

Fyfod masterfile altch15 @ 29. vi. 97. Needs to discuss some of the more abstract issues like 'adaptation', 'carrying capacity' and demography. I will put religion/ritual and landscape here too, since I have not yet written it into the book anywhere. Pjf.

CHAPTER 15

TIME AND THEMES IN A LOCAL LANDSCAPE

'...the landscape is constituted as an enduring record of - and testimony to - the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves'. Ingold 1993, 152

The landscape of Fyfield and Overton is undoubtedly both a testimony to the life of thousands of almost exclusively anonymous people who have lived there; and a testament of their works and, to an extent, their thoughts. A single phrase, a 'dwelling perspective' (*ibid.*), encapsulates both the thought welling out of long-term familiarity with this local landscape and the concept expressed in the above quotation; but while the phrase is neat, the thought is itself historical, not least because it has underpinned - if not always explicitly - the development of British field archaeology since the mid-C17 (Ashbee 1972, Ucko *et al.* 19^{^^}). Certainly this author grew up with the idea that somehow earthworks could 'speak' to us of past times and peoples if we could but read them correctly. The premise was absorbed in particular from Crawford (1953) and the above quotation is used here because, forty years on, it succinctly expresses in somebody else's words the basic assumption on which the Fyfod project proceeded from 1959 onwards.

Everything has followed from that: not just that the landscape contains a lot of archaeological evidence and has become a decipherable record of human activity but also that, to an extent, it has been 'humanised' during the process of its creation. It was given values in the past by those who were also modifying it towards those values which we in our turn attach to it. Those values are themselves mobile, and have developed considerably as sociological phenomena during the life time of this project; we explore some of this 'new territory' towards the end of this chapter.

One particular value was and is the perception of landscape as a scientific resource. From our belief in that, it followed that we could address a certain range of issues. It is therefore unsurprising, and indeed proper, that Chapters 1 and 13 have already clearly shown that the way in which the investigation has been conducted was strongly predetermined: we set out to answer a number of specific, pre-conceived questions. As a consequence, we adopted particular methodologies, acquired particular sorts of materials and other evidence, and interpreted our information in particular ways. While

we may not have stopped too long to answer the rather more basic question as to why we were working in Wessex rather than, say, The Black Country, we quickly anticipated the limitation likely to arise from concentrating on Chalk downland alone, that traditional archaeologists' milieu, by embracing the varied geologies and terrains of two whole parishes. But of course the Project has vigorously refused to be confined by such imposed restraints and has generated both evidence not on the original menu and thoughts which were certainly not in mind at the start.

Here we wish to explore some of this serendipitous territory, common places in others' perspectives may be but here arising *post hoc facto* from this place and our contemplation of it through time. Five major themes suggest themselves. Despite our best efforts to isolate them by definition for the purposes of discussion, they inter-relate. Rather than separate issues, they are too but different facets of a product, sometimes concrete, sometimes abstract, created in the 'real-time' of millennia as that which we would study and yet also very much a creation of a single generation in the later second millennium AD as the *outcome* of the study itself. The landscape is theirs, the people who owned, worked on and lived in this particular fragment of the earth's surface ; the interpretation is ours. The latter does not necessarily correlate with what happened in making the former. Whatever happened, and whatever those at the time thought was happening, are nevertheless fruitful sources of ideas thereafter, ideas which can give stimulation and pleasure whether or not they are historically accurate in any absolutist sense.

The themes are:

1. PLACE AND ITS STUDY
2. CHANGE
3. CONTINUITY
4. SACRED AND RITUAL
5. LINES ON THE LANDSCAPE

We arrive at the end of our routes with the concept of 'cultural landscape', the core of Chapter 16.

Place and its Study

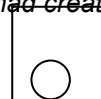
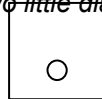
Methodology is impossible to ignore, even in a final chapter of discussion, simply because our image, impression, interpretation of the history of a place - call it what you will, - is itself so much the result of how it was studied. As we said earlier (p. 00), Fyfield and the Overtons do not contain some basic truth, not even a single, simple history, merely awaiting our arrival to reveal it. What we see, even in its simplest version, might be expressed as a formula: place + people x time = cultural landscape;

and that is complex enough as a process, without complicating it further by considering different results from different ways of studying it. Such issues are frequently discussed in *Antiquity* and are well-demonstrated in mid-1990s mode in *Archaeological Dialogues* 3, 2 (Dec. 1996, Leiden).

Here we merely comment on three methodological points arising from this Project in relation to issues of the 1990s. Nowhere have we discussed 'off-site' archaeology in this study, for the very simple reason that the concept was never part of its theory or practice. It never occurred to us that anything or anywhere within the study area was 'off-site' because from the start, first all the downland, and then very quickly the whole of the landscape of the two parishes, was regarded as 'the site' - if we must use the word. Of course, within the parishes there were phenomena labelled 'archaeological sites', some already in the record, others which we found; but such were always conceptualised as components of a landscape or landscapes, probably because we set out to study a landscape in the first place. Presumably someone trying to appreciate, say, Shostakovich's 10th symphony does not first look for the notes and then try joining them up, but will rather listen to the whole and come down to the detail - the refrain, chord or site, - to clarify or elaborate an initial broad understanding. The point is, of course, a methodological one, for both courses can be followed; but, in archaeological terms, concept and practice from the Fyfod experience found much of the post-early 1960s debate about the nature of 'landscape archaeology', regional survey and archaeological fieldwork (which, in particular, few seemed to understand) unduly abstruse and even redundant. The whole 'site' mind-set is quite inappropriate to a subject which would grow intellectually. It is a very great pity that archaeology has allowed 'the site' to be perpetuated so strongly, and indeed encouraged, by bureaucratic need and, probably, a human desire for something simple in the face of complexity.

Using the 'site/off-site' language, the simple site model could be compared graphically with the Fyfod model thus :

~~Two little diagrams which I kidded myself I had created as a computer graphic!~~



A 'site' surrounded by 'off-site'

'Landscape' containing an 'in-landscape'

The jargon is unacceptable; the logic is impeccable. If only the landscape theory were applied more generally, not merely in designing a project, the discipline might be able to think more coherently about some of its business.

