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BULLETIN

OF THE

SUTTON HOO

RESEARCH COMMITTEE



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PREFACE

The first full year of the SITE EVALUATION phase of the Sutton Hoo Research Project has seen advances in our knowledge of the extent, composition and preservation of the site, advances mainly achieved by remote sensing and trial excavation. The wider implications of the context of Sutton Hoo have been explored by field work conducted by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit, and studied in Sutton Hoo Seminars at Cambridge and Ipswich. The site management programme has been launched with the assistance of the new Sutton Hoo Society and the potential role of Sutton Hoo for tourism and education is being planned with the help of the English Tourist Board and Suffolk County Council. Research work has concentrated on the design of a Data Base Management System which will incorporate all the data previously recovered at Sutton Hoo (1860–1983), the assessment of the significance of the prehistoric settlements which lie beneath Sutton Hoo, and the study of barrow burial in Anglo-Saxon times.

In 1985 we hope to complete the evaluation and prepare a portfolio from which the second phase of the investigations at Sutton Hoo will be planned.

M. O. H. Carver

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SITE WORK, 1984

SITE EVALUATION continued with the examination of test transects in each of the different types of terrain which comprise the Sutton Hoo site complex (fig. 1). Between May and August, a total of 774m² was excavated with the purpose of validating the remote sensing results (see below), locating features on the supposed perimeters of the prehistoric settlement and Anglo-Saxon cemetery, assessing their state of survival, and the current threat, and exploring methods of stabilisation and enhancement.

The *prehistoric site* is now thought to cover about 12ha. and to be bounded on all sides. Individual discoveries included Neolithic pits and a complete Neolithic coarse-ware pot, Bronze Age ditches and hearths and a series of undated palisade-trenches. Preliminary review of the material suggests that the perimeter is Neolithic to the east (site XX), Bronze Age to the south (site XXII) and Iron-Age to the north (site XXXI), but the settlements of all these periods overlap beneath the barrow cemetery in Zone A (sites II–XVI) (fig. 7). Newman's work (see below) suggests that this especially concentrated and long-lived prehistoric settlement complex had a regional function, possibly connected with stock-rearing in a large (and unoccupied) hinterland to the east, with the river crossing to the west (fig. 8).

The *Anglo-Saxon cemetery* is now thought to occupy at least 4ha., and to extend about 100m east of the nearest known barrow. Here three inhumations (oriented E–W, W–E, and NE–SW) without grave-goods were excavated. They were the latest features present where stratification occurred, and their state of preservation and style resembled those found near mound 5 in 1970 (Longworth and Kinnes, 1980; Bruce-Mitford, 1975). Primafacie, these burials are therefore also Anglo-Saxon and the Sutton Hoo cemetery is roughly twice the size it was previously thought to be.

Within mound 2 a section of Basil Brown's 1938 trench was removed to reveal the (collapsed) edges of the barrow and the boat-shaped pit he found. No excavation of the barrow itself was undertaken, so the visible surface represents the latest stage in the following sequence: construction of the burial chamber, construction of the barrow, digging of robber pit(s), Basil Brown's excavation of 1938, and the collapse of his trench (at least two episodes being recorded in his diary). The trench was located by grassmarks and intervention XXVI coincided with the west end of the boat-shaped pit. At the extreme west end and apparently on the limits of Basil Brown's own excavation, a boat-shaped profile with a 'keel' was noted (fig. 2). It remains possible therefore that the outline of a larger (more conventional) ship remains to be discovered beneath mound 2, although the observed profile may well prove to have another explanation.

The state of preservation of ancient features varies considerably. In the fields (Zones D, F), prehistoric and Saxon features (including hearths) are intact beneath 25cm of ploughsoil, and have suffered comparatively little from erosion, possibly due to extensive marling during cultivation. Some damage due to subsoiling was however noted. In Top Hat Wood (Zone B), tree-roots were generally contained within the superficial mould and had not entered the prehistoric features encountered. The larger trees are, however, subsiding into the soft sand through their own weight. In Zone C (site XXXI), some 80cm of intact prehistoric stratification was noted, a prime deposit thought to extend over much of the north-western corner of the site. The situation was markedly different in the centre of Zone A, examined by re-opening a wartime anti-glider ditch (site XXIII). Here the latest surface topography was intact, although there was attrition of the prehistoric features probably due to the construction of barrows, and the top 20cm beneath the turf were badly scrambled by bracken-roots. These roots had also sought the richer soils of anthropogenic deposits, and were traced to a depth of 12 feet (3.65m) beneath the summit of mound 2.

Experiments for stabilisation and enhancement included the use of Vinamul (a PVA compound) which is now used routinely to stabilise soft sand edges and surfaces. It was mainly unaffected by the weather which was generally warm and overcast with two days (out of 87), lost through rain. Four night shifts proved that visibility was neither lost nor greatly improved by digging under artificial lighting. The surface of the turf in Zone A was

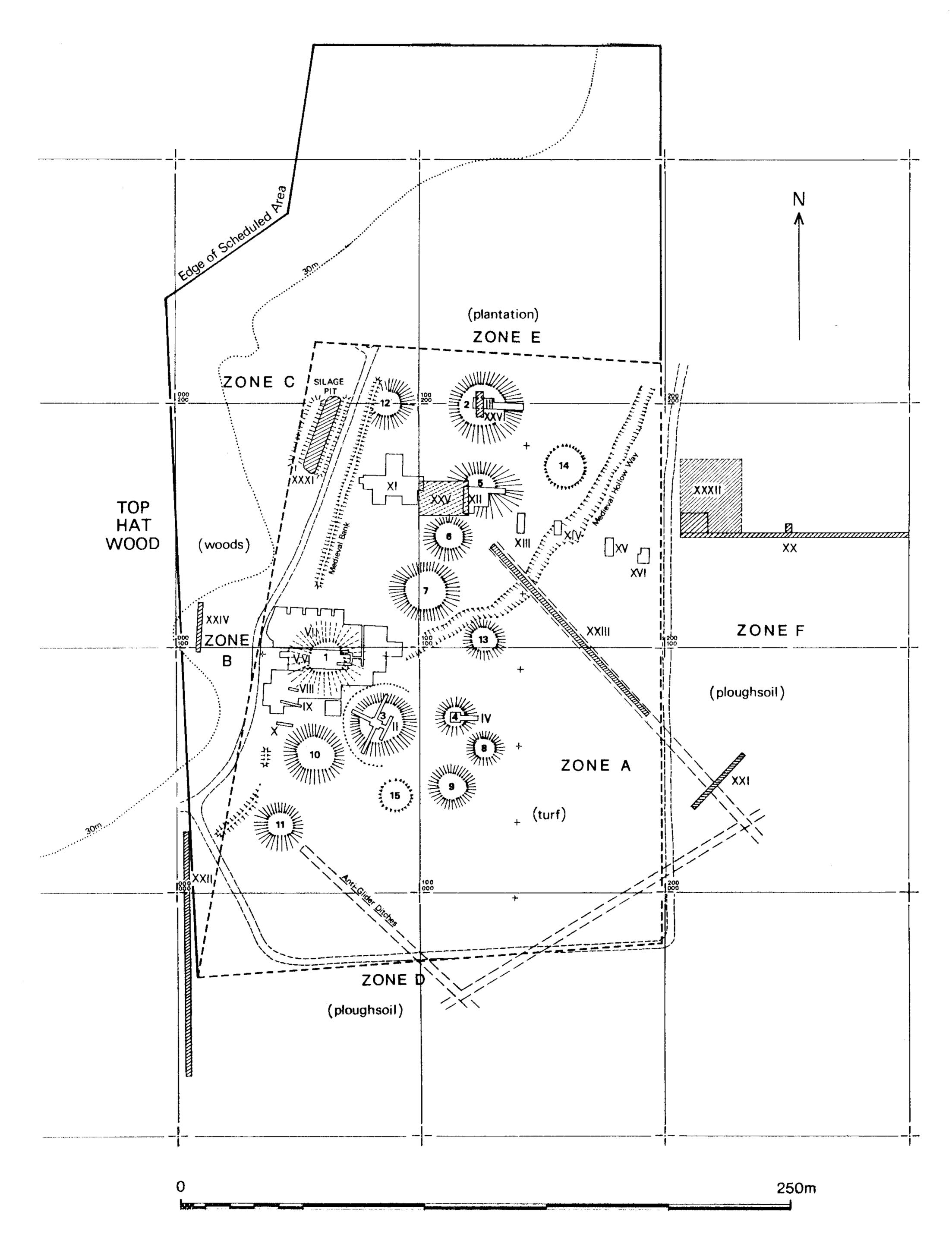


Fig. 1: The area under examination at Sutton Hoo, showing Zones for investigation and Intervention Numbers.

successfully recorded by photogrammetry carried out at night from a high-lift platform and using oblique high-intensity lighting. Ultra-violet emission applied to an inhumation caused the 'bone' element of the body-stain to fluoresce and some photography was achieved using a Cadmium Chloride filter. Chemical methods of enhancement have not yet been attempted, but a specially designed project funded by the Leverhulme Trust is shortly to begin.

The principal results still required from the site evaluation are the character of the prehistoric settlement, the extent of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery and the ability to read details of barrow structure. This will be achieved if possible in 1985 by further work in mound 2, by the application of further remote sensing methods and by an area excavation, on the supposed edges of the cemetery and within a dense area of prehistoric settlement (site XXXII on fig. 1).

M. O. H. Carver

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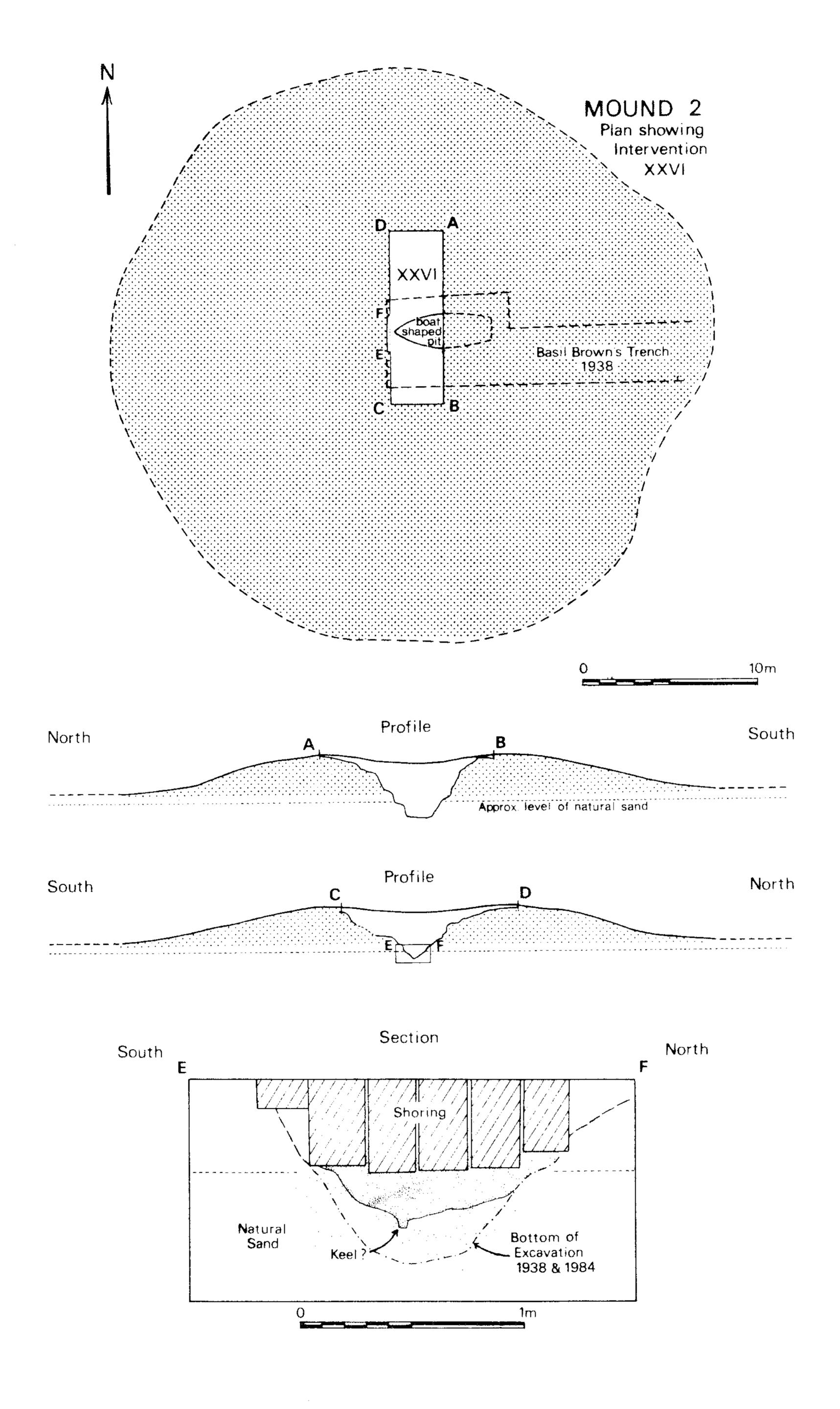


Fig. 2: Top: Plan of Mound 2 showing position of Basil Brown's boat-shaped pit within Intervention XXVI.

