

EXCAVATIONS AT RUMMAGES BARN, BINDERTON, WEST SUSSEX, 1983

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The Chichester-Silchester Roman road was first discovered in 1949 by officers from the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey, and its route from Chichester to Milland was confirmed and published by I.D. Margary (1953). In 1956 the remainder of the route to Silchester was identified by the Ordnance Survey and was published by A. Clarke (1959). The evidence for the line of the first 8 km. north from Chichester was an *agger* 24 ft. wide, with side ditches 60 ft. apart, over Heathbarn Down and a parish boundary and hedgerows between this point and Binderton House (Margary 1953, 6-12). Further south the line was not traced to any satisfaction and the alignment suggested for this part of the road is shown by Margary not only crossing the Chichester entrenchments where no obvious break or causeway can be seen on the ground, but also heading west of Chichester whereas it should have been approaching the north gate of the Roman town.

The line of the road has subsequently been researched by Mr. Jerome O'Hea of Chichester, and during the drought conditions of the summer of 1976 he was able to photograph from the air not only a crop mark of the road near Binderton House but also an oval enclosure through which the road passed (Fig. 1; Aldsworth 1979a). It has recently been observed that the road and its zone ditches can still be seen as a soil mark over Heathbarn Down, especially on air photographs in the possession of the County Planning Officer (BKS 1971 151392-3), and the oval enclosure can be seen as a crop mark on air photographs taken for the Ordnance Survey in 1973 (O.S. 1973/287 301-2).

In 1983 a trial excavation was undertaken at the point where the Roman road crossed the line of the northern ditch of the enclosure (Fig. 2), and using the evidence from this it has been possible to provide an approximate date for the construction of the enclosure and suggest a modification to the published alignment of the course of the Roman road. The excavation was undertaken under the auspices of a project funded by the Manpower Services Commission's Community Programme sponsored by West Sussex County Council under the supervision of the writer.

A rectangular area 15 by 20 metres was laid out, based on measurements taken from aerial photographs, over the north side of the enclosure ditch where it was crossed by the Chichester-Silchester Roman road. Topsoil was stripped off in north-south strips 1.5 and 2 metres wide. After the position of the enclosure ditch had been found the area of excavation was reduced by 3.5 metres all along its northern side. It soon became clear that the depth of topsoil over the whole site (never more than 35 cm.) had not been enough to prevent ploughing out of all archaeological features above chalk bedrock level. In fact the bedrock itself showed deep scoring by modern plough in many places. The enclosure ditch was exposed over the whole 20-metres length of the excavation but the expected eastern zone ditch of the Roman road was not found. Instead a ditch running roughly north-south with an apparently contemporary east-west offshoot was discovered. Neither was on the correct alignment to be justifiably associated with the road.