We have also mentioned the matter of scale (*above*, p. 00). Archaeology is, of course, only too familiar with this concept in the time dimension, for example claiming some intellectual advantage for its ability to consider both the long perspective on the one hand and an immediacy in its revelation of evidence witnessing a single moment in time. Fyfod, like other projects, illustrates both facets: for examples, the long orchestral relationship between natural resources and people on the one hand and, on the other, the instant when a child's corpse and a decorated jar were conjoined in a small grave high on Overton Down. This study has, however, brought out in particular the significance of scale in the spatial dimension. Again, the concept is familiar, in such as global/local contrasts and diffusionist theory; but here we started small and yet the study shows a similar range of spatial diversity, downwards as it were, within the smallness of the space under examination. Within the grandeur of a subject accustomed to thinking world-wide as well as long-term, the parochial scale is spatially (and probably intellectually) puny, yet it is the person-sized scale at which most people have conceptualised and lived their lives up to the present and also, however small, the 'big' framework within which lots of other scales have been and are nested. This applies to perceptions in the past, for example in what they did, as well as now, for example in both how we view what they did and how we interpret our studies of those past actions. Rowden Mead illustrates the point nicely, for there we have both free-standing archaeological evidence and excellent historical documentation. Yet both evidences are different in spatial scale as well as different in kind, for the one largely reflects life on that spot while the other's frame of reference, tenurially the Priory's manor, is regional (*see also below*).

On the ground too, whatever the kind of evidence, a whole range of spatial scales are witnessed. Their significance to us is interpretive, for a failure to be sensitive to their existence could miss a whole dimension of appreciation in the landscape. Our 'windows' approach, which was certainly not originally in mind as a means of presenting the work, may or may not be appropriate but it grew out of a developing appreciation of the existence and possible significances of diversity at the sub-parochial level. This emerged in our own thoughts. For example, we pondered the striking differences between, and historical consequences of, the forested south and grassland north of our study area; and then we noted the discordances between Fyfield and Overton Downs themselves and began to ask why this should be so. The obvious (now) realisation followed: that we were not the first to become aware of this small-scale diversity and its significances. It had always been thus; the very people we were presuming to study had been acutely aware of this range of difference in what to

them was not a landscape but a whole series of spatially overlapping, interconnecting mini-landscapes. In addition, in a countryside of mini-landscapes each 'micro-plate', to borrow tectonic imagery at this relatively minuscule scale, probably had collective and personal associative values. We have to say 'probably' because we do not have evidence for each; but we do for some, and hence the general probability.

The evidence is both physical, further discussed *below*, and in local topographical names. Some of the latter are present if bowdlerised as place-names on modern maps; others are forgotten now but recoverable from older maps themselves recording different layers of etymological development and, presumably, common usage and memory. Such maps are as much linguistic palimpsests as they are cartographic accumulations of landscape history. Obvious examples of collective associations are parts of the landscape where communal effort literally created a mini-landscape - places labelled with names like 'Shaw', 'Breach' and 'Park'. But the collectively-perceived kaleidoscope of what was a very familiar landscape also contains many bits and pieces known to all - names involving common features and functions like hills, woods and milling indicate not only locations of components of the landscape ('sites', see *above*) but how people at the time and over time perceived their surroundings. It was not just 'the hill' or 'the wood'; it was where something had been found ('heathen burials'), existed ('Barrow Copse') or had existed ('Brickkiln Copse') which everybody knew about and which made that hill different from other hills (names like 'White Hill', though that particular name is hardly distinctive in an arable, Chalk landscape; though it is almost certainly telling us that, unlike other hills which did not see such activity at the time, it was ploughed up). 'Everybody', of course, in the sort of rural society with which we are in general dealing with here until one-two centuries ago, actually means 'Nobody, other than the one or two hundred people who make up our virtually closed community'.

Other 'plates' making up the landscape as they saw it, and as we to an extent can recover it both historically and in terms of former cognition, involve personal names. Unfortunately we cannot always know why a particular personal name came to be associated with a particular place, though we can often know when a particular person put his (or her, though we have no female example) name to alter perception of at least one tessera in the landscape - and perhaps of himself too. Thus Mr. Wools (or was it Pumphrey - CHECK) changes the Anglo-Saxon name of his Grove in an exercise in proprietorial image-enhancement, though obviously he would not have expressed it in such terms. Another name for a sub-set of the Anglo-Saxon landscape, *Raddun*, has come through to the present as Wroughton; but one Richard, who farmed it in the mid-C13 and was known at the time as Richard of Raddun, has been forgotten, perhaps because, unlike Mr. Wools, he did not own it. Similarly, an Anglo-Saxon person (probably, *above* p. 00) lives on by name, Aethelferthe, through the

accident of documentary survival though that has not, as with Richard, ensured his survival as part of a living perception of the landscape as expressed on modern maps. He, like Richard, has become part of our 'ancestral landscape', having been put back on the map, so to speak, and placed in local space as a result of C20 scholarship. We suspect that he was already a folk memory in the C10, part of the etymological litter through which the local boundary commissions trudged twice to our certain knowledge as they tried to define what was already to them a landscape of ancestors quite as much as a landscape providing their daily bread and their lords' dues.

The significances of our two land charters are clearly many: here, they so very strongly emphasise the matter of scale. The surveyors were not operating at parish level; their concern was specifically less extensive than that. So, to us, their almost obsessive passion for detail might well seem a form of sub-parochial myopia unless we remember that their concern was with both their basic resource and with what we would call 'face'. It is not very difficult to detect behind the minutiae of the formulaic land description the hidden agenda. It involved such abstracts as pride, status, prestige, assertion, 'image', that is how you appear to your contemporary peers, and is unlikely to have been far from the minds of the surveyors and their clerks. Yet all such jostling, surely of a sort likely to have been traditionally indulged in perhaps even back to pre-documentary land negotiations, was occurring within what was really quite a small-scale frame. Few things, however, could have been more important to those involved.

Nor was this 'estate frame-work' the smallest scale by any means. The charters clearly indicated mini-landscapes within the grand design of their territories or estates, not just topographical and functional but also tenurial and memorial, that is 'landscapes of the mind' as well as landscapes of the earth. The northern half of what was later Lockeridge tithing is a case in point (*above*, p. 00), and we have also identified a separate unit *outside* the space occupied by the two Overtons (to be discussed and published elsewhere; see FWP %%).

