

Fyfod masterfile alch14 as at 29.vi. 97., a chapter not yet finished in prose and still to be enhanced in light of Kris Strutt's written comments. But NB the new Chap. 15 carries on the general discussion here. There is almost certainly some duplication and repetition between them since I have been shuffling word-processed text between them. As I wrote this in Aug. 96 and haven't read it since I guess I would wish to add much that has crystallised from work over the last year. Pjf.

## Chapter 14

### ARCHAEOLOGY and the LANDSCAPE:

#### Local perspectives and wider views

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*'...the response of a landscape is not only to its local characteristics and its local population, but also to the wider demands made upon it by the culture of which that population is inextricably a part.'* Cleary 1995, 24

Fyfield, Overton, Lockeridge, Shaw; Totterdown, West Woods, Delling, Dene: these are the names which both identify local places and characterise the local place. Windmill Hill, Avebury and Stonehenge, Barbury and Oldbury; *Cunetio* and *Aquae Sulis*, *Londoninium* and Rome; Winchester and Wilton; London: these are the names of places beyond the parish bounds, external places where, certainly or plausibly over six thousand years, decisions have been taken about, and demands made of Fyfield and the Overtons.

Such intervention has signally affected how the local place was used, developed and came by its present appearance. That assertion answers one of the questions with which we began this volume (p. 00): *Does the Fyfield evidence suggest that landscape evolution develops as much in response to economic change as to other (e.g. environmental) fluctuations?* Answer: yes. Though not always able to do so with quite such stunning brevity and unambiguity, here we attempt among other things to answer some of the other self-imposed questions; not all, for we hope we have done that elsewhere, but as appropriate we spell them out again.

#### **1a. The local approach**

The monograph has brought together a range of evidence produced by following a number of separate but essentially complementary methodologies. The initial aim was to gain an understanding of the development of the landscape of Fyfield and Overton Downs, Wiltshire. That of course continued to be included as a core objective when the study area necessarily and quickly expanded from the Downs to the whole of the two parishes. It is that still-local but enlarged parochial setting, juxtaposed with some regional and wider perspectives, which provide the framework for the discussion in this chapter and the next.

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Our investigation has demonstrated that the Overton/Fyfield landscape is not a series of layers to be peeled away slowly revealing the remains of past societies. This landscape did not work like that at all, nor does it if approached with such a framework in mind by the modern investigator. Models of both investigation and understanding stemming from concepts such as 'retrospective analysis' are simplistic and misleading. Here as elsewhere is a landscape perceived in the present which is created, intellectually rather more than physically, as a palimpsest of the actions of nature, past societies, and interaction between the two. Its existence as a landscape in the past remains in the perception of those who lived at the time. Our challenge as historians is, of course, to elucidate and then tell a good story, a narrative, of how the landscape has been used and what people have done hereabouts, how, when and where - we would not have it otherwise. In addition, however, there is for us as archaeologists the challenge to interpret how the terrain of Fyfod **was** perceived and, as an old landscape anciently perceived, in what ways it existed as a familiar landscape in which to live, work and worship. Contrapuntally, there was and is the external, applied perspective, sometimes alien, unfamiliar with the *locale*, characteristically non-indigenous and non-resident, and which tends to be exploitative rather than custodial. This is the viewpoint of the documents, largely generated by outsiders and landowners - in the case of this area, the two have characteristically been synonymous. The study area has tended to be used by such interests throughout its history, demonstrably so over the last two millennia except perhaps during the so-called 'Dark Ages' when, briefly, it might well have been self-sufficient and beholden to no outside authority. Perhaps that perception too is, however, a trick of the evidence.

Although we speak of the singular, present landscape, it is possible to identify a landscape as a personification of the past human lifeways which contributed to its formation. Here we take for granted the archaeology physically preserved across the downland. We take as read the 'preserved environment' as identified from the remains of plants and animals which lived and died through periods of human interference and neglect (Chap. 12). Combined with our perceptions of the terrain, we have fragments of a written record which is our most accessible evidence of past perceptions. They have been profusely illustrated *passim* and particularly in chapters 9-11. These three approaches -archaeological, environmental and documentary, - do not so much as build up a picture of past landscapes as catch flashes of light, sometimes very obscure, reflected from facets of what once was, and of what people were thinking as well as doing. We can, however, see landscape constraining human lives, and how in turn people ordered their natural world to fit their image.

### **1b. Wider Perceptions**

The amount of attention given to the study of the landscape of the parishes of Fyfield and Overton should enable interpretation of it to occur at, minimally, two levels. There is the purely local dimension: what happened on and to the land in the area that subsequently became the parishes of Fyfield and Overton? And there is the wider perspective: can such *parochialia* be related to some general considerations of landscape development valid beyond the parish boundaries? Here we have in mind explanatory concepts such as 'carrying capacity' and 'marginality'; more theoretical issues such as whether the evidence suggests interpretative patterns such as historical repetition or cycles; and interpretative methodology such as the primacy or otherwise of local causality or general theory and the relationship between documents and material culture, especially in landscape elucidation. Ideally, in addition to understanding the landscape a little more informedly, the Fyfod project should also have implications for research into historic landscape in general. There is certainly a great deal more research that could be done locally (Appendix %%). This Project is only a start.

We look at the area of study, then, in those two perspectives, local and more widely, in this Chapter, primarily in academic terms and broadening the discussion into some thematic generalisations in Chapter 14; but we are also well aware of another dimension to our considerations, that is the practical one. Any understanding of the area that the Project has induced should also have implications for the management of this and perhaps other comparable landscape. That dimension we briefly explore in the final chapter (Chapter 15).

## **2. Rationale 1: Exploring our Past**

We begin, nevertheless, at another pragmatic level which also can act as summary introduction. Both academically and diplomatically it behoves us to take note of one significant recent publication, *Exploring our Past* (English Heritage 1991a), the outcome of a great deal of consultation within the archaeological community. This set out, ostensibly for political purposes but as a purposeful template with wider implications too, a series of objectives to which field archaeology and excavation, especially where involved with landscape, were advised to consider directing themselves. This was, of course, all *post hoc facto* as far as the long-conceptualised objectives and methods of the Fyfod Project were concerned but nevertheless it seemed sensible to 'run' the Project alongside these 1990s criteria, if only to judge relevance to contemporary concerns a generation on. Was there in fact any significance of the data to current scholarship[, never mind management? Here we merely use as criteria, and do not debate, some of the *obiter dicta* of this official statement.

*Exploring Our Past* clearly states that 'It is through the record left by the surviving remains of past generations that we can interpret most clearly the impact of humankind on the environment of these islands.' It continues that, as a consequence, it is necessary to '...identify the surviving individual sites or landscapes which are the most important indicators... then to ensure that these are properly understood and that their significance is fully recognised...' (English Heritage 1991a, 1).

There can be few places in the British Isles where 'the record' is more clearly etched on the landscape than on and around Fyfield and Overton Downs; it is also there, off the Downs, but less clearly and homogeneously. Although this volume is much concerned with detail and particular sites, the whole is actually about the impact of human and environmental dynamics; that is to say the evolution of a magnificent example of a 'surviving landscape'. It appears in particular to be able to contribute to two of the major themes identified in *Exploring Our Past* (pp. 34-43), namely 'processes of change' and 'landscapes.' In the following brief comparison, we follow the themes and their order taken by our guide.

## **2a. Processes of Change** (*ibid.* 35-37)

### **i. Communal monuments into settlement and field landscapes**

The study area makes up a significant element of the hinterland to Avebury and Windmill Hill, being very much part of the landscape of megaliths and earthen barrows, long and round, disposed around the upper reaches of the Kennet valley. The 'domestication' of this landscape of communal, monumental earthworks in the course of the last two prehistoric millennia has now been elucidated in some detail in some places, allowing an overall interpretative 'working model' to be proposed. The land is partitioned by function and divided by territory. Large areas of fields, of arable and pasture, and of smaller areas of habitation, become discernible as permanent elements in the composition of the landscape though, as individual components, they come and go. English Heritage (1991a, 36) picked out c 1300-300 BC as being 'poorly understood' and, while Fyfod has highlighted that period yet again as particularly difficult, it has nevertheless produced some ideas about it in landscape terms.

