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CROFT AMBREY, AYMESTREY, HEREFORDSHIRE INVESTIGATION AND ANALYTICAL SURVEY OF EARTHWORKS

David Field and Nicky Smith

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CROFT AMBREY, AYMESTREY, HEREFORDSHIRE.

ANALYSIS OF EARTHWORKS AT CROFT AMBREY

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SUMMARY

Analytical survey and investigation of the earthworks at the well-known 'hillfort' of Croft Ambrey has introduced fresh interpretations of site and landscape development. There are just the slightest hints of an earlier genesis for human activity on the hill and while the great boundary constructions excavated in the 1960s by Stan Stanford remain the focus of interest, there is a considerable amount of formerly unreported activity relating to the historic period. The site is seen to be important for its geology, not least as the limestone, its outcrops and the shape of its weathered topography have influenced the form of the earthworks and, no doubt, prehistoric perception of the place. The visible surface engraving can be seen as representing a palimpsest of these activities with the latest invariably both masking and sometimes being influenced by earlier features. There is some evidence that the site served as a deer park, a rabbit warren and also suffered agricultural episodes before being incorporated into a landscape park.

CONTRIBUTORS

David Field and Nicky Smith

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ARCHIVE LOCATION

National Monuments Record

DATE OF SURVEY

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CONTACT DETAILS

David Field, English Heritage, Kemble Drive, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 2GZ.
email:david.field@english-heritage.org.uk

SILURIA: AN INVESTIGATION AND ANALYTICAL SURVEY OF THE EARTHWORKS OF THE AMBREY, CROFT, HEREFORDSHIRE

In memory of Stan C Stanford (1928--2007) whose extensive labours, comprehensive analysis and interpretation is responsible for bringing the site of Croft Ambrey into mainstream archaeological literature and who, sadly, died while this report was in preparation.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Frontispece: *plan of the earthworks at Croft Ambrey surveyed at 1:1000 scale and reduced to fit A4 page.*

INTRODUCTION

Having visited Herefordshire as part of his *Tour through the whole island of Great Britain* in the early years of the 18th century, Daniel Defoe (1968, 448) indicated that the local people liked to boast that they were a 'part of the Ancient Silures'. Evidently this intimation of the origins of their identity was readily accepted, for in preparing a new edition of Camden's *Britannia*, Gough (1806) fostered the theme by describing Herefordshire, along with Radnorshire, Brecknockshire, Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire as the land of the Silures. Only archaeologists countered this view; Raleigh Radford, for example (RCHM 1934, xlv), pointed out that far from supporting Silurian activity, the coin evidence indicated that it was the Dobunni who occupied Herefordshire, while the Silures, he suggested, may have occupied the smaller enclosures predominantly to the west of the line occupied by Offa's Dyke. Instead, the larger more complex hillforts including those of Herefordshire, were the work of the Dobunni and Cornovii.

Nevertheless, the idea of the Silures had captured local imagination, even to the extent that the name was adopted to describe an important sequence of geological deposits first encountered in the area around Aymestrey. The examination of rock outcrops around Croft Ambrey situated above that village is intricately associated with this early geological investigation. The Rev T T Lewis of Aymestrey, one of the founding members of the Woolhope Club, studied these exposures, collecting fossils from them and establishing the sequence of rock deposits that was subsequently adopted by Sir Roderick Murchison as the basis of his 'Silurian' system and which is still recognised across the world as one of the major divisions of the past.

'Siluria' aside, the area around Croft Ambrey is inextricably linked to the Mortimer family. The Mortimer's had their seat of power at Wigmore Castle, situated 4km to the northwest of, and overlooked by, Croft Ambrey. Along with two other hillforts, Pryor Wood and Brandon Camp, Croft Ambrey was very much part of their contemporary landscape which is still described as 'Mortimer country' in modern tourist literature. The 'Mortimer trail', a long distance, footpath actually makes its way through the site in question.

At 300m above Ordnance Datum, the hill is a significant eminence and from it a number of distant landscape features are visible (Fig 1). Without doubt, the views are stunning; Titterstone Clee, the Black Mountains, the Malvern Hills, are all visible and before the county reorganisation it was claimed that more than 12 counties could be seen from the summit on a clear day (Anon 1898, 125: Anon 1960: 1970).

Croft Ambrey is, of course, well known in the archaeological literature as the site of the extensive excavations undertaken by S C Stanford and the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club during the 1960s that profoundly influenced thinking concerning Iron Age hillforts. Given the purpose of earthwork analysis in utilising the, often subtle, surface traces to unravel the history of the site, one would have imagined that the presence of an extensive excavation record would only assist in that process and make it something of an easy matter. Far from it. The legacy of this work has presented some difficulty in interpretation. Analysis, understanding and interpretation of complex earthworks is one thing, but reconciling them with an equally complex set of excavated events sometimes amounting to 18 phases of Iron Age activity is quite another. For even though the survey was carried out without the influence of prior research in order to eliminate any bias created through expectations, there is nevertheless a tendency to try and 'fit' this in to the pre-existing sequence rather than the other way around. Without excavation it is unlikely that the idea of a 'plateau camp' with an original west entrance would have been entertained, there being no evidence for its 'rampart' on the surface. It is important therefore, that the reader consider this report in association with the various phasing plans and section drawings in Stanford's (1974) excavation report. The latter was presented in a form that invited re-interpretation and, as the author indicated on more than one occasion, the explanations given may need to be considerably modified. No major reinterpretation of the excavation evidence has been attempted here, although the present work highlights the desirability of a modern synthesis of the material.

Figure 1 *Anthills in the interior of Croft Ambrey with the snow capped Black Mountains just visible in the far distance.*

The survey

Earthworks to the north of Croft Castle in Herefordshire, marking an archaeological site generally described in modern literature as Croft Ambrey hillfort, were surveyed in the winter and spring of 2007 at the invitation of the National Trust, the site owners, and Herefordshire County Council. Set on the summit of a prominent ridge overlooking the Lugg valley and Wigmore lowlands, they comprise two part circuits of double ditch and banks, or bivallate ramparts, that are closed by a series of ledges on the steep north-northwest face of the hillslope to form two concentric enclosures. Excavations here between 1960 and 1966 by the late S C Stanford established that there had been a substantial Iron Age presence on site and that much of the interior was occupied by Iron Age huts with a small degree of subsequent Roman activity. While Stanford demonstrated

that considerable intricacy existed in the buried archaeology, it is evident that similar complexity exists among the extant surface remains. This study aims to elucidate the nature of the earthworks and set them within an appropriate spatial and chronological context.

The site, listed in the National Monuments Record as SO 46 NW 1, is located 9 km northwest of Leominster, 9 km southwest of Ludlow and 12 km east of Presteigne, centred at Ordnance Survey NGR SO 4435 6669 and it is situated on part of a ridge that overlooks the dramatic Aymestrey-Leintwardine valley (Figs 2 and 3). An important route, that of the present A4110, successor to Watling Street, utilises the valley and passes through the village of Aymestrey alongside the River Lugg. A small tributary, Allcock's Brook, provides a link with an extensive low-lying area to the north known as Wigmore Marsh and which is quite visible from the site. A small hamlet, Yatton, lies at the foot of the north-west scarp and a small re-entrant valley leading towards the northeast contains the small hamlet of Leinthall Earls. While the site itself forms part of the Croft Castle estate, it lies in the adjacent Civil Parish of Aymestrey. Curiously the parish boundary separating Croft and Yarpole parish from that of Aymestrey follows the southern boundary of the site, the earthworks themselves remaining in Aymestrey parish. The implication is that the land once formed part of Leinthall Manor which is situated to the northwest and now a part of Aymestrey, rather than Croft.

The site is a Scheduled Monument, numbers HW 76a-g, and is listed in the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sites and Monuments Record as No 177. It is administered by the National Trust, partly as tenanted rough pasture but there are patches of bracken and woodland pasture. Some of the trees on and around the site are of considerable age and appear to have been nurtured, almost certainly as part of Croft Castle Park. To the south is coniferous plantation, today managed by the Forestry Commission, while to the east the steep bracken covered slopes of Bircher Common are also part of the National Trust estate.

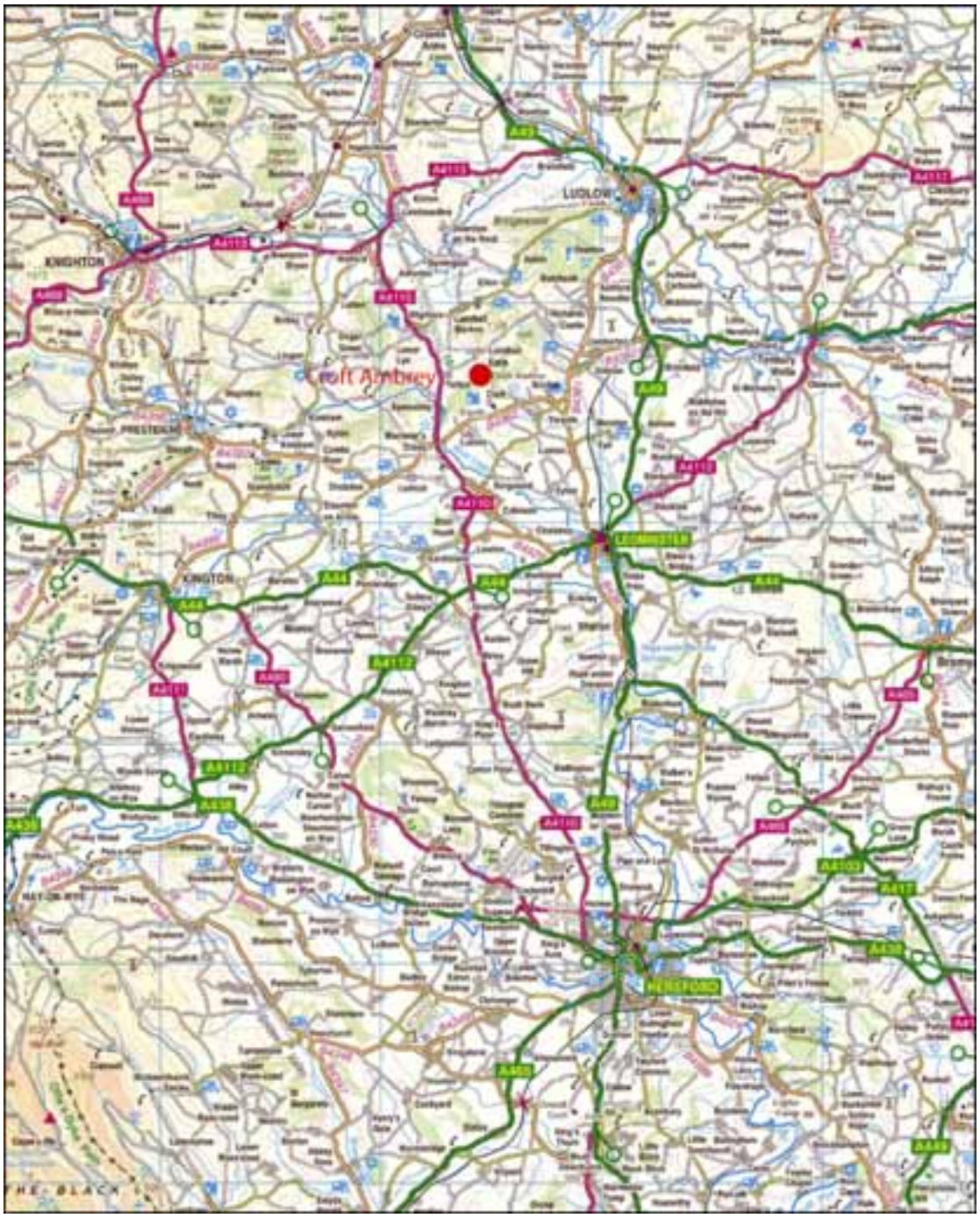

Figure 2 Location map. Croft Ambrey in relation to nearby centres of Ludlow, Leominster, Hereford and other settlements and towns. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2008.

Figure 3 *Location map. Croft Ambrey in relation to local topography and the villages of Wigmore (northwest corner), Leinthall Earls, Yatton, Aymestrey, and Croft Castle, all mentioned in the text. Note also the location of the hillfort in Pyon Wood. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2008.*

TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND DRAINAGE

The site occupies a prominent south-west to north-east oriented ridge that extends from Aymestrey through Richards Castle to Ludlow, reaching a maximum of 370m in height and with its dip slope to the southeast. Steep escarpments occur to the north and there are precipitous slopes locally where streams have engraved dramatic courses. The cuesta comprises several deposits of limestone, the Whitcliffe Formation, the Leintwardine Formation and, along the summit for over 7km, the Aymestry (traditionally misspelt after Murchison's use of the name) Limestone, a thick band of blue-grey material, with the Lower Bringewood Formation below it. These deposits occur in that order although upthrusting between two faults has resulted in the lower deposits of the sequence being elevated within the landscape and given greater local prominence. According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 2000) the whole of Croft Ambrey is on Aymestry Limestone, with Lower Bringewood Formation material outcropping below it on the steep north slope. The fault south of the hillfort lies in part along the line of the outer enclosure and is also responsible for the steep coombe or 'vallet' in the southwest.

This series of rocks south-west of Ludlow were first subdivided by Murchison (1839) into Upper and Lower Ludlow Limestone Beds, each separated by the Aymestry Limestone. Murchison (1839, 197) reported that 'The surface of the beds is sometimes covered with wavy undulating ridges and furrows, which are occasionally crossed by little raised tortuous bands. The ridges and furrows are supposed to be due to the rippling action of waves, when the bed formed the surface-bottom of the sea, and while the sediment was soft. The smaller transverse bands so much resemble the marks made by animals which live at present on sandy shores as to induce the belief that many of the marks may have had a similar origin'. These deposits are arranged in beds from 0.3 to 1.5m in thickness, sloping to the south and southeast. While the material is generally laminar, there is a band of rounded nodular material that can occasionally be found on site and which is thought to derive from a higher layer, i.e. the eroded base of the Upper Ludlow deposits. The laminae are characterised by deposits of shells and sometimes corallines, the lowest part of the Upper Ludlow Rock capping the calcareous Aymestry material, which according to Murchison is 'absolutely loaded with a vast number of small Terebratulae'.

When freshly quarried, the rock is blue-grey or indigo in colour and it contains a greater degree of calcareous matter and less sand than the Ludlow Beds, which makes the material useful for agricultural lime (Murchison 1839, 197, 202). It is noteworthy that several limekilns are recorded within the immediate environs of Aymestrey and the Croft Castle estate (Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" map: Herefordshire SMR and e.g. Fretwell *et al* 1987).

The deposit has been worked extensively and used as building stone (Murchison 1854, 130, 197: Millward & Robinson 1971, 157) although the argillaceous matter makes it liable to decomposition, particularly if left to weather on the surface. However, freshly extracted, and laid horizontally it is durable enough for walling. Compared to other limestones it provides poor quality building material but the 12th-century parish church of St John the Baptist and St Alkmund at Aymestrey and St Andrew at Leinthall Earls both incorporated limestone rubble in their construction (RCHM 1934, 9-11). However, it has in the past also been used for a variety of purposes including road stone and there is still an active quarry at Leinthall Earls on the opposite side of the re-entrant valley to Croft Ambrey, while its 'earthy character' made it particularly useful for cement and plaster, the mortar evidently 'setting rapidly under water' (Murchison 1839, 204).

To the south of the area lies an expanse of Old Red Sandstone and this brackets a district where the soils are employed for cultivation and pasture, in marked contrast to the ridge that is predominantly wooded or left as open common land. Beyond the hillfort in the west is an expanse of bracken covered common land that is criss-crossed by a number of hollow ways. The vegetation cover here made it impossible to observe the archaeology adequately, but a number of quarries and possibly formerly cultivated areas are visible. Some of the hollow ways are sharply incised and point to a considerable amount of traffic requiring access to the summit of the hill.

High level springs issue from both north-west and south-east slopes of the ridge a little below the summit, evidently at the junction of the Aymestry and Leintwardine Formation in the north and along the fault line leading to the deeply scored Lyngham Vallet in the south. That in the north-west trickles down the steep hillside to Leinthall Earls, but an

engraved hollow way leading to it from the summit indicates that it was at one time of greater importance and served a significant number of visitors. Today it is enclosed by a brick culvert. This may be the high level spring noted on Leinthall Common that is said to have supplied water to Gatley Park (Richardson 1935). The spring in the southeast also has a modern cover and water is piped into a pond just below it. Boggy ground above the spring indicates that it may have risen higher up the hillside during periods of high water table and indeed the spring is undoubtedly responsible for carving out a dramatic natural bowl or amphitheatre at the upper limit of its valley and a deeply incised re-entrant leading to the Lyngham Vallet and Fishpool Valley. There was possibly a further spring to the south at the head of a similar re-entrant, a source formerly being located adjacent to the keepers lodge (HRO S33/4), now a reservoir.

The Rev TT Lewis and Sir R Murchison

The Rev Thomas T Lewis took up post as curate at Aymestrey in 1825 and, having attended a number of lectures on the developing discipline of geology at university, immediately took to collecting fossils from the local limestone exposures. Perhaps following the example of, then recent, work on the South Downs, he used these to distinguish five rock formations that lay stratigraphically beneath the Old Red Sandstone. When Roderick Murchison visited Herefordshire in 1831, Lewis introduced him to the local rock succession. Lewis subsequently sent him boxes of fossils with descriptions of their provenance describing in particular the 'lower fossiliferous strata' that angled up towards Croft Ambrey (letter from Lewis to Murchison 7 Feb 1832 Geology Society London). On a later walk over Croft Ambrey and Yatton Hill he recalled the route 'up which I had the honour of conducting Mr Murchison (later Sir Roderick), in his first visit to Herefordshire, July, 1831, presenting in itself a continuous section from the Lower Ludlow rock to the Old Red Sandstone' (Lewis 1907a, 99-101: letter Lewis to Murchison 14 Dec 1832 Geology Society London). He went on ' I had at this time very fairly developed the structure of the surrounding country. My own researches in this district commenced with my residence in Aymestrey, in 1827: but I was working in the dark, and it was in that walk, which I continue to regard as one of the most interesting events in my life, there dawned upon me the vision of the deep interest of the then comparatively unknown country, in

which it was my good fortune and happiness to be dwelling, and to the true development of which I had, unknowingly, discovered the key, and made some progress. With what zeal, industry, ability and success Sir Roderick Murchison has followed up these beginnings, and prosecuted the identification of these rocks, through our own and the adjoining counties, and the greater part of the North of Europe, into Asiatic Russia, is shown by his great works on the Silurian system….and how far it has been verified by the researches of others, more especially by the United States naturalists'. Lewis sent him a sketch of a cross-section of the deposits between Downton and Croft Park, the line cutting through Croft Ambrey and depicting the outcropping of the limestone on the northern slopes of the hillfort (letter Lewis to Murchison 1832 Geological Society London). It is this that Murchison adapted for use in his publication to demonstrate the rock strata and the angle at which the rocks were dipping.