This brief discussion of the significance of scale brings out three points. Firstly, people in the past lived and worked in a particular local place at several different scales *within* their locality. Secondly, they perceived their surroundings at different spatial scales. The generalisation covering both points is that if the parish (or whatever name one uses for the local long-term administrative unit) was their 'universe', then a whole range of subsets, functional and cognitive, are almost certain to have been present in past rural communities.

The third point is that, if that was so, then we should not only be aware of this in our study but, adapting our methodology accordingly, should very positively be looking for

evidence of the phenomenon and taking its likely presence into account in our interpretations. The intensely local approach, as in 'local history' or 'local archaeology', has tended sometimes to be dismissed as limited because it was 'parochial', using the word in a derogatory sense. It has been demeaned as 'parish pump' history, meaning that because of its small scale it is unimportant. While not denying that much poor-quality historical research has been carried out at local level, as in wider fields, work at the small-scale is perhaps not intrinsically in minor academic key even though places like Fyfield and Overton are not intrinsically significant. Part of their interest, however, apart from the purely local history dimension, can be in their generality, in their typicality; and in that respect the concept of a nest of scales within the local one, a series of micro-perceptions of mini-landscapes, is useful, if only because that is the sort of framework in which most people operated within the communities and economies of locally-based agricultural societies in western Europe over the last four or five millennia.

It is also useful to remember that essentially those societies themselves were illiterate until quite recently. We have already touched on documentary evidence in discussing scale, but one point about it specifically can be emphasised. And the point is obvious: just because documents were generated and have survived, and in particular because some are about farming, it is easy to fall into the trap of assuming that the agricultural communities who worked the land were literate. They, and certainly most of their members, were not. The reason for raising this truism here is quite simple: merely to emphasise that the *written* word played virtually no part in the vernacular perception of landscape, even in periods - in our case from the C10 onwards, - when our perception of their landscape is signally influenced by contemporary documents. Such documents as concept - and later, maps, - and then as account, record and revision were in general simply not part of a farm-worker's way of thinking about and seeing his surroundings; the words and images that have survived for us to form a view of precisely those same surroundings come largely from professionals who surveyed and wrote on behalf of the owners, people who were mainly outsiders who neither lived in nor worked this land (*above*, p. 00). So while it is perfectly legitimate for us to use that evidence for our purposes, our methods and landscape interpretation should be sensitive to exactly what we are reading and looking at documentarily. It represents a particular, not a general or even common, point of view. And recognising that is, of course, in addition to following the well-founded advice to recognise the reason for the document's creation in the first place.

CHANGE

Again, this brief discussion is very selective. Clearly, our study area is ambiguous in respect of change: in one sense it moved into its *modus operandi* about four thousand

years ago and has been ticking over more or less in the same way ever since; in another, it provides us with a model of continual, arguably continuous, small-scale change, interposed with major changes every so often. It is a weak response, but to an extent any resolution of the conundrum depends on definitions of 'change'. Again, it is a matter of scale.

Mega-changes that can be identified include land-clearance, removing forest-cover over the northern reaches largely by c 2000 BC, clearing the valley sides and the downs of sarsens in the 2nd millennium BC, and gradually bringing the valley under control between 1000BC-AD1000. Huge acreages of enclosed landscape ceased to function fully in later prehistoric times, and some time in the mid/late 1st millennium AD an 'open' landscape in terms of its agrarian practice and appearance superseded earlier arrangements. Equally, hand-in hand with proprietorial and technological developments, landscape changes occurred frequently around 1780-1820 AD and in the mid-C20. The communications systems have changed almost out of all recognition. So has the population, though its Anglo- or West Saxon basis has been fairly stable for well over a millennium and, unlike other communities in Britain during the C20, remains unaffected by new ethnic components.

On the whole, although fundamental and significant changes of this sort were clearly of great impact locally and sometimes further afield, they are not peculiar to Fyfield and Overton; nor in general is its apparently endless catalogue of small changes. So there is apparently no idiosyncratic change, and no cataclysmic change, big as well as sudden, which could be called a 'rupture'. Both large changes individually and the small changes collectively are of sorts which occur practically anywhere else in southern England; yet the specifics of the small changes are of course special to this place. The particular geology and geomorphology, for example, condition the place and nature if not the date of many local micro-changes; the fact that ownership of much land lay, not just in ecclesiastical hands but specifically with Wilton and Winchester, gives a particular character to some of the medieval history. Earlier, it is at least plausible that the locality's little changes may well reflect at least proximity to, if not formal relationship with, Avebury and its megalithic formalities. At one level or another, then, it is easy to develop an interpretation of the study area's landscape history as one essentially of change, big changes from time to time and a stream of small ones all the time.

It is no more difficult to portray that same history as essentially one of stasis, fundamental continuities and stability. A demographic model along such lines has already been hinted at (*above*, p. 00). One can argue that the sort of mega-changes already pointed to occurred at such long intervals and were so long-term in their development and effects that they represent evolution along a continuum rather than

'change' as normally understood. The argument can continue that the range of resources, though rich, was fixed, and that once the most appropriate long-term land-use had been adduced experientially, then the pattern was essentially set. The time for the fossilisation of such wisdom was probably in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC. The myriad small changes since - to a field size here, to the river course there, - though often important to a farm or even the village, were really no more, and of no greater significance, than adjustments to the basic pattern of land-use.

A 'middle model' can explore the concept of 'adaptation'. Instead of change, big or small, adaptation becomes the driving force of interpretation, being both causative and explanatory. Thus, for example, the collection of the dead into cemeteries developed around the main downland farming area represents an adaptation in land-use strategies as local communities consciously began trying to manage the provision of enough food for themselves as a priority over god-driven activity or the maintenance of an ancestral landscape. The development in the later 2nd millennium of fixed field boundaries, walls and lynchets reflect an adaptation in farming practice to try to prevent further soil erosion. It is then found that the best preventative of erosion is grass, not exposed soil however well-boxed into fields, so a pastoral economy develops, perhaps highlighting horse-breeding. A worsening climate ameliorated the water deficiency of the 2nd millennium, and enabled stock to be run on the now characteristically vernal uplands. The growing prominence of cattle and sheep farming on these local uplands in the 1st and earlier 2nd millennia AD represents adaptation in agrarian economy to two harsh facts, neither of them, be it noted, 'God-given' but both anthropogenic. The first was that the downs, the local 'uplands' in terms of scale, would no longer support long-term arable. The second was that, nevertheless, a Chalk subsoil now covered by thin rendzina was all that the local communities possessed as their major resource in the northern half of their territory. Such an adaptive model has the big attraction that it seems to be fairly close to how existing or recorded, but pre-modern technology, agrarian communities often operate: cautious and traditional rather than innovative and enterprising, and only suspiciously receptive of new ideas which they tend to adapt to their local circumstances.