Centre: Diagramatic profiles through mound 'amidships' and at the 'prow' of the boat-shaped pit.

Bottom: Detail of the section observed at the western extremity of Basil Brown's trench, extracted from field drawings.

SURVEY WORK, 1984

The survey work which finished in April, 1984 began again in October after a break for the summer excavation season. The site and surrounding fields were covered in a thick blanket of snow for a total of five weeks during the winter, which hampered progress on an already tight schedule, but the major surveys have now been completed. These include the contour, surface-feature and metal-detector surveys in Zone A and field-walking in Zones D and F. This fieldwalking, which covers an area of approximately 8ha., took four months. Joined end to end the strips walked by the two fieldwalkers together stretch 120km, roughly the distance from Sutton Hoo to Cambridge. The metal-detector transects which were walked total a further 22km. In addition to these surveys, magnetometer and soil sounding radar surveys are progressing and will continue during the summer.

Analysis of these surveys will take several months, and until all the data has been thoroughly examined it is difficult to assess their significance. The following is a brief outline of the progress made on survey work and some of the results achieved to April 1985.

Surface feature survey (XVIII, A.Copp). The surface features and vegetational differences visible on Zone A were defined and planned in 1983/84, and the mapped inventory of grass species by Dr S. Rothera has also been completed. A comparison of these two surveys with previous site plans and the metal detector survey is now in progress and it is hoped that this will provide a more complete picture of past disturbance and activity.

Fieldwalking (XIX, A. Copp and C. Royle). A 100m wide strip around the perimeter of the site has now been completed in Zones D and F (see fig. 3) and over 5,300 finds collected and plotted. These include pottery, worked flint and burnt flint. The flintwork belongs to the Neolithic and Bronze Age, and includes scrapers, knives and arrowheads. The bulk of the assemblage, however, consists of waste flakes, many of which show signs of retouching. The prehistoric pottery also ranges from Late Neolithic to Bronze Age types. A few sherds of Roman and some Late Medieval pottery have also been recovered but so far no Anglo-Saxon material has been recognised. The distribution of prehistoric pottery and worked flint is shown in fig. 4.

In an attempt to establish clearer edges to the prehistoric settlement, which seemed to fade out at about 70m east of the site (Zone F) and to have no limit in the south field, six extra transects 100m x 5m were also walked outside the 100m wide corridor. Now that the results of fieldwalking are being drawn up, clusters of occupation debris are beginning to emerge, Zone D showing a particularly clear example (see fig. 4). In some cases the flint debris appears to be concentrated in discrete groups. All the finds are being entered onto computer-file and accurate plots of specific tool-types produced.

Results have already confirmed that fieldwalking can give an accurate reflection of the archaeological features which are, or have been present. A cluster of burnt flint in Zone D proved on excavation of site XXII to represent a prehistoric hearth, and a similar cluster in Zone F was the result of a palisade trench packed with burnt flint, as shown by excavation in site XX.

Radar (XXIV, M. Gorman, Scott Polar Institute). Further work has been undertaken in Zones A and F by the soil sounding radar, designed by Mike Gorman (see figs 3 and 5). For the first time it has been tested on a barrow, mound 12, and initial results are encouraging. It is hoped that further radar transects across other barrows will be carried out later in the year.

Metal Detector Survey (XXVII, C. Royle and A. Copp). The metal detector survey of Zone A has been completed, with over 5,200 metal objects or groups of objects plotted. Most of the site was covered by an Arado 120B metal detector, but a C-scope was also used. A distinction has been made between ferrous and non-ferrous, deep and shallow objects. The resulting plot of all metal detector readings is shown in fig. 6. The metal debris on the site falls into three main catagories: army disturbance, farm debris and the metal debris associated with the British Museum hut stance, (centre).

During fieldwalking and excavation on the site we have found rifle bullets, shells and

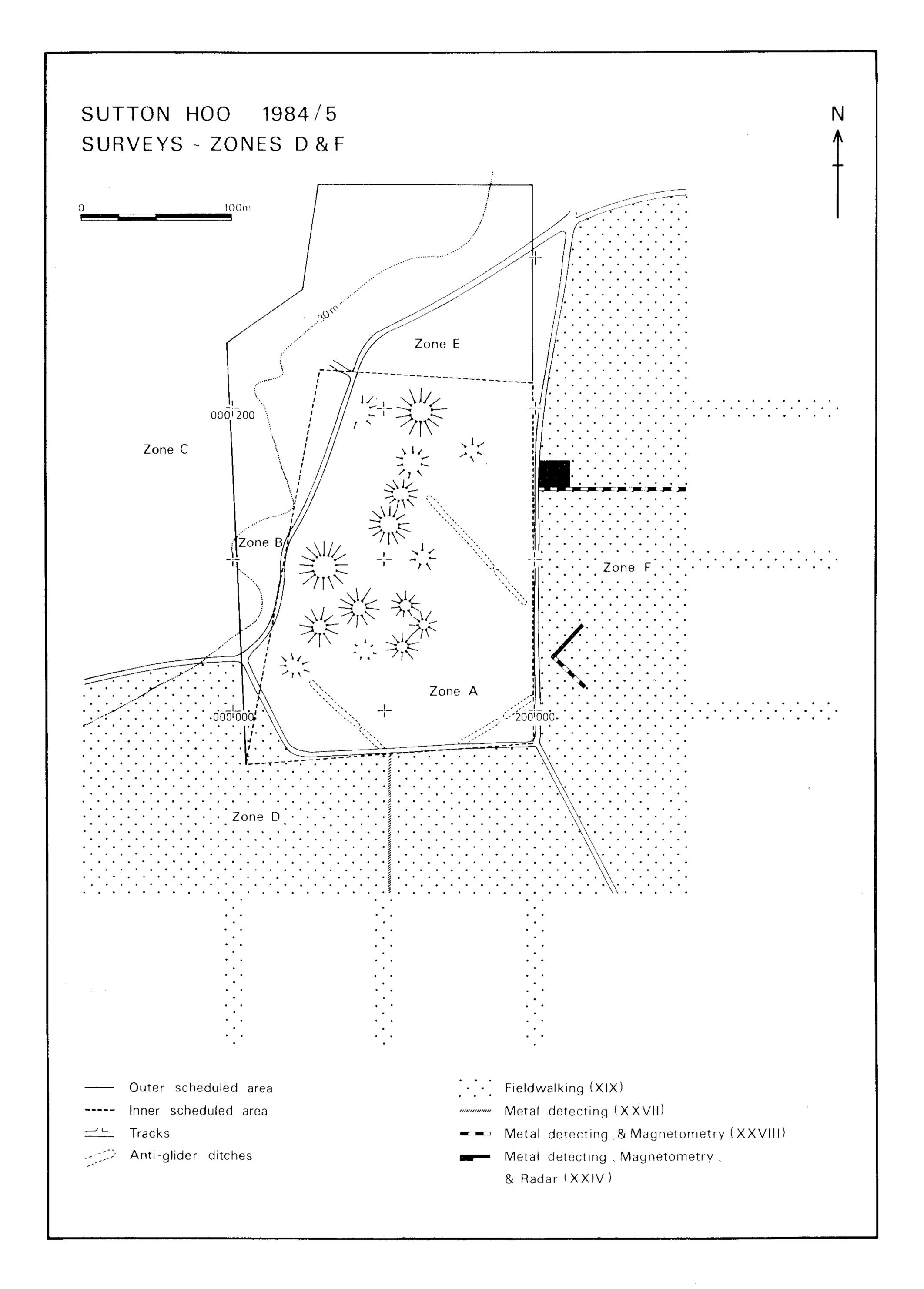


Fig. 3: Area surveyed in Zones D and F.

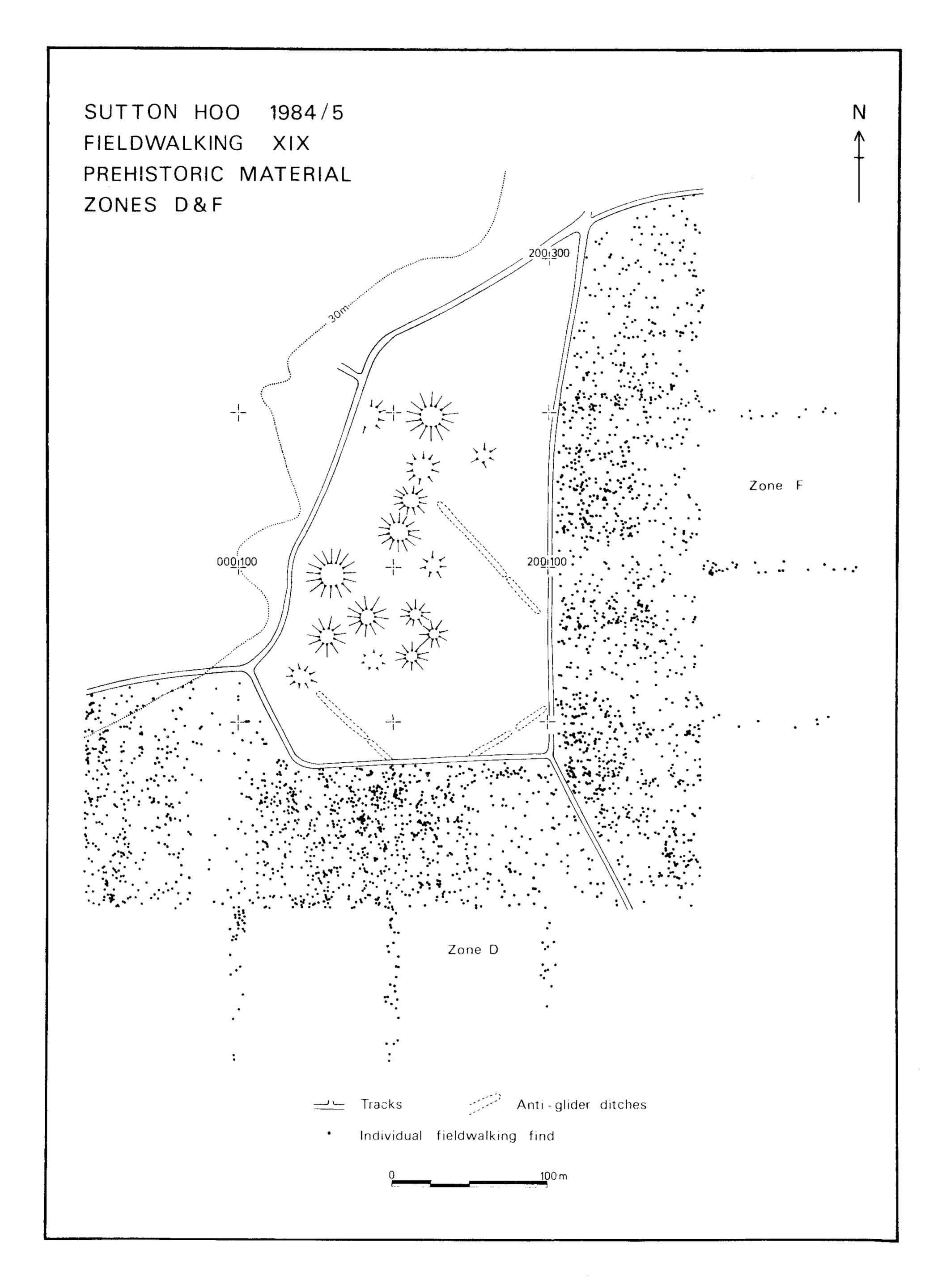


Fig. 4: Incidence plot of prehistoric material recovered by fieldwalking in Zones D and F.