Murchison had been investigating the sequence of rocks in the Welsh Borders and South Wales, first encountering the Old Red Sandstone along the banks of the River Wye in 1831 (Murchison 1854, 6), but discovering a completely different group of rocks around Ludlow in 1835 he introduced the term 'Silurian' for them after the Iron Age tribe that was thought to have inhabited the area. This was not entirely out of character as he seems to have developed an interest in other hillfort sites, notably Caer Caradoc, developing theories concerning the site of Caractacus' last battle (1839, xxx1). In 1839 his volume *The Silurian System* describing his discoveries was published, followed by *Siluria* in 1854, both of which incorporated details of the rock sequence around Aymestrey

Lewis was a subscriber to the earlier volume and with a burgeoning interest in the local geological strata was founder member of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club; he led a number of field visits to the area. The fledgling Club visited on 21st September 1852 (Thackray 1977). They approached Croft Ambrey from the dip slope within the grounds of Croft Castle and encountered a 'beautiful wooded dell formed in the side of the lofty hill of Croft Ambrey…..The dell seemed to have originated in a crack in the Upper Ludlow surface rock [the fault], by which the action of surface water was gradually denuded so as to bring to view the Aymestry rock beneath, leaving precipitous cliffs, considerable in height. This lovely ravine is interesting to the tourist on account of the extensive and striking landscape visible from its upper extremity…….Crossing the

ravine……the Aymestrey rock….dips at an angle of 37 degrees….. From this spot they went along the ridge to the Camp of the British Monarch, Ambrosius, whose name in the corrupted form, Ambrey, it still bears. …while to the geologist its prominent points are highly suggestive' (Anon 1907, 29-30). Continuing over Croft Ambrey and along the escarpment of Yatton Hill, Lewis described how the rocks were a microcosm of those that had been recently recognised as existing across the world (Lewis 1907a, 99-101).

Interest in these deposits continued and the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club held a further field meeting at Croft Ambrey in 1896 when, not surprisingly, the geology took precedence over the archaeology. Nevertheless, beginning at Croft, the visit moved north through Croft park, noting the presence of Upper Ludlow Beds for over a kilometre before reaching the dramatic upthrust of Aymestry Limestone at Croft Ambrey Camp (Anon 1898, 126). It was pointed out that 'a natural ridge of Aymestry limestone traverses the camp from west to east, from each side of which excavated material has been piled upon it until a rampart of extraordinary, and apparently unnecessarily large, dimensions had been formed' (Anon 1898, 122).

Prior to human intervention, the limestone outcrops on Croft Ambrey hill may therefore have been quite prominent features. The landscape today suggests that several natural outcrops were present which might have attracted and focused activity. The laminar strata is ideal for construction, while the fact that it dipped markedly made it possible to prise up bedrock with wedges up to a reasonable depth before the material became too earthfast.

Pleistocene

The dramatic upthrust of the hill and the fault with deep valleys to the south is echoed by equally dramatic landscape to the north. Here features are the result of ice action, carved by glaciers emerging from the west and south, principally through the Aymestrey Gap. Ice here is thought to have reached a height of 243m in the Wigmore Basin and 259m on north facing slopes, in which case only the summits, including that of Croft Ambrey hill, would have been exposed. On retreat, an ice front lay across the valley at Aymestrey and deposits of outwash sands and gravels indicate that on melting, water ponded up,

probably behind a col near Downton. The British Geological Survey (BGS 2000) have mapped alluvium on the Wigmore Valley bottom and this is fringed by Head gravels, with glaciofluvial sand and a gravel plug on the basin floor at Yatton. The lake reached some 128-131m in height and eventually forced a channel through the hills at Downton Gorge to drain into the River Teme (Pocock & Whitehead 1948, 78: Cross 1967, 203-5).

The legacy of the lake throughout the Holocene is not charted, but by the 1st millennium BC it may have been swamp and bog. Certainly, the place-name Wigmore suggests that it was so in the early medieval period. Such places are, of course, known to have played a role as receptacles for both special placed deposits and executed bodies during the Iron Age.

LANDSCAPE HISTORY

Early descriptions suggest the site was known simply as 'The Ambrey' and that 'Croft' was a relatively late addition to it. The place-name is curious. It was once said to refer to the British chieftain Ambrosius, but as long ago as 1898 members of the Woolhope Club believed that rather improbable (Anon 1898, 124-5). It can be compared to similar names at Ambersbury Banks, Essex, Amesbury, Wilts, Amberley in both Sussex and Worcestershire and Ambose-den in Oxford, and while the spelling Ambery in some documents (e.g. HRO71/163) introduces the possibility of a 'burgh' element, Ambrose is thought to be a British word and there are more convincing suggestions that the 'brey' is derived from 'Brae', a hill, as in Carn Brae in Cornwall (Anon 1898, 125).

Croft itself is mentioned as a small, almost insignificant settlement in the Domesday survey, with just Bernard, who held the land from William of Écouis, three smallholders and a Frenchman being mentioned, along with a single taxable hide of land. Ralph of Mortimer was recorded as holding land in Aymestrey and Leinthall in 1086, while woodland a league long and wide existed at the latter place (Thorn & Thorn 1983). It has already been mentioned that the Aymestrey parish boundary circumnavigated the southern limit of the site. The parishes of Aymestrey, and Leinthall Earls are currently a joint parish and the the position of the former boundary between them unknown. Their junction must have lain very close to, if not at, the Ambrey which must have presented itself as an obvious boundary marker, but it also perhaps implies that the site was not in use as an important centre at the time. Strangely, however, the Croft Ambrey area appears to have lain at the fringe of administrative units; Leinthall and Aymestrey lay in separate Hundreds, while Croft lay in a third. If the present parish boundary is of antiquity and reflects the Hundred boundary it will mean that the Ambrey lay in Hazletree Hundred rather than Wolphy.

The site was evidently of importance to the Mortimers of Wigmore who held Leinthall Earls and who are extremely unlikely to have countenanced a potentially defensive site in such a commanding position overlooking their lands. The survey of the metes and bounds of 1601 (Anon nd) followed closely the line of the parish boundary to the south of the

site depicted on the Aymestrey tithe map and the early Ordnance Survey editions and it seems fair to assume that this was its original course, which just included the site within what would have been Mortimer lands.

Croft Castle appears to have been present in the thirteenth century as Sir Roger de Croft is said to have entertained Prince Edward there (Croft 1892). Beyond this, the earliest mention of Croft as a place is when Hugo de Croft is said to have been Lord of the township of Croft in 1315 and 1316 (Croft 1949, 23). Croft is an extremely common name on early local maps and terriers and it may be that the original settlement was elsewhere, perhaps in the valley around the Fishpool stream, where a large building and a village symbol are depicted on I Taylor's map of 1715.

According to the Victoria County History, it is said that after his decisive victory over Mortimer in 1402, Owen Glendower 'sent men to occupy Croft Ambrey as a strong defensive position' (Page 1908, 208-9). Indeed, there have been suggestions that a number of local hillforts including Croft Ambrey were occupied during Owen Glendower's campaign against Mortimer, although little evidence to support this suggestion has been presented (Anon 1888b, 216). However, should Croft Castle have indeed been present at this date, he is likely to have utilised that site as opposed to the windy hilltop. Indeed, in writing of this period, O G A Croft speculated that Owen Glendower moved between Monnington, Staddle and Croft Castle during his last days and that he may have died at one of these places (Croft 1949, 34).

The Battle of Mortimers Cross in 1461 appears to have taken place on the low ground of the Aymestrey Gap and to the south of it, although the vantage points provided by the high ground around Croft Ambrey may have led to some military presence at the location.

The site evidently passed into pastoral use. A number of pillow mounds were noted as present on the site by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in 1931; Whitehead (2001) notes up to ten. They may be of medieval date and infer that the land was fully incorporated into the manorial economy.

Despite its distance from the major conurbations the area received its fair share of curious travellers. John Leland passed by some time between 1535 and 1543, but appears to have viewed Croft and its church from a distance and continued towards Richards Castle, some 5km to the northeast. He observed 'I also saw on the left hond, a mile of, Crofte, the manor of the Crofts, sett on the browe of a hill, somewhat rokky, dychid and waullyd castle like' (Toulmin-Smith 1964, 75). Chandler's (1998, 225) transcription marginally differs, describing a 'rather craggy hill, with walls and ditches like a castle…'. It is usually thought to refer to the present house on the lower slopes, although it could be a description of the camp which must have been visible from the road during the 16th century. If so it might make sense of John Aubrey's note prepared at some time between 1665 and 1693 (Fowles and Legg 1980, 304-5) which did not comment on Croft Castle or its church, but instead remarked that, 'At Crofts-parke is a large Camp with two great Ditches, called the Ambry: from whence is a lovely Prospect'. Aubrey's observation is the first to mention the site by name and implies that it lay at or within Croft Park, that is, the earlier or 'old' park, as distinct from the later landscape park that was established in the 17th or early 18th century.

Whenever the boundary was established, early mapping indicates that the enclosure lay firmly within Leinthall Earls manor, formerly the property of the Earls of March. Historical data therefore needs to be sought within documents relating to Aymestrey parish rather than Croft. The origin of the park that is depicted at the Ambrey on these early maps is unclear, but given the tendency to locate medieval parks towards boundaries in order to avoid potential agricultural areas around village centres (e.g. Cantor 1982) Leinthall is certainly worth considering as a candidate. Two early parks were evidently present in Leinthall Earls (Cantnor 1983, 36). One is Gatley owned by Edmund de Mortimer and in existence at 1301, the other a separate unnamed park then under the same ownership. Either of these may have been located at the Ambrey at this time (although Gatley might alternatively have occupied part of the area later encompassed by a landscape park of that name). Gatley and indeed Leinthall Earls was certainly associated with the Croft family during the 16-17th centuries after Henry VIII had made Edward Croft keeper of the park and the adjacent woods in 1509 (Anon 1952-4: Whitehead 2001, 174).

Whether Camden's original *Britannia*, published in Latin in 1586, contained a reference to

Croft is unclear. Certainly Gibson's more widely available edition of 1695 referred to 'Croft Castle, (Gibson 1695, 577, 579) as belonging to the famous and very ancient knightly family of the Crofts'. Additional pages inserted by E Gibson and his collaborators utilised Aubrey's material (at that time not published) and referred to 'Castle Park wherein is a large camp with two great Ditches called the Ambry; from it there is a lovely prospect'. The edition also contained a small-scale map of Herefordshire (1695, fp 574) prepared specifically for it by Robert Morden, that depicts the hundred boundary dividing 'Croft Cast' and 'Leinthall Earl' along a line of hills, but with no paling denoting a park. Only Richards Castle and Wigmore Castle nearby were depicted with pales. The details might have been derived from John Speed's map of 1610 that is, in turn, said to be based on that of Saxton (Smith 2004) and which in due course heavily influenced R Morden's later (1701) 'Map of Herefordshire', I Taylor's small scale 'Map of the county of Hereford' made in 1715 and H Moll's 'Herefordshire' of 1724, all of which chose to depict remarkably similar features. Thus aside from Aubrey's observation in the latter half of the 17th century, the early documentation does not with any clarity refer to a deer park at Croft.

These small-scale 17th and 18th century maps prepared for and sold to local gentry depicted the hundred and parish boundary as being to the north of the Ambrey. However, a survey of the Honour of Wigmore (Anon nd) in 1731 described the metes and bounds 'And from thence (Earles Shote), along the Way under the Amerye unto the Highway that leadeth from Eaton to Croffte' which carefully followed the boundary as shown on the OS 25" 1st edition of 1886.

The problem about why the site, evidently originally part of Leinthall Earls manor, became part of the Croft Estate might be found in a complex series of conveyances of land in the late 16th and early 17th century (also HRO F71/62) that are quite obscure regarding the boundaries and land units being referred to. Documents indicate that Sir James Crofte held the manors of both Croft and Leinthall Starkes, including Gatley Park (in Leinthall Earls), but was in debt to Queen Elizabeth and, as a result, the lands were appropriated but apparently rented back. Despite this, in return for 'certain considerations' Sir James conveyed the estate to Sir William Herbert and Thomas Wigmore, but the park (presumably Gatley) separately to Hugh Hare. Sir Herbert Croft, grandson of Sir James

obtained a lease of the lands from the Crown in 1594 and in 1595 he obtained the park from Hugh Hare in return for a monetary payment. The following year the estate was conveyed by Sir William Herbert and Thomas Wigmore to Sir Herbert Crofte, who also purchased the manor of Leinthall Earls. In order to complete other land transfers in 1607, Sir Herbert revoked the estates conveyed to him by Sir William Herbert and Hugh Hare and granted Leinthall Starkes together with Leinthall Earls to a trust in order to cover the rent. The following year he made a settlement in favour of certain friends in the manor of Croft and the park of Gately ensuring continued use for himself and his wife, then in 1612 made a conveyance whereby he re-assured those friends 'to the use of his wiefe this present estate of all the demesne lands of Croft and luston and the parke of Gately and doeth give all his plate and howshould stuffe and the use of all his stock of sheep and Cattell without any accompt to be made' (Anon 1952-4, 15-16: Robinson 1873, 173). Part of the estate in Leinthall Earls was subsequently purchased in 1625 of Sir William Croft by Henry Hughes at whose death in 1634 it passed to Henry Bourne (who had also bought part of the Croft estate) (Robinson 1873, 172). While these exchanges are extremely confusing, it is worth noting that the Ambrey, as part of Leinthall Earls and predominantly situated within and between the land units mentioned will have been included in these moves.

In 1644, Croft Castle was plundered by Royalists and subsequently dismantled, perhaps as part of the general campaign to fortify and defend Hereford (Anon [DU] undated, 8: Robinson 1873, 142) as part of these events. Sir William Croft was 'said to have been pursued as far as his own park' rather than to his castle after a local mêlée in 1645 (Anon [DU] undated, 8), but there is no record of military use of the Ambrey at this time. Sir Archer Croft mortgaged his ancestral estate in 1746 and ownership passed to Richard Knight, who was a prominent iron master and who already had claims on the Croft estate (Robinson nd, 37).

Travellers continued to note the presence of the Ambrey during the earlier 18th century (Cox 1730, 934: Lewis 1740), but it was not until 1754 that a park was depicted on a new 'Map of Herefordshire' by I Taylor (Hereford Public Library) and its presence is confirmed at this time by the observation of Silas Taylor in 1755 that a 'fair park' adjoined Croft Castle (Whitehead 2001, 559). The map (Fig 4) shows paling around the Ambrey,

with an outer circuit that is open on the south but extends along the scarp edge of Yatton Hill to incorporate a second paled area, the 'Paddock' that lay to the west of Croft Castle. The open area may have incorporated the deep 'vallets' to the south of the Ambrey in order to channel deer from the outside. The overall plan of the paling suggests that it was more than a mechanism to retain deer and its position appears to make a statement concerning property ownership, effectively excluding access from the north, east and west sides, that is, Aymestrey, Yatton and Leinthall Earls, but allowing it from the south. It will also have had the effect of blocking access to any route around the outer enclosure along the course of the parish boundary.

Gough (1806, 84) repeated Leland's observation, but continued that 'In the park is a large camp, double ditched, called the Ambrey, a name common to other earthworks', while Brayley & Britton (1805, 559) simply noted the presence of a park at an 'eminence to the north of Croft'

A map published in 1805 and prepared for Gough's (1806) edition of Camden's *Britannia* depicts an oval enclosure defined by paling with the legend 'Camp Croft Ambrey and Park' placed next to it. As in Taylor's map, the paling is linked to another oval enclosure, similarly paled and labelled the 'Paddock' all set to the north and west of Croft castle. Galley (Gatley) Park is separately labelled in Leinthall Earls parish to the north of the hillfort, though no paling is depicted there implying that in contrast to the park at Croft, it was a landscape park with no hint of former deer enclosure. However, a map of Gatley Park now in private hands but drawn c1735 refers to an enclosure known as Camp piece NGR SO444684 as a viewpoint to Croft Ambrey hillfort (Smith 2004, 116), implying that the hillfort may have been opened up as part of a designed landscape at that time. There is no indication of planting or other landscape modification on Taylor's 1754 map although dashed lines within the Ambrey might be interpreted as walks. However, a mid 18th century map of Croft Castle demesne described as a 'rough and simple sketch' (Smith 2004, 118) (HRO 098: LC5506) is said to depict 'avenues in the park'.

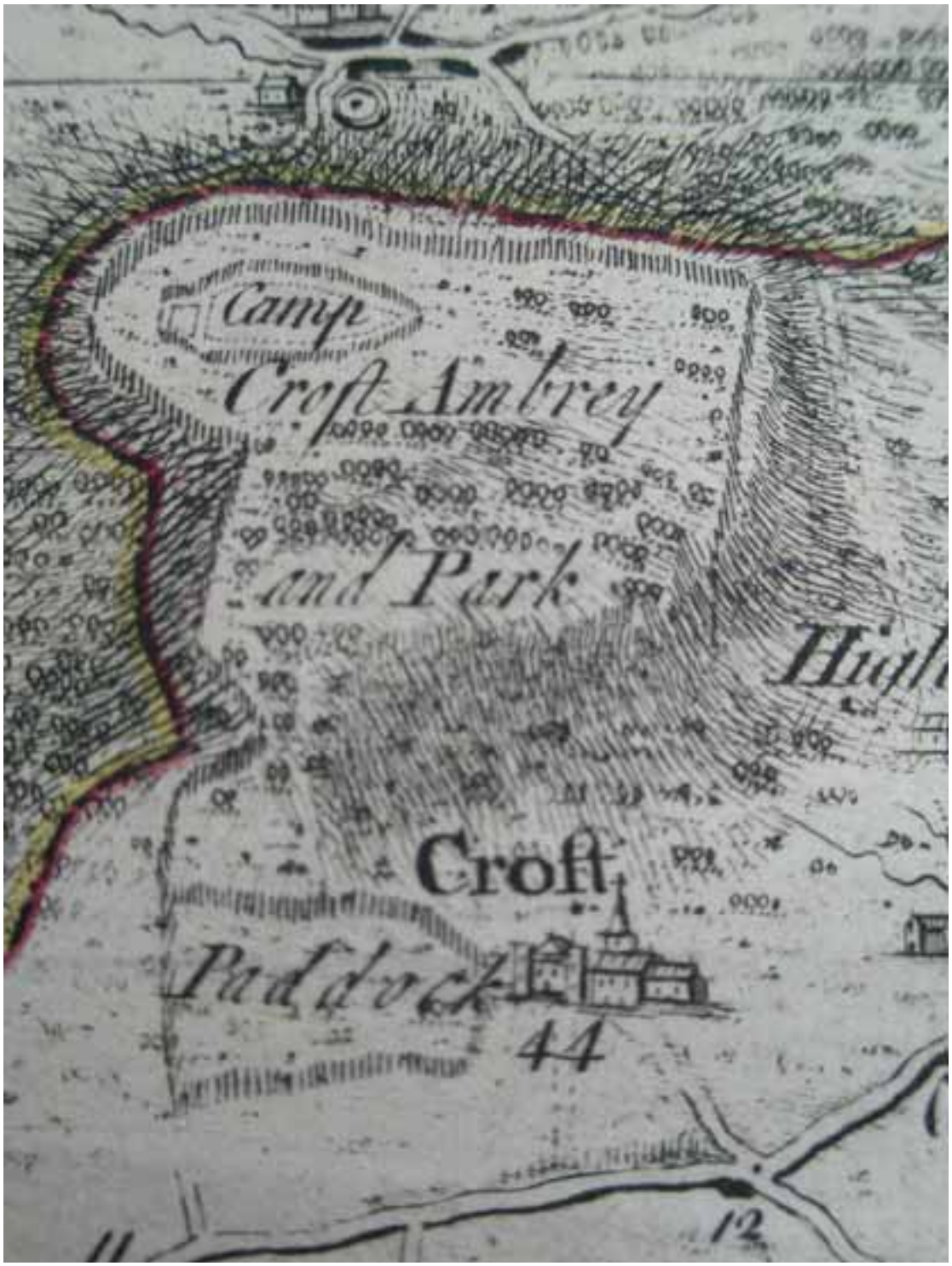

Figure 4 New map of Herefordshire by I Taylor published in 1754 that depicts palings around the 'Camp', here referred to as 'Croft Ambrey'. There is an outer circuit of palings that carries on along the lip of the escarpment and link to a paled enclosure named 'Paddock'. (Herefordshire Public Library).