Two linked limitations of the model stand out, however, particularly in considering 'change': all change tends to be seen as re-active and indeed largely re-active to a negative, trying to hold the position or at best return to the *status quo* after some downturn or setback. Even agrarian societies are not all so reactionary all the time: witness, for example, the readiness with which many adopted and then, variously, adapted to the completely alien and revolutionary concepts of Marxism (XXXXXXXref) in this century in time but often at much earlier stages in terms of technological phases in an archaeological linear model of 'development'. An adaptive, re-actionary model hardly seems to allow for direct external stimulation, nor for internal creativity - and

both existed in the past, as now. The Roman fields on the Downs, for example, represent external intrusion, innovation not inertia; they impacted and were not merely adapted. Similarly but internally Richard of Raddun, or more probably his immediate predecessors, moved out on to deserted and probably unfarmed grass landscape, in practical terms coping with day-to-day agrarian realities perhaps not too dissimilar to those of a new settler establishing his farmstead six hundred years later in Wisconsin or Minnesota (Hudson 1990, esp. pp. 171-175).

CONTINUITY

Continuity has been much discussed, though rarely defined, during the progress of this project (*above* in Chap. 13;). It has often been used in relation to settlements alone. Here, we have no continuity of occupation on any one particular settlement site on the downs, for none were inhabited for more than a few hundred years, and while the present village of West Overton has been a settlement for at least twelve hundred years, it is only at Fyfield that the possibility of real habitative continuity can be seriously entertained on present evidence. Yet clearly we have landscape continuity over millennia in the sense that people having been living in and using this particular area without a break since the fourth millennium BC, and probably for longer. In returning briefly to the topic in this overview, we merely mention two aspects in terms of generalities not discussed in Chap. 13. They are 'continuity' itself, and a 'generational habitative' model. Long-term routes through this landscape, especially in relation to 'nodal places', are discussed after that as 'lines in the landscape' (pp. 00-00) but they could as well have come under 'continuity'.

The concept of, or at least the word, 'continuity' may indeed be begging an inappropriate question. Already one can see that the intensity of post-war consideration of it (beginning with Finberg 1955) was as much sociological as intellectual, and that its 1970s' popularity was at worst a matter of fashion and in any case hardly more than an academic swallow heralding one of the motivators of the 1980s 'heritage industry' (Lowenthal 1985, Hewison 1987, Fowler 1992). In an agrarian perspective, the word 'persistence' seems more appropriate than 'continuity'. It can convey a sense that, almost whatever happened, people kept going - and that is what most rural lives were about rather than pursuing an abstract concept such as 'continuity'. Further, at the communal rather than personal level, once set on a economic strategy of mixed farming, an agrarian community has little option but long-term husbandry. Its policy has to be consistency, and its only flexibility lies essentially in modulating emphases between food on the stalk and the hoof. So long-term consistency, persistence, although a truism, is one of the main keys to understanding this particular landscape, even though - perhaps especially because - archaeological

and documentary evidence so often relate to ripples, interruptions and even the occasional rupture on the smooth and basically uneventful flat profile of agrarian continuity. Events such as floods, fires and famine, so temptingly the supposed stuff of history, are actually misleading in a long-term perspective of persistence.

There also seems to be a another sort of long-term continuity in the study area's 'carrying capacity'. Such can arguably be seen on the one hand in the archaeology itself with, even into the late C20, only three village-size settlements in the valley at any one time and, on the downs but only until the C18, a mere one or two contemporary settlements. Such a generality immediately brings out the exceptional nature of the downland settlement pattern in the early centuries AD; even without some received perception of what was happening then generally, the landscape interpreter would be looking for incomers and external forces to explain this departure from the norm. Characteristically, the downs supported a few farmsteads: the large settlement Overton Down South (fig. 6.00) stands out as an anomaly at any time.

Consideration of the excavated settlements suggested the possibility of another strand of continuity: a pattern of repetition in chronological, and perhaps even in generational, terms. We have already commented that each of the farmstead settlements, ODXI, ODXII and WC, may have enjoyed but short occupations (*above*, p. 00). The main farmstead we identify as *Raddun* was, with some degree of certainty, occupied between AD 1210/20-1318, that is for about one hundred years or somewhat less. The late Roman ODXII, regardless of whether it was a small farm or part of a larger settlement, does not enjoy quite the same precision but was nevertheless witness to its main occupation in three phases between the mid-4th and mid-5th centuries AD, say c.340-440 or, again, slightly less. The LBA/EIA site of ODXI saw its main occupation - Phase 3, - associated with an enclosed settlement, also with three structural phases and pottery difficult to spread far in time. The absolute and relative chronologies are much less precise than the other two settlements, but, whatever the absolute date (C9-8?), it is perfectly possible to envisage a short occupation of, again, about a century or slightly less. In other words, as a result of excavating three settlements close together in a generally similar situation, we might be able to glimpse a pattern of repetition not usually evidenced because settlements have tended to be excavated as single sites and often divorced from their landscape context. We seem to have, at three different times over two millennia, very much the same phenomenon, that is a farmstead with a single house and ancillary buildings related to a mixed farming economy. The pattern is emphasised by the seemingly short duration of each farmstead and indeed the similar length of habitation within that short duration. This observation, though to some extent circumstantial, could lead to the generalisation that within the sub-Atlantic climatic phase on this SW corner of the Marlborough Downs - and perhaps elsewhere

in Wessex, - a settlement on the local upland within an economic unit is likely to be a single-house farmstead which lasts only a century.