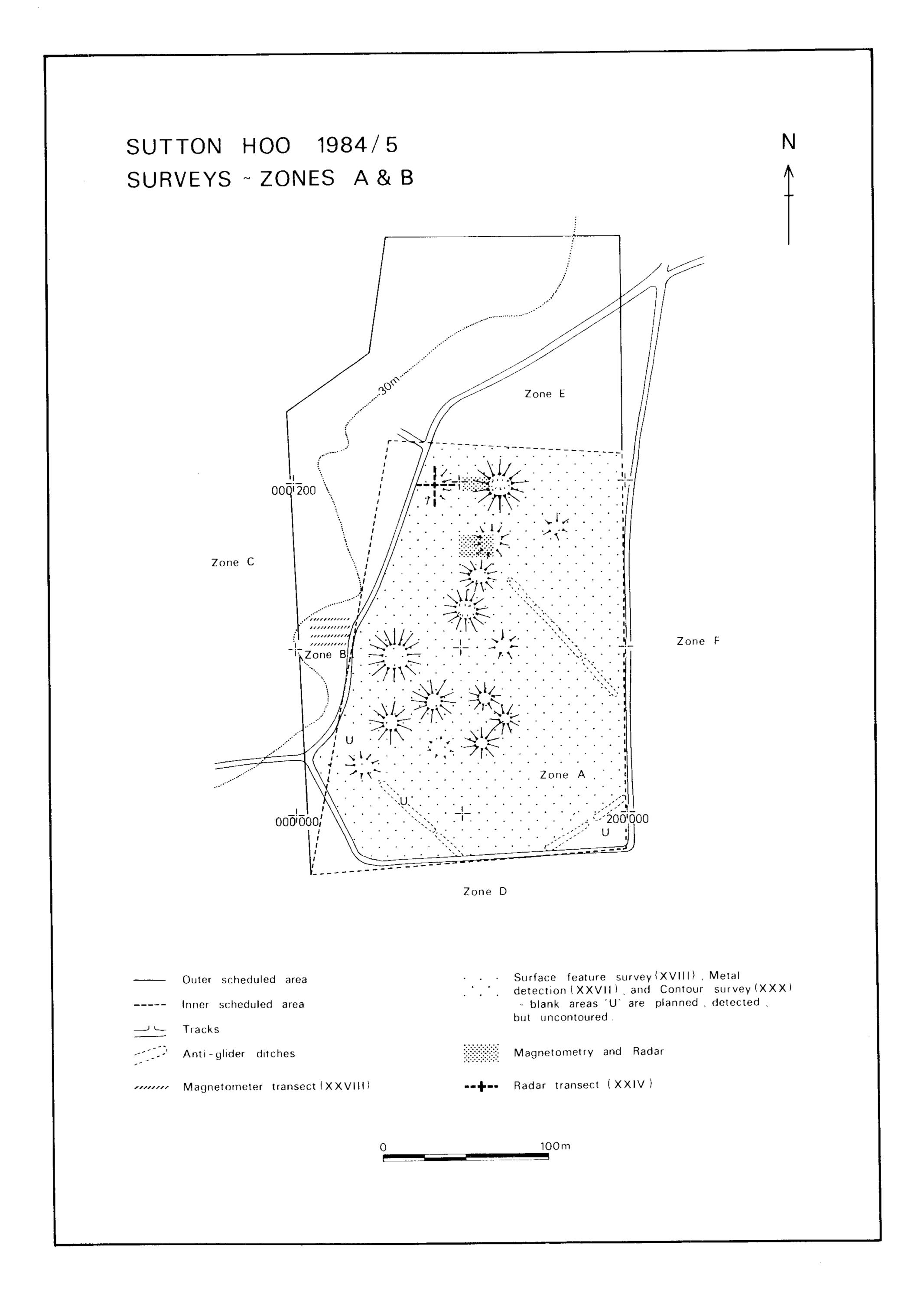


Fig. 5: Areas surveyed by remote sensing in Zones A and B.

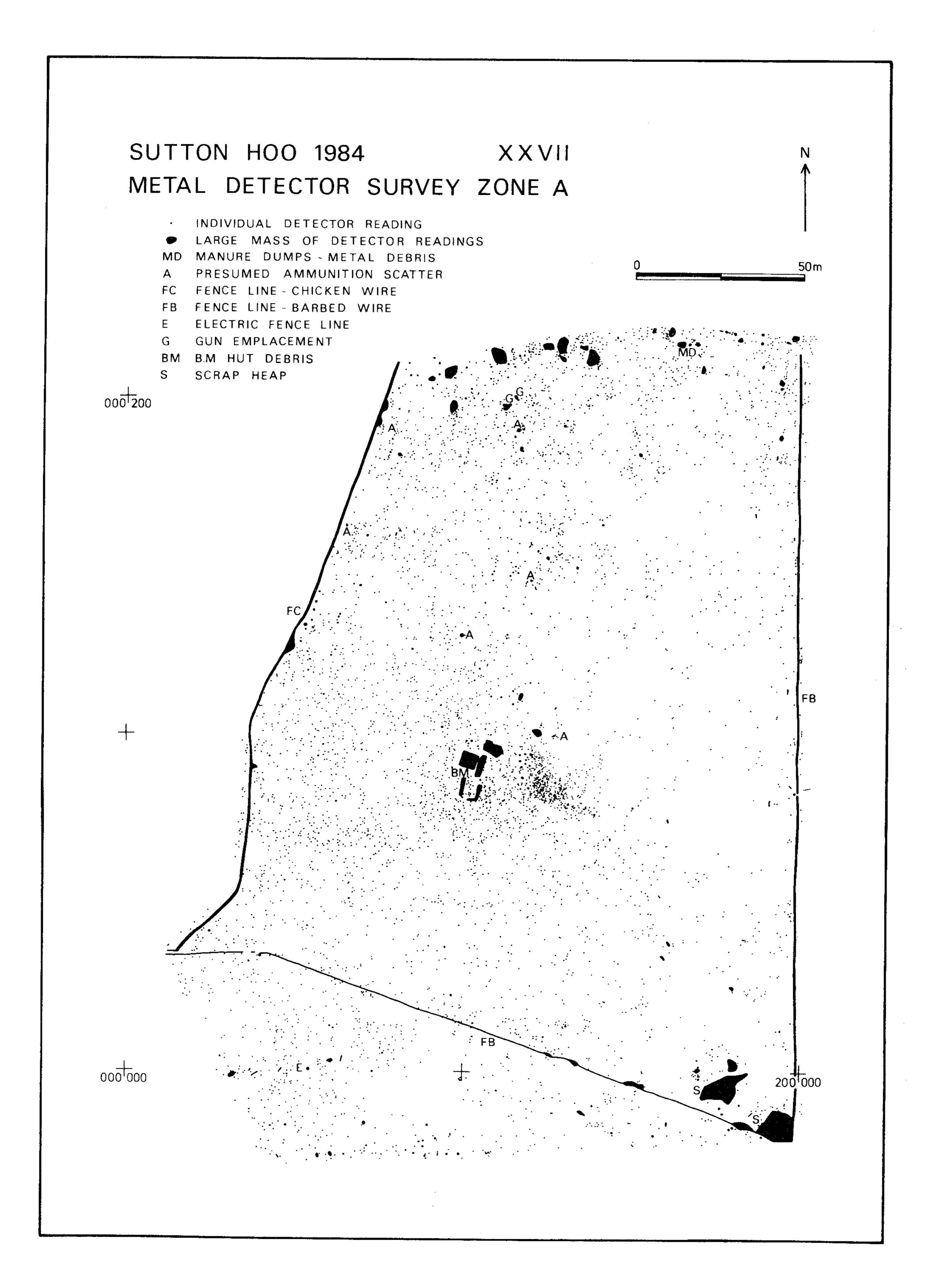


Fig. 6: Incidence plot of metal-detector reactions (all types) on Zone A.

mortar bombs, and hand grenades have been found in Zone C. The excavations on mound 1 in the 1960s produced a similar collection of wartime ammunition, the site having been used as a tank-training ground and firing range in World War II. It would seem that brass ammunition cases are the cause of groups of non-ferrous detector readings, representing gun emplacements or rifle stations. Many ferrous readings in Zone A probably represent shrapnel scatters. It is hardly surprising that there is generally more metal debris to the west of the site, around the burial mounds, than there is to the east, since the mounds must have presented ideal terrain for practising military manoeuvres.

The old fence lines, of barbed wire and chicken wire, are perhaps the most obvious features of the survey. The wire hardly exists above ground and has either collapsed and been completely buried, or the fence has been removed, leaving the bottom strand of wire, or a line of corrosion products, which have been overgrown by the turf. Iron electric fence stakes – presumably the remnants of cattle fences – have been found in several places, and much metal debris is hidden in grass-covered manure heaps to the north of the site. The south-east corner of the site has seen the dumping of much rubbish and scrap metal.

Archaeological excavations of previous years have also left their debris on the site, such as metal chaining, surveyors' arrows, grid-peg nails and a scaffolding clamp.

Magnetometry (XXVIII, M. Gorman, Scott Polar Institute). Work in Zone F continued (see figs 3 and 5) using paired G-856 magnetometers hired from Geophysical and Scientific Equipment Ltd. Resolution down to 0.1 gamma has been achieved, but the terrain at Sutton Hoo seems to cause certain difficulties, and investigations into the most appropriate instruments for use on this sandy site are still being made.

Contour Survey (XXX, J. Bruce, D. R. Ingram and M. Cooper). The contour survey of Zone A completed in the summer of 1983 has been resolved by computer into a contour map at 10cm vertical intervals. This has now been completed, and is being checked at the site itself before the final plan is published.

C. L. Royle

DATA BASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

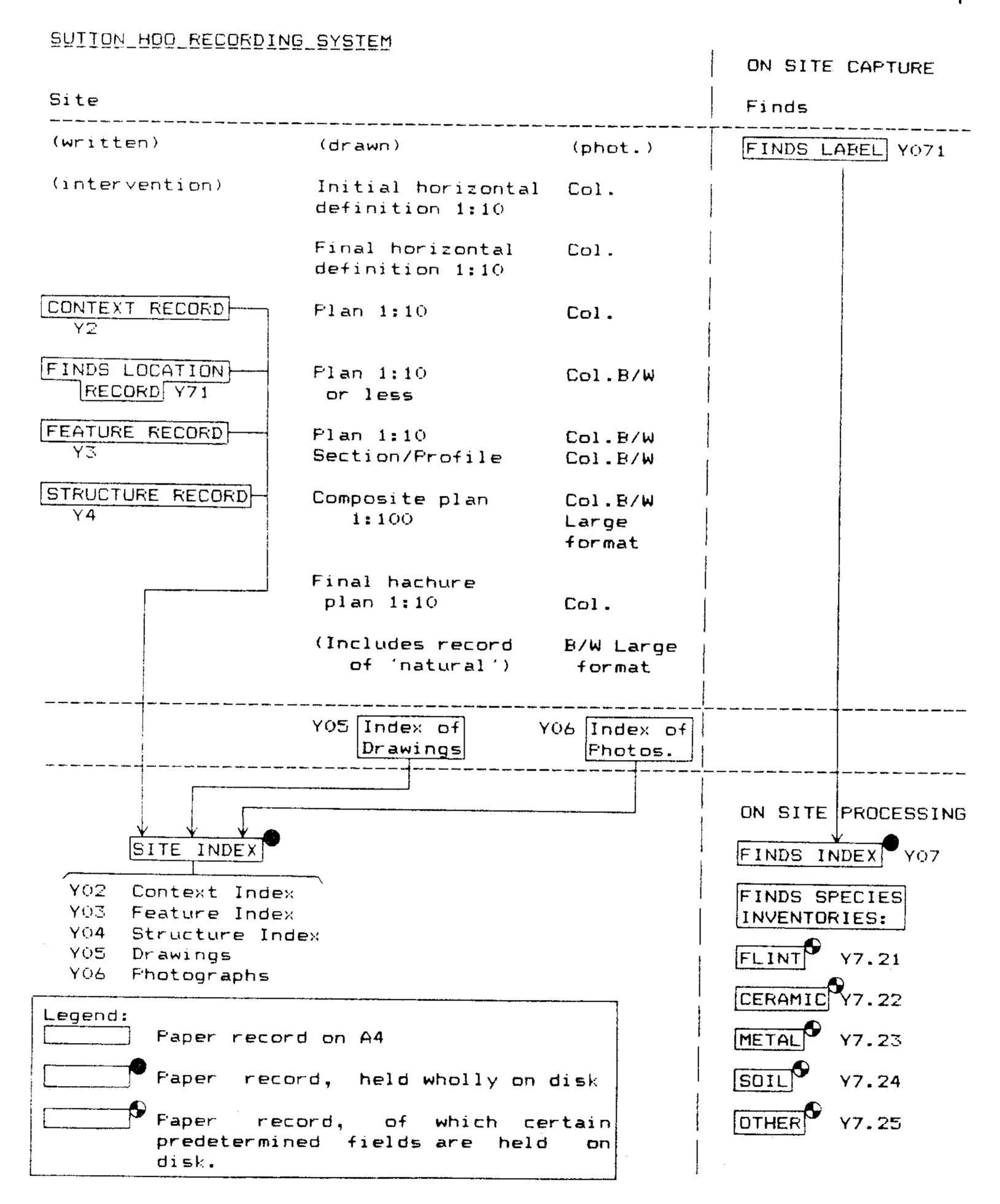
Principles for an integrated recording system were worked out in the winter of 1984 following the results of the first season. Elements of the record have been predefined according to the nature of observation possible at Sutton Hoo and the types of analytical study required.

Each record having an analytical destiny has been redesigned for computer-file. The DBMS uses D-Base II. Data is captured on the project's Sanyo micro-computer and transferred to the University's Honeywell main frame for specific analyses.

Not all these analyses have yet found appropriate software. Among those planned are: distribution plots of different species of material, multivariate analyses to cluster types of context and feature, multivariate analyses to cluster types of prehistoric pottery and flint, stratification diagrams of barrow make-up, and burial-chamber collapse simulation.

The full system is to undergo trials on site during the 1985 season. All material recovered before 1983 is also to be entered into the data base.