Permanently in the landscape in the sense that they are still there, the increasingly formal marking out of land boundaries by ditches, banks, sarsen boundary marker stones, walls, trackways and lynchets nevertheless represents change, for their arrival marked a change in land-use as surely as did their abandonment. It arguably signalled more, and perhaps of more fundamental significance than mere land-use change. The enclosed, prehistoric landscape of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC surely represents social change compared to the way people arranged themselves before 2000 BC; and it cannot but also reflect attitudinal change, surely. When we look at

the landscape now, we see neither what they saw nor what was their landscape, but the results of their activities; yet, even if self-delusion, we can imagine we fleetingly sense their attitudinal shift from a deeply respectful but perhaps rather romantic and religiously passive regard for their terrain to a more purposeful but secular and exploitive approach to land. They divided it up, not for fun nor sacrilegiously but, literally, to make it work; to make it work perhaps because an earlier, hands-off and leave it to the gods approach had not, in the end, produced the wherewithal of life. Probably too they set out to make it work for them rather than through praise of gods or as homage to ancestors. Yet only fragments of their great landscapes of Bronze Age enclosure now remain in use, at least in our study area, and not necessarily for their original purpose.

### ***ii. Briton into Roman***

The Project has shown rupture rather than continuity in local settlement and land use between the Early Iron Age and the Romano-British period. The Britons, who in the study area had become almost invisible in the last centuries BC, are suddenly apparent again, disguised as 'Roman' by different pottery and rectilinear fields and settlements, but, with little doubt, subject. The long-published, new Roman fields on Totterdown are now shown to be but part of an extensive reorganisation and exploitation of the landscape, probably affecting the valley and the whole settlement pattern, not just the downland. The probable villa close by Fyfield church, for example, begs the question of when exploitation of the valley seriously began. The evidence from the Project makes it probable that the answer is soon after the mid-C1 AD, though palaeo-environmental evidence specific to the valley floor itself does not illuminate such interpretation.

### ***iii. The early medieval and Late Saxon periods***

We merge these two periods separated in *Exploring ..* to reflect the local situation. Proper examination and re-examination of the structural sequence and artefacts from ODXII takes the story of that site well into the C5; a nearby earthwork enclosure is also late-Roman or later, so something seems to be going on around Down Barn in the C5. East Wansdyke was built c AD 500. A few pagan Saxon sherds at Wroughton Copse echo similar chance finds of the C5-6 to the north at Temple Farm and on the Ridgeway. The fact is, however, that Fyfod has not produced any great break-through or particular illumination around the middle of the millennium. It is, nevertheless, rich in ideas and speculation, especially as what happened in C5-7 could well have been crucial in contributing to the development of the relatively clear-cut picture of certain aspects of the area in the Late Saxon period.

Then, Fyfod has a contribution to make, centred on two C10 land-charters and their elucidation, largely worked out on the ground as sets of complementary boundaries and reworked for their evidence, direct and inferential, of environment, land-use and perception of landscape. Major reorganisation of the cultivated landscape may have occurred in this period, when we see our first glimpses of the opportunity to relate landscape history to tenurial documentation. We also see the processes of change continuing, especially in estate formation immediately before and after Domesday Book. The last clearly gives us a snapshot of landscape well-down the path of estate fragmentation.

***iv. Transition from medieval to post-medieval***

Because of the great extent and quality of the archaeological and landscape record in C16/17 and the high quality of some documentation pertinent to our objectives, we can see a landscape undergoing rapid change as a direct result of proprietorial and tenurial changes following the Dissolution of the monasteries. The change is specifically from medieval ecclesiastical estates to those of the Earl of Pembroke and Duke of Marlborough.

***2b. Landscapes (ibid. pp.37-39)***

i. Although the original project was not conceived in chronological terms, it can now readily conform, in modern parlance, to a 'landscape project ...defined as multi-period intensive investigation ...of a locality, which may lie ...across several (landscape types)' (*ibid.* 37-38). That is exactly what it has been, meeting the criterion about 'several landscape types' in both the original concept of a section across the grain of the country and in the presentation by 'windows' here of a range of carefully-selected land-use *locales*. The project therefore possesses what is now identified as a strength in that it investigated 'settlement and landuse patterns across two or more landscape categories' (*ibid.* 38). It is unnecessary to emphasise again the importance in the FYFOD project of relict field systems, both in their own right and as 'landscape horizons'; but we would stress here the relevance of FYFOD to the priority identified (*ibid.*) 'to recognising the patterns of ancient fields and estate boundaries'.

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***ii. Medieval rural settlement***

The FYFOD landscape is an apparently 'classic' example of settlement pattern in chalkland southern England. The model of expansion in the 11th to 13th centuries, followed by decline in the 14th and 15th centuries and change in the 16th and thereafter has been rigorously tested and found wanting. There was change, but not apparently decline, in the C14-15. Though 'environmental and social circumstances' (*ibid.* 39) may indeed have been influential, land ownership, estate

management, the workings of tenure, and above all, the economics of the wool market, are probably the keys to understanding the detail of the archaeology and documentation of the settlement pattern in the study area. Particularly challenging detail of both has been put together at Wroughton Copse where both point to unexpected abandonment of the C13 farmstead within the five years 1315-20. If this is the case, the consequences are considerable, not just for the local story but in providing a *terminus ante quem* for a considerable range of comparable material. We cannot prove but believe that the farmstead was deserted due to well-recorded appalling weather conditions in 1309-16, the major contributor to the Great Famine of 1315-22. Is this an example of what *Exploring our Past* asks for? - archaeology contributing 'to important debates and controversies hitherto ...largely the preserve of economic historians' (*ibid.* 37).

### 3. Rationale 2: the original research aims: have they been answered?

We can here reassess the Project's own original aims by seeing how well we can now answer the questions posed in Chap. 1 (*above* p.00-00). There is a risk in trying to respond to them coherently of some repetition of and overlap with material elsewhere in its own independent part; but, if we can now do so, we shall have gone a long way to answering that original and fundamental question as expressed crudely but succinctly by the present author: 'How does the present landscape come to look like what it does today?'. For any reader's sake more than anything, we group the questions (each cross-referenced to its place of origin) under four topics: Objectives; Particular local sites and areas; Study Area general; Wider considerations. and Topics Local Archaeology Fyfield and Overton Specifics; Methodology and Theory; Land-use History

#### Objectives

We prefaced our questions by saying that work on the project was initially prompted by the extraordinary state of archaeological preservation in the Fyfield/Overton area, combined with the apparent opportunities, after appropriate fieldwork, to date phases of landscape development by question-specific excavation. As stated, the initial objective was:

'... to establish ...the forms and sequence of human activity in the region. This involves a search for the areas of primary occupation, a consideration of settlement types and pattern and their development, of fields and pasture, boundaries, ritual and burial structures, of continuity and communications, and of the relationship of all to each other, to natural features and to conditions in different phases.' (Bowen & Fowler 1962, 98).

A recent version of that was suggested as:

The establishment of the main phases of human activity in the area in different periods and in relation to the natural environment overall, and especially in terms of landscape development with particular reference to questions of rupture, survival and continuity over four or more millennia.

This potential, and the approach to it, enabled two principal questions to be posed from the outset:

*a. 'How, why and when did the landscape, particularly the landscape of the Downs, evolve into its twentieth century form?'*

This volume is really all about the answers to that question: they are complex. But in another sense, we know something of the answers now and they can be simplified. Essentially, much of the present landscape came by its appearance a long time ago. It is an ancient landscape, not just in the sense that ancients lived here but because it took the principals of its present form and land-use about two and a half thousand years ago. Fifteen hundred years earlier than that, by the early 2nd millennium, the Downs were already open tracts of grassland with patches of arable, woodland and scrub, the southern uplands were covered with Savernake's woodland containing cleared areas and glades, and it was only the valley bottom, undrained, marshy and largely 'natural', which was distinctively different from today.