Pales were still present in 1776 (Whitehead 2001, 422) when woodland was planted on Yatton Common adjacent to them, while they were also depicted on Morden's map of 1805 prepared for Gough's 1806 edition of Britannia. However, Whitehead (2001) points out that the paled deer park is not depicted on the OS 1" map of 1832. Instead, a 'new park' is present to the south east of the castle (Whitehead 2001, 120), the former park around the Ambrey had evidently, therefore, been disparked by that date.

Figure 5 *Morden's map from Gough's edition of Camden's Britannia published in 1806*

Shirley (1867, 197, 198) did not list Croft among existing deer parks in 1867, but instead referred to Croft castle as having a modern park, any recollection of a deer park evidently having faded by that time. Neither was mention made of a deer park at Croft by Whitaker in his survey of parks in 1892.

Initial landscaping around Croft Castle may have taken place during the 17th century when some of the trees are thought to have been planted and terraced gardens laid out. It was thought that 'an avenue of large oaks led up to this spot (the Ambrey) from the

park' (Anon 1960), while other avenues of trees led from the castle to the north and west, some of them in the direction of the Ambrey (Whitehead 2001, 118-121).

Great numbers of trees were felled in the Croft Castle landscape park around the turn of the 18-19th century and others flattened in a storm of 1802 (Anon 1898, 116: Whitehead 2001, 120). Many large parkland trees were evidently mature in the 19th century. In 1852, when the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club held a field meeting, comment was made about the great oaks in the grounds of Croft Castle; 'some noble oak trees (Quercus sessiliflora) attracted all eyes, their great magnitude leaving the "Druidical" oaks at Bromfield, and other celebrated trees, far behind. The trunk of one was found to measure, including some excrescences, not less than 37 feet, and that of another 24 ½ ft in circumference' (Anon 1907, 29). Further comments were made in 1864 and again in 1870 (Anon 1871a, 305-7: Anon 1871b, 288).

There were said to be 'several fine Beech trees growing in the trenches' [i.e. the 'hillfort' ditches] when the Woolhope Club visited the site in 1864 and girths of 13, 14 and 15 feet were recorded. Large ash trees were also present on site, while reference was made to the 'well-known "Bower Oak"' around which a seat was placed. This is almost certainly the still prominent tree situated in the outer enclosure (Fig 28); it was described as a triple stemmed tree with its branches trailing the ground. Then the separate stems were recorded as 12' 2", 9' 5" and 9' 9" respectively, now the complete bole measures 10.3m.

Uhlman (Anon 1960) considered that these trees were likely to have been planted between 1620 and 1680. According to Robinson (nd, 36) Herbert Croft was fond of planting trees and may have been responsible for the chestnut avenues, although another commentator (Anon 1870) points out that this seems unlikely as Bishop Croft didn't actually live at Croft. A local directory was quoted as indicating that they were planted earlier by Sir James Croft, MP for Herefordshire, using seeds taken from a Spanish galleon that had been wrecked on the Welsh coast (Anon 1898, 116: Anon undated [DU]). However, such trees need not be imported, as sweet chestnut was present in Britain from the Roman period and recorded in the Forest of Dean in Medieval contexts (Rackham 1976). While Henry VIII had encouraged the planting of trees (e.g. James 1981, 125-128) for timber, such aesthetic planting might be considered unusual before publication in 1664

of Evelyn's *Sylva: or a Discourse of Forest Trees* that dramatically influenced thinking and garden design. Nevertheless, tree lined avenues had been planted at Nonsuch, while Evelyn himself had planted trees in avenues as a young man and he noted that using chestnuts for avenues was fashionable during the mid 17th century. Notwithstanding these indications, the massive size of some sweet chestnuts need not reflect an enormous age and in contrast to these views Muir (2005, 41) suggests that the Croft Castle specimens need not be more than mid 18th century in date.

The landscape on both sides of the parish boundary was in flux during the later 18th century. Yatton Court was constructed to the north of the site and along with it went a considerable degree of landscaping. Trees were planted adjacent to the Croft Park pale (Whitehead, D 2001, 422), perhaps to hide it from view. The work there may have encouraged development on the Croft side of the boundary. As part of this the Fishpool valley was incorporated into the picturesque landscape with the stream being dammed in a number of places to create a flight of ponds with walks alongside. The ponds are not depicted on Taylor's map of 1754 but Whitehead (2001, 118-121) indicates that they were present by 1790.

An Act of Enclosure was passed for Aymestrey in 1809 (AG 49) although there was no effect on the site. In 1818 the Ambrey, still generally referred to without the 'Croft' prefix, was considered to be within the township of Yatton and owned by Somerset Davies Esq (HRO F71/1), although 'Croft' may have been increasingly added to emphasize that ownership then lay within the latter parish. Ownership subsequently passed to Edward Davis and an undated plan of the parish of Aymestrey (HRO 71/162) produced for the Tithe Apportionment depicts 'The Ambrey 292', recorded as comprising 42 acres 1 rood and 6 perches, as what appears to be rough pasture. The route around it is shown but there are no earthworks or palings.

A summer house was evidently constructed on the Ambrey at some time during the 19th century and an ice house on the escarpment at the east end (Stanford 1974, 27: Whitehead 2001, 118-121).

A plan of the Croft Castle estate prepared for the sale catalogue in 1923 (HRO S33/4),

shows a footpath leading to a break in the rocks at the east entrance pf the 'hillfort' and depicts a black spot on the terrace enclosed by a black square as if a fenced feature. It also depicts the rectangular enclosure on the spur to the west, now enclosing Scots pine, as one of three such tree enclosures then existing along the escarpment. Lot 98 included Croft Ambrey which is listed as enclosing 52 acres.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The earliest formal archaeological investigation of the site appears to be that of the Ordnance Survey. Their 25" scale plan, surveyed in 1886, substantially depicts the form of the 'camp' with a steep scarp to the north and bivallate enclosure, in part following the contours around the southern slopes of the hill, with a massive quarry ditch set internally. A second, outer bivallate earthwork, is depicted enclosing the hill, less than 100m south of the first and following a lower contour. A later Ordnance Survey edition 1891-1912 adds some clarity to this; in particular detail of an outer ditch which was added to the inner set of bivallate works.

The field visit by the Woolhope Club in 1881 generated a basic plan, prepared by R Clarke, one of the group members, to accompany the description of the site (Anon 1888, fp51), but the trip fell foul of the weather and the field excursion was repeated in 1896 and the plan re-published (Anon 1898, 121-125). It depicts the main enclosure with steep scarp to the north and entrance at either extremity, with an outer line of banks a little to the south forming a 'triple line of defence'. It was noted that the 'original' entrance lay at the southwest corner and was entered along a 'covered way' further protected by an earthwork traverse. Perceptively, an entrance in the northeast was considered to have 'every appearance of a modern construction'.

A plan prepared by the Rev E A Downman was incorporated into the 'Ancient Earthworks' chapter of the *Victoria County History* (Gould 1908, 208-9). It depicts a bank along the northern edge and an internal bank around the lip of the quarry ditch. It is left open at the east end and no entrance is depicted there, but in the southwest is a staggered entrance through the rampart. The outer enclosure was recorded and defined by a single bank with portions of an outer ditch.

The Royal Commission of Historical Monuments (1934) considered the site to be among the most important of the hillforts in Herefordshire. Uniquely, they considered that the internal quarry ditch may have originally been used for the 'storage of water' (RCHM 1931, 13-15) and in this context it is interesting that Stanford later referred to the internal

quarry ditch as 'canal-like'. The RCHM also considered that the 'north side is defended by two scarps with an intermediate berm which may originally have been a ditch'. There is a second and lower berm but they doubted whether it was original. From the medial berm at the east end two trackways were traced upwards and towards the summit. They entered the camp either side of the east entrance, but again it was felt unlikely that these were original features and, thus influenced, Stanford later continued to regard this scarping on the north as recent pathways.

The RCHM identified some 'cross-banks' and mounds on the lip of the internal quarry ditch and noted the presence of a pillow mound and a second undated mound with other features within the outer enclosure, the latter said to measure 10m in diameter and almost 1m in height. The area to the south of the outer enclosure was described as 'newly planted' forest. Crucially, they reported that a 'terrace leads to what would appear to have possibly been an inner entrance to the enclosure proper at the northwest corner', which subsequently led to Stanford's excavation of that area and his interpretation of an inner 'plateau' camp.

Along with members of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club, S C Stanford excavated the site between 1960 and 1966. Trenches were cut in thirteen areas (see Fig 26), the objectives being to determine whether settlement at the site was continuous and whether its chronology and nature could be established by examining the defences; to determine the cultural and economic nature of those using the site and whether there was evidence of conflict at the time of the Roman conquest (Stanford 1967, 31).

The fact that Stanford encountered the successive replacement of postholes at a number of places around the site, evidently for the same purpose, led him to conclude that the enclosure was permanently occupied over a long period of time. The only structures encountered utilised four corner posts and were mostly square or slightly rectangular and many of them were interpreted as dwellings. They appeared to be arranged in rows along the contours and he postulated that there might be 274 buildings in all within the central area, representing a population of about 548 that gradually increased to some 900 at the time of the Roman conquest.

The renewal of posts at gateways and other structures provided his method of constructing a chronology and occupation was envisaged as taking place in seven main periods from 450BC to 49AD. Two C14 dates posed a problem. Calibrated here using Oxcal, these provide large date ranges of 1700-750 cal BC at 95% confidence or 1440-970 cal BC at 67% confidence (Birm-144 3000+/-200BP) on carbonised grain from 1m deep in the main internal quarry ditch: 850-150 cal BC at 95% or 600-390 cal BC at 41% (Birm-185a 2410+/-135BP) on charcoal from a phase of 'guardroom' destruction: and a second determination 850-100 cal BC at 95% or 600-360 cal BC at 43% (Birm-185b 2377+/-136BP) on charcoal identified as humate extract from 'guardroom' destruction. The date ranges are too broad by themselves but might be used in conjunction with pottery studies to refine the chronology a little. It should be borne in mind that Stanford's analysis based on pottery types was established prior to Barrett's (1980) redating of Iron Age pottery.

Stanford first cut a trench across the main enclosure banks and ditches in the south (Site G trench T1) although the lower part of the main bank was left unexcavated, perhaps for safety reasons, so details of its origin and phasing remain unclear. A further trench was placed across the inner bank in the vicinity of the 'extension' which appears to be of a different build to that in T1 and Stanford considered that this may be a remnant of an earlier phase bank.

Excavations at the east entrance encountered a series of postholes and pits interpreted as forming a gateway with rectangular guardrooms flanking the roadway to the rear of the gate. There was some revetting of bank material and the road way was 'terraced quite deeply into bedrock' and a sequence of eight phases of road surface construction or repair was recorded. The bank to the north of the entrance was excavated to a depth of 1m. At the base lay rampart material of no more than 0.3m in height, in turn covered by a burnt layer that was thought to represent closure of the site. Over this was 0.6m of 'rampart addition' which must represent post-Iron Age levelling or dumping. Any rampart construction at the east gate was therefore quite minimal and the impression of height is provided by the utilisation of the natural rock. The east entrance was accompanied by a 'bank of considerable width' alongside the crest of the escarpment (Stanford 1974, 26).

Excavations at the south-west entrance encountered a similar complex sequence of pits and postholes interpreted as forming gateposts with rectangular 'guardrooms' flanking the entrance to the rear and with patches of metalling in the roadway.

The main internal quarry ditch was cut locally to 3.7m below original ground level, but showed little sign of use in its initial phase. Some 2m of Iron Age deposits had accumulated within it, all subsequently capped by 0.5m of post-Iron Age material. Stanford suggested that this implied a high degree of internal erosion during occupation of the hillfort. However, there were relatively few finds; only 26 pieces of pottery were recorded from what might be expected to be a superb trap for cultural material.

The side of the internal quarry slope had been terraced to provide a base for structures and the rubble from this operation collected on the ditch floor. A four-post structure, 3m by 2.4m, was repeatedly replaced on the same spot, on one occasion after being burnt down; widespread charcoal was encountered and seeds provided a C14 date (above). Further postholes nearby were interpreted as forming a second four-post structure. Neither of these buildings were interpreted as dwellings, being considered too small, and instead were considered to be granaries.

Further trenches were placed at the east end of the quarry ditch, i.e. on the ramp or ditch terminal and these again encountered some 18 separate complex phases of activity involving hearths and burnt areas, all dated by Stanford using pottery styles to between 390BC and AD48. A drain was constructed down the middle of the quarry ditch and successively used, being recut on four occasions.

Stanford also placed trenches in the bottom of the internal quarry ditch, close to the 'cross banks' identified by the RCHM. No plan was published, but the location plot indicates that a rectangular trench (B17-19) was placed slightly askew to the line of the internal quarry ditch opposite the east end of the 'cross banks'. The published south and west sections indicate that it was 7.3m by 5m and taken to a depth of c1.5m, although it did not reach bedrock. However, evidence extrapolated from nearby trench 21 suggests that this may have been encountered at little more than about 1.7m deep. The fill was mostly ashy grey soil interleaved with yellow clay or rubble. The finds all dated to the Iron

Age.

A trial trench 2.75 to the west of this was excavated to a depth of 1m and it produced similar deposits, but a further 5.5m to the west encountered a pit which was at least 2.4m deep, and not traced to its base. This must have been in the vicinity of the mound of material placed against the inner bank at this point and which could be upcast from this feature. According to the report, evidence of the pit was revealed just below the humus and it cut through the ashy grey soil deposits that were encountered a little to the east and which were burnt at the pit edge. It was this that led Stanford to speculate concerning the possibility of a limekiln on the spot, something that he rapidly dismissed, although the presence of 'obviously modern low linear banks' led him to postulate 'a recent explanation' (Stanford 1974, 98).

Following indications on the RCHM survey, Stanford appears to have interpreted a bluff at the west end of the site as marking the position of an earlier rampart and the hollow way as cutting through it here considered to signal the position of an entrance into the interior. His trenches at this point encountered thirty-eight postholes, and he interpreted them as successive posts relating to a gate structure, the 'west gate'. However, few contained any dating evidence. No artefacts were discovered on the old ground surface but over it was a mounding of material that he interpreted as a rampart, the only primary dating from which was a single sherd of VCP (initially 'very coarse pottery', later considered to be the remains of ovens) from an area of later postholes and revetment. A hearth containing a potsherd with stamped chevrons and iron rivet lay across and sealed a shallow ditch that lay along the edge of the bluff, while a pit cut into the ditch contained sherds with linear tooled decoration. The ditch had been recut on two occasions and the presence of a terminal alongside the hollow way appeared to confirm the entrance (The terminal is less clear cut on the best cross-section through it fig 8 K-k).

These features were conjectured to have continued on the north side of the hollow way and consequently the postholes were interpreted as representing the gateway through an early 'rampart' that bounded the 'plateau' or summit of the hill. The rampart was described as a bank of dumped soil, about 8.5m wide, with a cover of limestone. There was no apparent revetment, but there appears to have been a berm about 1.5m wide.

Stanford observed that there was more material present in the bank than could possibly have been excavated from the ditch and postulated the scooping of spoil from behind the bank to account for this.

Further trenches tested the hypothesis that an inner 'plateau camp' was defined by its own bank and ditch. One was placed across the southwest corner of the interior but no evidence to support the idea of a ‘rampart’ was forthcoming, but presence of a 6m wide exposure of preserved subsoil along the lip of the scarp convinced him that it marked its position. In another trench placed further to the south, the presence of a hut terrace situated part-way down the slope was considered to have obscured the position of the ditch.

In the south, Stanford cut a section across the lip of the interior quarry ditch, where he encountered evidence for a bank about 8.3m wide with loose limestone over subsoil. He interpreted it as a continuation of the 'rampart', the absence of the ditch at this point being explained by its potential location part-way downslope and probably therefore occupied by later buildings. No finds were made in the bank or on the old ground surface.

Stanford thus considered that this initial ‘plateau fort' enclosure was protected by a small dump rampart and ditch situated along the line of the bluff in the west, marked by the inner lip of the quarry ditch in the south and the line of which is preserved in the ‘extension’ and entrance at the east end.

Within the interior, small four-post buildings were set closely together in rows, with posts repeatedly replaced in the same position, 'but there is no domestic pottery and little else that can with certainty be attributed to the occupation'. Given the density of these buildings this appears rather odd.

The excavations at the 'west gate' led Stanford to suggest that there were three early periods of construction work, Periods I-III, which were characterized by a lack of potsherds and during which time five successive sets of gate posts were set up. Despite the lack of dating evidence, the initial dump bank was considered to have been constructed about 550 BC with additions being made to it until, in about 390 BC, there

was a major reorganisation. Stanford's Periods IV-VII involved enlarging the enclosure boundaries. The 'plateau camp' ditch provided the template for this, the ditch being dramatically enlarged to become the internal quarry ditch and a large dump rampart outside the old defences was built from the spoil of the quarry ditch. A new entrance was constructed at the south-west end. 'but at the east end the new defences overlay the old ones' and the east gate continued in use throughout the site's history. The new Period IV enclosure enclosed 3.6ha and in terms of artefacts was characterised by the presence of stamped pottery. A new gate was constructed in the south-west at this time and reconstructed on a number of subsequent occasions. During Period V, the entrances were remodelled and rectangular 'guard rooms' were built in timber and stone, but were 'eventually abandoned and a simple corridor entrance substituted'. Within the interior, posts continued to be replaced and huts were 'rebuilt on their old sites' (Stanford 1974, 13).

In Period VI the 'guardrooms' at both southwest and east gates were dismantled, the corridor extended, and a number of hearths appeared behind the bank terminals at the east gate. The introduction of linear tooled pottery marks Period VII, during which bridges were constructed across the entranceway, while pits were dug on the periphery of the interior. The period was considered to end in AD48 at the time of the Roman invasion

Stanford pointed out that the site had been occupied for 600 years during which time the gateposts had been replaced on twenty successive occasions, while in the interior some huts at least had been rebuilt 6 times. Relatively late in the sequence the outer enclosure was added.

Little evidence was encountered of significant presence during the Roman period and settlement was finally thought to end about AD48, which corresponded with the date when Ostorious Scapula conquered the Decangi, who Stanford considered the local tribe. However, several platforms were encountered within the outer enclosure, one of which, along with its covering mound, was considered to represent a native sanctuary and based on pottery and other finds dated to cAD75-160.