RUMMAGES BARN, BINDERTON 1983

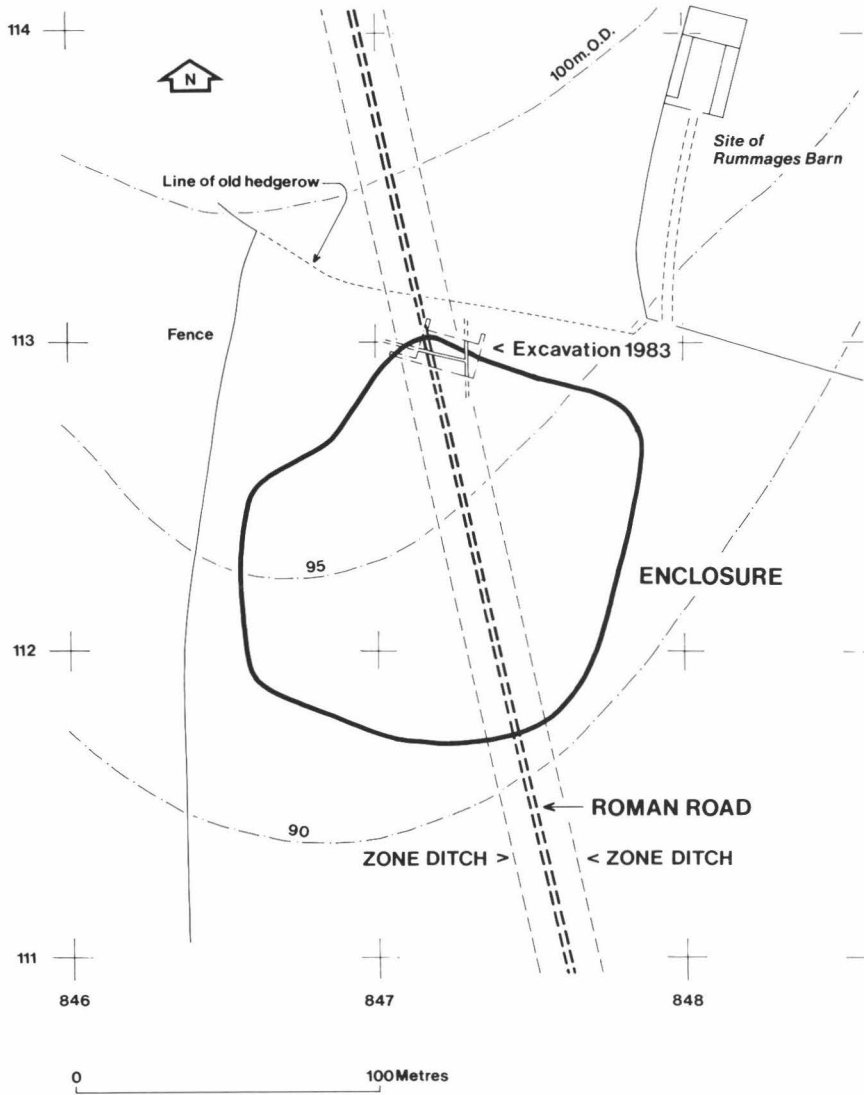


Fig. 1.

In order to find the position of the western zone ditch a 1.5-metre-wide extension westwards was made to the excavation. This continued for 8.5 metres until the southbound return of the enclosure ditch was exposed. The western zone ditch was not found. It can only be assumed that neither zone ditch was originally dug into the chalk bedrock, and that as a result they have both since been ploughed out. In retrospect it is quite clear from the aerial photograph, which showed no crop mark for the road as it crossed the northern side of the enclosure, that physical evidence for the road peters out as the soil becomes gradually more shallow on the crown of the hill.

No road metalling survived anywhere in the area excavated, but two shallow parallel ditches running diagonally northwards across the site were discovered. They were on the correct alignment for the road and were the correct distance apart so must be assumed to be the remnants of its side ditches.

THE BOUNDARY DITCHES

The fill of the unusual north-south and east-west ditches was taken out in order to find dating evidence for them and to show their relationship to the other archaeological features. Both ditches were uniformly filled with a very fine mid-brown silty soil, with few large inclusions apart from several flints and chalk lumps. It was quite clear that they were contemporary with each other and of one manufacture. They were both roughly cut with rounded bottoms (Section E-F, Fig. 3), and were nowhere dug more than 25 cm. into the bedrock. The east-west ditch became gradually shallower the further east it was followed, as if the topsoil at the time of its construction had been correspondingly deeper. The only dating material to come from the ditches was a small fragment of Roman tile and four badly worn sherds of probably Iron Age pottery. These were consistent with having been ploughed into the silting of the ditches in modern times and do not relate to their creation or use.

The north-south ditch was clearly shown (Section G-H, Fig. 3) to have cut the prehistoric enclosure ditch long after it had been filled, while the connecting east-west ditch cut the western Roman road ditch (Section K-L, Fig. 3) well after it had been filled. It can be concluded from these relationships that the two ditches were constructed after the Roman road had become disused.

From the complete lack of domestic evidence in either of the ditches and because natural drainage is very good in the area it seems most likely that the ditches were intended as some form of land boundary in the medieval period. However, no known historical document makes any reference to their existence.