M. O. H. Carver and M. A. Cooper



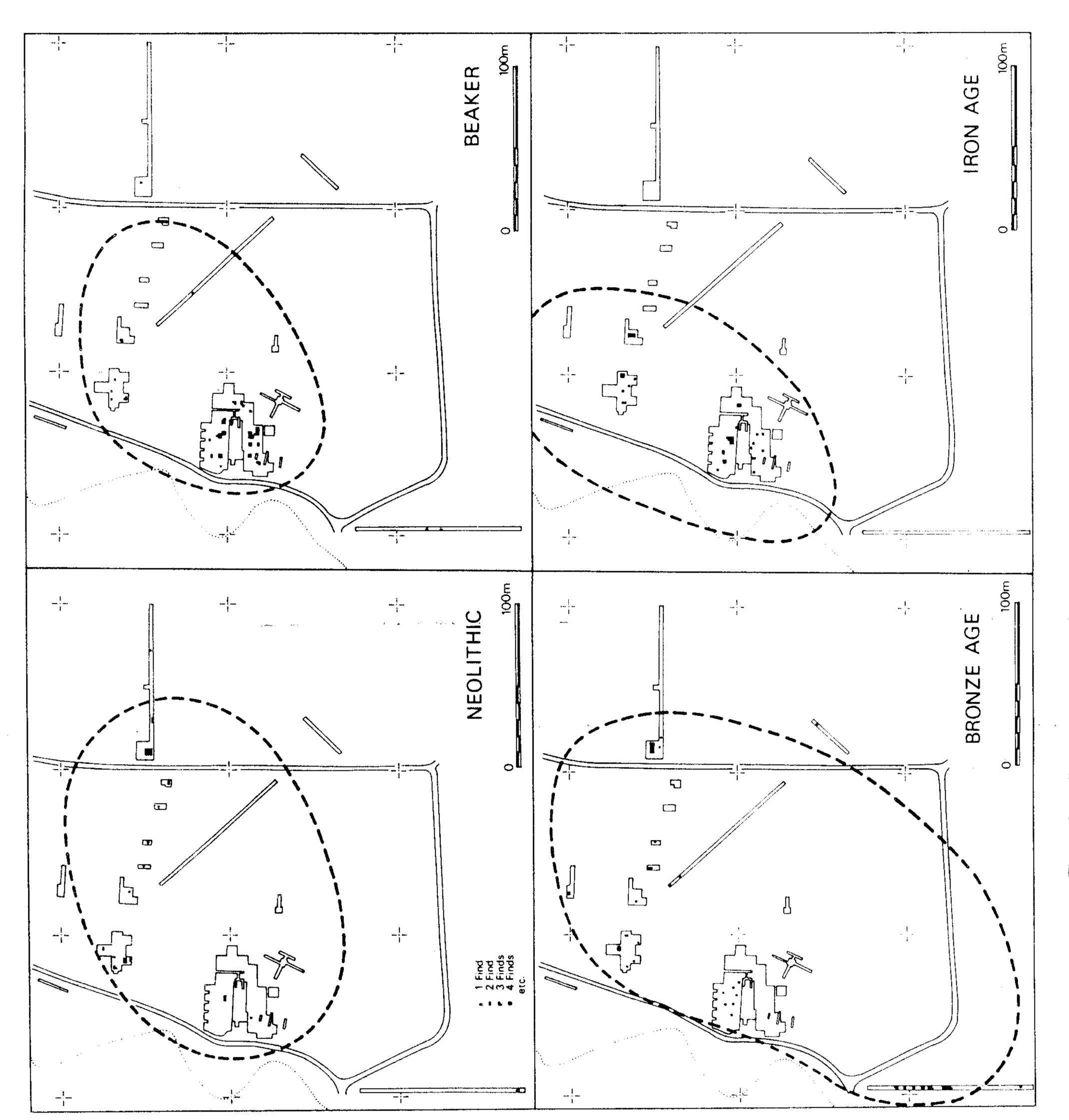


Fig. 7: A preliminary attempt to localise prehistoric settlements at Sutton Hoo. For Intervention numbers, see Fig. 1.

SUTTON HOO - THE PRE-SAXON DEPOSITS

Although it is now almost fifty years since pre-Saxon deposits were first encountered at Sutton Hoo, this aspect of the site's archaeological resource has received surprisingly little attention. No doubt this is at least partly due to the small portion of this large and complex deposit which has so far been recovered, and the brevity of most published notes on the material.

In order to facilitate an understanding of the site's complex pre-Saxon development, a survey of all relevant material recovered before August, 1984 has recently been completed (Newman, 1984). This report has done much to modify the image of the site's prehistory, and to make clear the potential of the large, complex and unusual prehistoric deposits. Only a brief summary of results can be attempted here – the full report is held in archive.

Pre-Saxon material has been recovered from a number of contexts and locations on and around the site (fig. 7). These include previous excavations, stray finds and currrent programmes of fieldwalking as well as current excavations. By period, the key material can be summarised as follows:

NEOLITHIC: Apart from two possible Palaeolithic tools, the earliest finds from the site are two large oval scrapers and several large blade tools of Early or Middle Neolithic date. The presence of Mildenhall Ware in sites XI and VII (where two very fine leaf-shaped arrowheads were also found) is also indicative of Middle Neolithic activity, as are the sherds of Middle Neolithic bowl-forms (Longworth and Kinnes, 1980). Several sherds from site XX (including a crushed (? complete) vessel) show affinities with material from Hurst Fen (Clarke, 1960). If a Neolithic date can be confirmed for these, then the pit cluster in the west of XX may also be of Neolithic date.

The later Neolithic is also well represented, mainly from sites XI–XIII. Several sherds of Peterborough Ware were recorded in this area, while a very fine Mortlake-style sherd was found by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit fieldwalking south-west of Top Hat Wood. Grooved Ware is also present on the site, again mainly from sites XI–XIII. The flint assemblage includes transverse arrowheads, denticulated blades, plano-convex knives and a tortoiseshell core which, together with Grooved Ware, represent the main elements of the Rinyo-Clacton cultural package (Wainwright and Longworth, 1971). Few features can be safely assigned to this period, although the ditch defined by Longworth and Kinnes in sites XI–XII seems likely to be of Neolithic date.

BEAKER: Although the areas excavated so far are too small to suggest certain nuclei of activity for given periods, there does seem to be a centre of Beaker activity in the area of mound 1 (site VII). The majority of Beaker sherds so far recovered were excavated from this area by Paul Ashbee. They were found in association with a set of features which may represent a structure. Beaker pottery was also recovered in sites XI, XII, and XXII, as were barbed and tanged arrowheads in sites XXII, XXIII and XX. The putative structure, the large number of vessels represented in the assemblage and the presence of rusticated beakers all suggest a Beaker domestic site as outlined by Gibson (1982).

BRONZE AGE: Grog-tempered and sand-tempered Bronze Age pottery has been found in several parts of the site, though it is not precisely datable yet. In general terms, an earlier rather than later date seems likely, particulary given the material resembling Ardleigh Urns recovered by Longworth and Kinnes. Bronze Age material has been found in several feature-fills, including the ditch and post-holes in site XXII, and a palisade trench in site XX, which also featured well-defined post-ghosts. Three fragments of collared vessels have also been found. These are probably to be linked with domestic, rather than ritual use. The 'loomweights' from site VII seem to support this view.

IRON AGE: As with the Bronze Age material, the Iron Age finds appear to be earlier rather than later in date. Pieces of 15 Early Iron Age 'Darmsden' vessels were excavated from a shallow scoop beneath mound 5, whilst other iron Age sherds came from site XI. Many fine rims were recovered from site VII, as were a number of burnished sherds. Though the dating of this material awaits confirmation, an Iron Age date seems likely.

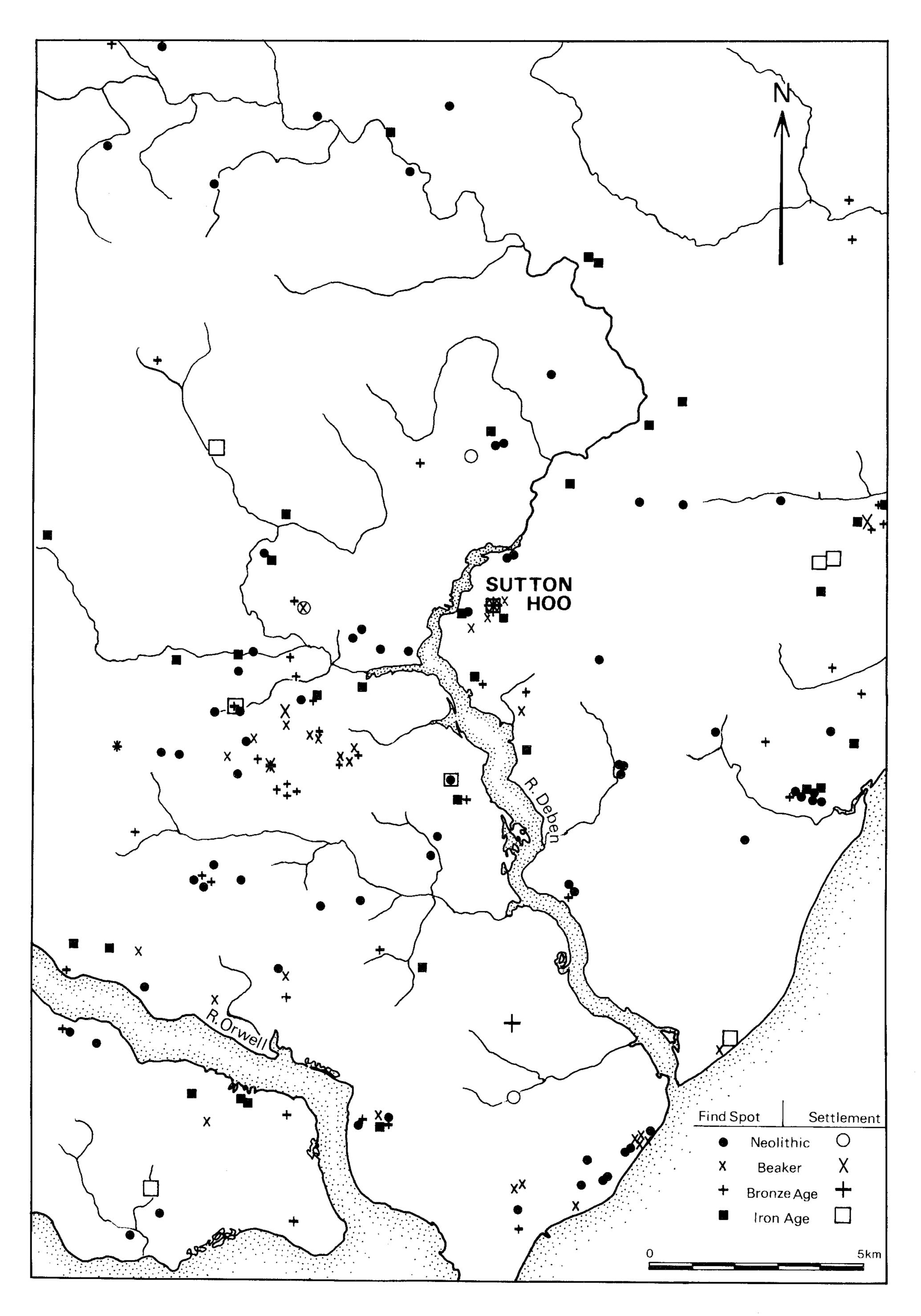


Fig. 8: Distribution of prehistoric finds and settlement sites in the Deben Valley. (Source: Newman, M. A., after Suffolk Archaeological Unit).

ROMAN: Only a few Roman sherds have been recovered from the site itself, though two more substantial concentrations of finds were recovered by the Suffolk Unit, south-west of the site at Ferry Cliffe, and north-west, just north of Little Sutton Hoo.

To set the site in its regional context, an area 30km x 20km (with Sutton Hoo at its centre) was selected, and the distribution of prehistoric settlements and finds was analysed, with particular emphasis on the physical characteristics of the area. The results showed the site to be an unusual one: its exposed position, unpromising soils and distance from a usable water supply showed it to be atypical of the 'average' favoured site in any pre-Saxon phase. It was also found that out of several hundred sites in the study area, it was the only one to show evidence of activity in all of the major Pre-Saxon phases (fig. 8).

There is no evidence to suggest that ritual factors or population pressure were responsible for the repeated re-use of this unpromising site. Given the absence of any special natural resource in the area, one can only conclude that the site was ideally suited to a specific economy or practice: the evidence suggests that pastural farming is the most likely option. The early clearance of the site (as recorded in the pollen record, Bruce-Mitford, 1975, p. 49 seq.) would have made it an ideal seasonal pastural station.