Small, narrow trenches were placed on two of the platforms and little encountered. In

contrast, having targeted the mound, Stanford's plan (1974, 137) indicates that a considerable part of the floor of a stance situated beneath it was excavated and demonstrated that there had been successive phases of activity. Like the other platforms it was cut into the south facing slope and the quarried material was placed downhill as an apron. This, a circular, or rather D-shaped level platform (Stanford called it a terrace) 8.8m by 6.7m, stood proud of the surrounding area and on which a structure stood. Stanford considered it to be an open building, but although only two certain postholes were uncovered, it could equally be described as marking the floor of a hut, its floor protected from weathering, with what appears to be an eroded crescentic drip gully to the north of it. Assuming the entrance to have been at the front of the terrace, it faced southeast and set against the back of the structure was an irregular deposit of red clay, presumably derived from the Old Red Sandstone and which covered an area some 3m by 3m. Within this, but restricted to the eastern half, among an area with evidence of a series of fires, were 27 stake holes forming no easily discerned pattern, while a series of three pits lay across the front of the terrace. The whole area, including the gully, was covered to a greater or lesser extent with a layer of charcoal and it may be that at some stage the building caught fire. Much of it was found on the southern part of the platform and on the natural ground surface in front of the apron, which led Stanford to suggest that it had been swept there. Within the charcoal were flecks of cremated bone and fragments of perished animal bone along with an Iron Age brooch, four Romano-British brooches, and Romano-British potsherds.

THE EARTHWORKS

The earthworks (Fig 6 and frontispiece) can conveniently be considered in three main groups: a) those of the outer enclosure and features within it, b) the inner enclosure and features within it and, c) features on the northern slopes. In order to avoid confusion the multiple banks and ditches pertaining to each enclosure are separately described as having inner and outer components.

Figure 6 *Plan of earthworks with location of insets, Figures 7, 8, 10 and 13 and points of interest mentioned in the text.*

The outer enclosure

Reaching from the escarpment edge in the west and extending to a narrow neck of land along the summit of the ridge in the east, the outer enclosure is marked by the crescentic

sweep of a bivallate bank and ditch, collectively some 30m broad, that has been constructed for over a distance of 720m (Fig 6 letter a). Its position is set partly along the bottom of a shallow valley that marks the geological fault on the lower slopes of the hill and it is by no means a prominent feature within the landscape. In the west it appears to bell out some 60m short of the escarpment edge, apparently to avoid or incorporate one or perhaps two linear features that lead downhill from the inner enclosure, although since the enclosure closely follows the topography of the valley floor at this point this may be fortuitous. Neither is the scale of this earthwork particularly dramatic, the innermost bank, in general, being a mere 4 to 5m in width and 0.5m in height (measured internally), with its corresponding ditch just a little larger at 7 to 9m wide and 0.5m deep. The configuration of these features changes along the length of its course and there is a general lack of consistency in the build. While the far western portion appears to have been re-cut and is visually more prominent and dramatic, towards the east it merely occurs as two parallel scarps that eventually all but merge with the natural slope.

As noted, the westernmost 60m stretch of bank and ditch is visually of greater prominence than the rest of the earthwork (Fig 7). The bank here is of a different build to the rest of the circuit, being a maximum of 10m in width and 2.7m in height, with a considerable berm of 5m separating it from the ditch. The ditch itself, up to 9m in width and 1.6m deep, of clean and sharp profile, is not only of different form, but takes a markedly different alignment to that of the ditch further east. Its western end segues into a hollowed trackway (fig 7 a) that curves north and then follows the crest of the escarpment before descending the slope, while the terminal at the eastern end of its length appears to cut into an earlier shallow ditch feature. Similarly, the considerable berm of over 5m (Fig 7 b) narrows towards the east and disappears altogether at the point mentioned. The outer bank here is set over 7m outside the ditch, leaving a considerable berm on which a small squared hollow opposite the ditch terminal appears to represent more recent digging (Fig 7c). The outer bank begins beyond a transverse hollowing in the west and after shallow beginnings, a 15m stretch is more prominent. Like its inner counterpart, the ditch segues into a hollowed trackway which curves sharply to the north along the escarpment edge (Fig 7 d). In contrast, the outer edge of the ditch, in places with an external bank, makes an entry from the southwest where it has been cut by hollow ways that approach the site from the south.

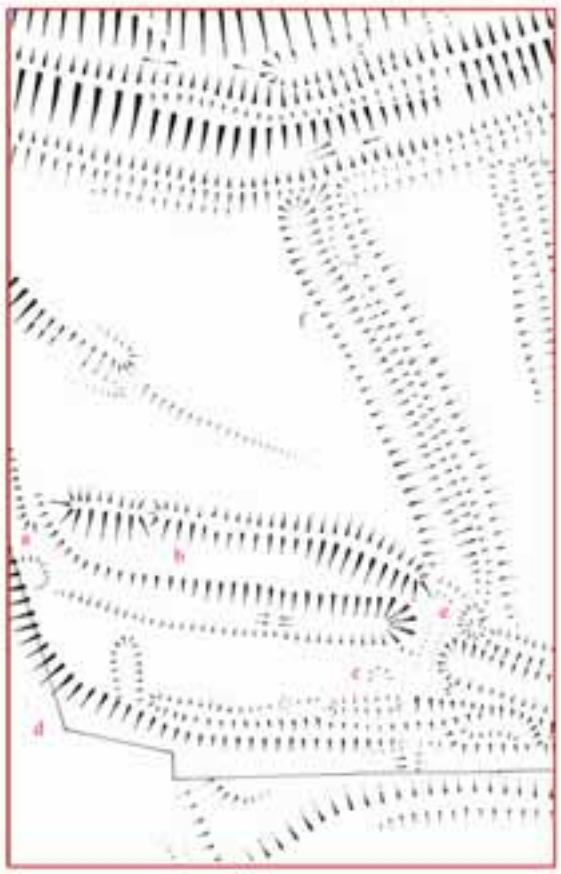

Figure 7 Inset 1. The western end of the outer enclosure with north to top.

The crucial junction (Fig 7 e) with the north-south linear feature (Fig 7 f) has unfortunately been used in recent times as an entry point into the site and there are shallow indications here of a former, modern, gateway, while attempts at mitigating damage and making access easier for wheeled traffic have led to an obscuring of the original detail. The line of the enclosure bank does, however, appear to truncate the ditch of the linear feature and it is therefore presumed that the linear feature is the earlier of the two. Compared with the size of the earthwork in the west, the enclosure ditch and bank to the east of this point is reduced in prominence and adopts the character typical for the rest of its course; the ditch here is consistent at 7m in width and 0.7m deep.

The inner bank and ditch of the outer enclosure continue eastwards in an unmodified form, the bank here reaching no more than 5m in width and 0.9m in internal height, interrupted by a break after c45m, although there is no corresponding causeway in the ditch at this point. Beyond this to the east, the earthwork takes the form of bank – ditch – bank – berm – ditch for a stretch of some 50m, before all features are cut and in some cases completely obscured by an evidently recent transverse access way. The feature then continues for a further 100m with the various elements sometimes taking a slightly sinuous course uncomformably with respect to each other, before a second transverse access way cuts across the inner bank and ditch. The berm between the inner and outer elements subsequently becomes relatively broad, up to c8m in width, sometimes with a slight counterscarp bank on the inner lip. It is interrupted by a further transverse access

way situated opposite a group of building platforms in the interior, with a ramp leading down the outside of the outer bank (Fig 8 a). Soon after this point, the character of the feature changes and the ditch fades out leaving a series of simple scarps that merely artificially enhance the slope. After 100m an entrance cuts through the innermost scarp and an 8m wide hollow way is traceable for 20m into the interior, which turns and exits 25m further along the enclosure boundary (Fig 8 b and c). Here it cuts through inner and second scarps, providing access to the outer berm before utilising a ramp to exit westwards. Between the two access ways the inner bank is present and at 8m wide appears to be enhanced. An oval depression 9m by 4.5m abuts it.

The following 50m inner section is slightly offset; with ditch and inner bank re-appearing, forming what appears to be either a staggered entrance into the enclosure (Fig 8 d), or a terminal marking the extent of an unfinished element of the earthwork. Presence of an inner bank demarcating the final 25m of the route provides some support for the view that this was an entrance and an integral feature. The two lower, outer scarps, increase in height and slope with the terrain and continue for a further 120m to complete the course.

A series of irregular hollows and depressions situated within the outermost ditch or ledge (Fig 8 e) appear to be geological rather than archaeological features and are considered no further. To the south of the enclosure boundary, however, a linear bank and ditch of some 12m overall width, that can be traced for over 60m approaches the site from the south (Fig 8 s), but as it stops short of the boundary earthwork its direct relationship cannot be determined.

The area within the outer enclosure is bracketed in the north by the counterscarp bank of the inner enclosure (Fig 8 f), which appears in places to have been re-used, either for dumping spoil from an episode of ditch clearance or possibly as a hedge bank, and it is divided by a number of linear features that run across the contours. The most prominent of these is situated in the west and has been mentioned above. It survives as a slightly sinuous length of substantial bank (Fig 7 f), that can be traced between the inner and outer enclosure banks, but which is now somewhat spread by cultivation to some 10m wide and 0.6m in height, with a plough step cutting into the side that has reduced the

major part by a half. At the northernmost extent a secondary mound surmounts it for some 15m and while the bank itself appears to underlie the counterscarp bank of the inner enclosure, the latter feature certainly overlies it. To the west lies its companion ditch, 6.5 to 7m wide and 0.6m deep, which probably provides an indication of the original size of the bank.

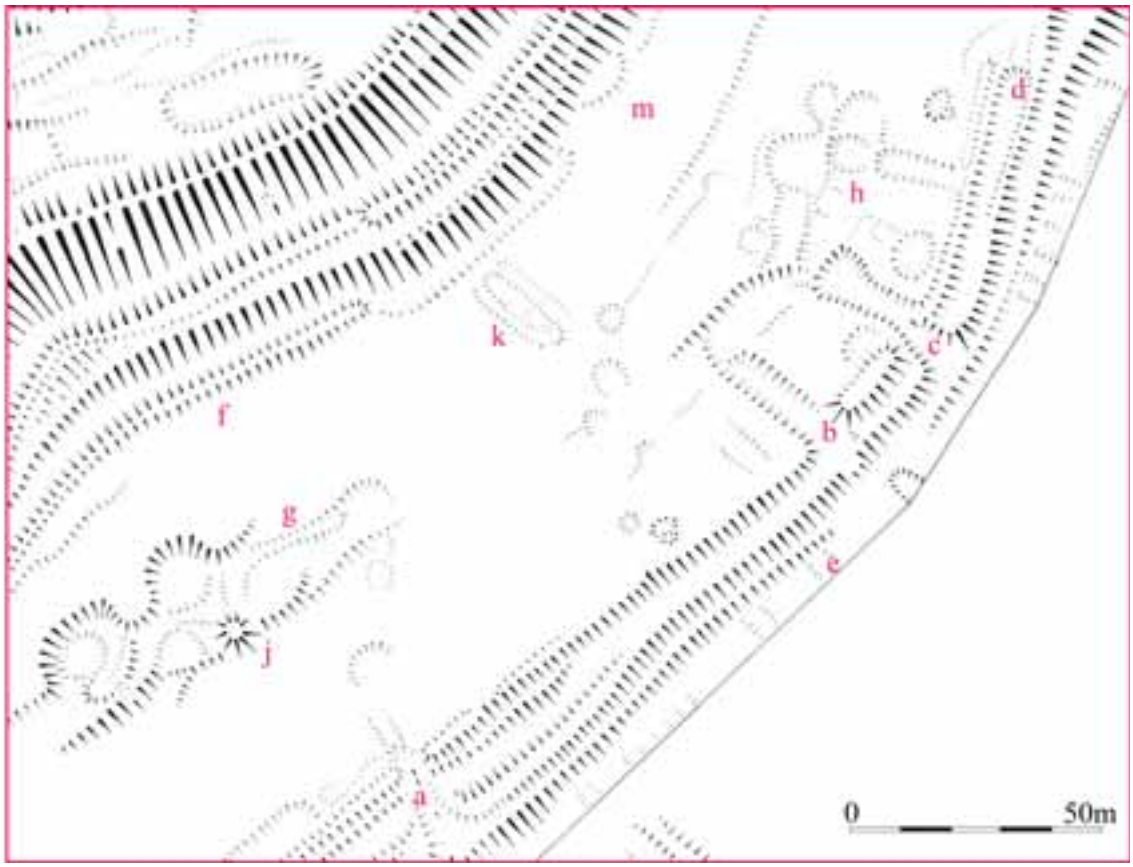

Figure 8 Inset 2. Platforms and other features in the outer enclosure with entrances through the boundary earthwork. North to top.

Two other features appear to pre-date the counterscarp bank. First, a very much shorter bank some 135m to the east (Fig 13 l) which is no more than 20m long and 10m at its widest reducing to 5m. It has the appearance of having been part levelled, although there is no sign of it having continued as far as the outer enclosure earthwork as in the first example. A second lies a further 80m beyond this to the east, alongside a later pillow mound (Fig 13 m). Here a bank can be traced for almost 30m, but is cut into by the pillow mound, which lies on a slightly different alignment.

This latter is the central of three rectangular pillow mounds that are well spaced within the outer enclosure (there are three further possible pillow mounds elsewhere on site) and which decrease in length from west to east. The westernmost (Fig 6 b) is 48m by 7m wide, little more than 0.4m in height and with well marked side ditches c4-5m wide and 0.3m deep. The central example (Fig 6: Fig 13 n) is 32m by 9m wide and 0.7m height with a pathway that has eroded through the centre, while the easternmost (Fig 6: Fig 8 k), 24m by 5m, is slightly more oval than the others. Again, traffic has scored an incision across it and there is other minor disturbance. It is conceivable that some of this is the product of collapsed subterranean artificial rabbit channels, but no pattern could be recognized. In all three cases the ditches are limited to the sides and do not extend around the end of the mounds.

Twenty metres to the east of the longest pillow mound, a straight but shallow ditch on a similar alignment is present with an equally shallow bank on its east side (Fig 6 c). Together they reach a width of 12m, but neither end can be traced as far as the respective enclosure banks. While the southern end simply fades out, recent disturbance to the ground adjacent to the inner enclosure at this point has obscured the ultimate destination. The feature appears to have been subject to cultivation and the area to the west of it, and to a lesser extent the east, exhibits traces of ridge and furrow.

Large areas further east contain amorphous undulations (Fig 6 d), often small depressions with spoil to one side that appear to result from fallen trees (not plotted). In places the weight and bulk of the earthworks suggests that these may overlie earlier features that are now difficult to define with any degree of certainty, but at least four potential hut stances or building platforms appear to stand out as distinct and it may be that such features were once present in greater numbers. However, two hut stance complexes were recorded, one situated between the central and easternmost pillow mound; the second beyond the easternmost pillow mound (Fig 8 g and h). In all probability, these complexes formed a continuous group, but trees and other vegetation currently obscures the surface between them making observation of subtle detail impossible.

The first complex focuses on two massive building platforms along with six crescentic or sub-circular stances of lesser proportions. The first platform is cut into the slope to a

depth of 1.2m and measures 18m by 18m inclusive of an apron placed at the front, all providing and enclosing an internal level area of 14m by 7m. A shallow hollow, 11m by 7m, within this may mark the site of a building, while scarping of the slope adjacent to the stance may demarcate the approach or define the extent of a garden or yard. The apron has a narrow incision across the front of it that marks the location of one of Stanford's excavation trenches.

The second platform is also cut to a depth of 1.8m but, at 15m by 15m, is slightly smaller with a leveled central area of 9m by 9m. The slope on both sides of it is artificially scarped so that it forms a continuous feature with the first stance. Set along a slightly lower contour are three further platforms, all less dramatic but providing levelled areas of similar size and all keyed in to the first two. Overlying the scarp that links the apron of these stances lies an oval mound, 10m by 8m across by 0.8m high, (Fig 8 j), that was excavated by Stanford during the 1960s. To the south of the apron of the easternmost stance lie two, much smaller, platforms along with a further example a little beyond.

The second complex survives in more subtle form. Traces of four stances can be observed amongst the vegetation to the southwest of the easternmost pillow mound, but a little further east of this the remains take on a little more structure with a terraced appearance similar to that of the first group. Eight stances were recorded with two further probable examples at a little distance away. The largest is 11m by 10m and c0.4m high leaving a level platform 7m by 9m. Alongside and integrally associated is a level terraced area that could mark a garden plot or similar feature, while to the north a smaller stance, 8m by 7m, marks the location of a subsidiary structure. Immediately to the east, but at a slightly lower contour, is a further stance this time divided in two, 16m by 9m overall. A hollow leads from this towards the outer enclosure bank but its relationship with it is not clear and, unlike the hollowed trackways to the southwest, it cannot be traced across the enclosure scarp.

The inner enclosure

The inner enclosure bounds the summit of the hill in a broad crescentic sweep, while a broad ledge continues and dips down along the northern escarpment almost completing

the circuit. The enclosed area is long and narrow and this is accentuated at the eastern end where the earthworks inexplicably cut in and enclose an extension-like tongue or protuberance of no more than 80m by 30m.

Compared to those of the outer enclosure, the boundary earthworks present an impressive edifice, comprising a massive internal quarry ditch, two banks and ditches and in places a counterscarp. Taking them in turn, starting with the innermost, the enormous internal quarry ditch is 4m deep. Its flat base reaches over 12m in width, while the distance from the lip of the internal ground surface to the top of the rampart which, due to the sloping ground is here at a similar level, is 30m. The quarry ditch becomes shallower at either end gradually fading some 30m from the southern entrance and in the north rising via a sloping access ramp to finish immediately before the 'extension'.

The innermost bank is of similar massive proportions, rising to 4.5m above the floor of the internal quarry ditch and measuring some 24 to 25m in width to the base of the ditch. On the surface, there is uncertainty about the position of the old ground surface and therefore the base of the bank. Several lengths of breaks in the slope occur that might indicate its former presence, although these do not occur at a consistent height and they may represent other, albeit ancient, erosion episodes or particularly strong lenses in the limestone. Nevertheless, the bank is of relatively proud profile and is rarely more than 1.5m across its summit. To the north-west of the south-west entrance, the bank is situated on the lip of the escarpment edge and, while the external face of the rampart remains constant, the internal aspect is all but missing. However, the slope is steeper here and this may be the result of silt from the interior covering the internal quarry ditch and catching against the internal face of the bank. While the southern course of the bank is sympathetic to the contours, towards the east as the 'extension' is approached, this line was abandoned and the bank built on a slanting incline. Where the earthworks enclose the 'extension' the full basal width of the bank, 10m, is visible.

Outside the bank lay two ditches separated by a further, outer, bank. The present flat bottom of the inner ditch reaches 4m width in places and it consistently follows the course of the inner bank. As noted above, nowhere can the old ground surface be identified with certainty and therefore its original maximum width cannot be ascertained.

The outer bank, Stanford's medial, is of much lesser proportions than the inner, being up to 14m across the base from ditch to ditch and reaching a maximum of 2.5m in height from the base of the external ditch, with a flat summit sometimes reaching 2m wide. However, in several places an outer berm of up to 2m in width is present, indicating that the bank itself must have been, at most, no more than 5m wide, and probably less, with a height of little more than 1.5m.

Figure 9 Natural limestone seams exposed in bank of the inner enclosure.