Because of the length of time indicated - a century or slightly less, - the possibility also exists that such a farmstead begins, peaks and ends over three generations. This 'three-generation model' was initially suggested by the *Raddun* evidence where, centred on the eponymous Richard, the fairly tight archaeological dating, combined with a possible interpretation of the documentary evidence, suggested that Richard and two other generations, perhaps son and grandson, or even his parents and his son, lived out the farm's history. With such similar lifespans as well as life-styles, clearly OD XI and ODXII could be embraced by the same interpretation.

A result of such speculation is that, within our 'continuity' theme here, we are left with an ambivalence typical of attempts to push evidence about the past to its limits. On the one hand, each of the three major settlement excavations very convincingly demonstrated an absence of long, and culturally significant, continuity, despite the evidence at each of illuminating little sequences in terms of landscape history. On the other hand, at a deeper and long-term level, the three of them together hint at a very significant form of continuity, a repeating habitative pattern, possibly involving three generations and individual families. If remotely close to past reality, the suggestion would quite usefully bring a 'dwelling perspective' to our landscape. That would be especially so if the pattern were perhaps more common than presently realised, because relevant evidence tends to be masked rather than exposed by archaeological methodology. The idea of such a long-term continuity would appear to do with a periodicity of unsustainability, with limits to 'carrying capacity' of these local uplands on the downs under a particular set of economic, technological and, probably, climatic factors; but in the continuity perspective, there just may be a tenurial factor too.

On the other hand, more generally and less precisely, the area seems to have supported a population at a certain sort of level of consistency. An order of numbers (despite a 100% deviation!) of c. 500-1000 people living in the Overton/Fyfield 'catchment' seems likely in pre-machine age terms (though the risky means of arriving at that sort of figure must be appreciated, *above* in Chap. 10 or 11). If so, then perhaps some 30-50 males formed the effective work-force for much of the time in what later we can perceive to be the two main manors.

LINES ON THE LANDSCAPE

Trackways, transhumance and 'nodal places'

Our first set of 'lines' could as easily have been allocated to 'continuity, for their longevity quite as much as their prime function as traffic-ways is their chief interest here. We are seized by the concept of nodal places in this landscape, especially in

relation to lines of communication rather than places which people inhabited over various periods. We referred to Down Barn as one such place (*above* Chap. 7), and the idea can be used elsewhere, particularly now that the landscape has filled up considerably as a result of our investigation. It had become, certainly by the C13 and probably much earlier as the C10 charters imply, quite difficult to thread a way through this place without bumping into something, interrupting an activity or crossing on to some-one's land. A main route or road in the study area is, therefore, *a priori* likely to be of some antiquity. Furthermore, as either a long-term landscape feature or an intrusion, it is probably of some historic significance to us in addition to having been important to those using it in the past (whenever that may have been). Because of their function, routes, roads and tracks are likely to lead, as they led their travellers formerly, to sub-areas within the local landscape, places of resource rather than only those places where people lived. Inhabited or exploited, such places tend to become 'preferred spots' in the landscape where, as archaeology in particular will tend to bear out, things happen again and again over long periods. When the National Trust flattened the Ridgeway café, for example, they performed an act of tremendous symbolic, even iconographic, sensuality in terms of late C20 conservation philosophy (Pl. 00); but, in its local context on Overton Hill, that was merely another incident in a history of that nodal place which goes back more than four thousand years to 'happenings' before The Sanctuary was built (Pollard 1988, 000). The point is not, however, the importance of Overton Hill; it is that people were not drawn similarly to other places of similar topography. Whether the nodal places emerge because routes happen to converge on them, or whether something about a place leads people to go there and thus form roads and tracks, is a moot point.

Various ways, tracks and roads through our study area are described in Chap. 1 (pp. 00-00). It was emphasised that the main route was east-west, crossing Fyfield and Overton parishes almost incidentally but along four lines (the prehistoric 'ditch' F.4, the Roman road, medieval Green Street and the C18 valley turnpike); and that the Ridgeway, the only obvious north-south route, was both anomalous and post-Roman. Otherwise, there was only a network of minor tracks for local communication. Our study would quite radically revise that initial perception.

The Ridgeway remains post-Roman in origin but can now be seen as but one of a skein of N-S routes (fig. 14. 00). Some of them were operative in Roman times, and some of the elements were almost certainly prehistoric in origin. Take the innocuous-looking Down Barn, for example, a place whose position and status as a nodal point in the communications network has been markedly enhanced by detailed local work and then standing back from it (Chap. 7). Far from being a tucked away place of obscurity, it can now be appreciated as having been a cross-roads of important routes, not just local tracks but long-distance through-ways. Basically they funnelled in off the downs

to its north and then either continued south across the grain of the topography or flowed with the contours south-eastwards down the dene. Essentially we can see two of the three main routes from N-S coming off the scarp-head of the Marlborough Downs in the north of our study area, and through Down Barn to different river crossings at, respectively, The Withy Bed on the West and East Overton boundary and, probably, somewhere close to Lockeridge House (figs. 9.1, 11.3).

The overall pattern of these ways seems to suggest that, in medieval times if not earlier, Fyfield and Overton lay on a general N-S route coming off the Marlborough Downs to cross the R. Kennet at various spots before largely re-coalescing for the difficult descent into Pewsey Vale and up on to Salisbury Plain beyond. If this perception is correct, surely what we are looking at is the 'real' historic, prehistoric Ridgeway, a 'zone of linear movement' or north-south route in the proper sense of that word for travelling from the R. Thames to the Plain and the South Coast (fig. 15.1).

At any one time, and indeed on any one journey, a traveller could and would make numerous local choices about the actual path, track or drove that s/he followed. The pattern of old tracks across the Fyfod landscape seems to represent both the choices that were on offer, as initially suggested by the terrain, and the results of those choices as the preferred paths and trackways came to be etched on the landscape. Their lines became increasingly defined, by normal wear and tear on the ground and because, as the landscape developed in its private ownership and specialist uses, the ways across the land became increasingly confined. Arable fields were enclosed and the track had to circumvent the enclosed area; woodland was planted and coppiced so droveways were funnelled into particular tracks through them. We see the one, for example, on Totterdown (figs. 3.4, 3.5), and the other just E of Boreham Wood (fig. 10.2).