#### **Local sites and areas**

*h.. What, in chronological terms, were the main phases of human activity in the area?*

Given that much of the text works towards elucidating precisely this point, a table, however, unobtrusive, can summarise one sort of answer here. It lists, from earliest onwards, the key points in the local landscape - the 13 'windows' and X other places, - where habitation and/or specific activity has been identified during at least a broadly dateable period, here of 500 year units after 1500 BC:



Wroug . Cop											
Fyfld village											

**Table 12.00.** FYFOD: a chronological/landuse table (6.5.96.pjf)

The table brings out immediately that most places in this landscape had already been used by 1500 BC. Fyfield village, easily regarded as 'old' because of some major Roman construction, probably a villa, beneath and to one side of the medieval church, comes out in fact as quite 'late' in this tabulation. The main phases of human activity within, it must be stressed, a continuum, were in the 4th millennium; 2500-1500; 1000-500; AD 1-500; 500-1000, and especially the last two centuries; and 1000-1500.

*j. How did the (three main) excavated sites function within the landscape, with particular reference to economic activity?*

The earliest, OD XI, enjoyed YY phases over 3000 years (figs. 6.00-00), so the question can only be answered at a series of time slices; but if it is confined to the main settlement phases, before and during the life of the banked and ditched enclosure, the answer can be reasonably clear-cut for at least some aspects. Before enclosure, perhaps in the C9-8, people were living on a small area of one field, probably at its corner, within an extensive arable field system. This seemed to work, or they liked it, for while the fields continued in use round about, they took over parts of probably four adjacent fields, enclosing them with a new bank and ditch. They continued to farm their surrounds from new timber buildings, periodically renewed, within this improved settlement. A dramatic change saw the settlement abandoned, its space re-allocated in newly-defined fields, and the whole returned to arable cultivation which, however, soon became pasture. Despite the striking archaeological evidence of two more short, arable phases in the C1-2 and C13, it was in grass that its long-term future lay.

Settlement OD XII, 400 m southwards and about 1000 years later, also contained one or two houses at any one time over about the same area as excavated at OD XI. It also was engaged in farming, and perhaps too, by the early C5, in a landscape become fairly empty of people but filling up with sheep. But there appear to be two big differences in how it 'worked' in its landscape compared with OD XI. In the first place, it seems to have been, or become, a specialist place where grain was processed. Perhaps that was its role in particular while it was part of another theoretical estate, that of a villa or more specifically the villa 1.5 km. southwards at Headlands (*above* p 00). The cattle bones and a range of artefacts show that it was involved in other activities too, but we do not know whether it was growing its own

grain or acting merely as a central processing plant. The other main difference is that of course its economy, much more so than that of OD XI, was part of an economic network, widespread, complex and based on cash. What happened at and to OD XII depended, not on its inhabitants, but far more on what happened elsewhere, from the estate manager's office in the villa over the hill to the taxation policies of the provincial government and indeed of the Imperial bureaucracy a long way away. That said, though OD XII is quite important archaeologically for its position, late date and material, it was probably not all that important locally at the time. It still remains a puzzle as to why and whence its building materials were removed, particularly if the settlement's functions were continued on another site.

There are puzzling aspects of the third excavated settlement too but in general its 'working' in the landscape of the C13 and early C14 is reasonably clear. It too was a farm, mixed in its activities but, though surrounded by sheep, with a special responsibility for the plough-oxen used by people coming up from Fyfield village. Here is a difference: we know that from documentary evidence, not archaeology. Indeed, it is the sort of inference not allowable by the earlier evidence. From the farm was cultivated at least one of the areas of ridge-and-furrow dotted across the downland. Otherwise its position tenurially within a manor of a large, ecclesiastical estate, and economically in a sheep-based regime, is fairly well-documented. What is not documented at all but is very visible archaeologically is that some odd things seem to have been going on at this farm. Its occupants were quite well-off for one things, beyond what one might expect from their subservient position implied by Winchester documents. They apparently black-smithed, and worked a corn-drying oven; they doubled the size of their house. Altogether, there are plentiful hints that a 'hidden agenda' was being worked out, literally off the record though not necessarily behind the reeve's back. Winchester after all, like Rome 600 years earlier, was along way away. Much closer were the Templars, only 3 kms away up the track over Totterdown and Rough Hill. Archaeology suggests that a relationship with them, especially perhaps servicing their practical needs, proved mutually agreeable. Whatever it was, this successful farm came to a sudden and apparently unexpected end. The Templars were disbanded, the weather deteriorated, the crops presumably failed. Suddenly, in changed economic and natural circumstances, the farm became marginal. The people left to live elsewhere. The site, however, with its shepherds and its sheep cote, remained a key one in the manorial economy for another 2 centuries when, once again looking different because it is documented, it appears as part of the post-Dissolution Pembroke estate.

*Why is social aggregation on Overton Down present in the 1st Millennium BC and Roman period, but not later, and not at all on Fyfield Down?*

*n. What does the evidence tell us about changes in building types?*

The Project has recorded well over a hundred buildings if we count the 'earthwork' ones which have been planned and the Listed standing ones which have been checked; but here we confine consideration to the excavated ones: four complexes of the LBA/EIA on Overton Down, another five complexes of the C4-5 AD at OD XII, and six buildings in three complexes of the C13-15 at Wroughton Copse - some sixteen or so buildings in all (fig. 12.00).

The first point is that those numbers of buildings on each site are all of the same order; though perhaps that says more about the logistical capacity of the Project than the inherent nature of the settlements. The second is that each site produced only one house certainly in use at any one time; and that for every house there were two or three other buildings. In other words, what was excavated each time was essentially a farm. The third point is that every single building site investigated proved on excavation to be multi-phase. Fourthly, the buildings were entirely timber-built and circular (except for one possible '6-poster') at OD XI; they were entirely stone-footed and rectangular at OD XII and WC, though at both were examples of earlier, entirely wooden structures.

where is the rest? building types; internal area; spatial ratios etc.

*c. 'To what extent is the downland 'marginal':*

- i) *in area?*
- ii) *in terms of set*
- iii) *economically,*

The answer to the main question depends on your viewpoint and when you are asking the question. Nevertheless, an attempt to give a straightforward answer covering both the general and the particular questions would be:

*'Marginal' probably means little in economic terms before c 2500 BC. The higher downland here was hinterland rather than marginal land to the great ceremonial complex of Avebury in the 3rd millennium BC. Its edges continued to enjoy a ritual and burial function, presumably central to at least local communities, in the earlier 2nd millennium. Downland was marginal for habitation until the middle 2nd millennium, a state which has continued as the norm in the later 1st millennium BC and since the C5 AD. It has been marginal for arable farming before 2000 BC, c 500 BC - later C1 AD, and from c 200 AD onwards to the present except for a brief period of intensive but patchy cultivation in the C13-early C14. It has probably never been truly marginal as pasture, for people have kept animals hereabouts for*

6000 years and their need for grazing is continuous; but as pasture the downs were certainly central to concerns in the later 1st millennium BC and from the mid-1st millennium AD onwards, especially from the C14 onwards to the present. Though race-horse training may seem a marginal sort of activity to many, it certainly was not for those who dedicated much of the higher downland to it a hundred years ago, and to those today for whom it is a significant financial and status-laden investment. Nor can the C20's increasingly valued scientific and recreational functions of the downland landscape be dismissed as in any sense 'marginal.' That it has been 'socially marginal', however, probably since c 600 BC, cannot be denied: who, after all, would want to spend their life on Fyfield and Overton Downs?

It is clear, however, that, important though the question is, it is far too simplistic to seek to explain the archaeology and history of the whole area, or the Downs within that area, within parameters of 'marginality' alone. The concept is one relating to one or some resources at any one time, apparently with regard to function rather than to those attributes often thought of as characteristic of marginality, altitude or distance. Economically, for example, the riversides were 'marginal' probably until Roman times. The high downs, whose archaeological visibility reduces to almost nothing in the C14-15 as an apparently classic area of medieval marginality, were actually at the core of one of the most productive manors of one of the richest estates in southern England. On the other hand, the late Roman settlement OD XII, whether or not it was 'central' to a land-unit or an activity in the C4, had certainly become positionally marginal by the mid-C5 because it was abandoned; yet the functions of that settlement may have continued elsewhere, for its fabric was recycled on another site. 'Marginal' is a relative term, not an absolute, and its role is probably best in explanatory rather than causative mode.