The Pre-Saxon deposits seem to have a number of very valuable aspects. The discovery of a good Rinyo-Clacton assemblage, along with Peterborough Ware and a Beaker nucleus on the same site, suggests that the site will have much to tell about the interrelationship of these styles and their 'user-cultures'. The seemingly domestic nature of the site, combined with its very high quality of feature preservation, must make the likelihood of discovering preserved early prehistoric structures quite good. The absence of a well-excavated domestic site using Collared Vessels has recently been noted by Dr lan Longworth (1984); here again, if excavated, the site could provide valuable data. Taking the site as a whole, tracing the development of a site probably associated with a stock-raising economy on a dry location will provide valuable comparative data for analysing results from the wetlands sites.

M. A. Newman

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Documentation on the Pre-Saxon Deposits at Sutton Hoo Held in Archive

- I. List of excavated/dated sites in the Lower Deben Valley (Source: SUFFOLK S.M.R.).
- II. Lists of Diagnostic finds from Interventions VI–XXXI. (Co-ordinates converted to master site grid).
- III. List of all material from pre-Barrow deposits (Intervention VII) (Co-ordinates converted to master site grid).
- IV. Density plots of material recovered from Intervention XIX-XXIII in 1984.
- V. Results of Fieldwalking in Sutton Parish, 1983/84. Includes distribution maps (Source: Suffolk Archaeological Unit. Map source: M. A. Newman).
- VI. A List of Prehistoric material from Sutton Hoo held at Ipswich Museum.

Prehistoric material from Sutton Hoo is currently held at:

The British Museum (Interventions II–V, VIII–XVI)

Ipswich Museum (Interventions II-IV)

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, Sutton Hoo Archive (Interventions VI-VII, XVIII-XXXI).

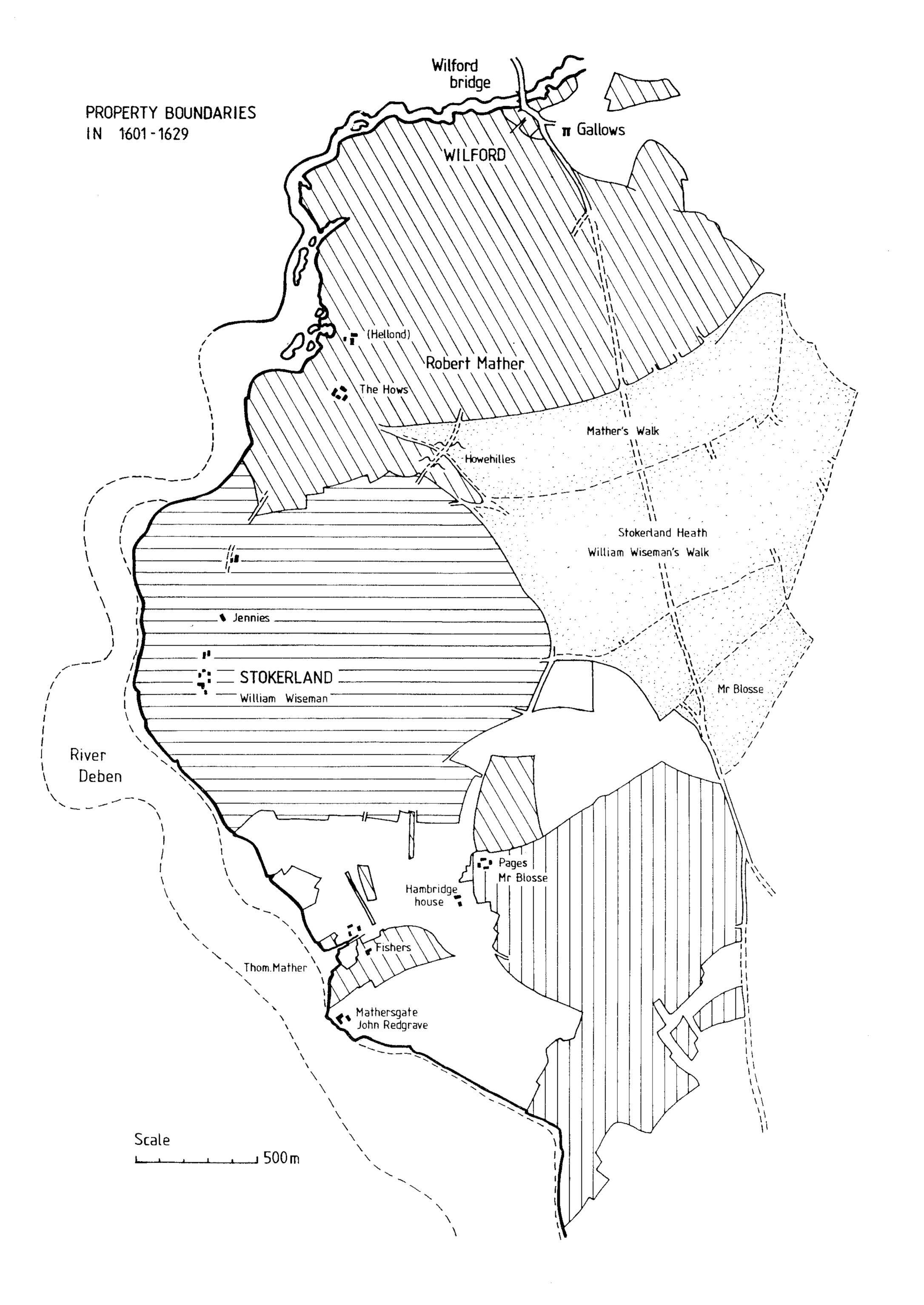


Fig. 9: Property boundaries in 1601-1629, after map evidence. (P. Warner).

DOCUMENTARY SURVEY

The Sutton Parish Survey

The writer has long been convinced that individual parish studies are of little value in themselves; the parish in southern England is rarely a meaningful unit in terms of settlement history. Eighteen months of part-time research into the parish of Sutton has not shaken this opinion. The relatively late cardinal place-name of 'SUTHTUNA' (DB.ii, 317), suggests it once had a relationship with a dominant land unit somewhere to the north, perhaps Rendlesham, and that Sutton is no more than an appendage to a more important neighbouring Saxon estate. Within the first week of research it was established that the civil parish of Sutton contained at least one Domesday vill called 'Stokerland' which included a large part of the north-west of the parish. Part of the eastern boundary was disputed with the neighbouring parish of Eyke in the sixteenth century. It will take several years of study into neighbouring parishes before the full complexity of boundary changes are elucidated. However, suffice it to say that the parish boundary is of little consequence in historical terms, although the study of boundary changes may ultimately lead us towards an understanding of settlement development over a wider area.

Sutton is comparatively rich in historical sources. It has an excellent series of maps for the seventeeth century. Not only do we have William Haiward's finished survey of 1631 but also his detailed preparatory drawings which cover ⁴/₅th of the parish in the most intricate detail. The Haiward maps link up with an excellent book of plans by John Norden, dated 1600–01, which cover the estate of Sir Michael Stanhope in the adjoining parishes of Bromeswell and Eyke. We have another superb Haiward map of Shottisham dated 1631. Altogether these maps serve as a detailed historical platform for the early seventeenth century from which the local historian can project himself back in time towards the late medieval period.

These early seventeenth century maps of Sutton and Shottisham are largely concerned with the remains of a decayed medieval strip-field system, particularly in the south-eastern half of Sutton parish where hundreds of tiny strips of land are recorded. Interestingly enough, Norden's map of Bromeswell and Eyke give a very different impression for they show a landscape neatly enclosed and well ordered with many small farms, green fields and open heathland pastures or sheep-walks. However, we know from later maps of freehold farms in eighteenth century Bromeswell that behind this well ordered facade lay a tangled web of land ownership with many small and scattered strips; relics of a decayed open-field system. During the course of research an Elizabethan tenurial survey was discovered, which describes about forty pieces of land in Bromeswell, many of them very small, lying as strips or plots submerged beneath an ordered landscape of late medieval piecemeal enclosure. So while Norden's maps are no doubt accurate, in that they describe what was actually there at the time, we are able to detect a much earlier hidden landscape beneath them. The Elizabethan survey or extent contains internal evidence to demonstrate that many of its entries go back to the midfifteenth century. Thus we have the knowledge to project ourselves back from our early seventeenth century 'map-platform' into the landscape of the 1460s and possibly even earlier. The same is true for Haiward's map of Sutton, which we know accords with an extent of the manor of Sutton made, or rather renewed, between 1427 and 1429.

Although we know that a fifteenth century extent for Sutton existed, it has not been traced. It may well lie hidden among the quantity of as yet unsearched manorial court rolls for the many manors of Sutton, which are scattered in various record offices: Arundel, Lambeth, West Sussex, the British Museum and the Public Record Office as well as the Suffolk County Records. Much more useful work is waiting to be done in this area.

The fact that we only seem to have heathen place-names on the Bromeswell side of Sutton Hoo is because our earliest field-names come from the Elizabethan extent which happens to cover that area. A search through the Sutton manorial archives might well enable us to correct that bias, indeed it might well give us even earlier field-names close to the site. A historical research programme which undertook to investigate in full all the Sutton manorial records with this aim in mind might well reap dividends.

Likewise, we know there is a connection between the fields around Sutton Hoo Farm and a monastery with a dispensation from tithe because those fields were free of great tithe in the late nineteenth century. Both Sibton Abbey, a Cistercian house, and Leiston Abbey, a Premontratensian house, held lands in Sutton and both held dispensations from tithe. While the cartulary of Leiston Abbey has been published, the numerous charters of Sibton are currently being prepared for publication in the Suffolk Charter series. A more exhaustive study of the charters from both monasteries might perhaps reveal which held the fields adjoining Sutton Hoo. Campsey Ash priory and later the nunnery of Minoresses at Bruisyard also held lands in Sutton together with the advowson of Sutton church from about 1390. A preliminary search of documents for both these minor houses looks unpromising, but there is as yet an untraced cartulary for Bruisyard Abbey, a document which might prove to be invaluable.

The formation of properties, such as that amalgamated over a 200 year period by the Mather family of Sutton Hoo Farm, gives us an interesting perspective on the farming lives of well-to-do yeoman who cared for little but the fear of God and the quiet enjoyment of their simple estates (fig. 9). There is much in Sutton that is wholly typical of the Sandling district, its many small manors and their obscure histories, its preponderance of freehold farms built up piecemeal by yeoman families with a consistently good eye for an advantageous marriage and a love of large flocks of ewes and wethers. The river, ships and the fish in the open sea were never very far away. Ships consume hemp like horses consume hay, so for the farmers of Sutton there was always non-agricultural interests to serve. The hemp and linen trade may well have kept many a poor Sutton freeholder off the breadline in those dry years when the rye withered on the Sandling and the turnips were insufficient to keep the beasts through winter. In all respects but one, Sutton was a very ordinary parish, an 'open' parish, with many poor ordinary folk. Not until the nineteenth century, when the Quilters built Bawdsey Manor, did Sutton feel the influence of a big house and a large 'closed' estate.

Heathen Place-names

In what respects was Sutton an extraordinary parish? The historical investigation has established one important fact, that the events which took place at Sutton Hoo in the early seventh century had a profound and lasting effect on the landscape and on the subsequent development of settlement in the area. The discovery of two or three heathen place-names may not seem to be of such significance that an entire thesis should be based upon them. But when it becomes clear exactly how rare these names are in southern England and how important they are in relation to a site such as Sutton Hoo, their significance begins to become apparent (fig. 10). That these heathen place-names should fit into a vacuum of ecclesiastical development is truly remarkable (fig. 11). These place-names say something about the latter-day function of the cemetery and have a direct bearing on our understanding of the excavations. The frequency of minor Scandinavian place-names in the Deben valley, such as Stokerland and Eyke, is of no less concern when considering the later functions of the site, which may have continued as a place of burial and even as an enclave of heathen worship as late as the ninth century.

There are now at least two highly significant sites in the immediate area of Sutton Hoo itself. One, 'Harrough Pightle', the possible temple site above Wilford bridge, has been partly quarried away, but the site of the sixteenth century gallows still remains and this might well mark a traditional place of heathen ritual. The site of the other heathen placename, 'Thurstow Went' is still intact. It may have been only a minor heathen site, but if it continued on in use into the Christian period, as the survival of the place-name would seem to suggest, then it must be considered of archaeological importance.