Of two local consequences of this argument, one concerns Wansdyke. Two of the breaks through it have personal names in the C10 (*above* p. 00). Both 'gates' are on tracks forming part of this great N-S route (figs. 9.4, 15.1) Our argument would suggest that these throughways were not only already there when Wansdyke was built but that they were sufficiently important to have to have been accommodated by this new construction. The significance of these named gates could therefore be that they were not only original gaps rather than later breaks but that they were also furnished with contemporary structure and were possibly manned. Indeed, taking a wider view and accepting East Wansdyke as a distinct and quite short length of bank and ditch (only c 20 kms. long, following Yorke 1995, 00) centred on our study area, we may have stumbled on the reason for its construction: it was not just blocking the Ridgeway in the sense of running across the line of a single trackway, but rather was it designed literally to block the Ridgeway *sensu* a north-south route following the grain of the countryside by stretching a barrier across a linear zone of movement some 4 kms.

wide. The western and eastern 'wings' of Wansdyke either side of the central Fyfod length can readily be explained on this model as outreach portions intended to make ingress difficult by pushing would-be intruders off the Chalk and away into more wooded ground on the flanks of the Avon valley and in Savernake Forest.

The other local consequence to mention here concerns the present day-villages. All lie on lines of tracks within the general pattern of the great routeway as it sweeps across the Kennet valley (fig. 15.1). In practice it had to funnel down to reasonably reliable fording points. One, paved in the 10th century, lay on our western boundary and may well have been the most westerly point to cross the Kennet valley; hence, perhaps the growing importance of the particular line that alone came to be called the 'Ridgeway'. We show in on fig. 15.1 'restored' to its more sinuous, pre-Enclosure line on air photographic evidence; it then accords more readily with other elements of the great route, rather than appearing as the straight, rigid-sided road that it has only come to be during the last century. Old West Overton, as well as East Kennet, lay on this loop of the route, and new West Overton was created beside Anglo-Saxon East Overton just south of the next crossing to the east (fig. 9.1).

The next crossing to the east after that lay SE of the present Fyfield church at the point where the Roman road to (or from) *Cunetio* also crossed the Kennet (fig. 12.1). It is interesting that the track down to it off the downs ignores what one might imagine was the core of historic Fyfield village by the church (fig. 9.1) and follows a line along the E bank of the Kennet to Lockeridge Dene (*above* p.00). A general implication here would seem to be that, whether villages were sited at crossings or crossing were made near villages, a certain sort of symbiosis between village and through-traffic is likely to have benefited both.

Renewing acknowledgement of the speculative element in this chapter, if this proposed great North-South route existed with a growing imprint on the landscape from prehistoric times onwards, what was it for? Discounting local communication, which was clearly not what it was about, we would suggest two complementary answers. In the first place, this route represents a key element in pre-modern agrarian society which disappeared from the southern English landscape long ago (do we know when as a matter of interest? - check Chris Dyer and W. Ford): transhumance. The tracks and droves (some called such from 1567 onwards) we have delineated were the sorts of ways, and in some cases the actual lines, along which sheep and cattle, perhaps horses too, were driven to and from summer pastures on the uplands of the Marlborough Downs and Salisbury Plain. This is a proposition, not a statement of fact. If correct, it could be a regional manifestation of longer-distance droving involving the chalk downs as far as the Thames at Goring, the Thames valley itself, and even the Cotswolds. Compared to the well-documented transhumance still or recently extant in,

for example, southern France, the distances are short: not so long ago, thousands of sheep moved steadily along the *dragues* each year from Camargue to Causse, the Cevennes and beyond over distances of 200 km. and more (Fowler *forthcoming*). Attractive though the idea may be, however, there is precious little local evidence to support it or give it substance in time. Yet the archaeological and cartographic evidence is there to build up the pattern of fig. 15.1. Transhumance seems likely to have developed in the 2nd millennium BC, perhaps as a response to increasing pressures on resources, and an apparent absence of arable from much of the later prehistoric landscape could well point to a need for careful management of large flocks and herds, including going to some trouble to ensure the year-round provisioning.

The market economy of the Roman phase and, if not then, of Anglo-Saxon Wessex suggests that our pattern of movement through the landscape may well have changed its emphasis in the first millennium AD. Transhumance probably continued but much of the traffic along both old and new tracks was arguably to supply new towns and new markets in a new economic regime. With the mid-Saxon evidence from Hamwih very much in mind (Bourdillon several refs; Hinton; Fowler ASE 9 19\$\$), one is entitled to envisage a Wessex landscape laced by tracks and droveways heading towards the new towns and the centres of political and ecclesiastical power like Winchester. We suggest that the pattern of lines of communication in the Fyfod landscape, in part at least, was functioning in historic times as throughways to the 'nodal places' at regional and national level.

An insight into how and why these tracks were probably operating in earlier times, locally and as through-routes, is offered by Smith (1885, 24), writing of the Ridge Way in the middle and earlier 19th century and arguably just in touch with an older tradition:

'... it is remarkable that to this hour [this British road] is used by some; and twenty years ago, in the days of the turnpike, was the regular route adopted by the thrifty drovers who would avoid the tolls on the high road; and only fifty years since, in the time of heavy excise duty, was the much-frequented path employed by smugglers for conveying their contraband goods from the south coast to the interior of the country. The British road does not appear to have been stoned or even drained, as were the Roman roads which succeeded them. They were merely tracks over the turf, keeping well above the heads of the combs or valleys which run into the downs, and lying open to the wind in that exposed position, are generally firm and hard'

We note how he accepts what our argument is suggesting: that these through-ways are prehistoric, even though we can now demonstrate that, in the case of the Ridge Way, such is not the case. But then 'the British road' cuts across prehistoric and Roman fields, whereas on downs to both north and south we can show some of these tracks running between and respecting such fields as if they were contemporary. A contemporaneity is also suggested in relationships with various 'nodal places' to which some ways lead and where boundaries sometimes meet.

