms of landscape development (Pl. 4.00). It was covered with a thick, humic old land surface below and in which were evidences of both structure (post-holes) and activity (flints, pottery). This layer contained an area of Mesolithic activity (flints, almost absolutely rare in the study area) with a Neolithic/EBA horizon or horizons on or in its surface. From the Fyfod point of view, the important fact is a 'latest date' of around *c* 2000 BC for a phase which preceded the bulk of the section's (and valley bottom's?) deposit. This was a virtually sterile, thick layer of chocolate-brown humus, as recorded in 1962 above ?EBA/?Beaker sherds (*above).* It was now seen more fully in 1995 stretching, with variations but basically as in Pl. 4.00, right across the width of the enclosure from ditch to ditch and outside.

It remains unclear whether this layer results from long slow accumulation or a sudden circumstances (*above*; further discussed *below* Chap. 10, p.00); but it is interpreted as the product of either or both alluvium and/or colluvium deriving from cultivation of the slopes on either side but particularly on the north (Overton Down). In itself, the layer is not securely dated, though the latest material in it

were a few EBA sherds **(GILL: is this correct?)**. Overlying an EBA phase, however, completely devoid of EIA material, and sealed by early RB material, it seems likely that the layer represents a process, perhaps an event, in the 2nd millennium BC (*above* Chap 2, p.00; *below* Chap 10, p.00).

The bulk of the archaeological material came from an occupation layer apparently stretching across the coombe on top of the thick humus deposit. In some places, indeed, it appeared to be on an land surface which had developed there. In the interim report, the equivalent material was identified as similar to that from OD XII and therefore C4. Close examination of the material from the 1995 excavation highlights the almost total absence of characteristically late RB artefacts and suggests, in contrast, that it is predominantly of C1-2 AD. Most of it came from under or in the bank of the enclosure, or from the make-up of the platform on the SW side of the enclosure (fig. 4.00). There is no doubt, therefore, that the enclosure itself is of late- or post-Roman date.

A context for the C1-2 activity is provided locally by the early Roman phase of landscape organisation generally. Specific to the environs of the Down Barn enclosure is the C1-2 cultivation on Overton Down (*above* Chap 2, p. 00; *below* Chaps. 5, p.00, and 10, p.00); the C2 phase underlying the C4 settlement on OD XII (*below* Chap. 6, p. 00); and the early RB material collected from the surface of settlement Overton Down South (*above* Chap. 3, p.00), of which indeed this layer in the coombe may be a part.

The enclosure itself remains something of a mystery, as it has been since its discovery. The total absence of material associated with it is puzzling, as is the total absence of any material later than late RB apart from two or three medeival sherds. It might, of course, have been constructed for a use not requiring artefacts or generating discarded ones e.g. an animal fold, and could therefore be of any date later than, say, *c* AD 400. The ready availability of medieval and post-medieval artefacts, especially pottery, as witnessed at WC (Chap. 7) and the Delling Enclosure (*below*), and their near-absence from the Down Barn enclosure, inclines interpretation towards its use in a post-Roman/pre-medieval phase, possibly one that was aceramic but more probably one in which, whatever the state of material culture, its use did not lead to the deposition and/or accumulation of rubbish. A cattle pen or sheep fold seems a likely purpose, beside a pond, on marginal land between arable and pasture, and close to an intersection in local tracks and regional routes.

The enclosure may, however, be one of the missing medieval sheep-cotes (*above* Chap. 8, p. 00). Those "two or three stray medieval sherds", only evidenced in that published phrase, may be the slight but significant evidence indicating that here is the Overton equivalent of *Raddun* (especially triangular enclosure C, *above* Chap. 3, p.00, and *below* Chap 7, p. 00). That site, however, produced alot of material.

Alternatively, the Down Barn enclosure could well be only the visible part of a wider complex: indeed, in a sense we know that to be the case (*above* Chap. 3, p.00). The whole site, or just the enclosure, may have originated earlier and been abandoned, or originated earlier and lasted a long time. The enclosure could well have originated in the Anglo-Saxon period, at a guess between the C7-9 when pottery locally was at best scarce and before the C10 charters which do not mention it. It is very near to two boundaries, and it may well have been referred to if it was relevant. An implication of the lack of post-Roman material is that, whatever the date of its use, it was disused and forgotten before the 13th century when pottery became common locally, even on Fyfield Down. This makes its absence on Overton Down, and from the Down Barn enclosure in particular, striking. Indeed, the two or three medieval sherds, perhaps indeed strays, draw attention to rather than dispute this absence on that line of argument. Even shepherds and cow-hands break the occasional jug and glass bottle out in the open, again as some of the post-medieval material at WC illustrates (*below*, p.00). Yet such evidence is completely lacking from the Down Barn enclosure, an oddity especially since the post-medieval habitation site at Down Barn itself is so near.