The archaeology of the study area, taken as an accumulated whole, brings out a nice contrast between relatively large, nucleated settlements and isolated smaller settlements. Some of the former are high on what might appear to be marginal land; some of the latter are in or near the lower ground. Such complexity, *a priori* one imagines, it likely to take more than one explanatory factor such as marginality. Lines of communication and religious attraction are two factors which might override, locally and temporarily maybe, marginality as a reason for change. It is interesting to note the role of general concepts at the micro-level. The Fyfod evidence may well challenge, for example, the conventional wisdom about nucleation being a characteristic of the 'Lowland Zone' (and vice versa), making the nice point that 'Highland' and 'Lowland' might perhaps be local and relative as well as national and absolute. Clearly, viewed from Cheviot or Snowdonia, the idea of 'Uplands' tucked away down in gentle Wiltshire is laughable. On the other hand, however, from the point of view of the farmer in South or North Farms in Overton, the forest-edge fields on Boreham Down and the rough grazing on Overton Down

North are, respectively, uplands, not only altitudinally but also attitudinally in terms of travel-time and distance. Such local uplands also enjoy their own micro-climates (*above* p.00), so in several respects they can be, and are likely to have been from time to time, marginal as areas unfavoured for farming, let alone habitation. It is significant that the only houses built on the Downs - Totterdown (now ruins), Delling and Down Barn cottage, - in the last two centuries were to provided for the open-space specialists - gamekeepers and shepherds, - of traditional marginal land, and that the two still standing are maintained as non-agricultural accommodation.

Yet in the early Roman period, hundreds of people were living as well as working on the Downs alone, and such must surely also have been the case a thousand years earlier. Were such periods the norm, interspersed by phases of marginal desertion? Or were they themselves the interruptions in a long drawn-out marginality? The answer seems to be that marginality is not a constant, but is rather a condition, like an illness, that became endemic with climatic deterioration and the long-term effects of exploitative agriculture. Given those conditions from the earlier 1st millennium BC, it is likely to break out in particular economic circumstances at any time, and indeed became the norm on the impoverished Downs from late Roman times onwards as far as arable farming and habitation were concerned. But for sheep-farming, extensive and low-input, such 'marginal' lands were ideal - and, far from being 'marginal', they were at the heart of a new-found prosperity based on wool.

Nucleated settlements existed both on the uplands and in the valleys, but not on the plateaux after c 450 except at Shaw. On the uplands, small habitations are evidenced, at least since Roman times, though they exist in relation tenurially to the valley settlements and economically both to their immediate surroundings and distant landlords. Is there a possible model there? Why it was that social aggregations as indicated on Overton Down (but not on Fyfield Down) were present in the 1st millennium BC and the Roman period, but not thereafter? The point is further discussed *below* p. 00, for it goes beyond marginality.

### **Study Area general**

*b. 'What types of economic activity were carried out in the study area and how were they distributed within it?'*

An understanding of the types of economic activities carried out in the study area has to a large extent been achieved. The landscape of Fyfield and Overton is essentially a farming one: that is obvious now, but in this particular aspect we now know that the present is a continuum with the past since people were farming well enough to deposit their agricultural products at Windmill Hill in the 5th millennium BC. Although a commonplace in one respect, this agrarian primacy nevertheless

makes the area and its story of basic significance since they tell of what most communities have been involved in Britain over the last six thousand years or so.

It is therefore a landscape of exploitation but, equally important, it is also a landscape of sustainability, not least through husbandry and adaptation. In this respect, the 'special' resources of the area are significant in terms of the local economy, notably the availability of ancient forest, Savernake, along the southern edge of the parishes, and, remarkably for Chalk country, of surface stone in the form of sarsen (sandstone) blocks concentrated in 'trains' in the valleys but also widely scattered across the downs. Forestry and stone-quarrying have therefore also been locally significant economic activities, though rather oddly the stone, the distinctive local economic resource in many ways and recognised as such in the Neolithic, was completely ignored except as an encumbrance for over a thousand years up to the Roman Conquest. Conversely, there is plentiful evidence of the use of wood in the LBA/MBA, for field fences as well as buildings, so we can be certain that silviculture was being practised. The right timber for specific purposes does not just grow on trees; it has to be encouraged out of the growing tree, just like fuel and wattling have to be encouraged by coppicing. The active management of West Woods becomes apparent as soon as cartographic evidence becomes available in the C18, and both it, copse-names and scraps of earlier documentation indicated such activity was already traditional by then. Exploitation of the sarsen goes back to Neolithic times, notably in the 5th millennium for building great tombs and the 4th millennium for erecting Avebury and, possibly, Stonehenge. Whether or not such activity was 'economic', certainly exploitation of the same resource for commercial reasons was a locally important work-provider in the C19, continuing as a minor activity until the Second World War (King 19XX).

Evans *et al.* (1993) have clearly demonstrated the dynamic nature of the valleys in this landscape, and linked them to the surrounding uplands. This, with FYFOD, has focused attention *inter alia* on the slopes as places of both habitation and cultivation and of pasture, hunting and ceremonial. In part at least changes there have been and still are induced by economics, for example the ebb and low of arable on them as indicated by air photography and maps. Now, of course, the economic significance of the landscape is coming to lie quite as much in its recreation and conservation interests as it does in farming. Depending on how one quantifies the income from however one defines tourism, this may have happened already.

As much because of changing agendas in the later C20 as because of what happened in the past, new questions and lines of enquiry have constantly arisen during the Project. Within the over-arching objective of enhancing understanding of the landscape's historical evolution, they were rationalised as a series of sub-questions, *above p. 00*, here answered:

*d. Is it possible to define the or a history of the changing pattern of land use?*

'Yes' would be claimed to be the answer; and this Project would seem to have gone a long way to justifying it. Overall, the present pattern is, amazingly in some respects, the traditional one, a land-use tradition going back for certain a thousand years and probably two thousand. Indeed, the first two centuries AD may well have produced a landscape recognisably that of the later C20; but even closer in a way, for the downs were then grass as now, was the landscape of the last five or so centuries BC. Use of the land obviously changes, field by field and year by year; on a grander scale it changes for longer in response to economic trends, government fiat or proprietorial whim. But in terms of centuries, and despite the differences in detail lying behind the land-use histories of our 'windows', the overall pattern of land-use in the landscape now was developed in prehistoric times. Changes to it have been, by and large, not fundamental and often not long-lived.

*e. What was the chronology, extent and function of the 'Celtic' fields?*

The extent over the northern part of the study area is shown on fig. 2.00, an extent now analysed into a spatial grouping and morphology, as well as sequences based on physical and spatial relationships and axonometry. The extent of such fields is shown overall on fig. 0.00 which includes the major addition distributionally of stone-walled prehistoric field boundaries on the valley floor.

The fields' chronology initially spans roughly a thousand years, c 1500-500 BC, basically on two axial layouts ( $15\frac{1}{2}^\circ$  and  $46^\circ$ ); followed by an early Roman system, also axial ( $7^\circ$ ). Some late Roman cultivation is perhaps over rather than within such fields, as are areas of medieval cultivation (fig. 2.00).

(But don't forget the Boreham Down fields with their burial - date?)

The 'Celtic' fields - and no better term has been found, despite its misleading connotations, - were primarily for growing cereal crops on soil cultivated using, at least sometimes, an ard in a criss-cross pattern of 'furrows'. Perhaps one of the most important insights to emerge from the Project is that such firmly-bounded fields, with permanent structures at their edges, were probably devised in the M/LBA as a technique to prevent soil erosion under continuous cropping. Lynchets were the result, showing how very effective the technique was rather than being the accidental by-product of a particular form of land enclosure for reasons of tenure or stock-management.

(surely this next passage is now redundant?)

**Fields and ploughing**

Archaeologically, land exploitation is well documented from the Upper Kennet Valley. Rows of sarsens on the valley floor at West Overton may be the remains of field boundaries to prevent the widespread alluviation which was taking place (Evans et al 1993). Allen (1988) has demonstrated that the occurrence of colluvial episodes occurred across the south of England at this time, possibly relating to a major agricultural exploitation of the slopes. The impact of this exploitation was to degrade the soils which were being farmed and so encourage adaptation to the changing conditions. On the Marlborough Downs the establishment of field systems during the Middle Bronze Age (Gingell 1992) may, in part, be a reaction to the loss of soils on the slopes and the burial of settlements in the valleys. A number of sections through lynchets in FYFOD (pp\$) have shown they had formed over small walls whose size precluded any use as a barrier to livestock. Aside from the possible tenurial significance the walls may result from a conscious decision to preserve the valuable soil.