Early Barrow Diggers

A fascinating, but more problematic area of historical investigation is into barrow-diggers and treasure hunters from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. A number of

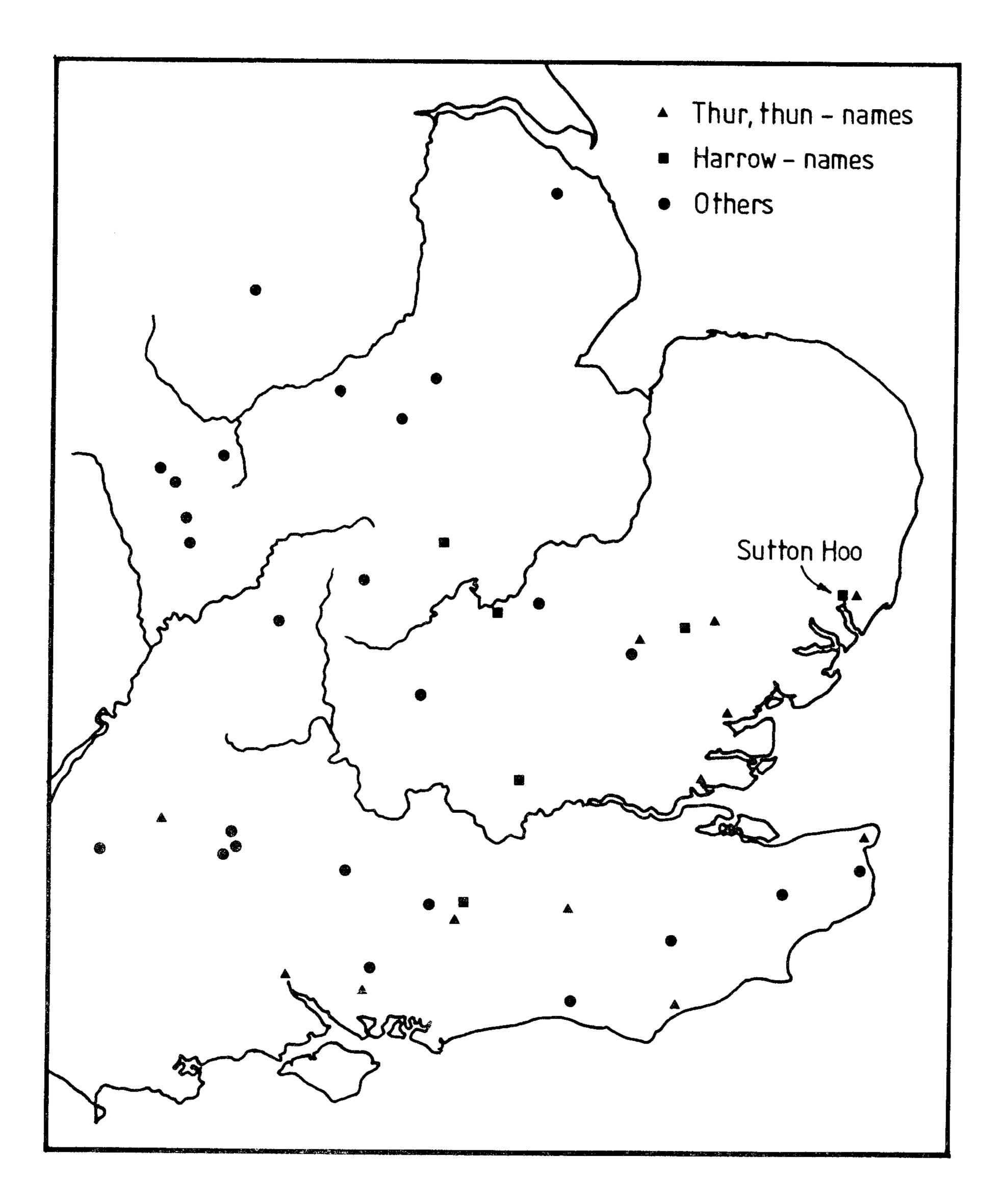


Fig. 10: Place-names which probably refer to pagan religious practices. (After Gelling).

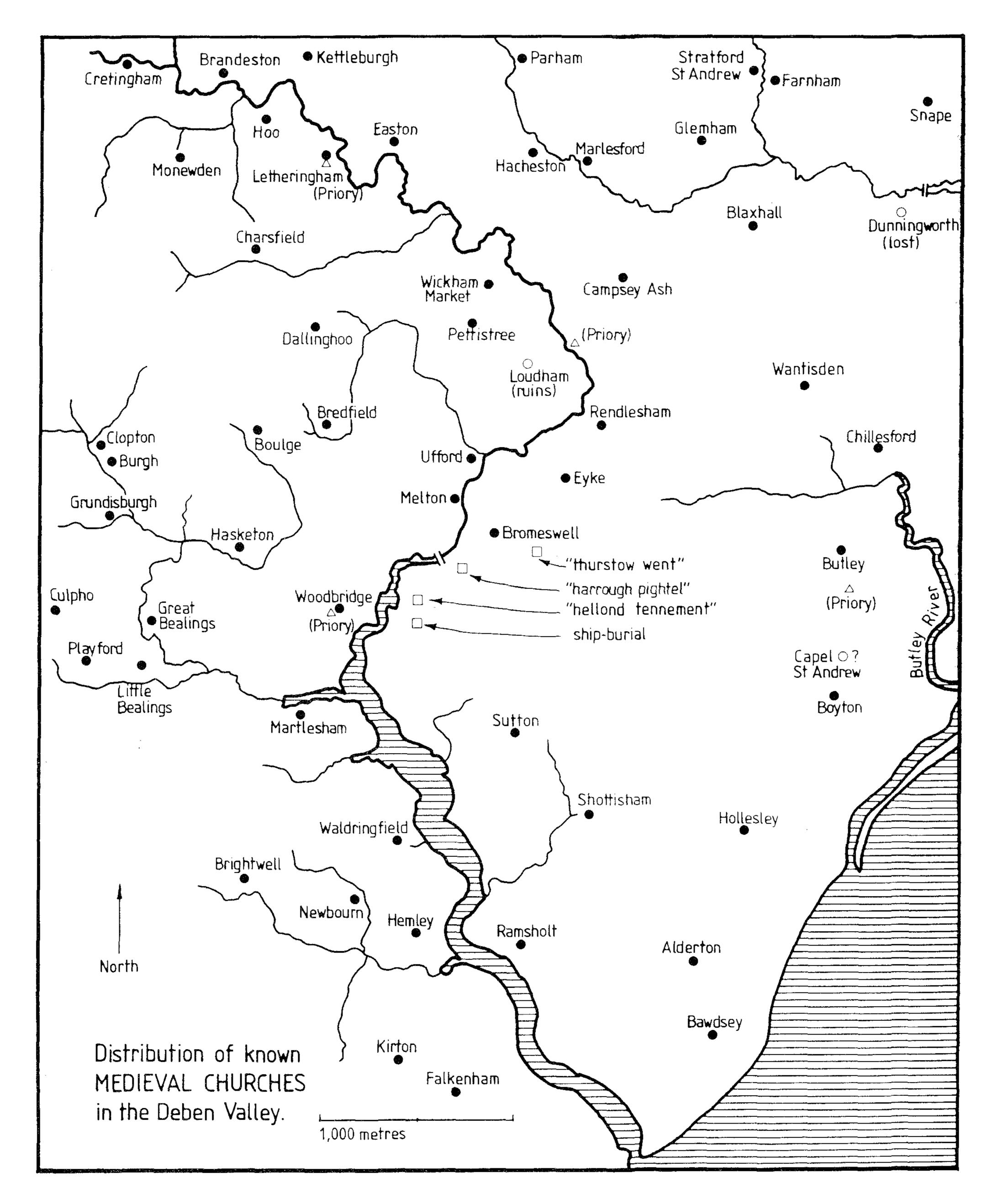


Fig. 11: Distribution of known medieval churches in the Deben Valley, together with pagan Saxon place-names (arrowed). (P. Warner).

candidates for the mound 1 robbers' pit have been identified, including the elusive John Dee, the supposed barrow-digger suggested to Basil Brown in 1939. There is no confirmation that Dee ever worked at Sutton Hoo, although there is still room for more investigation into this well documented and important character.

More promising is a local man, William Smyth, from the nearby village of Clopton. He and his servant Amylion obtained a licence to search for treasure trove from Lord Curzon in the early 1520s. Smyth, like his contemporary, the ex-monk William Stapleton, was a rogue; an unmitigated 'digger of hilles' and licensed treasure seeker who seems to have plundered many sites in Norfolk and Suffolk. They indulged in necromancy, magic and crystal-gazing to divine the presence of hidden gold. Smyth also had what we might call an alcohol problem and was not beyond acts of violent intimidation when under the influence of drink. He is described as a yeoman of Clopton in the County of Suffolk; as such he must have been aware of the barrows lying on the Sandling heaths so close to home and the Deben valley in particular. We need to know much more about him and his treasure hunting activities nearer home in Suffolk.

Evidence for Marling

The evidence for marling with chalk, crag, clay and loam, a practice which has gone on for many hundreds of years on the Sandling soils, must have a bearing on the findings of the fieldwalking survey. How seriously can we take isolated finds of metalwork and prehistoric artifacts when we know that every acre of land around Sutton Hoo may have hundreds of tons of extraneous material deposited on it? It is particularly worrying when it is known that some of this material was coming from as far afield as the chalk downlands of Kent, an area noted for prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon finds.

Abridged from 'Introduction and Summary' to the full report which is held in the Sutton Hoo archive. Copies may be obtained on application to the project centre citing Z6 (Warner).

P. Warner

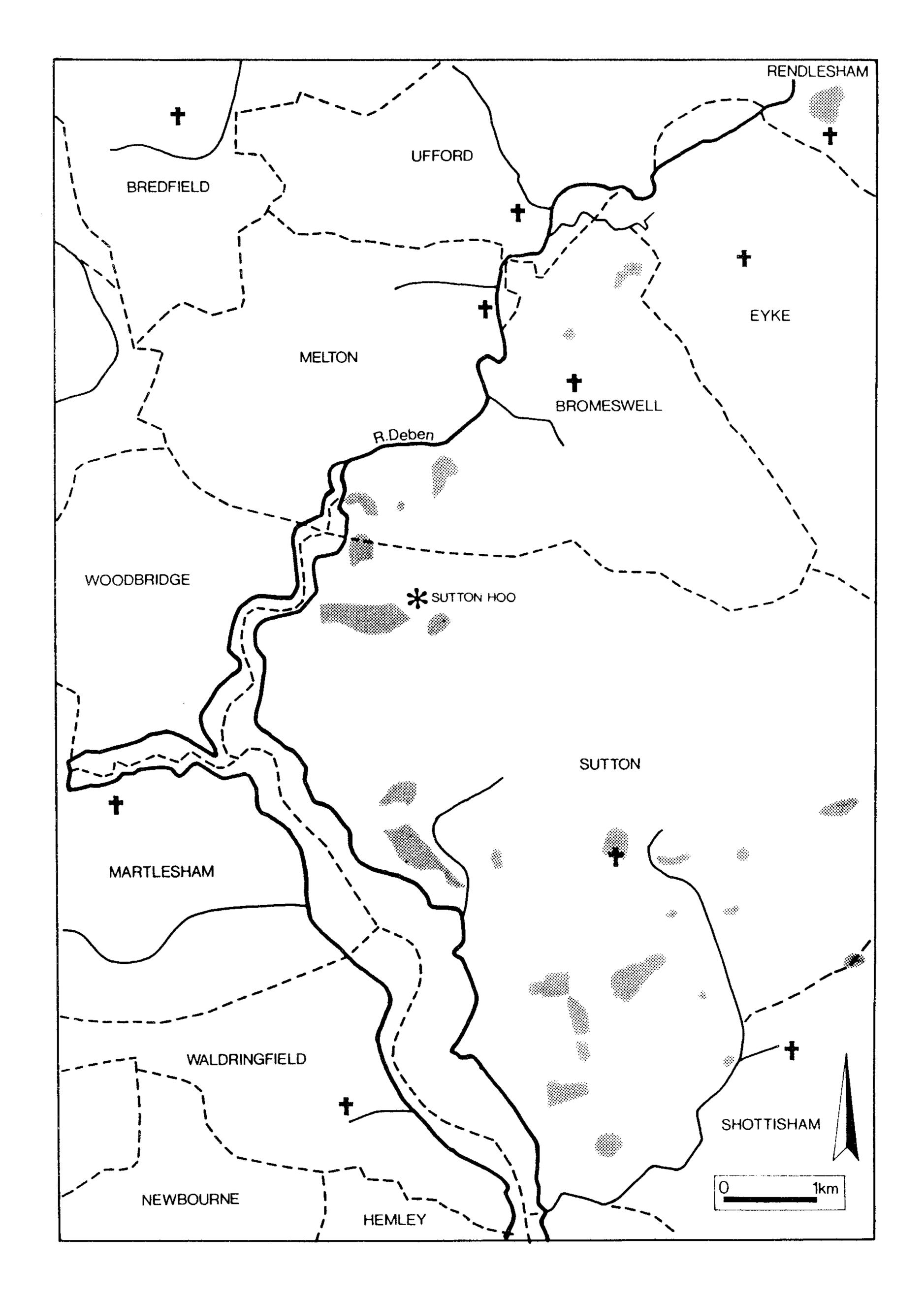


Fig. 12: Settlements located by fieldwalking in the east Deben Valley. (Source: Suffolk Archaeological Unit).

EAST ANGLIA KINGDOM SURVEY INTERIM REPORT ON THE SOUTH EAST SUFFOLK PILOT FIELD SURVEY

The second season of fieldwork in the Sutton area over the winter 1984/85 has seen an attempt to traverse all available arable land in the parish as well as filling in the gaps left between Sutton parish and work carried out in Rendlesham parish in previous years. Sites of all periods found to date are shown on fig. 12.