THE ROAD DITCHES

It was found that, while the base of the western ditch was consistently about 15 cm. below the surface of the chalk bedrock (Section I-J, Fig. 3), the eastern ditch was no more than a very shallow scrape across the surface. Because of this it was impossible to show any relationship between the eastern ditch and either the prehistoric enclosure ditch or the supposed medieval field boundary. The western road ditch was filled with very compact chalk rubble with little soil and was clearly cut by the later east-west medieval ditch (Section K-L, Fig. 3). Pottery dating evidence was limited to a small fragment of Roman tile and one of modern tile together with five very small and worn sherds of probably Iron Age pottery. As before, these were consistent with having been ploughed into the ditches in modern times. In addition, the western ditch contained frequent small fragments of fire-cracked flint such as were later found associated with the prehistoric enclosure ditch.

The question remains as to why the western road ditch was so much deeper than the eastern. It is possible that, since their use as drainage ditches for the road was unnecessary, no great effort was made by the Roman engineers to make them a uniform depth. The disparity bet-

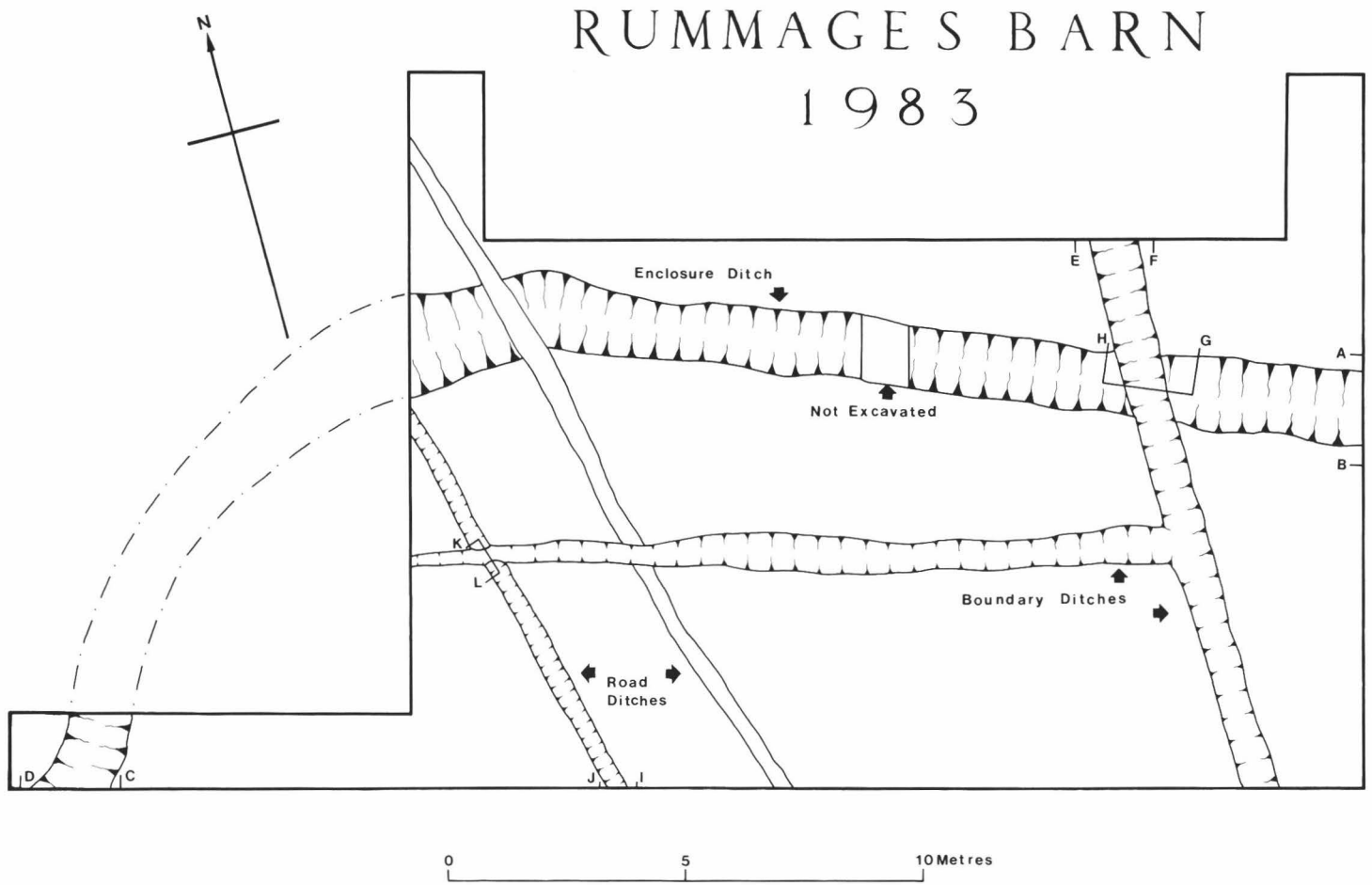


Fig. 2.