Whatever the reason it is clear that human exploitation had a part to play in the fluvial degradation of the slopes and valleys. The archaeological evidence is again sparse much of no doubt lying under deposits in the valleys having either slipped down the slopes or been buried in situ. There is a contrast, therefore, between the cleared landscape within which the enclosure ditch of ODXI was dug and the recently cleared woodland over which the lynchet at FLI formed. This is a clear indication that it is not possible to speak of a wholly cleared landscape until certainly the build up of this lynchet. Gingell may well be correct in speaking of widespread clearance during the Beaker period. And Evans may also be right in suggesting much of the colluvium formed in the valleys occurred at this time. But the colluvium is not uniformly distributed and much of the archaeological evidence comes from surface scatters and a few burials on the slopes with buried sherds found in the valleys. The early Bronze can be seen as period of intensified agriculture but not as a uniform degradation of the land. It may be more correct to suggest a minimalist landscape supporting a less intensified agriculture centred around particular sites. But then why have we been so lucky in finding them, or have we. i.e. considering the quantity of Neolithic monuments and the paucity in settlement as with the EBA are we seeing a mobile economy which caused localised but intensive, and environmentally destructive, agriculture. For that very reason settlements are difficult to locate. The Later BA then sees a realisation of the practical importance of managing the land as opposed to exploiting it. Therefore, time is spent creating field systems and complex agricultural systems rather than building monuments to the dead.

**Here's another chunk lifted from new chap. 2 but more appropriate here as interpretation, of the basic idea of territory; the idea needs developing see sketch fig. of the territory and its lands:**

**the 15½° axis**

Mention is made *above* (p.00) of a possible third axial arrangement. Such appears to survive fragmentarily on an axis between the two more obvious orientations already identified. It lies 15½° W of True North, and is represented mainly by field banks on and at right angles to that axis on eastern Fyfield Down and Manton Down (Field Groups 9 east, 10 and 11). In fact, field Group 11 seems to be constructed around this axis, and is at the same time the most convincing evidence of the suggestion that such exists. Particularly in the S of this group, boundaries on this axis appear to be primary to others on the main NW/SE orientation. Much of field Group 10, though it is again overploughed, accords with this 15½° axis, reinforcing the suggestion *above* (p.00) that it and Group 11 were in fact an entity.

This proposal can be extended, for the other remaining clutch of axially-related field boundaries lie 0.5 km. distant down slope to the SW on the east of Fyfield Down. In fact, they lie specifically on the E side of a shallow, sarsen-filled re-entrant running up northwards from Stoney Valley, hinting that there may have been an overall '15½° land arrangement' across this eastern part of our study area (*below* Chap. 12, p. 00). embracing an area from that re-entrant - locally quite a marked topographical feature, - and SE down its parent combe, Clatford Bottom northwards and eastwards to the combe now marked by The Beeches and Manton House

**write in new bit on ardmaks**

*g. How has the environment of the area changed over time and what were/are/have been the consequences of such changes?*

The environmental history is now detailed and synthesised in Chap. 11, but the consequences of the changes detected are not considered and are indeed perhaps more a matter for Chap 15. The issue raises, however, an interpretative nuance, namely whether it is possible on the one hand to assert that basically the pattern of land-use in the study area was set by the mid-1st millennium BC (*above* p. 00) while discussing fairly major environmental changes (Chap. 11). The solution is, of course, chronological, in that much of the environmental change had not only occurred by c 500 BC but was itself subsequently influential in the way that a traditional pattern of land-use developed. But although it tends to be arable farming which catches the eye, here it is in pastoral farming that economic sustainability resided long-term, from late-Roman to recent times. The fact that that was so came about as the main consequence of environmental change, ironically because the

environment and the way that it was used proved unable to sustain on the higher downs the arable which, abandoned, provided the sheep with their crop. Maybe something similar happened around the 6th century BC.

Another major environmental change, not picked up in Chap. 11 probably because it is a recent phenomenon, is that of the dropping of the water table. There are no local data on this phenomenon, though it is clearly now much lower than previously and places are consequently much drier. This is a trend noticeable during the Project, and it may have been happening slowly since Roman improvements to the valley and its drainage. It was not a particularly difficult point for earlier times, even high on the downs as the fauna from OD XI indicate; nor, one suspects, was a low water table a medieval problem for grazing animals - who can take in water during the day's itinerary, - though it may have been for humans as evidence at Wroughton Copse suggests. As there, at key points in the landscape like Down Barn, efforts were made to ensure a water supply. That also applied in post-medieval times, to which the construction of most of the visible ponds, now nearly all dry, belongs. Nevertheless, these are all reactions to an environmental change beyond local control. Returning to a point *above*, p.00, it may well be that that change, because its consequence was to increase the unavailability of water at higher levels of the landscape, has contributed more than anything else to the real marginality of the downs since they were effectively abandoned as a place to farm and live in the early C14.

#### **Wider issues**

*f. Do the types of settlement represented in the study area increase understanding of settlement morphology?*

For the prehistoric period, though each 'new' site adds to the local story, Fyfod has produced little new in terms of settlement morphology. OD XI has been overtaken by other work in Wessex on LBA/EIA settlement morphology and chronology. On the other hand, it produced 30 years ago plans of three different RB settlements (Fowler 1966, figs. 000000000). One of these is now amplified with the full excavated plan (fig. 7.00), and a fourth, again different, settlement plan is added (fig. 6.00). These add little overall except to emphasise the variety in size, shape and form of RB rural settlements on the Wessex Chalk.

Fyfod makes a small contribution for post-Roman times. First, though not strictly settlements, the Down Barn Enclosure and arguably the similar 'Crawford Enclosure' on Overton Down could be earthworks identified for the first time as 'sheepcotes', possibly even Anglo-Saxon sheepcotes. The triangular Enclosure C at Wroughton Copse is more definitely a sheepcote, there C14-15. Secondly, the morphology of the Wroughton Copse C13 farmstead, here displayed in full for the

first time with its 'Mead', is an addition to the virtually unknown subject of Wessex downland's medieval settlements. Thirdly, the plan of the earthworks in Overton village is also an addition, this time to the *corpus* of valley-bottom settlements, interesting perhaps precisely because the remains are not those of a *deserted* medieval village in isolation but occur within an existing village (ref RCHM person in Aston Wessex bk). The discussion of their relationship with the Anglo-Saxon Overtons and the present village morphology, together with the consideration of the morphology of Fyfield and Lockeridge villages, brings together some ideas possibly relevant elsewhere along the Kennet valley. Back on the downs, interesting contrasts are provided by Shaw, in effect a completely deserted medieval village in isolation (fig. 10.00), and the Delling Enclosure, a completely deserted post-medieval farm. Its plan, here published for the first time and again a morphological addition, looks rather like that of a medieval sheep cote but now with a visible internal building (fig. 5.00). The project has, therefore, added to data on settlement morphology, but whether it has increased understanding only time will judge.

Further objectives emerged as the project developed and the strengths and weakness of both data and methodology became apparent. Field survey led not merely to a 'feel' for the landscape but the rapid discovery of new sites in a manner which has since become very familiar. In particular it led to the recognition of phases of chronological development in the landscape (*below* in Chap. 2), demonstrable land-use zones within the landscape (*below* in Chaps. 3-10), and to specific places where relative and possible absolute dating evidence could be obtained. Feedback between air photography and survey, between both and documentary evidence, and between survey, excavation and documentary/cartographic evidence played a particularly important part in the conceptual development of how as much as what to investigate in the study area. As a result, in its now-evolved and mature form, the original project can be interrogated to consider yet further questions:

*Can we generate a general model for the nature, use and abandonment of Celtic fields from the Fyfod evidence?* (check the exact wording with Chap 1)

While the chronology of the origin, spread and decay of the Celtic field systems in the study area is reasonably clear in outline, it would be unwise to generate a general model on the basis of one area survey. Clearly this type of field system, lasting over some 2000 years, enjoyed chequered histories in different places. In some places, perhaps on the Marlborough Downs, early development was followed by early abandonment i.e. by 1000 BC; elsewhere, the type continued in use until post-Roman times, and as the evidence here clearly shows the physical framework of such field systems could persist as an influence in the landscape long after the fields themselves had ceased to be cultivated.