Although the work is now virtually completed, this season's material has yet to be examined in detail and conclusions are, therefore, provisional. Nonetheless, the dominant position of Sutton Hoo itself in the prehistoric period is obvious, the scatter of pottery and flint covers an area of some 20 to 30 hectares, and finds of Neolithic and Bronze Age date elsewhere have been very thin. Iron Age activity in the area is better represented with pottery scatters being found at one to two kilometre intervals along the River Deben, (fig. 13a). This emphasises the riverine bias shown by settlement in all periods. The only occupation evidence to be found at a greater distance than five hundred metres from a water source being thin prehistoric scatters on the dry, sandy heathland.

A similar pattern is to be seen in the Romano-British period with nearly all scatters producing Iron Age pottery as well, (fig. 13b). The most obvious reduction in settlement evidence appears to come in the Pagan Saxon period. This could, of course, be due to the low survival rate for handmade pottery, but it would not explain the relatively large number of Iron Age pottery scatters found, which are also represented by fragile handmade sherds. There remains the possibility, however, that Iron Age pottery survives better in the ploughsoil than Pagan Saxon pottery. Of the three areas producing Pagan Saxon evidence, two have produced evidence for occupation in the Romano-British period and these are adjacent to present day churches, raising the question of the status of these church sites in the Late Roman/Pagan Saxon period. These three sites producing Pagan Saxon pottery are also the only sites where Middle Saxon Ipswich Ware has been found (fig. 13c).

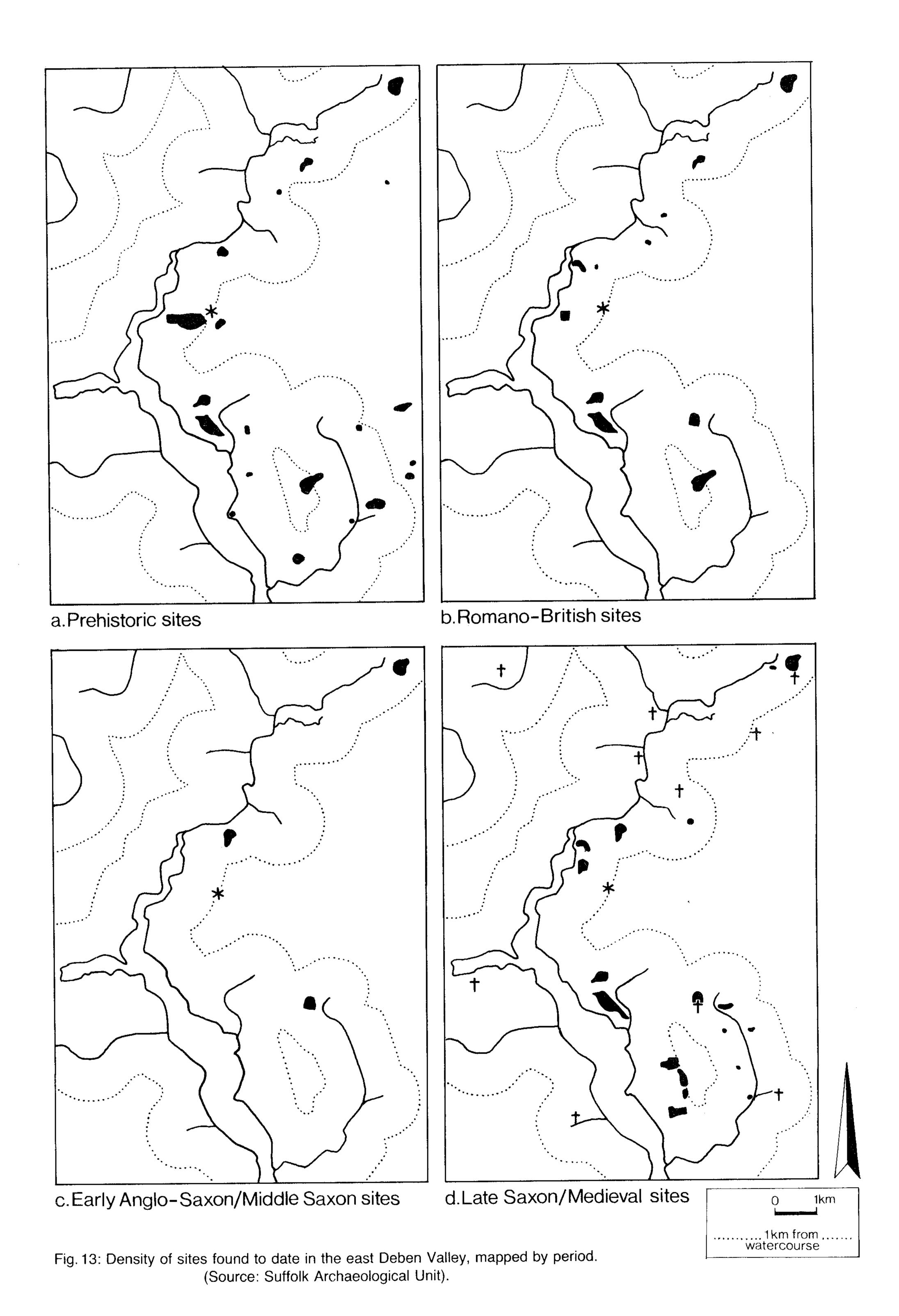
During the Medieval period settlement evidence in the whole area becomes much more widespread with many large and small pottery scatters located, indicating the greatest settlement density since the Romano-British period (fig. 13d).

Many scatters of burnt and cracked flints, or 'pot boilers' have also been found in the survey area. Some of these may be of some antiquity but it has been noticed that the burning of tree felling debris also creates such scatters, and this process could have occurred any date from early prehistoric to last year.

Acknowledgements

The Suffolk Archaeological Unit is grateful to all landowners in the area for allowing access to carry out survey work and to the Sutton Hoo Research Trust for grant aid towards the costs involved.

John Newman March, 1985



THE POTENTIAL OF AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE REGION OF SUTTON HOO

Examination of the prehistoric and later settlement pattern of which Sutton Hoo forms part continued with an assessment of the corpus of aerial photographs and the potential for further reconnaissance from the air in the region of Sutton Hoo. The work was undertaken in close collaboration with the Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography and the advice and support of Dr Rowan Whimster in particular. The collections at Cambridge, and at the National Monuments Record and Suffolk Sites and Monument Record, were catalogued and CUCAP are currently engaged in the machine plotting of sites in the immediate area of Sutton Hoo.

As a guide to the potential of aerial reconnaissance, the history of discoveries was chronicled year by year since records began and an attempt was made to correlate the yield with factors such as geology, soils, topography, weather, farming practice and moisture deficit in general. Modern constraints such as restricted air space were also mapped.

As can be seen from fig. 14 there is a considerable population of cropmarks in the Deben Valley area, providing a preliminary view of the settlement pattern which conforms to Wade's hypothesis: Middle Saxon and earlier features, which are thought to be responsible for the majority of the cropmarks, lie within 2km of moving water. The increase of land put under arable has greatly increased the potential for blanket coverage, and must be at least partly responsible for the increase in discovery rate since 1960. Another factor perhaps still more decisive is the increased activity by the National Monuments Record.

The Sandlings does however feature its own individual inhibition to aerial photography, which is a product of modern farming efficiency. Being exceptionally well-drained, arable fields are equipped with permanent irrigation systems using pulse sprayers; under these circumstances the moisture deficit is rarely allowed to fall dramatically even in the hottest summers.

Investigations are currently in progress to 'force' cropmarks in the fields adjacent to Sutton Hoo by interrupting the irrigation. If successful, this should be a cost-effective method of mapping in detail a local landscape which is still proving relatively resistant to other methods of remote sensing.

M. O. H. Carver

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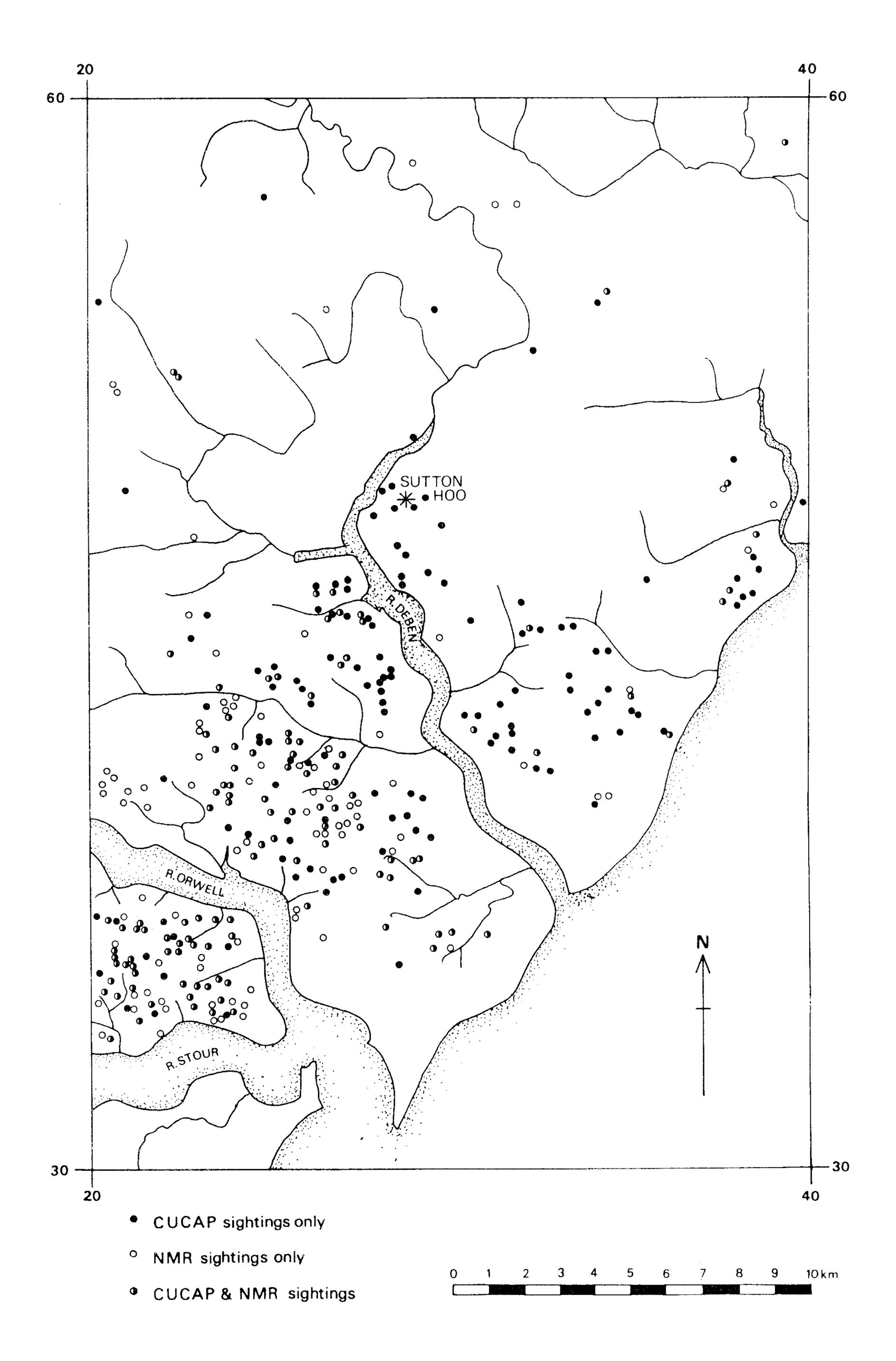


Fig. 14: Distribution of recorded cropmarks in the region of Sutton Hoo. (V. Bryant)

SUTTON HOO SEMINARS

Princely Burials and Their Context: An invitation seminar was held at Cambridge on 14th—16th September, 1984 under the auspices of the Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge (seminar organiser: Catherine Hills).

Papers were contributed by M.O.H.Carver on *New research at Sutton Hoo and its context*, B. Myre on *Norwegian burials and their context*, B. Ambrosiani on *Aristocratic graves and manors in early medieval Sweden*, B. Almgren on *Further thoughts on and recent finds from Swedish mounds*, B. Arrhenius on *The so-called Royal mounds in central Sweden*, E. Rosendahl on *Aristocratic burials in 10th century Denmark*, M. Biddle and B. Kjølbye-Biddle on *Repton – a Mercian analogy for Sutton Hoo* and H. W. Böhme on *The evolution of aristocratic burials in Frankia and the Rhineland*.

The seminar set out to explore the significance of high-status or demonstrative burials and how archaeology could be used to throw further light on the problem, particularly through the Sutton Hoo Research Project. The structure of individual mounds was of paramount importance, leading to identification of their intention as a place of burial, or if empty, as a sacrifice, or subsequently subjected to translation of the body. The function of a mound as status-seeking, land-claiming, or dynastic would require accurate chronology within a cemetery and comparative regional surveys; as would the way the practice of demonstrative mound burial (or its Christian analogue) arrived in the area. The principal remaining problem will be to know whether to equate the arrival of demonstrative burial with a social change or religious fashion. The many valuable individual contributions made at this seminar endorsed the need for regional survey and comparative study in East Anglia and Europe, particularly in the fields of archaeology and anthropology. No publication of the proceedings is planned.