The 1.3m deep outer ditch has a flat bottom of some 3m and, like the inner ditch, there is considerable uncertainty about the original surface width. The counterscarp bank is quite variable, between c5m wide in the north and 8m in the south. As noted above, there is in places some evidence of a narrow supplementary bank placed upon it, perhaps a result of ditch scouring or of a later hedgerow.

For the most part the outer ditch and counterscarp follow quite closely the course of the inner rampart, but at the point where the main bank changes direction to incorporate the

'extension' they cut the corner taking a shallower route and leaving a triangular piece of what appears to be old ground surface as a berm.

The easternmost 100m of external bank, ditch and counterscarp differs in form slightly, as though a process of modification was left uncompleted. It is perhaps worth noting that in this respect it mirrors the outer enclosure earthwork at this point where no bank or ditch was constructed. The outer bank is raised by some 2.5m and is slightly wider than it is further west. No counterscarp is present at this point. Instead, a scarp of sharper profile leads down from the edge of the berm to a shallow, evidently uncompleted, ditch at the base. At one point, c40m from the eastern end, a platform-like feature 15m across and 8m wide interrupts the course of the ditch (Fig 8 m).

The entrance through the earthworks in the south-west is undoubtedly part of the build (Fig 6 e). Here a 6m wide terraced approach is well defined alongside the edge of the escarpment and the route is channeled via a causeway through ditch and bank terminals which turn slightly inwards in partial response to the proximity of the escarpment edge. The south-east component of the inner bank changes course more markedly in order to overlap its north-west counterpart. The access passage here is restricted to no more than 3m in width.

At the east end, the inner bank turns abruptly northwards to meet the escarpment edge where, club-like, it expands and then turns eastwards (Fig 10 a). A hollowing, or lowering of the bank, 8m short of the escarpment edge, signals the position of an entrance (Fig 10 b) and the position is accentuated by the inner ditch and outer bank, which have terminals here along with the shallow outer ditch that fades out. However, any entrance marked by these features is not engraved to the level of, or below, the ground surface as is the case at the south-west entrance. Instead, mounding up of material to a height of 1m within the passage way appears to indicate that it may have been blocked.

Although interrupted, the bank continues eastwards alongside the crest of the escarpment for 25m at a less prominent level and subsequently for 30m as a single scarp helping to define the course of the entrance (Fig 10 d). A hollow way approaches from the east (Fig 6) and cuts across the route of the outer enclosure boundary at a point where it would

meet the escarpment, then continues as a shallow but relatively broad feature up to 9m across and 0.3m deep, bounded to the south by a bank 7m wide and 0.7m high. However, its course is blocked by a 9m wide and 2m high bank placed perpendicular to the escarpment that forces movement southwards (Fig 10 e), only to describe a further right angled junction in order to complete the prescribed route into the enclosure. The final, 0.7m deep, hollowed approach (Fig 10 f), is cut into the natural rock leaving a 2m high terrace on the north and a 0.7m high bank to the south and continues for 70m before being channelled into the entrance passage (Fig 11).

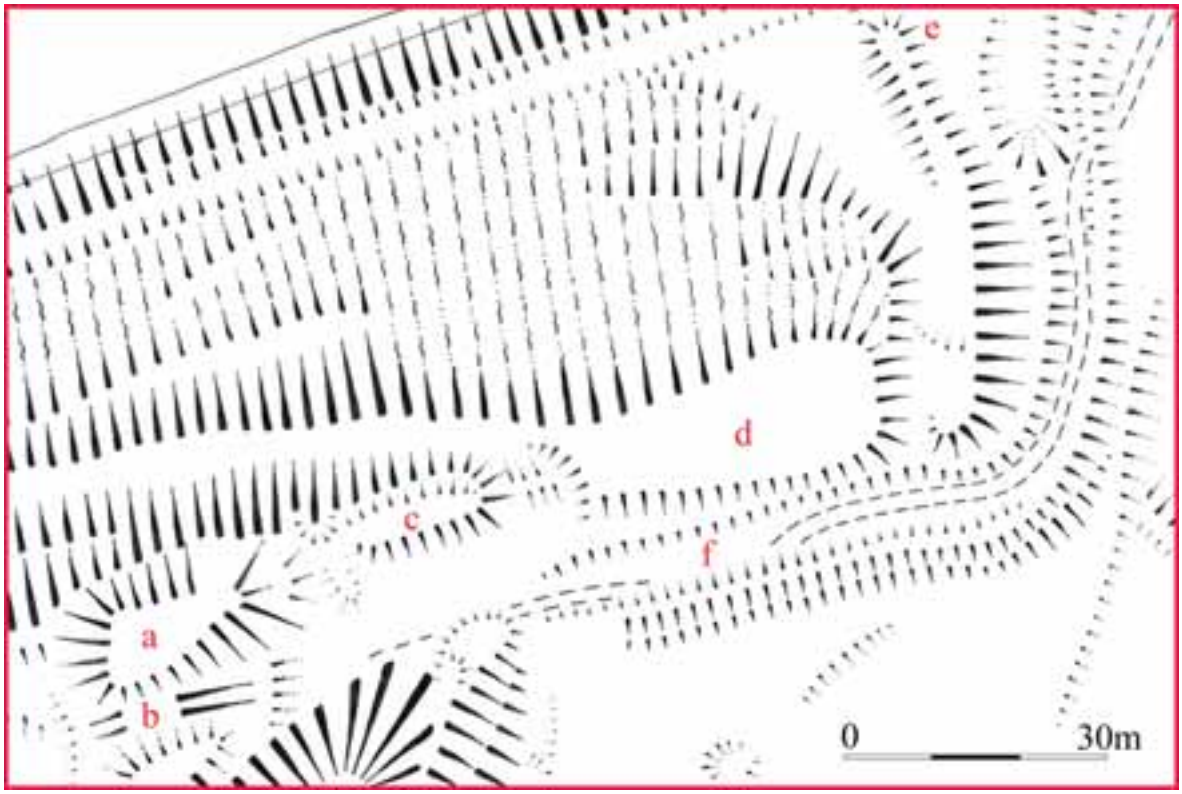

Figure 10 Inset 3. Earthworks at the east entrance. North to top.

Many of the apparently embanked features at the eastern end of the enclosure may be cut into rock outcrop rather than built. This is demonstrated on the escarpment side of the bank that extends from the entrance (Fig 10 c), where a cut through it has revealed stratified limestone (Fig 12) and it may be that a natural outcrop here was responsible for the unusual entrance.

Stanford identified a west entrance leading into the interior of the 'plateau'. The hollow

way leading to this and into the interior (Fig 6 f) cut into and through earlier features and deposits and is here considered to be a medieval or post medieval feature that has no relationship to the earlier features.

Figure 11 *Hollowed trackway leading to the entrance at the east end of the main enclosure.*

The northern slopes

In the north, that is, on the steep escarpment slope, matters are less straightforward. Essentially a series of terraces effectively helps complete the circuit of the enclosure. The first and lowest of these (Fig 6 g) can be traced around the north-west corner as a ditch, but as it turns along the escarpment takes the form of a narrow ledge now occupied by a footpath, reaching a maximum of 5m in width and often less. The footpath continues eastward for 300m along the contour, until, it gradually ascends the slope obliquely to attain the summit opposite the outer ditch terminal. A modern forest ride parallel to the footpath approaches from the east, cuts into the ledge and leads to the ledge above it, thus obscuring the original relationship.

Figure 12 Natural rock exposed in the 'bank' parallel with the hollowed trackway.

The second terrace continues the course of the inner bank as a scarp (Fig 6 h), by descending the slope slightly and appears as a 7m wide ledge that narrows locally to 3m before broadens to some 9m. It then steadily rises again to the summit of the hill 40m west of the east entrance, having surmounted several prominent hard rock strata layers en route. There is a little evidence of a shallow bank in places on the outer edge of the terrace, particularly where it starts to ascend the slope towards the east.

A third terrace (Fig 6 j) situated some 17m above the latter lies more sympathetically to the contours and can be traced for 300m. At the west end it turns to the south and is lost in a palimpsest of hut platforms and scoops, though its line can be followed in the bluff to the south that eventually turns eastwards as the inner slope of the internal quarry ditch. Little more than 3 m wide for much of its course, it bells out and incorporates a ledge from a slightly higher contour before widening to 9m and then fading. Breaks of slope suggest that it continued but has been obscured by soil slippage.

A fourth, upper terrace can also be detected. This is less consistent than the others and interrupted by scarps and in two cases by building platforms, but in all can be traced for 240m before fading out towards the east.

At least nine other smaller ledges of different lengths and width can be identified at other levels on the steep slopes and in some instances breaks of slope hint that they may have continued. Towards the summit many of these are more platform-like, small levelled areas little more than 4 or 5m across.

Internal features

Within the interior are a number of building stances. Twenty-eight were noted, varying in size from 12m to a mere 3.5m, although some caution is required regarding the smaller of these as the disturbed ground in places appears to derive from tree falls. There is no apparent order to them, although more appear to survive in the east than the west. In the west, a group of three scoops along with a shallow mound 12m in diameter by 0.2m in height have been scored by cultivation (Fig 6 k).

Traces of shallow ridge and furrow cultivation marks are visible in the west on a north to south axis with furrows c5m apart. Some furrows are deeper and ditch-like and may have demarcated plots. Plough steps and scars are also present within the internal quarry ditch marking a process that appears to have smoothed out the bottom of the ditch.

Along the lip of, and within, the internal quarry ditch are a number of features that have survived this cultivation, presumably as a result of caution in turning plough teams too close to the edge of the ditch.

Two long mounds lie at an angle down the inner slope of the internal quarry ditch (Fig 13 a & b). The westernmost, 19m in length and 7m wide and 0.6m in height lies at an angle with a ditch on the west side, it appears to turn an angle at the base of the internal quarry ditch where it is integrally related to a sub-divided platform 20m long and 3m wide that is cut into the lower part of the ditch slope. The eastern mound is 12m by 5m and 0.8m in

height and flanked at the sides and around the upper end by a ditch. It is of weathered and rounded profile and appears to be of some antiquity, although it must be later than the internal quarry ditch itself. The well-defined ditch appears to mark it out as different from a midden or mound of casual accumulation, even though this possibility must be signposted as immediately west of it is a rectangular building (Fig 13 c). This latter is visible as a depression 24m in length and 8m wide and 0.6m deep fronting onto the internal quarry ditch. Two cross-divisions indicate the presence of three cells or bays.

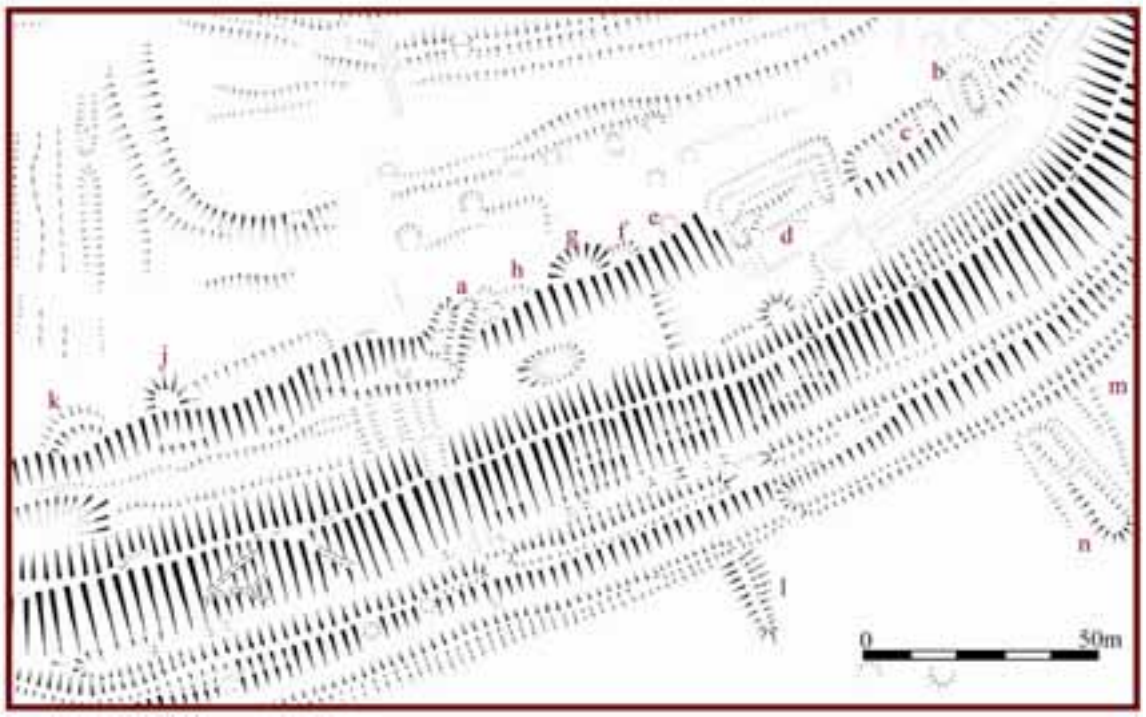

Figure 13 The southern reach of the main enclosure boundary with earthworks within and set along the lip of the internal quarry ditch. North to top.

Less than 5 m to the west of this, a complex of features span the ditch slope and floor (Fig 13 d) which are at least partly enclosed by a bank and ditch that evidently originally formed three sides of a square. Two sides have been cut through on the valley floor, possibly by some of Stanford's excavation trenches that were located here (Fig 26, site I: above). The earthwork is sharp with a proud profile, the bank 4.5m wide by 0.5m high with an external ditch of similar proportions and its appearance suggests that it may be relatively recent in date. Within it and on the inner slope of the internal quarry ditch, is a platform that may have held a structure.

Westwards, several substantial crescentic building stances fronting on to the internal quarry ditch remain (Fig 13 e-h). These are up to 0.5m in depth and if intended for circular structures they would appear to have been cut into by the internal quarry ditch. West of them is a shallow mound, 12m across by 0.2m high, that rests on the lip of the internal quarry ditch and which may have been truncated by it (Fig 13 j). One of Stanford's trenches was placed here (Site D: Fig 26) but the composition of the mound is not clear from the report. Emanating from it eastwards for 30m is a shallow scarp reaching 0.3m in height which then turns a sharp 90 degree angle into the internal quarry ditch. This could relate to a feature truncated by the internal quarry ditch, although it may equally result from the later internal cultivation creating a lynchet at, for example, a fence or former line of trees. A little west, a further crescentic scoop or stance is backed by a bank of spoil 7m across and less than 0.2m in height (Fig 13 k).

Although the inner rampart is all but missing in the west, several building stances, three of them sub-rectangular, are visible set within the lee of it (Fig 6m). The inner face of the internal quarry ditch turns to merge with what appears to be the steep natural slope and this continues as far as the escarpment edge in the north, leaving a wider, lower, open area between it and the enclosure bank itself. Along the lip of this, building stances, some quite substantial, are again present. One shallow example, just 7m in diameter, is on a ledge where adjacent slight undulations suggest that others are also present (Fig 6 n). Beyond this, a level space, oval in plan, has been cut 0.3m deep into the scarp, while beyond it a further example 8m by 6m, located opposite the enclosure entrance (Fig 6 f), is cut in to a depth of 1.8m. A huge oak tree, 6.2m in girth and of considerable age grows on this platform. To the north-west of this, a rectangular scoop (Fig 6 q), 13m by 8m, is cut into the lower slope and is fronted by a bank of sharp profile some 0.6m in height, which curves into an adjacent circular scoop.

A hollow way runs at the foot of this scarp, evidently gathering traffic from the south-west entrance and distributing it to both right and left. South-eastwards it fades out as it approaches the internal quarry ditch, although recent foot traffic has adopted it and engraved a route up the scarp into the interior. To the north, the hollow way takes a curving route but cuts across the scarp into the interior 10m or so south of the

escarpment edge (Fig 6 f). As it turns east, it can be traced for at least 100m along the summit of the escarpment, its ultimate destination at the time of survey being obscured by vegetation.

The escarpment edge is traversed by a shallow bank some 7m wide that can be traced for 130m. At the easternmost end are two platforms or terraces (Fig 6 r) that superficially have the appearance of levelled golf tees and which may, in fact, have been cut in modern times.

Traces of modern trenching were recorded in several places across the site (Fig 26), both within the interior, in the internal quarry ditch and the outer enclosure. These correspond with Stanford's trenches at his sites C, E, F, G, L and M.

DISCUSSION

Stanford (1974, 17-25) provided an excellent description of the earthworks and landscape setting which this account aims to complement. Only minor alterations to his interpretation are necessary, most of which refer to matters of timescale and are a testament to the comprehensive nature of his work. He was clear that no occupation of the historic periods occurred and instead all activity was placed within the Iron Age and the Roman period. This might be considered a little surprising as he certainly recognised the medieval nature of the pillow mounds and the evidently recent banks on the inner slope of the internal quarry ditch, while he even speculated about the presence of a limekiln at one point. There are also references to 'flags and burnt limestone from limepit' and that one trench at the east gate [T25] was 'excavated through post Iron Age destruction levels associated with [a] limepit overlying [the] ditch fill' (Croft Ambrey site notebook NMR). But these observations should be considered in the context of contemporary archaeological thought, which only then was beginning to come to terms with the importance of a medieval and later component. While many of the visible remains can no doubt be attributed to activities taking place during the 1st millennium BC, there is also evidently much later use. Indeed, the complexity of detail is such that it is sometimes difficult to disentangle the ancient from the comparatively recent and we are left with a myriad of enticing possibilities rather than the certainties that we have come to expect.

Evidence of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity on the hilltop does indeed appear to be lacking unless, that is, the two shallow mounds within the inner enclosure should prove to be part levelled round barrows. Traces of a curving linear scarp in the interior are probably the result of cultivation chamfering the edge of a prominent limestone deposit rather than a trace of an earlier enclosure. Several pieces of struck flint were recovered during the excavations, but these are notable more for their actual presence in a flint-free area rather than as a chronological indicator. Even the scraper-like pieces (Stanford 1974, 189 fig 89) could have been strike-a-lights used by Roman or medieval inhabitants. A Beaker burial covered with flagstones was recorded at the foot of the hill in Aymestrey (Woodiwiss 1989) and indicates that the local rocks might have been quarried for such

use from an early date, but there is no reason to associate such activity directly with Croft Ambrey.

Equally, there is no evidence for 'Celtic' fields within or around the area investigated, although a prehistoric field system was formerly recorded in association with two enclosures elsewhere on the Croft Castle estate (Shoesmith 1992, 242) and Stanford (1974, 134) suggested that the lack of turfline and the presence of charcoal in the subsoil within the outer enclosure may have been a result of cultivation during the Iron Age. Given the evidence from Wessex and elsewhere (e.g. McOmish *et al* 2002), it is entirely feasible that one or more of the linear earthworks in the outer enclosure is of Late Bronze Age date, in particular, the sinuous linear ditch and bank, which in its earlier phase at least, appears to underlie the counterscarp of the inner enclosure. If continued northwards, i.e. into the inner enclosure, and only later cut by the main enclosure boundaries, it would lie approximately along the edge of the bluff at the west end of the site, or to put it another way, on the same alignment as the western arm of Stanford's proposed phase 1 bank and ditch (Fig 14). Alignment on what might have been a natural rock outcrop is reflected in the position of the rock cut linear ditch to the south of Midsummer Hill (Field 2000) that could have taken an avoiding course. Aside from any symbolism that might have been inherent in it, the outcrop will have been a prominent landscape marker and it would by no means be unusual to incorporate or enclose such a feature as, for example, in the tor enclosures of the southwest many of which are thought to have a Neolithic date (Oswald *et al* 2001, 85-9).