*k. What can we infer about the nature of 'marginal' land? And if the Downs (and forested area) were indeed 'marginal', how was this marginal land exploited at different times?*

Marginality has already been discussed, *above* pp 00, 00, but the just-quoted desertion of the Wroughton settlement in the early C14 raises another point. Perhaps a useful definition of 'marginal land' should distinguish between two meanings. It usually means land which is already out of use, or is used only partially, because it lacks some qualities relevant to contemporary farming; but it is therefore available as space on which to expand. A rather different meaning is where the phrase is used of land which is not so much out of use already but which is, or is likely to be, sensitive to change and become undesirable or difficult to continue using. Land predicted as likely to be affected adversely by global warming in the C21 is, in that sense, already marginal. Wroughton Mead proved to be marginal as somewhere to live because of changed circumstances c 1315 but that was not, we can be fairly certain, in the minds of Richard of Raddun's family in the C13. In contrast, it would always have been misguided to regard the afforested south of the parishes as 'marginal' in a negative sense. Agreed, West Woods are spatially peripheral and not much use for arable farming but that does not classify them as marginal except on a very narrow, and unrealistic, basis. The Woods provide a range of resources complementing not only cultivated land but also pasture, and they have to be assessed in those terms, as they were and are in real life, and not as acres of third-rate arable. Indeed, among other resources woodland provides an alternative to open grassland as a sort of pasture, shaded from the sun and often damper through impeded evaporation. Overall, in this area there is virtually no marginal land in the sense that it is unusable, and the largest area which others often see as 'marginal', the downs, were deliberately managed as extensive sheep-pastures in a successful economy for much of the last two millennia. That hardly smacks of marginal land, from the estates' or shepherds' point of view; though it did and does to the arable farmer. So, in practice, marginality once more seems to be a relative rather than an absolute concept: "marginal' in relation to what?" seems a fair question to ask before using it. 'When?' is useful to establish too, for marginality changes with time as well as function. Tenth century West Overton village, for example, strung along the 'Herepath' on the western side of its estate, had become within two centuries marginal to the needs and perhaps rivalries of the two Overton estates centred on their common boundary 1.3 km. to the east.

*m. What does the evidence tell us about changing methods of farming and land-use?*

The evidence confirms overall a point often made by others, namely that some activities and periods are archaeologically visible, others not; yet the invisible can be just as important historically. The outstanding example has already been mentioned: the archaeological invisibility of the C14-15 on the downs when they supported one of the largest flocks in Wessex (*below Hare's piece*). In general, arable farming shows up archaeologically, while pastoral farming is much more difficult to 'see'. Documents, characteristically concerned with ownership, dues and rents, do not make that distinction, but tend to be 'blind' to activities other than the tenurially regulated. Changes in methods of farming are difficult to pick up at the time they occur; they usually become apparent by comparing before with after. The ard, for example, was in use as the cultivating implement in the mid-1st millennium BC; it had been replaced by a mould-board plough creating ridge-and-furrow by the C13. The observation hardly adds to the sum of human knowledge but, strictly speaking, those are the brackets of the archaeological evidence which tells us nothing in between. There, however, we can make inferences about strip cultivation from the C10 charters, though that does not tell us about the type of cultivating implement: we infer it too. Similarly we can see before and after the biggest land-use change ever to happen in the study area, the change not just from mixed farming to an emphasis on arable but the apparently synchronous change from extensive, low-intensity exploitation to intensive cultivation within a landscape of enclosure. We can see fragments of the landscape before that happened, say in the earlier 2nd millennium BC, and we can see the landscape after it has happened, say by 900 BC. When the first organised landscape, perhaps the 15½<sup>o</sup> one, began to develop, however, is not known from evidence internal to the Project. On the other hand, what might well be seen as the great reversion to arable farming after centuries of late prehistoric stock-raising can be dated fairly precisely to the late C1 AD. Then we see changes in methods of land-use - not just pasture to arable but the allotment of the land in distinctive, enclosed rectilinear fields - as well as farming and the people doing as, as is implied by an increase in the number of settlements. But this may be another case of archaeological visibility, for Roman pottery is common on the downs in sharp contrast to the apparently aceramic periods immediately before and after it.

*To what extent are models other than those recently discussed by Evans et al (1993) created by looking at a major transect across the grain of the topography instead of along the river valley?*

insert (tho not necessarily at this exact spot)

This image of a full and thriving landscape is supported by the results from the valley survey. There the final deposits of the West Overton formation occurred by

2500 ± 70 BP (Evans et al 1993, 189). While archaeological evidence includes a Deverel-Rimbury cremation deposit dated to 3020 ± 70 BP and a sarsen structure dated to 2980 ± 100 BP. It is clear that activity was present in the valleys and has been revealed by only limited through only limited sampling. It seems fair then to project such settlement over a much wider area. The first phases of Overton Down XI are associated with Deverel-Rimbury pottery and may be contemporary with the occupation of West Overton Valley. However, as the activity on the slopes continues into the Iron Age the evidence from the valleys 'dries up'. The Iron Age and Roman period is not represented at either the Avebury or West Overton locations (Evans et al 1993). The lack of remains from this period seems to fit with models of this transitory period recognised elsewhere (Cunliffe ???). The environmental evidence for the end of colluvial and alluvial activity and the archaeological evidence for a shift in settlement pattern are in agreement.

Decalcification on chalk downland in BA not ubiquitous. The process took place locally, however, over a wide area in certain circumstances which may be related to a shift in the nuclei of cultivated land from uplands to valleys.....soil decalcification also has implications for later land use - leads to loss of soil structure - specifically aeration, porosity and drainage.....the first attacks on such soils and their peaty grass mat (GET NEW PHOTO of such a MAT in the OD EWK enclosure to illus. this chapt) was probably by burning and turf-cutting, followed by burning of turfs. Ploughing then followed, but the results of this would have been immediate erosion - by wind or slope-wash - because of the structureless nature of the soil (which is precisely what we have in Down Barn enclosure; and check other contexts: FD 1? ODX?); so perhaps the extensive formation of massive lynchets in the Bronze Age was partly a result of this, and we can also expect an increase in alluviation."

These ideas can readily be combined into a model not just to interpret OD/FD but also to set up the dynamics. Most of the large CF lynchets are undoubtedly IA as large lynchets of FD1 which we must make more of in terms of its growth/time ratio. Equally, it is clear that cultivation in fields is widespread by MBA, perhaps starting of in EBA after Beaker horizon. Make more of analysis of AP map fields and their 3-stage development of which the third is RB. Is there a distinction here between :

slash and burn/sporadic cultivation in patches: Neo

developing into: infield/outfield system: Beaker (ardmarks in fields, but the fields are only in patches and not necessarily enclosed)

developing into: larger areas of enclosed fields (check this out to see if will work around or otherwise in relation to main barrow grps.- that could give both nuclei effect and dating; EBA???)

developing into: congealing of areas of enclosed fields into continuous system, though that will include non-arable areas eg funerary, unenclosed pasture (among sarsens? and N of Totterdown ditch); MBA? at which point seriously bounded

fields are beginning to be made to counteract erosion = 1m of brown soil at DB = essentially a 2nd millennium phenomenon

developing into: the highly organised LBA/EIA landscape where intensity of use leads to pile up of soils against structured field edges and hence, by no later than say 500BC, large lynchets i.e. erosion is countered rather than stopped, it now taking place in self-contained units rather than sheeting off the downs into

Piggledean

developing into: a deserted? but stabilised downland landscape of grass for 500 years, not cultivated but perhaps used (intensively?) for sheep grazing; and what about horses? - breeding out on the range of the Marlborough Downs? Attractive idea, possibly echoed in the Rockley white horse (which has a suspiciously 'Celtic' snout). But if Downs in use, where are the people living: we have conspicuously not found occupation sites of M/LIA, nor are there remains locally of the characteristic pottery etc. (similar question to period 450-650: where are they?).

developing into: the renewed arable/settlement exploitation with local road system and new types of blocks of fields in later C1

reverting to pasture, with minor arable, in C4-5 and probably C6

and thereafter, use of downland becomes fitful for occupation and sporadic and patchy for arable, though for over a thousand years it is intensively and continuously used for sheep: it being quite clear from C10 that by then the permanent arable of med and modern times was already established, with the outer Downs performing as grazing and resource source as part of an economic and tenurial system stretching across the grain of the land but based, in terms of power-base and living place, in the valley.