M. O. H. Carver

Parameters for an Archaeological Survey of the East Anglian Kingdom: An invitation seminar was held at Ipswich on 3rd-5th October, 1984 under the auspices of the University of East Anglia (seminar organiser: Keith Wade).

Papers were given by M. O. H. Carver on *Sutton Hoo Excavation Season*, 1984, S. West on *The Lark Valley*, P. Warner on *The Blything Hundred*, R. Silvester on *The Norfolk Fens*, P. Wade-Martins on *The Launditch Hundred*, A. Rogerson on *Fransham Parish*. The contribution of *Literary Sources* was then assessed by D. Dumville, of *Place-Name Studies* by M. Gelling, of *Coin Studies* by M. Archibald, of *Environmental Archaeology* by P. Murphy, of *Aerial Photography* by R. Whimster, and of *Cemetery Studies* by C. Scull.

In the final session the aims and methods of the East Anglian Kingdom Survey were discussed by J. Campbell, K. Wade and T. Williamson. The seminar culminated in a research design presented by Keith Wade. He proposed a two-part survey comprising a multi-period investigation of the Deben Valley and a sampling programme for surface reconnaissance of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom. The sampling strategy for the 'Kingdom' survey would involve the pre-selection of certain topographical zones and predicted settlement bounds within them. All areas selected for sampling would be validated regularly against the model. He reminded the meeting that our objective should be the examination of social and economic change and that this could be achieved in East Anglia within a realistic time-scale using the academically autonomous methods of field survey.

The final discussion went a long way towards the approval of Wade's research design, while leaving largely unresolved the question of how methods of survey other than fieldwork (e.g. documentary, numismatic) should be incorporated in a common objective. These matters would be reconsidered when further progress had been made with the multi-period pilot study over the Deben valley. No publication of the proceedings is planned.

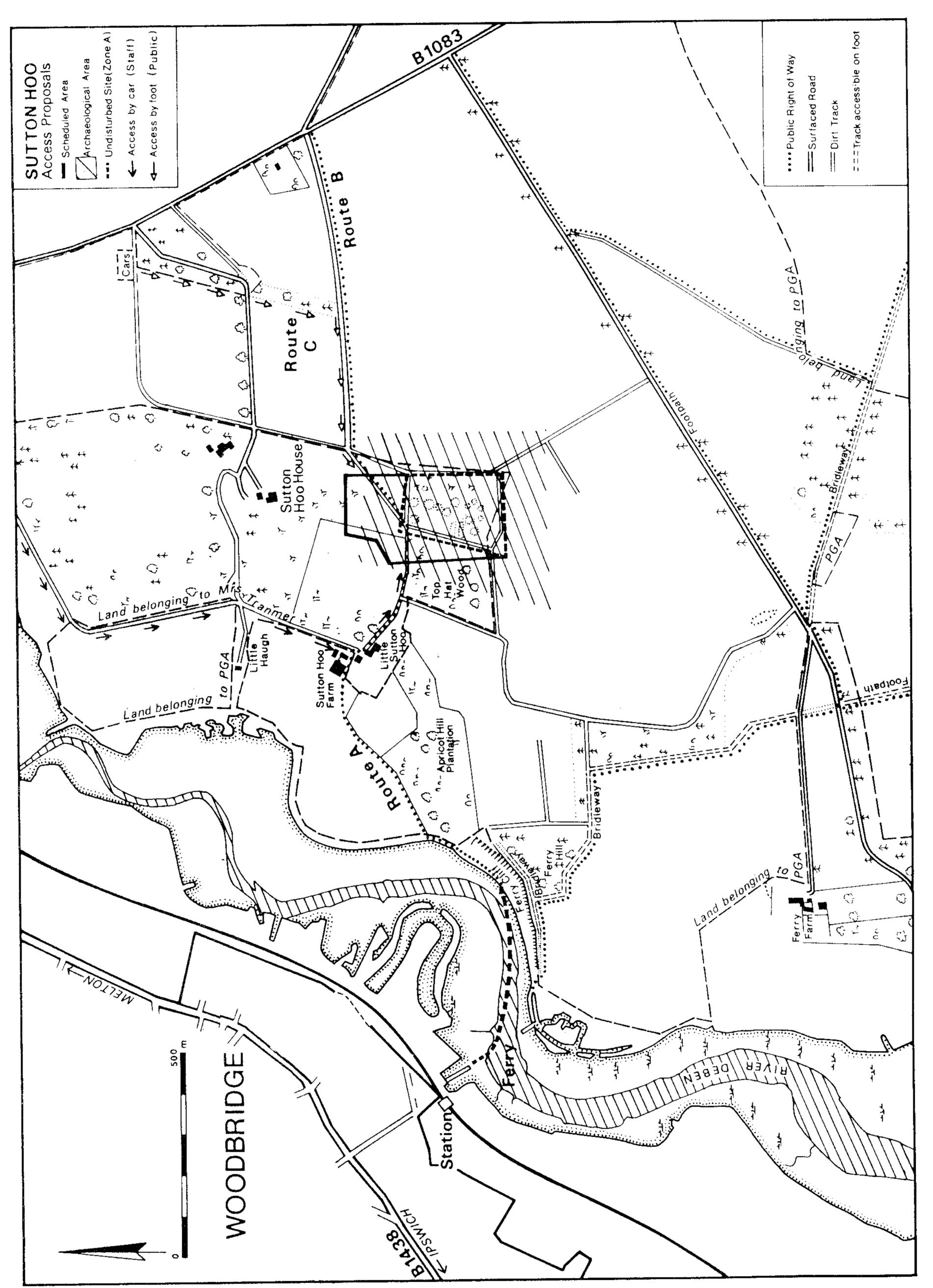


Fig. 15: Public Access to the Sutton Hoo site in 1985.

Route A (served by Ferry from the Tide Mill Quay) and Route B are public footpaths.

Route C is a private footpath for site visitors only, served by a car-park as shown.

There is no access to the site for motorised traffic, other than for site staff.

A PUBLIC SEMINAR entitled Sutton Hoo and East Anglia: Progress and Prospects, was held at Bury St Edmunds on 2nd March, 1985, organised by the Centre for East Anglian Studies of the University of East Anglia. The speakers were M.O.H.Carver, J. Newman, P. Warner and T. Williamson. A new exhibition of Sutton Hoo created by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was displayed.

The next PUBLIC SEMINAR will be held at the University of Birmingham on 15th March, 1986 when the speakers will be G. Hutchinson, C. M. Hills, M. O. H. Carver, J. Newman and R. Hodges.

PUBLIC LECTURES BY THE RESEARCH DIRECTOR, 1984/85

Societies:

Dover College, Norfolk Archaeological Rescue Group, Norfolk Research Committee, Sutton Hoo Society, Aldeburgh Festival Club, C.B.A. Gp.6, Gloucester & District Archaeological Research Group, Headmasters' Conference (Eastern Division Schools), Cambridge Antiquarian Society.

Universities:

Glasgow University Archaeology Society and Archaeology Department, Sheffield University Archaeology Society, University College Cardiff Archaeology Society, Cambridge University Department of Archaeology, Oxford University Archaeological Society.

BBC TELEVISION PROGRAMME

Work on the preparation of television films about Sutton Hoo has been proceeding since the summer of 1983 under the direction of former 'Chronicle' producer, Ray Sutcliffe. The editing of the first programme of 'Sutton Hoo - the search for a Kingdom', is now in its final stages and transmission is scheduled for the summer of 1985.

THE SUTTON HOO SOCIETY

THE SUTTON HOO SOCIETY was formed during 1984 to support the work of the Trust, particularly its efforts to present Sutton Hoo to the public. Public access by car, foot and ferry has now been arranged and will open in May, 1985 (fig. 15). The Society provides a panel of speakers and guides for the site tours and all visits to the site are now coordinated by the Secretary. The Society is a charitable organisation, attracting sponsorship to the project both for research and for site management. In 1984 the Society was presented with a boat for use as a ferry. Enquiries about membership of the Society should be made to the Hon. Secretary.

The Society's Officers as at 1st April, 1985 were as follows:

Chairman:

Malcolm Miles, Two Barns, Eyke, Woodbridge.

Hon. Secretary:

Mike Weaver, Woodbridge School, Woodbridge.

Hon. Treasurer: Maritime Affairs: John Aldridge, National Westminster Bank, Woodbridge. Robert Simper, Sluice Cottages, Ramsholt, Nr. Woodbridge.

Membership Secretary: Liz Miles, Two Barns, Eyke, Woodbridge.

Publicity Officer:

John Warburton, The Old Stores, The Street, Eyke, Woodbridge.

SPONSORSHIP AND EXPENDITURE 1984/85

Grateful acknowledgement and appreciation is due to the following organisations who supported the work of the Trust in 1984/85:

The British Museum, The Society of Antiquaries, the British Broadcasting Corporation, the National Maritime Museum, the Scarfe Trust, Aurelius Trust, Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, Trinity College Cambridge, St John's College Cambridge, Royal Historical Society, the British Academy and the East Anglian Daily Times.

The Trust is grateful to the following who supported their work in 1984 with the loan or gift of equipment in kind:

Suffolk Coastal District Council, Ransomes, Sims & Jeffries, Osram-GEC Ltd., Andrews Industrial Equipment, Goblin Ltd., Vinyl Products Ltd.

The Trust is grateful to the National Maritime Museum for the secondment of Gillian Hutchinson, and to the British Museum for the secondment of Angela Evans, as site supervisors during the 1984 season.

The Trust is grateful to the Committee and members of the Sutton Hoo Society for their many services to the site and the research team throughout the year.

Sutton Hoo Research Project Statement of Expenditure

Expenditure	£
Director	11,749
Project Management	10,142
Equipment and site services	5,262
Field season: May – August, 1984	11,300
Prehistoric research (MA)	2,200
Aerial photographic research (MA)	2,200
Documentary research (Sutton parish)	4,285
Post excavation and site guardianship	7,700
Archive processing and programming	4,443
Illustration and publication	3,530
Sutton Hoo Seminars	500
East Anglian Kingdom Survey	2,000
	65,311

The Sutton Hoo Research Trust acknowledges with gratitude the sponsorship of BOYDELL & BREWER who have undertaken the publication of the Bulletin of the Sutton Hoo Research Committee.

PARTICIPATION 1984/85

The Research Director would like to thank:

Stanley West, Keith Wade, John Newman, Judith Plouviez and Edward Martin of the Suffolk Archaeological Unit for their support and advice; Mark Newman for his work on the prehistory of Sutton Hoo; Victoria Bryant for her work on the aerial photographic potential of the area; Andrew Copp and Catherine Royle for their achievements as field workers, surveyors and site guards, Dr P. Warner, Homerton College, Cambridge for his study of the documentary evidence; Jim Hooker, City University, for assistance with photogrammetry; Mike Gorman of the Scott Polar Institute for his work with the soil sounding radar; Malcolm Cooper and Richard Young for preparation of the Data Base Management system; Andrew Brooker-Carey, Elizabeth Hooper and Penny Cottle for project management; Amanda Balfour, Ron Warmington, Caroline Fleming for artwork, particularly the Sutton Hoomobile display; Ray Sutcliffe and BBC film crews for comment and advice;

and the following who participated in the 1984 field season:

Peter Leach (senior supervisor); Gillian Hutchinson, Angela Evans, Catherine Royle, Andrew Copp (site supervisors); Mick Sharp, Edward Morgan (photography); Jenny Glazebrook (project secretary); Mark Newman (finds supervisor); Madeleine Hummler (finds supervisor); Frederic Carver (born); Marianna Birkeland (illustrator); Neil Oakey, Nigel MacBeth, Paul McCullock, Dominic Perring, Julia Green, William Filmer-Sankey, Susanne Hazelgrove, Elizabeth Saunders, Louise Dilworth, Tuija Rankama, Julian Richards and Paivi Kan Khunem.

The Research Director wishes to thank Peter Berry for his active help, suggestions and advice on matters of site management.

The Trust is grateful to Mrs Anne Tranmer and her Trustees for their kind permission to carry out the research; to Mr Colin Walker and Property Growth Assurance for their kind permission to carry out research in Zones D and F; and to both landowners and to all local inhabitants and farmers, particularly Mr William Glasse, who have tolerated or supported the research programme and the public interest it has aroused, in a variety of ways.

Boydell & Brewer =

Forthcoming titles

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: 3. MS A

JANET BATELY. September, £25

Aldhelm: Poetic Works

Editied and translated by MICHAEL LAPIDGE and JAMES ROSIER, and including the Carmina Ecclesiastica, the Carmen de Virginitate, and the Enigmata: also a translation of De Metris, and bibliography. August, £25

Old English 'Finding of the True Cross'

MARY-CATHERINE BODDEN stresses in this edition the tradition of early English homiletic literature. *Spring* 1986, c£19.50

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