At local level, our 'nodal places' are relatively impoverished and obscure; but they nevertheless existed. Our criterion for a 'nodal place' in this local context is a place or area at which at least five 'through-lines' met or meet. The definition is arbitrary to an extent but on the other hand it is more, significantly more we would argue, than the three lines of any T-junction and the four lines, by definition, meeting at a cross-roads. A place from which five or more 'lines' radiate suggests more than co-incidence and, even if it were, indicates the creation of a likely focus of interest e.g of communications and boundaries. Overton Hill on our western boundary was and is the most obvious 'nodal place' because three different roads (=six 'lines') meet there and all are through-roads, not merely local tracks. In addition, the place had an habitative function and ceremonial and funereal structures were built on it (Chap. 8, fig. 8.00; pp. 00, 00). It became a place of resort, a destination for more than local residents in Neolithic and EBA times; a battle was fought there a millennium ago and about it a decade ago. Its last quasi-ritual structure, unceremoniously demolished, was a transport café,

Curiously, however, it is the only such 'nodal' place along the line of the narrow, present-day Ridgeway until a small area on the northern part of Lockeridge Down, 3.5 km. to the north. There the modern Ridgeway intersects the Bronze Age ditch and Roman trackway, F.4, close to the point where the Anglo-Saxon 'Ridgeway' follows the spine of Overton Down to the SE. This same area is in our 'window 1', so we know it to have been 'special' from an early date, with its standing stone, stone axe-sharpening bench and Beaker habitation (Chap. 3; figs. 3.00, 14.00). As a nodal place, its position seems to have been fixed in this landscape in the 3rd if not the 4th millennium. Thereafter its status developed and was maintained over at least three millennia until, arguably, the reign of King John when one of the royal half-pennies was lost as its icon, the Neolithic stone bench, was broken up (*above* p.00).

Roughly 1 km. to the east of the modern Ridgeway is a parallel way which we propose to call 'Overton Way' (fig. 14. 00). It curves - for it is still a Right of Way, though little used, - southwards off the high ground of Old Totterdown, itself a 'nodal place' with six radiating ways and a parish/tithing boundary passing through. Along its southerly line it passes through four other 'nodal places' on the downs: at Wroughton Copse (fig. 4.00), Anne of Cleves corner (p. 00; fig. 6.00), Down Barn, and ?Grey Wether Cottage (get the correct name: it is the NNR Warden's house on the A4). At the first is a conjunction of Roman and medieval through-ways, and the boundaries of prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval land allotments, variously of arable, pasture and woodland. Enhanced by passing through such a 'busy' spot, the Overton Way then goes through another node of track and boundary, both at work in the late Anglo-Saxon landscape and at a spot later associated with that rare thing in our study area, a national personage (*above* p. 00). The node at Down Barn has already been discussed (Chap. 7, figs. 7.00, 7.00; pp. 00, 00) but the next on to the south, although

mentioned (*above* p.00), has not previously been identified as particularly significant. In a context of round barrows, Roman settlement and Anglo-Saxon estate boundary, the Overton Way is intersected by both the main Roman road and the turnpike (Chap. 8). There are no other nodal places on the downs: apart from the special category Overton Hill, clearly of regional significance, all five local ones are strung along the Overton Way.

The parochial pattern of nodes is different south of the R. Kennet. Only three places unambiguously qualify, half the number (6) on the downs. From N-S, they are at the Manton Road cross-roads, Lockeridge Dene and, to the south in the woods, Hursley Bottom. The first is technically outside the study area just E of Clatford Hall but, as we have already seen (pp. 00, 00), Fyfield has been closely associated with Clatford at times. In this context, the linking factor is the Roman road to *Cunetio*. It intersects the most easterly of the long-distance tracks - we call it 'Clatford Way' - which comes off the Totterdown ridge 4 kms. to the N and climbs to the S through Clatford Park (now in Fyfield parish) and on to Oare (fig. 14.00). The status of 'nodal place' for the cross-roads is because one of the important medieval roads, 'the market road' from Marlborough and Manton, also crosses here as it takes off for the SW through Lockeridge Dene; so, at an innocuous-looking place, in fact three main tracks, all medieval or earlier, come together.

The 'nodal' status of the main villages is arguable, largely dependent on judgements about the status of their tracks. Only the Overtons (present-day West Overton) have a boundary running through them; they were arguably laid out in relation to it (*above* p. 00), but the minor road connecting them to East Kennet and Lockeridge, though likely to be of early medieval origin, seems never to have been of more than local import. Two probable 'old' N-S through-ways pass W of Fyfield church (fig. 14.00). The more westerly is the southerly continuation of the Anglo-Saxon 'Ridgeway', for this length identified here as 'Lockeridge Way' because it actually runs the length of Lockeridge tithing before providing the spine of the eponymous village. At Lockeridge Dene, which we argue elsewhere to be the older settlement (*above* p. 00 in Chap. 11), at a conjunction of ways close by the boundary with the Anglo-Saxon estate of East Overton, it crossed the 'market road' (CHECK name) from the NE (pp. 00, 00). Both continued on their separate ways into the Vale of Pewsey, the 'market road' heading SW to descend below Walker's Hill, the 'Ridgeway' continuing S through the only woodland nodal place, Hursley Bottom (fig. 15. 00). There, in a glade so described in the 10th century and again where Anglo-Saxon boundaries met, another two major lines within the N-S route met and crossed over. The more easterly, the Ridgeway/Lockeridge Way track, now proceeded to the SW towards Huish in the Vale, and the more westerly Overton Way continued SE towards Overton Heath and, beyond, Martinsell hillfort (*above* p. 00) or Oare (*above* p. 00).

On its way there it intersected with the other track which passed immediately W of Fyfield church. This also runs right across the northern downs from Totterdown ridge; its northern end may have connected with Temple Bottom, while immediately N of the church its line was formalised in the C19 into the straight track over Fyfield Hill. Southwards it seems to have linked with the Roman road, crossing at the Roman ford, before sweeping off to the SE past the pound and Audley's Farm (*above* p.00) to intersect with Overton Way at 'long barrow cross-roads' (fig. 14.00).

We have used the word 'intersect' in description but in practice such junctions probably offered local options to continue on-line or divert one way or the other. Despite there being only three examples of 'nodal places', then, plus West Overton and Fyfield if the criteria are not applied too strictly, the southerly pattern nevertheless can be adduced to support the thesis that our study area was characterised by a dozen 'nodal' places, not necessarily settlements, significant as conjunctions of lines in the landscape and in particular in relation to several recognised tracks which were parts of an ancient, long-distance N-S route (fig. 14.00).