Interesting though the enclosure is in its own right, particularly in hinting at post-Roman elements in the landscape, the site is even more significant because of the underlying prehistoric stratigraphy to which the earthwork accidentally drew attention. The early phases, so convincingly stratified, point to the similarities with the buried evidence examined by Evans *et al.* 1993 along the main valley: this seems a downland equivalent, also with a high environmental potential whatever its chronological and cultural significances. The subsequent sequence is interpreted as illustrating large-scale and probably widespread erosion on the downs in the 2nd millennium BC (*below* Chaps. 9 and 10, p. 00), a key factor, so it is argued, in understanding this landscape. A monument-led approach can, apparently, produce bonuses.

4.H The Delling enclosure, Fyfield Down Pl. 3.00, 4.00; figs. 3.00, 4.00).

Another, much smaller excavation was carried out by boys from Marlborough College at the suggestion of PJF, this time under the direction of A. Witheridge. Sadly, the pattern has repeated itself: records and master have disappeared, and all attempts to locate either have failed. Here, however, no re-excavation has occurred.

The enclosure was discovered independently during field reconnaissance, though in fact it was published as an air photograph at about the same time (St. Joseph 19XX, **), suggesting it was a medieval or Roman farmstead. Detailed field survey showed that, like its neighbour in Wroughton Mead (fig. 3.00), it overlay 'Celtic' fields: the scarp dividing off its northern third is the lower edge of one such field. The enclosure was also shown to have a southern annexe. The

whole looked, from experience, to be post-medieval. Despite its lack of a name, suggestions were that its association might well be with the pillow-mound across the coombe to its south and that, as possible precursor to the extant Delling cottage, it might even be the *Dyllinge* of the 1570 Pembroke Survey (*above* Chap 3, p. 00, and *below* Chap 8, p. 00). Dating it by archaeological means was hardly likely to add to precision in providing a *terminus ante quem* for 'Celtic' fields but it nevertheless seemed that a useful purpose would be served by dating the enclosure, particularly if it really was post-medieval. That period was not, at the time in the early 1960s, known to be represented archaeologically on the Downs.

In the absence of the director and his records, the following is based on memory, checked as far as possible on the ground early in 1996. A small cutting, of which the outline was found in 1996, was dug at the foot and towards the western end of the scarp underlying the enclosure. The exact point was in the centre of the slight depression below that scarp, opposite a platform above the scarp which appeared to be the foundations of a building. Both then and in February 1996, brick fragments were observed on the surface, suggesting the nature of these foundations and the post-medieval date of the structure. It was guessed that, if a building, possibly a house, had stood there, then its rubbish would have been thrown downhill into the depression. It was.

The cutting was clearly into the top of a midden or rubbish tip. It quickly produced, close under the modern turf, a quantity (a bucketful or cardboard boxful?) of quite fresh, unabraded, wheel-made sherds which this author saw once on site. They consisted memorably of quite large pieces and of yellow, internally glazed pottery with S-graffito brown decoration. There is no memory of any other material except possibly some animal bones. Clearly the assemblage was post-medieval, probably C17 (by analogy with material then being excavated from WC, cutting 10, *below* p. 00), perhaps a bit earlier but apparently with nothing later. The date of the enclosure seemed to have been established. Since there was no wish either to extend the excavation or involve the College in a long-term excavation commitment, the exercise was stopped and the trench was filled in.

Obviously, the sequel to the excavation is unsatisfactory and it is not a happy experience to attempt writing an excavation note, however small its canvass, from memory across a generation. If memory is correct, however, the main point of the exercise stands and very little damage has been done. The Delling enclosure would have gone into this account as post-medieval anyway, and the suggestion made that it could be the site of the documented late-C16 *Dyllinge*. Nothing in the memory of the small excavation gainsays that interpretation and, if anything, a date around AD 1600 is that more secure. The point, furthermore, is checkable, and enough material for a proper ceramic appraisal could easily be obtained; though the enclosure is now within the Scheduled area.

Appendix to Chap. 4 (probably worth doing properly?)
rough draft off the top of my head 5.iv.96. pjf

List of non-project excavations in Fyfield and Overton parishes:

Gill Swanton: her barrow;

JGEvans et al: cuttings at North Farm PPS

I Smith and Simpson: RIdgeway barrow PPS
I Smith : Roman barrows WAM
B Eagles AS burials from above WAM
RJC Atkinson: Manton long barrow: unpub but summary in Barker WAM
J Pollard for Overton Hill summary inc. Sanctuary PPS 1992
J Birmingham: barrow W of Ridgeway opp. N Overton Dn: unpublished:
?note in PPS c 1960?
?Meyrick: fieldwk and finds but excav? - The Beeches?? G Swanton WAM article
Colt Hoare: Wroughton Mead Anc. Wilts. II
Who originally dug Devil's Den?
Small's sarsen excavs. in 1960s: any finds or archaeol. records?

List does not include archaeol. observation of non-archaeol. holes e.g the two pipelines which have gone along the Kennet valley, or the med pott. from Lockeridge village: it is confined to deliberate excavations and perhaps ought to keep to deliberate ARCHAEOLOGICAL excavations