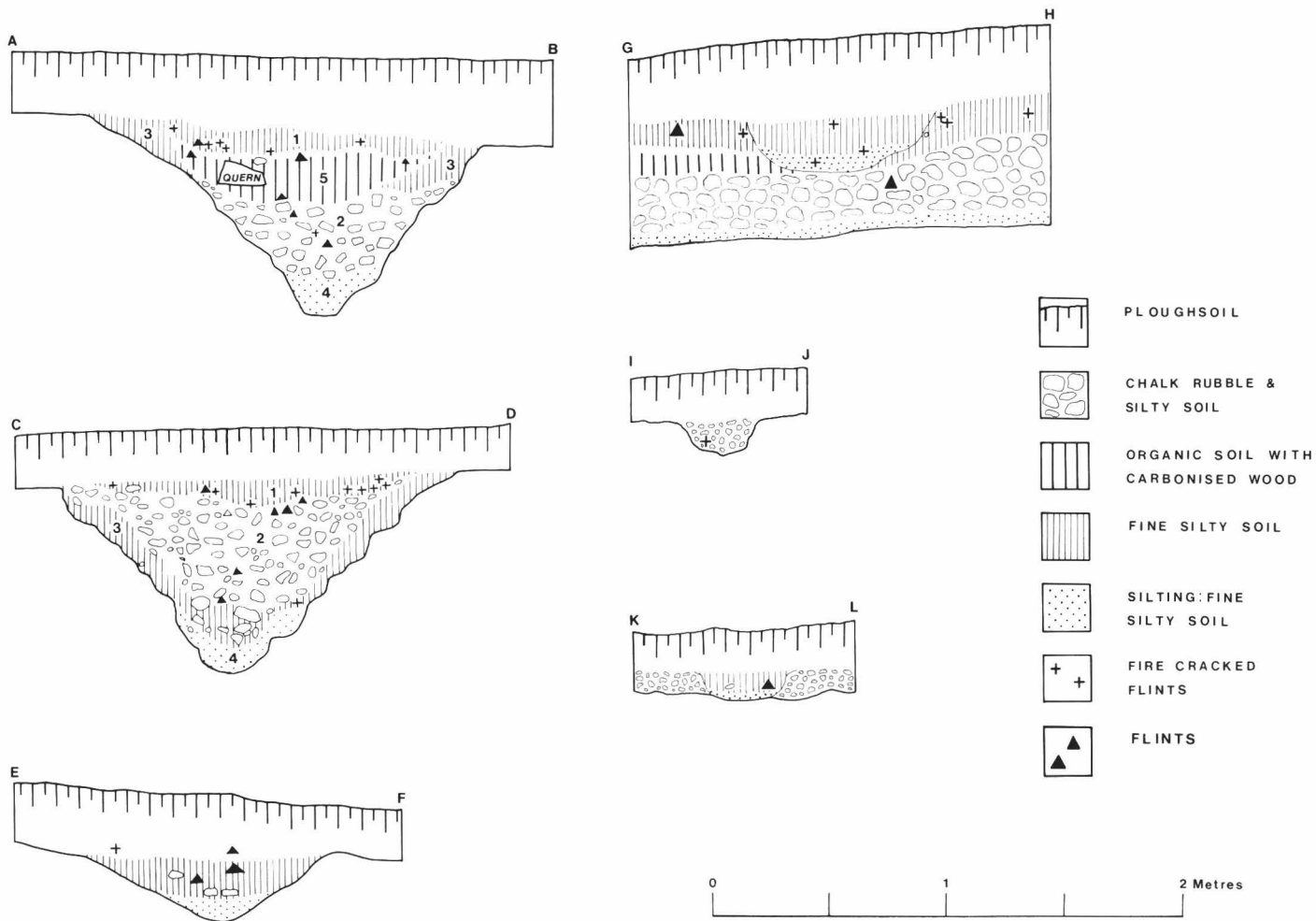


Fig. 3. Rummages Barn. Sections.

ween the fill of the western road ditch (compacted chalk rubble) and that of the east-west and north-south medieval ditches (very fine silty soil) seems to indicate that the road ditch was filled by residual chalk in the area, possibly from the road itself, while the medieval ditch was filled purely by wind-blown silt. This suggests that the chalk bedrock dug out to make the medieval ditches was taken away from the site to be used for another purpose, probably either as hardcore or to marl clay fields.

THE ENCLOSURE DITCH

Section trenches 1.5 metres wide were dug across the enclosure ditch at the western and eastern edges of the excavated area. For the purposes of cataloguing finds the fill of the ditch was excavated in 2-metre sections, leaving a 1-metre baulk at the mid-point of the site. In addition, the ditch fill was excavated where it had been uncovered by the narrow westward extension to the site. Throughout the excavated length of the ditch it showed the same basic V-shaped profile. Its average depth into the bedrock was 80 cm. and average width at bedrock level 170 cm. Nothing remained of the bank which probably existed originally on the inside of the ditch, though there was a slightly deeper soil on the inside of the ditch in some places (Section A-B, Fig. 3). There were no post-holes at all on the site, so if the bank was timber-revetted the timbers cannot have been set into the bedrock.

Stratigraphy (Fig. 3, Sections A-B and C-D)

The most recent layer was Layer 1, a mid-brown silty soil with small chalk and very frequent fragments of fire-cracked flint. The layer was about 10 cm. deep. It was very rich in pottery and bone, accounting for 69.6 per cent of all the sherds found in the ditch and 28.3 per cent by weight of the bone. The depression in which this material lay appeared to have resulted from settling of the ditch sediments after it had been infilled. Several of the sherds