Whether or not this should be so cannot unfortunately be demonstrated. No dating material was recovered from Stanford's feature, although it was assigned by him to his earliest phase i.e. 550-454 BC, and the lack of cultural material associated with it therefore allows consideration of an earlier date. However, further possibilities can be flagged up. According to the report, the ditch of this feature was flat bottomed and U-shaped, c1.2m deep and after undergoing two re-cuts reached 3m in width, with an 8m wide bank initially a mere c0.5m in height, later perhaps a little over a metre, separated from it by a berm of 3m. In longitudinal section, Stanford (1974, fig 8, L-l) illustrated the ditch end or terminal with silted re-cuts. He assumed that the recuts related to the nearby 'gateway' phases of periods I-III and they may well do, but repeated recuts of U-shaped ditches are

also for example, a feature of causewayed enclosure ditches, where the small scale of the earthwork would not be out of place. The ditch, certainly in its primary phase, would be too small to provide much material for a bank and Stanford speculated about supplementary material being supplied from the interior. The edge of the bluff was not depicted on the excavation plan but extrapolated, the ditch would be set approximately 1m from the edge of the scarp. It was also oriented obliquely towards the scarp and must have broken through into it beyond the southern part of the trench. A sketch in Stanford's excavation notebook depicts at least one posthole or pit base on the outside of the ditch. As a defensive feature, the ditch therefore rests in a curious position on the summit of a steep scarp where it would provide a secure foothold, whereas it would have been relatively easy to simply enhance the scarp itself. Indeed, the proportions of both ditch and bank were relatively slight and, were it not for the natural scarp; the ditch could have easily been leapt across. There is no evidence of bank and ditch on the surface and no indication of its continuation was revealed by excavation north of the hollow way towards the escarpment. Given Stanford's interpretation of the course of the early phase defence as incorporating the extension-like feature at the eastern end of the site (Stanford 1974, 25), the early 'plateau' camp would have been excessively long and narrow, not too dissimilar from the very narrow Neolithic enclosure site at Gardom's Edge in Derbyshire (Oswald et al 2001, 86-9). The tenuous conclusion is that, if a bank at all, the feature recorded by Stanford is just as likely to be a boundary for purposes other than defence or enclosure and that it could date to a period earlier than the Iron Age. The presence of turf used in its construction indicates that the immediate area was grazed and it may even have been hedged and served for stock control.

It must be admitted that the dating evidence is meagre; consequently in contrast to Stanford's view that the site expanded, with the outer enclosure being a later 'annex', it is equally possible to suggest that the latter is one of the earlier features on site. While the small size of the outer earthwork is reminiscent of late Iron Age works at, for example, Stockton, Hanging Langford and elsewhere in Wiltshire (Hoare 1812, 107, 112: also Corney 1989), the low banks are equally reminiscent of those at Casterley Camp or Martinsell, Wiltshire (McOmish *et al* 2002, 59: Payne *et al* 2006, 118), or perhaps Ivinghoe Beacon, Buckinghamshire (Brown 2001) that are considered to be Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age in origin. A further possibility (suggested by Keith Ray, pers comm.) is that,

coupled with the linear (Fig 7 f), Stanford's Phase I bank formed the western flank of a much larger enclosure incorporating the central and eastern part of the outer enclosure boundary. Enclosure of such large a large area would not be out of place in an early context. However, the degree to which the outer enclosure boundary represents a prehistoric feature at all is just as uncertain and some reservation needs to be expressed here.

Figure 14. Interpretation plot showing potentially early features. The westernmost linear, if continued northwards, corresponds with the edge of a bluff into which hut platforms have been placed.

Partly positioned at the bottom of a shallow valley, they are not placed in a 'defensive' location and, being relatively slight, neither do they present a significant obstacle. Excavation by Stanford in one of the, as it transpired recent, causeways revealed that the inner ditch at that point was a mere 1.5m deep (Stanford 1974, 131). The build of this feature is not constant and there is a certain amount of bifurcation and inconsistency

along its length. It is worth considering the extent to which the boundary may have been modified, or indeed constructed, in later periods. The presence of pillow mounds encourages the view that the site was enclosed to keep rabbits in. but only a single circuit would be necessary for that. Further light might be shed on the matter by reference to the series of small-scale maps that depict the presence of a park pale at Croft Ambrey. On Taylor's map of 1754 at least, a pale is depicted around the *main* enclosure. However, the revelation that the site was used as a park at all introduces the possibility, or even likelihood, that the outer perimeter was, at least in part, at sometime constructed as a park boundary which may have been needed to deter deer as much as rabbits from escaping. Given this scenario, whether enclosure was for deer, rabbits or both, the outer 'ditch' can be satisfactorily explained as a hollowed track that circumnavigated the palings, for at both extremities the feature feeds into trackways. Similar hollow ways can be traced across Yatton Common to the west and may have resulted, for example, from dragging timber obtained from the nearby woodland, or possibly some activity associated with the high level springs to the east of Croft Ambrey. Whether or not this is the case, there is certainly evidence, in the form of ramps leading to entrances in the enclosure earthwork and for a small bank probably supporting a hedge placed along the inner lip of the 'ditch' of what appears to be post-prehistoric activity. It may be, of course, that such tracks are responsible for the very discontinuity, effectively obscuring detail of an original construction, but it must equally be acknowledged that the outer earthworks may not be Iron Age at all.

The apparently dramatically modified stretch of bank and ditch in the west remains a problem. The 'ditch', or hollow way, appears to have been recut at this point and overall the sharp profile here, at least, might be taken to indicate a post-prehistoric build. The scar of a small trench that corresponds with Stanford's Site M, occurs in the lee of the bank, although unfortunately apart from a retouched piece of flint from an upper layer and part of an iron chain link from behind the bank, no dating evidence was recovered. His section drawing of this trench (Stanford 1974, 132 fig 62), however, allows for a phased build, with a later more monumental bank simply overlying shallower precursors. In such a scenario, the line of the original enclosure could have formerly struck a more northerly course in the west (Fig 15). This would account for the eastern portion of the 'new built' bank which lies on a different alignment. It would also account for the remnant

of ditch and bank that form the southernmost element of the terrace way that leads towards the entrance of the main enclosure.

It might also be observed that, just as the course of the linear bank (Fig 7 f) mirrors the line of the escarpment, the outer enclosure bank here is set parallel to the outer bank and ditch of the inner enclosure and its counterscarp (Fig 7). These do not maintain the course taken by the main enclosure boundary from the east but, west of the junction of the linear 'cross bank', turn at an angle and in so doing impinge on the course of the inner bank. These features form a small unit of some coherence.

The location of this enhanced stetch of the outer boundary earthwork is situated immediately at the head of a steep comb that separates Yatton Hill from Lady Acre Plantation, and although of severe incline, remains an obvious access way from the valley below. Approached from this direction, the bank will have appeared suddenly and prominently within view as the summit was attained and the traveller would be funnelled around the perimeter of the enclosure. Given that its proud profile indicates a relative lack of weathering, it seems less likely that it is of prehistoric construction. The likeliest occasion for such construction may have been during the post Roman period or, less likely because of the reservations expressed earlier, one of the periods of known military campaigns in the area, possibly the Owen Glendower foray, the Battle of Mortimer's Cross, or perhaps during the Civil Wars of the 17th century. None of this precludes a prehistoric origin for this circuit of earthworks; indeed the implication of the parish boundary, assuming that it was established sometime in the late Saxon period, is that it circumnavigated a shallow earthwork of an earlier date, but it does emphasise that the visible component is likely to represent the wear and tear of much later occupation and activity.

Within the outer enclosure some 20 or more hut stances were recorded. They occur in two groups separated by an area where vegetation made observation of subtle earthworks impractical. There is no indication of overlying cultivation and the weathered profile indicates that they may be of some antiquity. As earthworks, some are more ephemeral than others and there are a range of sizes. The largest and most prominent were those identified by Stanford, where narrow excavation trenches were placed. In one,

a clean, level floor of limestone bedrock was encountered with a hollow towards the north sealed by a layer containing two sherds of 2nd century AD Roman pottery. The trench was evidently not wide enough to determine whether other features lay on the platform, although Stanford was content to interpret it as a quarry for the provision of material for a mound that covered a similar stance situated immediately down slope.

Figure 15. Interpretation plot showing potential earlier course of outer enclosure bank

The mound, fully excavated, formed a key component of Stanford's report and, along with its underlying platform, was interpreted as being of ritual significance. The present survey records it as a slightly oval mound of sharp profile reaching 0.8m in height, although it has been completely reconstructed. A frontal scarp links the platform to stances on either side and demonstrates that the mound overlies them (being a recent reconstruction this is of course so, but the original is likely to have done likewise). The excavated platform is therefore an integral component of this group of stances.

The only dating mentioned for these stances comes from this site. Brooches and potsherds dateable to AD75-160 were recovered. A mere seven fragments of pottery came from the clay mound that overlay the platform and while it was assumed that it was also built in the Romano-British period, it could of course have been a later construction with the potsherds being residual. There must also be a possibility that these platforms did not support domestic huts, but other farmyard buildings and it is important not to lose sight of the possibility that some might even have formed part of a medieval or post-medieval complex that involved the warren or park. This becomes of particular importance when considering the hollow way which cuts through the earthworks of the outer enclosure that is integrally associated by proximity to these stances.

Figure 16 Hollowed sandstone grinding block on building platform in outer enclosure. The reflector rod is 1.2m in length.

There are similar problems concerning interpretation of the inner enclosure. First, the extension-like constriction or tongue at the east end is curious. The dog-leg in the course

of the boundary earthwork was explained as the new 'rampart' changing direction in order to utilise the old 'plateau camp rampart' part way along its course. (Stanford 1974, 25). Why only part of the complex should be enlarged was not explained. If Stanford's interpretation is correct, however, it implies that the former enclosure would have been even more long and thin than the existing one. It is not merely a case of the builders utilizing a contour for the line of the earthworks, as the course of the earthwork rises obliquely across the contour to reach the level of the 'extension'. Little is gained in terms of land enclosed; the 'extension' is just 80m long and 30m wide, or less if the internal quarry ditch is taken into account. Equally no evidence was forthcoming of an earlier bank that formerly cut straight across from the dog-leg to the escarpment edge which would have allowed the 'extension' to be considered as a later attachment.

Figure 17 Interpretation plot depicting the components of the main enclosure boundaries. Dark grey = ditches or ledges and light grey = banks.

The nature of the east entrance is not easily understood. Stanford excavated extensively

here and unearthed a complex series of deposits. Post holes and other features occurred up to 7m to the rear of the bank, mostly interpreted as associated with a 'guard room' structure, but how far such features may have continued into the interior is not clear. Bowden (2006) has recently challenged the view that 'guard chambers' need have a military function and those reservations are relevant here. The features could, for example, have formed a continuous arrangement with the four post structures encountered further west that appeared to be arranged in rows.

The present survey indicates that the northernmost (and perhaps the southern) side of the entrance passage was constructed from a natural rock outcrop. Indeed, the course of the enclosure boundary may have been conditioned by a desire to incorporate this and other outcrops into the circuit (e.g. Figs 9 and 12). Here the outcrop extends for 80m alongside the escarpment and the over-elaborate funnelled hollow way leading to this entrance runs parallel to it and, as Stanford recognised, has been cut into and 'terraced quite deeply into the bedrock' (ibid, 69). There was no need to do this and an entrance could have been made more easily elsewhere, but it appears to comprise an important component of what might be described as a formal 'façade', an ostentatious construction, awe inspiring in order to encourage a desire for entry, yet designed to conceal the nature of what lay within. It follows, however, that the rock cut hollow-way extended as far west as the entrance, and was originally cut to a similar levels as a consistent feature right through the outcrop. Stanford's section drawings of Site K make it clear that the natural limestone in the gateway has been cut into the rock to a depth of 1.5m, closer to the present ground surface of the hollow way as well as to the interior of the enclosure. If this was contemporary with the cutting of the track way, it implies that the hollow way funnel was integral to an early, if not the earliest, build. Currently, there is a mounding between the north and south sides of the 'gateway' reaching 1m in height as though the entrance was blocked. The 1.5m depth of sediments that built up within the gateway incorporated a sequence of eight road metal deposits confined to the corridor between the bank terminals. This is curious as the original limestone surface might be considered hard enough for most traffic, but instead of creating a hollowed surface it has been increasingly raised with new metalling just at this point. It may be, of course, that the intensity of traffic at the gateway resulted in a need for constant repair, but there is no evidence for ruts and the increasing mounding between the bank terminals would be exceedingly difficult

for wheeled vehicles to negotiate. A raising of the road surface in the gateway would also necessitate replacement of the gate, along with appropriate alterations to any linked superstructure arrangement on the adjacent banks.

Metalling has been noted at other hillfort entrances, both at the gate and on the approach and is generally thought to represent road repairs, but otherwise has been little considered. Traces of metalling outside the east gate at Maiden Castle, Dorset were thought to possibly mark the site of a temporary fair or market (Wheeler 1943, 118), more recently it has been suggested by Armit (2007) to be a platform for aggressive display as part of ritualized warfare. Whether or not either of these explanations is accepted, the formal paraphernalia of entrances, enhanced ramparts, 'guardrooms', and bridges, hollowed approach ways and metalling, form a façade or focal point, similar to those sometimes encountered in long barrows, and needs further investigation.

Figure 18 The east entrance.

Obtaining access to the site was made difficult and despite the monumental entrances

there appears to have been no simple way in. The hollowed trackway at the east end can be traced from above the spring via some right angled turns towards the east gateway where, having obtained access to the interior, movement appears to have been channelled into and around the internal quarry ditch. No significant hollowing could be traced into the centre of the site to suggest otherwise. Blocking, or heightening of the east entrance passage serves to reinforce this focus on movement, this time by forcing it around the outer ditch to the south-west entrance and lengthening the route. Its appearance as a 'blind entrance' may have been deliberate, perhaps to obscure in some way views of the interior, although a gate would do that just as well, or to funnel individuals off to either side. In the later phase, Stanford postulated a bridge across the passage way.

Staggered terminals at the south-western entrance ensure that movement was prescribed to continue in the same clockwise direction, to return along the terrace on the northern side. In this way, the earthworks at Croft Ambrey can be interpreted as implying movement and it is interesting that Hill (1996, 110) came to the conclusion that entrances were more than functional and wrote in terms of 'controlling the movement of the body through space'. Curiously, some of these factors were noted at Midsummer Hill, where the hollowed eastern approach channels activity along a desired route. Indeed, while too easily dismissed as fallen rampart material, the closely set slabs of stone discovered during excavation of the ditch were originally interpreted as paving (Hughes 1926). At Croft Ambrey, the proscribed east entrance is even more marked and comparable to the long embanked entrance at Maiden Castle, Swaledale (Bowden 1996: although there are uncertainties concerning date); to Ivington Camp, Leominster (RCHM 1934, 132) where the long hollowed western entrance is embanked on one side and where the outer rampart is extended to mirror its course; to Wapley, Staunton-on-Arrow (RCHM 1934, 184) where a curving hollowed funnel approaches the site; or to Credonhill (RCHM 1932, 66) where a curving embanked and hollowed entrance channels the approach. On a different scale it echoes the choreographed approach of banjo enclosures (see Hill 1996, 110), whereby negotiation of the entrance into the interior is strictly regulated. There is no cutting across from the wrong direction or taking short cuts.

Strangely the 'guardroom' at the south-west entrance incorporated stone brought to the

site from elsewhere. This also occurred at the Wrekin and Midsummer Hill (Bowden 2006) and a similar phenomenon occurred at Segsbury, where blocks of chalk built into the box rampart were brought from a distance (Lock 2007) and this provides some indication of the area from which those constructing the monument might have come. Such ideas are well established on Bronze Age sites, the supreme example, of course, being that of Stonehenge, but similar observations have been made of barrow materials and it is conceivable that similar processes were at work here.

The internal quarry ditch is curious. The amount of effort involved in digging such an enormous ditch to this depth and width seems out of all proportion to the small internal area left to be utilised. It is of course easier to move spoil down rather than upslope when constructing earthworks and so for the main enclosure earthwork this makes some sense. However, the regular dimensions and smooth outline suggest that the quarry ditch was carefully designed and deliberately constructed in that manner and was more than a mere quarry to provide material for the bank. Stanford (1974, 25) even commented on its canal-like form while, as noted above, the RCHM had raised the possibility of it being used as a water container. There is little evidence on the surface of wetland vegetation and Stanford, careful to investigate this point, reported no evidence of standing water when he cut trenches across and within the feature.

The enormous area occupied by the quarry ditch in the lee of the bank would be difficult to use for settlement. Its depth ensures that the area is sheltered from winds but equally from sunlight and it is of no surprise that when excavated the earliest phase was relatively clean of occupation debris. Later structures were built in it and fires repeatedly lit, but the excavations throw little light on the function of the ditch, at least in its original state. In fact, the internal quarry ditch is as impressive a feature as the enclosure bank itself and rather than an area where support might be provided for defenders of the 'rampart', would actually serve to isolate them. Instead it gives the enclosure a henge-like countenance. Its sheer size in comparison to the small area of the interior implies that the feature was of considerable importance. It is here that the geology, laboured somewhat above, is important. For those involved, extraction was an encounter with rocks similar to that experienced on the northern slopes. Here workers came face to face with the smell, the finger staining, the abrasive qualities, and gained an intimate knowledge of structure

and bedding planes and how the material might be used in construction. The presence of the curious fossilised plants and animals may have provided a supernatural dimension that encouraged myth and legend. Such intimate engagement with the rock is something that might enhance association and attachment to the land and assist with rights of tenure and identification of place.

Of course, internal quarry ditches are present at other sites, often as incomplete or part circuits such as Credenhill, Herefordshire and Hod Hill and Chalbury in Dorset. Most often these are wider and shallower than the main enclosure ditches, but that at Figsbury, Wiltshire, where it is set back from the enclosure bank, is sometimes considered be the remnant of a henge ditch. Forde-Johnstone (1976, 129) pointed out that internal ditches have been frequently overlooked in early surveys, possibly as they apparently played no role in defence. Equally, where interiors have been cultivated others may have been levelled.

Figure 19 The inner slope of the internal quarry ditch with a platform part way upslope surrounded on three sides by a bank and ditch.

The earthwork survey reveals that features were built on the slopes of the quarry ditch and Stanford's excavations also suggest that platforms were constructed for buildings. At least one of these is visible as an earthwork with what may be an access way to the top of the ditch and there are also a number of other earthwork features located along the lip of the internal quarry ditch. Of particular interest are the semi-circular building stances which, should they represent Iron Age structures, might be held to have been cut into by construction of the ditch. In these circumstances it is astonishing that they survive in such good condition, given the expected traffic and disturbance that digging of the quarry ditch must have entailed. An alternative is that these stances were deliberately sited on the edge of the ditch, in which case, with no apparent entrance, it is unlikely that they represent domestic structures, particularly as there is little evidence of wear and tear and an obvious lack of hollowed access directly into the ditch. There is a further possibility, that these are, in fact, more recent features, the site of benches or other focal points in the 17th - 18th century landscape park.