*I ran out of time at this point, so no further editing/re-writing/new writing occurs hereafter. There are also quite a number of other interpretative ideas which at the moment do not appear in the text at all*

major insert

**This now to be used as framework for rest of chapter:**

### **The Archaeology**

structure?

Intro

Chronol. overview picking up selected points

Thematic brief discussions- fields

Some general points NOT already covered

Link to History

Introduction

A short trip around the Avebury area today would identify the extent to which small scale impact may have a huge symbolic significance. For example, the long barrow at West Kennet takes up a relatively small area of land and resources, but it may well have been a centre of ancestral worship for ??? years (see Whittle 19?? OJA ). In contrast to the large scale erosion episodes described above the establishment of West Kennet was environmentally invisible.

The earliest structures in the study area are long barrows, all megalithic as far as is known.

1. Long barrows: distributionally the significant thing about the study area is that it is part of a `corridor` stretching S. from N. of Hackpen Hill S to the lip of Pewsey Vale by Knap hill where, with one exception, THERE ARE NO LONG BARROWS of any sort. There is the spaced out group to the W around Avebury, including on the W face of the Marlborough Downs W of the Ridgeway; and there is a not too irregular N-S line from Temple Bottom to West Woods N-S along the E of our core area. But in between, in this very marked gap 13 km. N-S by 3 kms W-E, there is only the `Old Chapel` megalithic barrow, additionally exceptional by being the ONLY barrow in Barker`s map area (except for two on the W tip of Oldbury Hill, which are irrelevant, and Adam`s Grave) which is sited above the 210 m contour. So our study area has a major `negative` which might be significant: no lbs of any sort on the chalk uplands except for `Old Chapel` right in the middle of the corridor. What is this telling us? -

that the Downs were already open in `lb time`? -

that this stretch was still closed by woodland (there`s quite a lot of Clay-with-Flints hereabouts on the higher peaks)

that the Ridgeway corridor was already recognised and, for what ever reason, been kept `lb free`?

or that much of the downland was not only open but was already in intensive agricultural use, for grazing and perhaps for cultivation as the new Manton evidence might suggest?

Also another point here, following 1995 AP discovery of new lb above Kennet's house on S side of Lockeridge Dene (Antiquity Dec 1995): its position is almost exactly where it could have been predicted in near-complete, quite regularly-spaced `ring` of LBs around the central blank area of Fyfield/Overton Downs (see distrib map)

**cf these ideas with Bob Smith`s environmental models in PPS which covered the W of our study area**

Neolithic remains can be identified by a number of the flints from ODXII and ODXI if they are early they are only residual. The lack of diagnostic pottery is a problem and it seems likely that any Neolithic occupation in the are was minor. ADD MORE

ON NEOLITHIC MONUMENTS AND RITUAL USE IN THE SURROUNDING AREA. HERE WE CAN INCLUDE WEST KENNET AVEBURY, SILBURY HILL etc.

Para here on Overton Hill, with summary of and thoughts on implications of Pollard's (1992) revision of The Sanctuary, which has pre-circle earlier Neo pottery (p.219) which he compares to the pre-barrow activity at G 6 a and b c 400 m to the n (Smith and Simpson 1964, 1966). Sanctuary itself firmly placed at Grooved Ware phase: where were all the people coming from? Who was this `temple` serving? - questions must be addressed re local . Cf. his analysis of flint assemblages with Fyfod material types landscape evolution in 3rd mill BC. NB apparent emphasis on NE quadrant as scene of activity i.e. the arc opening on to ?Ridgeway and the DOWNLAND, not the river valley (figs 5 and 6): " p. 222: the spatial organisation of deposition would appear to have a relationship to particular cardinal points, principally the north and east (sunrise, or where their fields/animals/burial sites were, or all four????), suggesting a wider frame of reference than that provided by the sites (Woodhenge as well as Sanct.) themselves. Do Beaker sherds on Sanct. link with thin but arguably ubiquitous scatter of Beaker sherds over Fyfod? - are these sherds (OD1, FD 1, ODX and XI, surface finds on OD) indicating the people who were trooping to the Sanct. at 11 am on Sunday morning? (But perhaps all this line of thinks should go in chap 11??)

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Sanct. conclusion puts it at 2500 cal BC +/- 100. p.224 "The use of stone settings (here seen as perhaps a constructional phase 2) can be seen as part of a local tradition of megalithic construction..." Some odd standing stones and the axe sharpening sarsen, which originally stood upright, could fit such a model. Pollard's point p.224 that there was a `period of intense monumental activity in the Avebury region, in the centuries either side of 2500cal BC,` must surely have its reflection somewhere, somehow, in the Fyfod landscape. If not, why not?

material from Evans 1990, `wider implications` p. 115: to be worked in as appropriate:

"Late Beaker cultivation showed no reverence for the long barrows and was probably not specific to them.....woodland clearance more or less associated with renewed activity in late Beaker times, and it is likely that the events are a reflection of widespread land re-organisation and other activities.....later Neo events show a similarity on a regional scale cf. in Early Neo. when land-use practices and sequences were more locally individualistic

By around 2000 cal BC "the timber settings may long since have decayed, though the stone settings provided a lasting focal point in the landscape, including the focus for the development of a small round barrow cemetery on the southern spur

of Overton Hill." Quite: and that embryonic barrow group is spatially related to the field system phase I which now provides a cultural landscape context for all this. Not only are we NOT any longer just looking at discrete monuments in space, for they are all contextualised, but are we also looking at landscape continuum, an evolution, perhaps through a myriad adjustments as well as strategic decisions, in which in this small area of the 'Truckie Caff complex' we move apparently smoothly from pits and knapping around 3000 BC perhaps through ritual deposition to mega temple construction at 2500 to barrows at 2000 to an organised landscape of fields in 2nd millennium - all well before 1000 BC

It is during the beginning of the 2nd millennium that the settlement picture changes. The Beaker burials found at ODXI represent use of the area in at least a mortuary context. Aerial photographic analysis has revealed the extent of round barrows across the landscape. These lie along the edges of field systems which themselves did not appear until at least the Middle Bronze Age. This asks the question then what were the barrows marking? Was it the edge of the marginal land? Certainly the use of field systems respects the barrows and we may be seeing the continuity which exists physically in the landscape which is in contrast to the social/symbolic situation as dramatic changes again take place between the EBA and MBA. Settlement sites of the EBA have not been located in the study area and this mirrors a similar situation elsewhere in Britain (ref ???? I know the Irish ones but that's not particularly relevant!). The pottery from Piggledean Bottom, lying just down slope from the Overton Down sites, may well be a good indication of the early BA settlement strategy. This is identified elsewhere by Allen (19??) when Beaker pottery continually turns up below colluvial layers in valley deposits. The archaeological evidence therefore indicates a valley settlement pattern for EBA groups with the mortuary remains indicating boundaries between the exploited land of the valleys and the marginal land of the higher plateau. However, if groups were settled in the valleys in would still be unusual not to find at least some settlement evidence. The answer may be a much different economy/subsistence to that employed in the Neolithic. Since it is clear early farmers were inclined towards a sedentary lifestyle, further emphasised by the time spent in the one location, long enough to build large monuments. So the EBA is a shift towards a mobile economy, not everywhere i.e. stone circles etc. But certainly we have to envisage a shifting landscape as represented by the archaeological evidence. The remains of material culture is widespread but seldom concentrated in settlements. Therefore although monumentality continues and in fact increases in significance as not only are new sites created (Durrington Walls) but old ones are changed and revisited with a renewed significance (West Kennet).

Fyfod essentially avoids this intense and highly destructive activity. The Marlborough Downs saw a large amount of clearance. But this was not permanent

clearance. Human groups were living for the present on the basis of their success in the past. Hence blocking of the tombs to preserve the past as unchanging and unchangeable. Prior to the EBA the past was continually altered as the rearrangement of bones in West Kennet identifies.

