

new chap 5 on new structure 3.vii. 96. pjf

Chapter 5 **Old Grassland on Fyfield Down:** **land-use history around Wroughton Copse**

Introduction

3: **Wroughton Mead**: intensively used old pasture with (locally rare) deciduous woodland in med. and later enclosures (ditto Chap. 7)

(to be written)

excavations WC 1-9

excavations WC 10-12

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

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.

A small excavation was carried out by boys from Marlborough College at the suggestion of PJF under the direction of A. Witheridge. Sadly, records and master have disappeared, and all attempts to locate either have failed. 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.

Discussion/interpretation of the Wroughton area:

to be writ