The terraces on the northern hillslopes are worthy of some consideration. That they were re-utilized as part of a system of landscape park walks is not doubted, but their origins are more obscure and less easily explained. In plan, the lowest terrace corresponds with the main ditch of the inner enclosure. Whether it was originally a ditch (silting on the steep slope here would be rapid) is not ascertained from surface survey. The RCHM thought not. However, it not only continues the line of the ditch in the west but also becomes more ditch-like in the east, where it then ascends the slope at an oblique angle, though is prevented from closing with its counterpart because of the linear rock outcrop alongside the entrance hollow way. Above this, a further terrace corresponds on plan to the internal quarry ditch, although visually it appears in a very different form. While the ledge is of considerable width, nowhere does it match the dramatic internal quarry ditch along the southern circuit. The width of the terrace discounts its origin as a parkland walk or drive feature, but equally it is difficult to explain in terms of defence. Although conforming to the enclosure 'circuit', it does not follow the contour, but descends the slope in the west then levels out before ascending in the east to reappear at the summit just within the east gate. Three of the terraces can be seen as forming units integral to the overall plan of the main enclosure and whatever the original purpose and subsequent

development their genesis can be traced to the Iron Age.

However, the purpose of the terraces could lie elsewhere and it is worth considering whether they were deliberately constructed for agriculture or horticulture. On the face of it such a function seems unlikely, given that they lie on the north side of the hill, although creation of terraces would have ensured that even in winter a certain amount of sunlight reached the ground. Access to these areas, however, is not easy. The incline in the east had evidently encountered several hard, thick, layers of rock that served to enhance the gradient and was clearly not meant for wheeled traffic. The steep scarp backing the terrace is rock cut and sometimes vertical and it is clear that a considerable amount of rock has been removed. It is even possible that the rock was deliberately targeted, perhaps for quernstones, for lime, or for (Roman) road construction. A phase of ancient quarrying would help to account for some of the otherwise unexplained mounds and discontinuities here.

Figure 20 Ledge on northern slopes at the point where it cuts downslope to a lower level.

Some of the smaller discontinuous platform-like terraces are rounded and indistinguishable from the building stances encountered elsewhere on site. Given the density of buildings within the interior revealed by Stanford, it is quite conceivable that the terraces on the northern slope also supported structures. Their location on the steep windswept northern face is hardly conducive to domestic activity, but it maybe that the buildings here served some other purpose.

Figure 21 Ledge on northern slopes.

Altogether, 47 potential building stances were recorded in the interior of the main enclosure, although a little caution is required regarding the interpretation of some as there are traces of tree hollows occurring in places. The stances would usually be interpreted as supporting circular structures, although given the sheer number of four-post settings encountered during the excavations it is not inconceivable that at least the smaller examples supported similar structures.

Stanford envisaged that there was a substantial domestic component with an estimated

137 dwellings and as many other huts and storehouses all set in rows along the contour, many of which were persistently rebuilt on the same site. Yet strikingly, evidence of the wear and tear of everyday use on the landscape of the kind that one would expect with such numbers is almost completely lacking. Aside from the main entrances there are no engraved track ways, no shortcuts across or through the enclosure earthworks, no place for stock, no hollowed yards where organic debris has been carted off to the fields, while given the compact terraces of buildings Stanford (1974, 232) was led to acknowledge that there would have been 'intolerable congestion'. Equally, artefactual debris is limited. Domestic detritus, broken quernstones for example, certainly occur, but not in the numbers that one might expect from a densely packed settlement used for several centuries. Indeed, the internal quarry ditch which, given the size of the trenches opened, of all features might expect to be a trap for cultural material, contained relatively few cultural artefacts. Similar circumstances occurred at Midsummer Hill in the Malvern Hills, a site intervisible from the summit of Croft Ambrey and where the unsatisfactory nature of this explanation has been highlighted (Field 2000). Studies of other major enclosures of this period have encountered similar problems.

While surface traces indicate that the interior was not as crowded as at Midsummer Hill in the Malverns (Bowden 2005, 22-4), this could be a product of later cultivation, for where building stances do occur they tend to support the excavation evidence and Stanford's interpretation of it, that buildings were constructed in rows along the contour. Like Midsummer Hill, there appears to have been some planned layout. This need not have been related to the origins of the site but imposed as part of some later, though prominent, reorganisation. It may be that the original use was forgotten and overlooked, or that use of the site had become increasingly popular and intense activity demanded change. Whatever the reason, the re-use of precisely the same plots over what might be many generations implies that there was little room for manoeuvre or expansion within the central area and that, additionally, the layout was important in terms of tenure or tradition.

It has been suggested by some, that these places were simply holding centres for grain and other materials, where they could be cared for in times of friction, and that the settlements lay elsewhere, or that they were used only seasonally (Stopford 1987), in the

case of Danebury, where a large number of open pits made internal movement quite hazardous, potentially leaving a small caretaker population (Hill 1996, 101).

In such cases, engraved expressions of daily activity might be less noticeable, but absence of such activity still needs some explanation. It would appear to run against all principles of land use and social organisation to invest maximum labour in one place and carry the fruits to another, difficult of access location, only, like the Grand Old Duke of York, to return them periodically to the first. Why not, for example, cultivate the area to maximum intensity around the enclosure where journeys would be kept to a minimum, or build an enclosure close to or around the settlement? The order found in the interior implies that this is no mere family of nomads, transhumants or squatters, but a relatively large community reliant on agriculture for subsistence. If the four posters represent a communal storage arrangement it is strange that, in contrast to, for example, medieval tithe barns, they are so small. Instead, the impression is obtained that they each represent the property of an individual or small family group.

Nevertheless, Stanford felt that the 'hillfort' could be interpreted as a response to cattle raiding (1974, 234), with the main 'defences' constructed by a chieftain eager to establish a new social order. He recognised that in the event of a raid, the outer enclosure would not be defendable and thought that stock could be taken elsewhere and dispersed. It might, in contrast, be considered that construction of a monument like Croft Ambrey is an over response to a spot of cattle rustling. Some evidence of fires was encountered during excavation, notably at the entrances but also in the internal quarry ditch and this was put down to attack as opposed to any fixation with fire, or of domestic hearths, though the accumulated evidence might be considered surprisingly little given a lifespan for the enclosure of half a millennium. However, even in the later Iron Age, battles may have taken place in the open with no thought of siege warfare. Using Maori *pa* as an ethnographic example of how enclosures might be used for defence, Armit (2007) suggested that the main function of the, generally palisaded, sites in warfare was to deter 'sneak attacks'. Battles involved hand-to-hand combat and an element of ritual whereby rectangular fighting platforms (not unlike the plan form of 'guard rooms') were constructed, from which the defending warriors could hurl spears (Vayda 1960). Armit went on to acknowledge that in the case of the *pa* any multi-vallation provided was of a

symbolic nature. Consideration of the great variation of pa, both in terms of size, form and landscape position has led to the view that they served wide range of functions. Many were of 19th century origin, the earthworks constructed because of the introduction of firearms (Jones 1997, 13).

Although the utilization of the natural slope has enhanced the impression of height and bulk, the main bank and ditch at Croft Ambrey are enormous. The scale is also huge in relation to the small size of the area enclosed. It is after all quite possible to have enclosed a larger area and to have placed the internal quarry ditch externally. The scale of such boundaries is usually considered as related to defensive capabilities, the width and height being thought to deter missiles, but despite extensive excavations at both gates and in several places behind the main and largest bank, it may be telling that absolutely no sling stones were found.

The purpose of the enclosure then, continues to remain obscure. Function, of course, may change with time as is evident by the modern use of historic buildings where even overtly ritual buildings such as churches can be pressed into use for shelter or defence on one hand or flower shows and concerts on the other.

As noted, the massive and relatively smooth internal quarry ditch gives the site a henge-like appearance and it may be relevant that other enclosures of this period such as Rybury, Wiltshire (Brown *et al* 2005, 4-5) and Wolstonbury in Sussex (NMR TQ 21 SE1), or the smaller banjo enclosures, have ditches on the inside. Collis (1996) pointed out that the internal ditches at Navan in Ireland emphasise its non-defensive nature and there is some evidence, in the way that ditches are used, of behaviour that is inconsistent with a strictly defensive purpose. The ditches at Owslebury were deliberately levelled according to the excavator (Collis 1996, 91) while elsewhere there are sequences of backfilling, recutting along with the presence of 'placed deposits' (Hill 1996, 102), all of which is more reminiscent of the processes observed at causewayed enclosures or round barrows. It might even be that, if intended as obstacles at all, ditches were placed to impede malign spirits rather than humans, or to provide an outlet whereby earth-based spirits could provide protection for the activities within (e.g. Darling 1998).

While acknowledgement of the presence of later ritual buildings at places like Caesars Camp, Heathrow, or Maiden Castle, Dorset and the potential of hillforts as 'sacred space' has long been recognised (Hawkes 1971, 6), it has recently taken a more prominent role. Shrines focusing on the centre of the site were reported at Danebury (e.g. Cunliffe 1983, 102-5, 177) and it has been suggested that Harrow Hill, Sussex, was a ritual site and potentially a 'Celtic sanctuary' (Manning 1995). The inferences inherent in the very name 'hillfort' have long ensured that military interpretations were, and still are, given primary consideration. The association of earthwork enclosures and 'camps' with defensive capability derives chiefly from the work of Colonel Augustus Lane Fox who, having then recently returned from a campaign in the Crimea, immediately recognised Sussex examples as defensive works (Lane-Fox 1869) and of course the excavation of a 'war cemetery' at Maiden Castle, Dorset, dated to the Roman invasion (Wheeler 1943) i.e. centuries after initial construction and use, only served to enhance this perspective. Evidence for the latter is now considered to have been over emphasized and there are other possible interpretations (Sharples 1991, 100-101). Influential publications by Bowden and McOmish (1987; 1989) however, introduced the possibility that in some cases at least, the design of enclosures, while an expression of power, may have been symbolic or for display purposes, rather than for practical defence. This has been taken a little further given the reconsideration of 'guardrooms' (Bowden 2006) and the possibility that they could have had other functions, while Loch (2007) has emphasised the importance of both the physical *and* metaphysical properties of banks and ditches as boundaries.

The establishment and development of the enclosure may, in part, be a response to changing environmental pressures, the nature of the diminishing Wigmore Lake or marsh coupled with social requirements of the Late Bronze Age society, while enclosure function may ultimately derive from those communal ceremonial centres of the Late Neolithic and early Bronze Age rather than any defensive need (e.g. Hill 1996, 108-9). Collis (1996, 91) for example, acknowledges that they could represent 'short lived affairs for special ceremonies or feasts', while Hill (1996, 109) talks of initiation ceremonies, agriculturally related gatherings, corporate assemblies and sees enclosures as symbols of community (although monumental banks are not strictly needed for any of those functions). In this context it is worth noting the presence of a spring as a focal point at Midsummer Hill and

high level springs outside the east entrance at Croft Ambrey.

Thus the stances at Croft Ambrey might also be seen in a different light, serving a range of social, agricultural exchange, ceremonial and ritual functions or even supporting excarnation platforms (Carr & Knusel 1997: Ellison & Drewett 1971). The ledges on the north slopes, along with countless fissures, clefts and crevices in the rocks where bones could be placed might, in particular, suit such a function.

Relationship with nearby enclosures is unclear, although activities at Pyon Wood and Brandon Camp must have been contemporary with those at Croft Ambrey for at least part of the site's history. It has been suggested that 'hillforts' in Wessex may have controlled river routes into the interior (Sherratt 1996), in which case the enormous monuments at Scratchbury and Battlesbury along the River Wylye at Warminster could be seen as something like customs posts. Certainly Pyon Wood and Croft Ambrey lie alongside the River Lugg, but whether it were possible to dash down to the river to detain a canoe before it passed around the next bend seems doubtful. As with those Wiltshire hillforts the question remains as to why it was felt necessary to build more than one enclosure in close proximity. According to Collis (1996, 88-9) such proximity emphasises that purpose was not one of regional defence, while Loch (2007) stressed the potential of differing functions and that while one may have catered for fairs and exchange events its partner may have served for certain rituals and ceremonies. While it is possible to imagine how an adjacent smaller enclosure serves a different function, it is difficult to imagine why 'monumental' enclosures such as Scratchbury and Battlesbury, or Hod and Hambledon, or British Camp and Midsummer Hill should be built within a short distance of each other. Armit (2007, 69) points out that if successive, the reason for not reoccupying an earlier site may lie in something similar to the Maori idea of tapu; that is, the site is sacred and it had become taboo to enter.

The landscape position of Croft Ambrey is certainly quite striking. Its height alone ensures that the earthworks are observable from great distances. However, while the viewshed makes it clear that it would be visible from a good portion of the Old Red Sandstone country to the south, it would appear to be less striking than from the north (today such views are obscured by tree cover), where it is seen to crown the summit of an almost

vertical escarpment.

Nevertheless analysis of the viewshed (Fig 22) demonstrates that there are considerable portions of the landscape that are not visible from the site, some of which would have been alleviated by locating it a little further one way or the other. A large portion of the landscape to the north-east from where access to the site is gained along the ridge, is not visible and neither, crucially, is the important Aymestrey valley to the southwest. Thus the site hardly dominates when, placed a little further south-west long the ridge it could have been used to control the River Lugg and the important natural north to south routeway that was later occupied by Watling Street. Alternatively, placed a little further east along the ridge – where the land is higher – it would have ensured domination of a considerable additional component of the countryside.

Figure 22 Analysis of the areas visible from Croft Ambrey (green) and those obscured (brown) demonstrate how the hillfort does not play a strategic role in commanding the Aymestrey Gap to the south-southwest, or of much of the land to the north and east. Only at a distance is it visible from the southeast. In contrast, the view to the northwest, i.e. along the area of the Wigmore Lake, is visually striking.

Instead, the topography appears most dramatic from the low ground of the Wigmore glacial lake to the northwest. Viewed from here the enclosure crowns the steep escarpment that appears to rise like an almost vertical wall as one traverses the valley and approaches the site from that direction. Freshly quarried rock faces on the northern slopes of the hillfort would have served to enhance this effect. The importance of this

vista is also demonstrated by the view shed which depicts how visibility from the hillfort is funnelled along this valley to the north-northwest of the site. It is as if the two topographical extremes, the low land of Wigmore Marsh and the highest point visible from it, are inextricably linked.

Approached from the south the situation is rather different. The dip slope rises more gently and it may be this that led to a requirement to supplement the site with such massive banks and ditches. The land is broken, however, by several dramatic chasms, which although at a short distance, serve to complement the earthworks. Perhaps glacial in origin, these subsequently served a series of high-level springs that have cut deep gorges through the Ludlow Limestone. Approached from the lower ground on Bircher Common and obscured from view by the rise of the dip slope, the dramatic Lyngham Vallet is not visible until it is revealed with astonishment as one stands on the lip of the ravine. In fact, the earthworks might almost be seen as mimicking, or a mnemonic for, these valleys in a similar manner to those at Holmbury, Surrey, a site which like Croft Ambrey, has terraces forming one side and where earthen banks and ditches are set on and among a series of natural sand ridges (J English pers comm: personal observation: or Winbolt 1930: Thompson 1979 for the site itself, the latter of whom commented on the breadth of the defences as being related to sling warfare).

The duality of topographic detail noted in the landscape to the north of the hillfort is present in a different form here. The deep valleys may be on a smaller scale, but are even more dramatic and the nature of height and depth, not to mention light and shade, sky and earth and other complementary oppositions are brought dramatically into focus. However, the opportunity to descend into the ravine and metaphysically encounter the interior of the earth, where layers of rock incorporate the skeletal material of strange unknown creatures, might even be perceived as a supernatural experience and, in a similar manner to the deep chasm of the Devils Dyke in Sussex that leads to the entrance of an enclosure, possibly even controlled as part of a prescribed passage towards the spring and subsequently to the 'hillfort'. The geological faults to the north and south of the site, should they at some point have resulted in local earthquakes, recorded in myth and tradition, might have enhanced the event.

The symbolic importance of such natural places, springs and dramatic hills (Tilley 1994: Bradley 2000) as interfaces with the spirit world, is well established in ethnography (e.g. Hirsh and O'Hanlon 1995; Ashmore and Knapp 1999). One high level spring still serving this valley system lies just beyond the east end of the hillfort, where it has at some stage in the past been instrumental in eroding a large amphitheatre-like depression in the hillside. Proximity suggests that almost certainly this spring will have been of importance to those building, occupying, or using the enclosure and it is noteworthy that the concave landform surrounding it provides a degree of intimacy and unity, not to mention surprising aural qualities, that the enclosure does not.

The drama associated with Croft Ambrey and its location encourages consideration of a more striking arrangement. Once enticed in and having negotiated access, the visitor is 'required' to look over the edge and appreciate the view. It is a place to observe landscape and the relationship of places. From here it is possible to frame a map of the countryside below and observe the buzzard hovering on the thermals alongside, suitably reminding one that such viewpoints are a privileged bird's eye view not usually accessible to humans. The whole point about the massive enclosure earthworks is that they are monumental. They are excessive to practical needs. The workforce needed in construction is likely to have involved more than the local community and incidentally, would have incorporated the catchment of communities who are likely to have constructed the other enclosures at Brandon and Pyon Wood nearby. The massive efforts of labour, the experiences of the earth, define the place in a monumental way.

* * *

Stanford was keen to establish the fate of the site during the Roman conquest and consequently interpreted a succession of hearths on the rampart north of the east gate and some burning in the quarry ditch as signs of conflict, interpreting it as the 'final burning of the camp' (Stanford 1974, 69 and notebooks NMR). However, there is little evidence of Romano-British activity in the interior and no widespread evidence of destruction. Similarly, there is no levelling of the earthworks and there is little evidence to support a view that the site was forcefully abandoned even if still occupied at that time. The site was left as a prominent, upstanding monument, visible to all for many miles around.

A number of the building stances just within the south west entrance are sub-rectangular in outline (Fig 6 m; Fig 23), similar to those recently excavated at Coombe Down and Chisenbury Warren on Salisbury Plain (Fulford *et al* 2006) and may, therefore, be Romano-British. A small trench placed over one of these by Stanford revealed what he considered to be a small quarry for bank material rather than terracing for a building. It was just 1m deep and within were a number of postholes, a short length of possible walling and several hearths almost certainly representing phases of a building. Above Iron Age levels the rim of a Romano-British jar was recovered (Stanford 1974, 155). The rectangular building at the foot of the bluff nearby (Fig 6 q) might conceivably be of this date, but its proud profile suggests that it is altogether of more recent origin.

As noted above, the groups of stances within the outer enclosure may be of Romano-British date, if that is, we accept the dating evidence of material on one platform excavated by Stanford as dating the complex. This was associated with 1st and 2nd century pottery and, along with a series of hearths, led to the conclusion that it had a ritual purpose and it was described as 'the sanctuary'. These finds aside, however, when compared to its companion stances, were it not for the mound material that was subsequently dumped upon it and provided focus, it would appear to be of no outstanding or special interest. If the dating material found can be taken as applying to all of the platforms, then this group of buildings might represent a small settlement. A single sherd of Romano-British pottery was observed during survey within a rectangular depression adjacent to the outer enclosure bank opposite these features which could have some association and it is shown as such on the period diagram (Fig 23).

