

file 4edfyf.doc. rewritten in almost final draft to 11.iv.96 when printed out at 10750 wds. A few points to check/amplify but archaeologically this is it.. Copied to AC/GA. pjf.

Re-organised, with deletions and gains, to accord with new structure, but remaining as new Chap 4, file name R4edfyf.doc. 3.vii.96. pjf

CHAPTER 4

Old Grassland with Field Systems: Totterdown, Manton Down and Fyfield DOWn

Introduction

to be written

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 lynched 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).

5: **Manton Down**: new (1950s on) arable from old grassland, with long barrow and its contexts in Neo, BA and mid/late C20

(to be written): these are just notes towards:

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

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 answered 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 1), 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 'Celtic' 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 3°. Four small cuttings were also excavated right on the corner of the 'Celtic' field itself to elucidate the main structural question arising from FL 1 (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 1/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 its 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 tenorial, 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 3° 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.

Overall interpretation of fields and landscape on this higher downland, all facing S/SW - hints of Neo: Manton lb; round b. ?later than Cfs on Fyfield Dnr; saddle quern in FL1

- BA fields : not much evidence but Beaker on TD + cupmarks and gen orientation of CFs with phase 1 of landscape arrangements

- apparent assoc. of field system on Manton Dn with typical M/LBA enclosure

- slight oddity now (tho' assumed to be the overall picture until recently) are EIA sherds suggesting cultivation in OLS under FL1 (but check this - how many such sherds actually exist?)

- unambiguous evid. of late C1 AD layout of distinctive fields on TD, overlying earlier (BA?) fields; and still suggestive rather than proven evid. of similar date +later for field wall and therefore CF lynchet

- with overlying r and f, **but significantly in only three places (E side TD, centre FD and NW of MD)**, not overall; and each block belongs to a different land unit: demonstrate