If the hypothesis is at all correct, it could significantly alter our appreciation of this landscape. It could too lend a different perspective to our original interpretation of the estates/tithings/parishes as laid out across the landscape in their distinctive shape in order to give each economic unit access to a range of resources (*above* Chap. 1). A somewhat different model of landscape-genesis begins to emerge. The near-common northern point of all the tithings becomes very significant: this is the 'reverse funnel' area where southward traffic could start fanning out in response to the local topography as it chose its way to cross the Kennet valley (or, conversely, the area where all traffic from the south had to come together to round the heads of Temple and Wick Bottoms in order to proceed north). There is no point in southerly traffic splitting off earlier if the route round the rim of the Marlborough Downs has been followed and the destination is Pewsey Vale, Salisbury Plain or the south coast. So it might be argued that the long, thin, generally NW-SE tenurial pattern of Fyfield and Overton parishes developed along the lines of tracks and paths which were themselves elements in a great N-S route cascading off the Marlborough Downs to cross the Kennet and then re-grouping to descend into Pewsey Vale. Far from rational, equitable blocks of lands with tracks running through them and along their edges, a landscape can be envisaged structured as roughly parallel slivers of land surviving between and defined by trackways. A model emerges of old estates whose shapes reflected the lines of communications on the landscape which were even older in origin. Possibly, on this model, Fyfield and Overton were originally just one land unit embracing the whole width of a bifurcating Ridgeway route, giving them their position, size and their so-distinctive triangular shape. If so, they are rather more important and less anonymous than has been thought.

A geo-resource model

So much for its immediate *locale*; how it 'worked' with its nearest neighbours in comparable enclosures, exactly 1.5 kms. to N and S, is unknown. There do not appear to have been neighbours to E and W. Assuming there were not, it is easy to define topographically three theoretical territories, one for each settlement, based on the Kennet and its northern dry valleys (fig. 15.00). The easternmost comfortably embraces the earlier theoretical territory on Manton Down (fig. 2.00), identified in analysing field rather than settlement patterns. This could be taken to suggest that, had the territory really existed, then the sort of land-take expansion already envisaged during the earlier 1st millennium BC would, in this case, have seen assarting from the long-cultivated soils of Manton Down on to the progressively higher, more clayey and stonier lands of Fyfield Down and Totterdown. Yet, behind whatever were the doubtless many details of local differences, it turns out that each such theoretical territory almost takes off into some sort of real-world plausibility. All, without premeditation, are some 3 kms. long, each with access to a range of lands and other resources, notably a frontage on the River Kennet. Though different in shape and based on different amounts of guesswork, each is c 400 hectares in area, which may be co-incidence but strikes a chord of pragmatism. By pure chance, of course, that area, translated into English and traditional agricultural mensuration, is of the order of 1000 acres, about the size of a good present-day farm in these parts.

This place as cultural landscape

The concept of a 'cultural landscape' grows out of a sort of intellectual symbiosis, fortuitous perhaps in its happening but then seized upon as an idea and developed by us as cerebral vertebrates within a model of humanity as part of Nature. Essentially, with the concept of cultural landscape, we could be dealing with something new and exciting, not possible to earlier generations, something which offers us not just a new way of looking at scenery and not even a new way of looking at Nature; but a vision which could enable us to perceive ourselves as part of a process creating and constantly changing the environment of which we are an integral part. Cultural landscapes, properly handled as intellectual property and not reduced to mindless items of bureaucratic convenience, could be the nodes of memory for humankind in thinking about that process; and it is conceivable that a perfectly ordinary area of landscape such as that we have been studying could become in future additionally valued for that reason.

The phrase 'cultural landscape', and the concepts it embraces, are both familiar and somewhat alien. Many in Britain find it an awkward conjunction of words; others, more accustomed to the concept of 'natural landscapes', find thoughts of culture all over

the countryside disturbing. More than 40 years after the publication of W. G. Hoskins' *The Making of the English Landscape* (1955), itself one of the seminal foundations of the Fyod Project, many in so much of England still regard the countryside as God-given rather than Man-manipulated. The science-based approaches of historical ecology, geomorphology and landscape archaeology have brought us to a different understanding of that landscape, yet to many the concept that in effect the whole of the British landscape is modified by humanity and is, to a greater or lesser extent, anthropogenic, remains unknown, difficult or uncomfortable. Nevertheless, all of it is in one sense cultural landscape, using that adjective to be synonymous with 'man-made' or 'man-influenced.'

Such a meaning is common, especially in Scandinavia (Birks *et al.* 1988). Here there seems to be an opportunity to edge towards a more specific but deeper sense for the phrase, one where it comes wrapped in a global concept. For our hard-won late-twentieth, scientific understanding of the British landscape is a product similar to that intellectually-generated in many other parts of the world. Together, bottom-upwards as it were, these many local perceptions merge with the global perception of the strategists who perceive in their perspective the humanising of the whole world's environment. The thought is articulated in great overarching studies, through time as well as around the world, of human impact on the globe e.g. Simmons 1989, Goudie 1999. The basic point, fundamental in grasping 'cultural landscape', is simply expressed in another influential world appraisal, McKibben's *The End of Nature*, which argues that there is nothing truly natural left on earth. The global attempt to capture the cultural landscape concept and express it in World Heritage terms is discussed in von Droste *et al.* 1995; more locally, the British situation is appraised in the proceedings of the *Seminar on Cultural Landscapes* (ICOMOS 1997).

Historicity must be in a cultural landscape, not because 'old' is necessarily of itself good or from a long time ago but because anything cultural involves development and process and both those require time. A cultural landscape has to have been, by definition therefore, dynamic, though by now its energies may be played out, as in many an archaeological landscape, such as Dartmoor for example, while in other cases, on Orkney Mainland, and among the Banawe rice terraces of Luzon, Philippines, long-lived practices continue. Curiously, despite the downland archaeology of long-deserted settlements and abandoned fields, this study of the parochial setting of that archaeology suggests that the Fyod landscape belongs in the 'still continuing' rather than the 'played out' category. The tools may be different, but farming continues in the same places, producing the same range of foods as in the 2nd millennium BC.

Yet, four thousand years later, the landscape is different, precisely because it is now a cultural landscape in which human beings have impacted on Nature. Indeed, it is a landscape where people and Nature have interacted, not just impacted; the results of that interaction give the landscape in view its particular character - and its late twentieth values.