It is the MBA where activity on the Downland begins to become physical and tangible. Although the area of the study area has not produced a great deal of MBA material, the surrounding area has been much more profitable archaeologically. Gingell's work on the Marlborough downs has identified that much of the settlement enclosures associated with field systems had origins in the MBA although none appear to be contemporary. Consequently although we can picture the development of field systems at around this time we can suggest to what extent there was contemporary and widespread use of the landscape only tentatively (fig. 14.2; *cf.* Gingell 1992). It was suggested that these sites fitted into an economy based around the exploitation of cattle kept in the valleys, sheep from the higher slopes and arable land around the settlements themselves. In the valley the archaeological evidence does suggest some activity (Evans *et. al.* 1993). It is clear that at this time farmers were settled in the valleys and on the slopes. Their material culture is richer by the addition of metal however the ritual culture has all but vanished and the question must be asked where did it go? It may be possible to take the archaeological evidence and suggest a much greater concentration on the use of field systems. That is to say that the monuments lose importance and the need for boundaries whether they be agricultural in significance or tenurial. If they are tenurial then maybe the suggestion that we are seeing the development of a new power base which relies on material goods (i.e. bronze) and physical possessions (i.e. land). It might be interesting to lead this into the LBA/EIA when land is definitely of prime importance and make the point that change only makes sense if it is put in the context of what goes before and what goes after. This is an approach taken by Lotte Hedeager (Iron Age Societies) who identifies the development of a state based society in the pre Roman Iron Age in Denmark. Clearly we do not have that here but we see a new attitude to what is important in life, i.e. land and crops. This is a new attitude which is to develop over the next three and one half thousand years.

The settlement of ODXI occurs at a time when the overall settlement appears to be in decline. Gingell's recent study did not identify any substantial EIA locations while Evans showed the IA to be all but non-existent in the valley. The round houses built within the Overton Down enclosure were occupied for a number of centuries and the quantity and variability of the animal bones present suggest a varied and prosperous farming regime was practised. It is unlikely the settlement lay isolated although no other settlement have been located close by. It is the field systems which suggest well established communities in the area although the dates for the

boundaries may not exceed the LBA. It has been shown on Salisbury Plain that boundaries may have complex use histories (Bradley et al 199?). On Overton Down this has similarly proved to be the case. The field within which the EIA settlement was placed was already in existence, possibly from as far apace as the later BA. There is no evidence for arable activity up until this time and it may be that walls were built as stock enclosures, parallels to which can be drawn from as far afield as the Peak District (Hodges 1991) or West Ireland (Caulfield 19??).

The Overton Down settlement existed as a small farming community on the low hills above the Kennet Valley and a model of its social/political context is suggested elsewhere. It was drawing on resources over the local terrain but how widely and to what extent is not known. The presence of the LBA site on Burderop Down excavated by Chris Gingell (1992, 38) is interesting since it has been interpreted as a 'craft village'. Although this is difficult to prove the evidence from the site certainly suggests it is unlike any others on the Down and may well indicate the presence of more specialised activities. Elsewhere in Wessex the picture for the EIA is clearer and although the term 'marginal' is contentious certainly the settlement is far from being part of an intense local farming community. Its abandonment some time around ?600 BC? may signal the end of 1000 years continuous use of the field systems from the MBA until the EIA and around the time of the advent of hillforts from 550 BC onwards (Cunliffe 1984, 30). It is argued that from the mid-1st millennium BC essentially Fyfield and Overton Downs, and the Marlborough Downs, were empty of habitation while busy with stock-farming - a trial run for the Middle Ages as it were.

It is not until the early 1st millennium AD that the local area became repopulated and used for settlement. The first occupation of ODXII occurred within the 2nd century, evidenced by coins and pottery from across the site, in particular the pit within area 1. This occupation is not isolated since Early Roman pottery has been found during fieldwalking of the ploughed out remains of what appears to be a large settlement cluster (pp\$\$). Similarly Roman sherds have been picked up from across the Marlborough Downs both during surface collection and through the excavation of lynchets suggesting an intensity of occupation not seen since the MBA. At ODXI this picture is complimented by the environmental record which may well indicate the first arable use of the ODX enclosure. This evidence is not firmly dated and its interpretation lies solely in a comparison with the evidence from the surrounding area for Early RB exploitation of the land. The field systems which these Romano-British farmers used had to some extent already been established in the BA. But new fields were created across the slopes leading the development of many of the large lynchets which remain today.

The purpose of the new fields appears to represent the first real exploitation of the Fyfod area for arable. Although there was almost certainly some activity in the BA we have has yet no direct evidence from the study area and can only infer from increased clearance and parallels from elsewhere on the Marlborough Downs (Gingell 1992). In contrast, by the early Roman period the evidence is much more convincing. Particularly the mollusc sample from cutting 15, ODX (pp\*\*), where a period of cultivation is identified in the tertiary fill. While the pottery scattered across the fields may be indicative of heavy manuring. To complete the picture we have the first appearance of quern stones, found in situ at ODXII, along with what may be a corn drying kiln.

Clearly the Romano-British period saw a major change in land use over Fyfield and Overton Downs with extensive associated occupation similar if not more intense than the MBA to EIA. Land was used for both arable and pasture with much of the settlement occurring on the slopes with evidence from the valley at present being poor. Unfortunately this may be the result of poor preservation and an unrecognisable land use, possibly as rough pasture or managed woodland.

The vision of a wholly exploited landscape continues into the 3rd and 4th centuries AD at about the time of the principle occupation layers of ODXII. The settlement to the south may well have been abandoned by this time since the pottery collected is mostly of Early Roman date. Instead a group of settlement plots were built, the earliest being the buildings 2 and 3. This post dated the use of the site during phase 1 of building 4 which may have been a barn within the field system or an out building for a much larger complex. As has already been suggested the later buildings formed distinct units within a small hamlet or village which farmed the surrounding fields, their economy being based on sheep, cattle and arable. The predominance of sheep at this time can be seen as leading on from the increase in sheep identified in the IA elsewhere in the country.

The settlement structure found at ODXII is very distinct from that from the EIA, as found at ODXI, both in the clustering of sites and the size and shape of the houses. In the LBA/EIA the site was enclosed and consisted of no more than two houses; while the Late Roman site at ODXII indicates an open, planned settlement of distinct units set outside the field system. This morphology is not confined to the 3rd and 4th centuries since the earthworks to the south indicate a 1st to 2nd century settlement of similar characteristics. The position of the settlements also shows a shift further down the valley with ODXII being in a much less exposed position than the LBA/EIA site. This may simply relate to the use of the higher, more level, ground for fields; resulting in the neglect of earlier boundaries: identified by the lynchet running through the centre of the ODXI enclosure and the filling in of the ditch at cutting 15.

This view of a reordered landscape reveals dispersed settlement in 'native farmsteads' along with larger 'hamlets' represented by the earthworks at ??? and the excavations at ODXII. The tracks between the fields can be distinguished and it is possible to recreate quite closely the human impact on the terrain during the Romano-British period, certainly with much more confidence that we can do for the BA-EIA use of the land.

The primary reason for the excellent survival of the Roman remains is not simply a matter of increased intensity. More important is the form of occupation which followed. With the exception of modern agricultural infringement which lies beyond the core area of study, the only major changes have been medieval in date and have since become clear through aerial reconnaissance, leaving little doubt over which are the earlier changes and how preservation has affected the evidence. However as with the environmental data there remains an archaeologically dark area from the 6th century through until the 12th and 13th centuries. This is not reflected in the documentary evidence which remains are main source for land development during this period. Archaeological evidence is restricted to the settlement at ODXII, a number of Saxon burials found along the line of the Ridgeway, and the remains of what may be Saxon boundaries relating to the charters discussed below.

Quite long periods are unrepresented on the Downs by any evidence on the ground and this has suggested breaks in the continuity of local land-use (Fowler 1975, 121). Any genuine continuity on the Downs, from the Neolithic onwards, is in only general terms of community or agrarian regime and any unbroken functional occupation of one site is doubtful (*ibid.* 123). It is possible, therefore, that ruptures and discontinuities are more characteristic than continuities in several lines of enquiry, some of which are further discussed in Chap. 15. We note here, nevertheless, the quite striking evidence on the Downs for the influence of 'old' things physically existing in the landscape. Hence the concept of 'place' in the sense of somewhere to which people keep going back to renew activity there, though not necessarily the same activity as previously. This is of course rather different from the idea of 'place' as where 'I belong', and of continuity as the place where people successively live. We move on in the next Chapter (15) to some of these more tenuous and even abstract interpretative thoughts arising from consideration of this Fyfod landscape and this project's evidence about it.

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