There is no obvious formal route or entrance to this group of building platforms and associated features, although there is a break through the outer enclosure opposite this point. In the woodland to the south, a linear bank and ditch (Fig 6 s) approaches in the direction of the building complex but does not cut across the enclosure boundary earthworks, neither can its course be detected into the interior as an earlier feature and its date and purpose remain obscure.

* * *

The sharp profile, form and relationship of some of the earthworks suggest that they may date to the historic period. Among these, in particular, the rectangular feature opposite the south-west entrance (Fig 6 q), the rectangular building on the lip of the quarry ditch (Fig 13 c) and the 'cross-bank' enclosure (Fig 13 d) and the pillow mounds.

Figure 23 Interpretation plot showing likely Romano-British activity areas.

Adjacent to the bluff within the south-west entrance of the main enclosure is a rectangular building with no apparent entrance. Its location allows it to be interpreted in various ways, military, ritual or otherwise. However, it is of sharp profile and unlikely to be of prehistoric or Romano-British date. Immediately adjacent and integral to it is a circular platform and the two would appear to be contemporary. It is preferred here to consider this as a medieval barn or other agricultural building, perhaps related to the cultivation episodes recorded within the enclosures. The hollow way alongside this feature curves

around the bluff to attain the summit at the 'west gate' and extends for a considerable distance along the escarpment lip and it is likely that some feature restricted this route. The trackway was certainly acknowledged as being of a later date since Stanford reported that it had removed the Iron Age levels. Given the presence of ridge and furrow in this part of the site it may be that the edge of the cultivated area defined its course.

The rectangular building on the lip of the inner quarry ditch with bays at each end (Fig 13 c) may be a medieval structure. Its position appears integrally associated with the quarry ditch and as such it appears to assume a low key role. Immediately adjacent to the east is a long mound oriented down the slope of the quarry ditch. Its position relative to the building might suggest that it is a midden, although the presence of a ditch at the sides and upper end imply something more formal. Deliberately constructed on a steep slope it can only be presumed that drainage was an important determining factor in its location and it is therefore considered here to be a pillow mound for rabbits. A similar mound occurs on the slope of the outer bank in the west of the site.

The platform on the inner quarry ditch slope enclosed by the three-sided 'cross-bank' feature (Fig 13 d) could also be of this period and associated with the rectangular building, although the proud nature of the earthworks suggests that they may be even later in date. The presence of squared limestone building material encountered nearby (Figs 24) hints that a structure nearby was of considerable construction.

A number of pits encountered by Stanford both on the edge of the plateau, on his site F and at the east entrance (Fig 26), were referred to as 'interference' or discounted as 'late' (Stanford 1974, 29, 31 and site notebooks). No dating evidence is recorded for these but they are presumed to be of the historic period. Similarly, features that were dismissed as 'lime pits' around the east gate could infer some recent activity there.

Within the quarry ditch a deep pit containing brown ashy soil with burnt stone was partly excavated (close to Site I) and it was suggested that an extrusion at the base of the 'rampart' was spoil from this pit. Stanford considered that the pit might be modern and for burning lime, but discounted this as no burnt limestone was found in the upper layers of Trench B17-19. He recognized, perhaps as a result of having excavated through them,

that the 'cross-banks' (Fig 13 d) on the slopes nearby were relatively modern.

As noted above, traces of cultivation in the form of ridge and furrow can be observed at the west end of both inner and outer enclosures, but ploughing may have covered a wider area than this. The internal quarry ditch, for example, appears to have been smoothed off at some point and plough scars remain. There is, however, nothing to indicate precisely when this took place. The distance between furrows in the outer enclosure is 8m, while in the inner it is 5m. Taking this at face value two periods appear to be represented, though it is possible that both could relate to the period of the Napoleonic Wars. The undated Tithe map of Aymestrey (probably *c*1830) depicts the area as rough pasture and consequently this activity would appear to predate that.

Figure 24 One of two squared limestone blocks noted during the survey. This one in the internal quarry ditch, the other in the outer enclosure.

Within the outer enclosure the staggered entrance (Fig 8 d) is flanked by an internal bank of sharp outline. It deviates from the general course of the enclosure earthworks and may

therefore be of medieval construction providing access to the warren, park or both. Two hollow ways set 25m apart and situated towards the east end cut through the enclosure bank transversely and may also be associated with the warren. The bank between them is enhanced and may even have supported a structure. The platforms within the enclosure at this point are generally circular and of subtle profile, although it is not inconceivable that here lies paraphernalia associated with the warren lodge.

Three, or possibly four pillow mounds in the outer enclosure and further possible examples on the steep slopes on the inner quarry ditch and outer rampart in the west were identified, inclusive of those noted by the RCHM in 1931. All were long examples with, in most cases, narrow and shallow side ditches. Those in the outer enclosure were set around the rim of the main enclosure counterscarp and were well spaced, presumably in order to allow reasonable areas for grazing between separate breeding populations, although the curious examples set in the internal quarry ditch and the west of the site would make it difficult for the warrener to keep an eye on the rabbits.

Figure 25 Earthwork features on the edge of the internal quarry ditch.

Figure 26 Interpretation plot showing medieval features (green), landscape park (blue). and excavation trenches (red).

Activity associated with the deer park might be expected. In particular, a lodge was almost certainly present. The present survey does not make it clear whether this lay within the inner or outer enclosure and it is possible to identify potential locations in both. Whether the park was entirely a post-medieval feature, or relict from an earlier period is not clear but detailed study of documentation might assist with the issue.

On the lip of the internal quarry ditch adjacent to the 'cross-banks', fragments of brick can be found. Brick was also noted within the south-west entrance and Stanford also describes the presence of brick in some of the excavation trenches (notebooks NMR). It is likely that the material reflects the dismantling of a summer house or other landscape park feature.

Figure 27 Interpretation plot showing the location of parkland trees (see also Figure 29).

Undoubtedly the site was incorporated into the landscape park of Croft Castle, achievable once land in the two parishes came into common ownership. The planting of trees on the enclosure banks and on the slopes may indicate that the enclosures were not used

primarily for deer management purposes at the time (deer would eat the saplings). Most of the parkland trees surveyed during this project were placed around the main enclosure (Fig 27) and there are few in the outer enclosure or along its boundary earthworks. This may be a result of the storm or the fellings mentioned in documents, but it may equally reflect the position suggested by Taylor's map of 1754 (Fig 4) that, potentially, depicts walks around the main enclosure. Some trees have been coppiced and in places the whitebeam (see appendix) appears to have been stripped for bark; indeed a document regarding the sale of timber on Croft Castle estate refers to expenditure on bark stripping (HRO 80/37).

Figure 28 The triple stem 'Bower Oak' in the outer enclosure once had a seat around it.

A seat around the triple stemmed oak in the outer enclosure has been mentioned above, but there may have been other features or focal points incorporated into planned walks or rides around the landscape park. It is likely that the site formed an important component of such routes around the estate and the reported avenue of trees may have channelled attention in the appropriate direction. The internal quarry ditch and the terraces on the northern flanks might have formed part of this, incorporating the cut

through the natural rock bank flanking the hollow way at the east entrance (see Fig 12). Some of the features within the interior appear remarkably level and may have been terraced to form platforms ideal for seats, shelters or other parkland structures. This includes the northern side of the east entrance itself, while panoramic views can be obtained from two level platforms (Fig 6 r) set on the escarpment edge in the inner enclosure that may have supported seats or other features.

CONCLUSIONS

As one of the few extensively excavated hillforts in the country, Croft Ambrey has, in recent decades, been prominent in archaeological literature. The comprehensive report on the excavations emphasised the uncertainties involved in interpretation and invited further work and reconsideration. While introducing even more reservations than those that the excavator struggled with, this investigation has revealed new data in unexpected areas, among them, the possibility of a longer chronology, while perceptions of the site without the constraints of military terminology and expectations have led to different possibilities concerning function. A historic past has also been recognised, even though the traces of activities of this time are sometimes difficult to identify. However, slight hints in the excavation notebooks of the presence of what were interpreted as 'limepits' that are not visible on the surface, along with traces of less easily explained earthworks, lead to the view that a whole episode of activity has been obscured by cultivation or landscaping at some point in time.

This survey has not attempted to reinterpret the excavation record, but it is important that this is done in the not too distant future, in order to bring understanding of the site up to date. Some of the problems, however, will only be resolved with further excavation. The survey has emphasised what we don't know, but its main contribution has been to signpost which of those critical points to target. For example, there remains a problem of the date of the origins of the outer enclosure boundary. There are problems concerning the nature of the entrances and not least the nature and origin of the terraces on the northern flank.

The work provides an addition to the small but growing inventory of modern analytical surveys that demonstrate that 'hillforts' are not the easily interpreted monuments that they were thought to be. There is much greater complexity and a new era in the study of these monuments has commenced, within which Croft Ambrey will continue to play an important central role in discussions far into the future.

METHOD

The survey was carried out by David Field and Nicky Smith during the late winter and spring of 2007 utilising the period when bracken and other vegetation was at its lowest. While meticulous with regard to surface detail, the nature of the landscape meant that some areas received more comprehensive investigation that others. The ledges on the north slope for example, often encumbered by vegetation and disturbed by animal scars as a result of sheep using the area for shelter, or rabbit or badger damage, made it difficult to record subtle detail. Equally, scars and animal runs on the large enclosure banks frequently obscured detail and there is some evidence of an episode of conservation repair to the rampart that has served to obscure the archaeological profile.

The survey was carried out using Total Station Trimble 5600 Geodometer EDM and reflector and detail recorded digitally from a framework of 65 stations. The resulting data was processed using Geosite survey software and AutoCAD. More subtle detail was added using taped offsets from a network of control points plotted at short intervals around the site.

The position of trees considered to be of parkland significance, and in every case where numbered, were measured by EDM as the survey progressed and numbers recorded manually. Girths were taken as far as possible at chest height although this was not always possible on steeply sloping ground.

The completed survey was penned by Deborah Cunliffe and incorporated into Adobe Illustrator. Katie Page Smith helped with survey during the initial stages while Trevor Pearson provided technical support and in particular prepared a series of viewsheds of which one, Fig 22, is depicted here.

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APPENDIX: LIST OF PARKLAND TREES

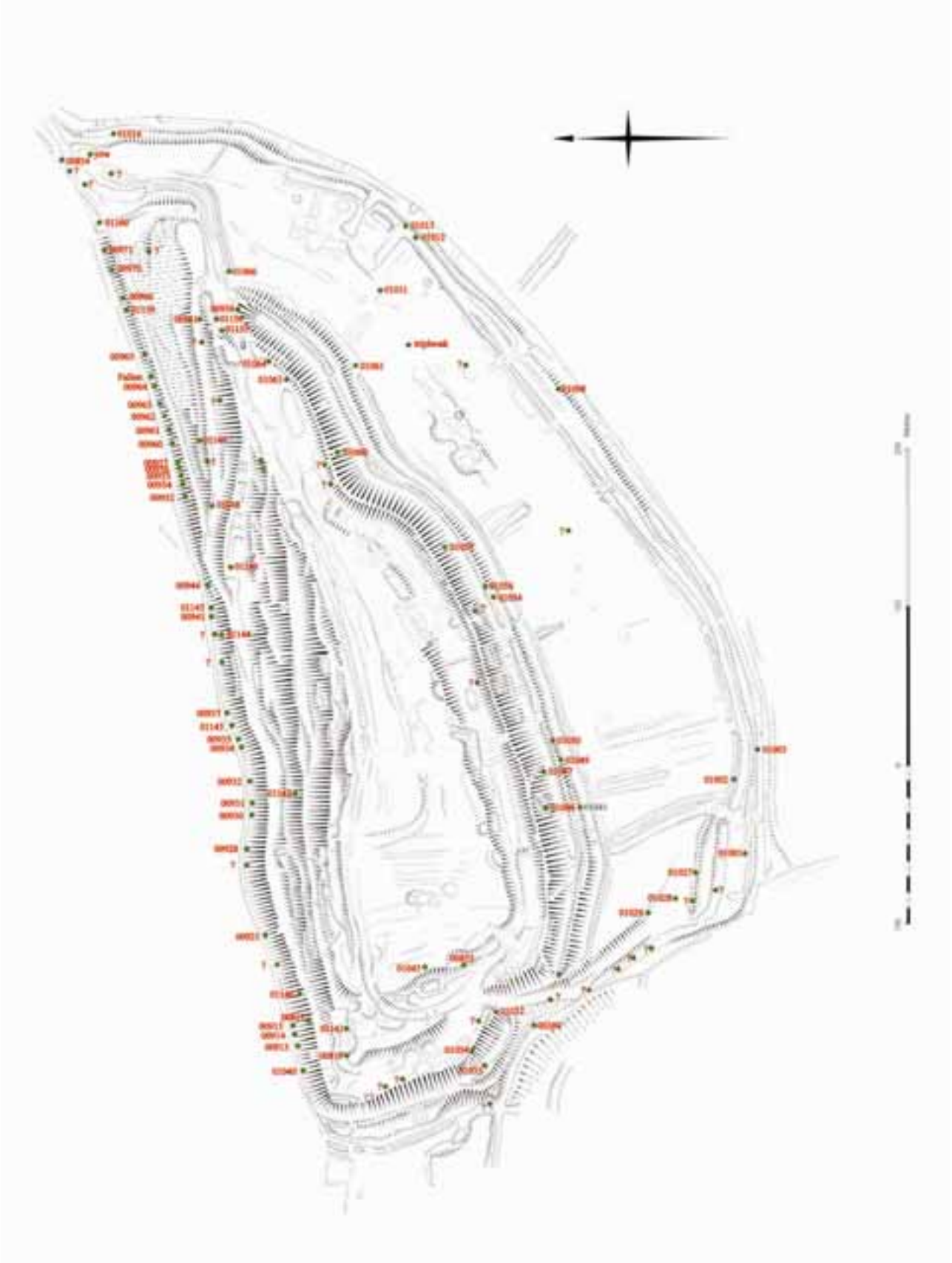

Figure 29 *Numbered parkland trees.*

Tree number	Species	Girth	Location
00389	Hornbeam	3.2	W fence line
00817		2.7m	NW outer slopes
00819	Beech	3.9m	S corner
00854	Hornbeam	2.9m	NW fence (entrance)
00891		2.7m	NW lowest ledge (upper)
00913	Hornbeam	2.6m	NW fence line
00914	Hornbeam	2.5m	NW fence line
00915	Hornbeam	2.0m	NW fence line
00921	Hornbeam	?1.9m	NW fence line
00928		2.3m	NW fence line
00930	Hornbeam	2.6m	NW fence line
00931	Hornbeam	2.4m	NW fence line
00932	Hornbeam	2.2m	NW fence line
00934	Hornbeam	3.0m	NW fence line
00935	Hornbeam	2.5m	NW fence line
00937	Hornbeam pollard	4.2m	NW fence line
00941	Hornbeam	2.0m	NW outer slopes
00944	Hornbeam	2.4m	NW fence line
00952	Hornbeam	2.4m	NW fence line
00954	Hornbeam	1.8m	NW fence line
00955	Hornbeam	2.3m	NW fencelike
00955	Oak	6.2m	Opposite entrance
00956		1.8m	NW fence line
00957	Hornbeam	2.1m	NW fence line
00960	Hornbeam	1.9m	NW fence line
00961	Hornbeam	3.1m	NW fence line
00962	Hornbeam	2.5m	NW fence line
00963	Hornbeam	2.5m	NW fence line
00964	Hornbeam	2.4m	NW fence line
00965	Hornbeam	2.2m	NW fence line
00968	Hornbeam	2.9m	NW fence line
00970	Hornbeam	2.5m	NW fence line
00971	Hornbeam	2.2m	NW fence line
01001	Oak	2.6m	SE outer enclosure bank
01002	Oak	2.8m	E outer enclosure bank
01003	Oak	3.4m	E outer enclosure bank

01011	Oak	6.2m	Outer enclosure
01012	Oak	3.8m	NE outer enclosure bank
01013	Oak	2.3m	NE Outer enclosure bank
01016	Oak	4.3m	NE outer enclosure bank
01027	Oak	3.3m	SE outer enclosure bank
01028	Oak	3.1m	S outer enclosure
01029	Ash	3.3m	S outer enclosure
01032	Ash	3.3m	Inner bank/S entrance
01034	Beech	5.2m	Inner bank slope
01035	Oak	3.1	Inner ditch
01040	-----	3.9m	NW fence line
01041	Oak	4.8m	Bivallate bank
01043	Oak	6.8m	Opposite entrance
01046	Ash	3.0m	Inner bank slope
01047		5.1m	Inner bank slope
01049	Oak	5.2m	Bivallate bank
01050	Oak	5.0m	Bivallate bank
01054	Oak	4.6m	Bivallate bank
01056	Oak	5.3m	Bivallate bank
01057	Oak	9.7m	Inner bank slope
01060	Oak poll	5.3m	Inner bank slope
01061	Chestnut	6.4m	Counterscarp bank
01063	Oak	3.7m	Inner bank
01064	Oak	3.8m	Inner bank
01065 (00956)	Oak	2.3m	NE entranceway
01066	Oak	5.2m	NE entranceway
01140	Beech	3.0m	NW outer slopes
01141		3.1m	S corner
01142	Oak	5.0m	NW middle slopes
01143		2.9m	NW fence line
01144		4.0m	NW outer slopes
01146	Oak	4.0m	NW lower ledge
01148	Beech	5.6m	NW lowest ledge
01149	Oak	2.7m	NW lowest ledge
01155		2.3m	NE entranceway
01156	Oak fallen poll		NE entranceway
01159	Beech	2.8m	NW fence line
01160	Beech	4.4m	NW fence (bank terminal)
01098	Oak	3.5m	E Outer enclosure bank
Unnumbered		3.3m	NW fence line

Unnumbered		2.3m	NW fence line
Unnumbered		3.4m	NW fence line
Unnumbered		2.7m	NW fence line
Unnumbered	Pine		NW lowest ledge
Unnumbered	Oak	2.6m	NW lowest ledge (upper)
Unnumbered fallen tree			NW fence line
Unnumbered	Oak	3.0m	NW fence line (entrance)
Unnumbered	Hornbeam	2.7m	NW fence line (entrance)
Unnumbered	Yew	4.4m	NE entrance
Unnumbered	Ash	3.8m	SE outer ditch
Unnumbered	Hornbeam	2.7m	SE outer enclosure bank
Unnumbered	Hornbeam	2.3m	SW fence line
Unnumbered	Hornbeam	2.6m	SW fence line
Unnumbered	Hornbeam	2.4m	SW fence line
Unnumbered	Hornbeam	2.7m	SW fence line
Unnumbered		1.8m	S entrance way
Unnumbered	Hornbeam	3.0m	Cross path post
Unnumbered	Oak	8.0m	Outer enclosure
Unnumbered	Oak coppiced	10.3m	Outer enclosure
Unnumbered	Ash coppice	5.4m	Bivallate bank terminal
Unnumbered	Beech	5.4m	Inner bank slope
Unnumbered	Beech	5.5m	Inner bank slope
Unnumbered	Oak	6.5m	Inner bank slope
Unnumbered	Oak	6.0m	Inner bank slope
Unnumbered	Beech	6.9m	Inner bank terminal
Unnumbered	Beech	4.6m	Inner bank S
Unnumbered	Beech	4.5m	Inner bank S
Unnumbered	Beech		NW Upper ledge
Unnumbered	Beech		NW upper ledge






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