of pottery from the layer were subsequently fitted together, including no. 4 (Fig. 4), 54 sherds of which were found spread over a 5.5-metre length of the ditch. This suggests that the deposit was laid down in a deliberate and uniform way along the length of the ditch.

Underlying this layer was the more extensive Layer 2, a mass of chalk rubble with very little soil, up to 40 cm. deep. There was a complete absence of stratigraphy within the layer, which indicates that it represents a deliberate infilling of the ditch. This theory is supported by the relative paucity of pottery sherds (only 8.7 per cent of the total) though the deposit contained 24 per cent by weight of the bone found. On either side of and underlying the chalk rubble was Layer 3, a soil silting with some chalk rubble, which represented a natural weathering of the ditch sides while it was still open. The silting along the northern side of the ditch was consistently thicker than that on the southern, inner side. Probably the reason for this is that the southern side of the ditch was protected from silting by the existence of a bank. Underlying it was Layer 4, a very fine soil representing the primary silt of the ditch, which had few inclusions. It was probably formed by wind-blown silting very soon after the original construction of the ditch. Layer 3 contained 8.2 per cent of the pottery sherds and 8.3 per cent of the bone while, as might be expected, Layer 4 had only 1.1 per cent of the pottery and 0.5 per cent of the bone.

Spreading 420 cm. along the ditch from the eastern limit of excavation and between Layers 1 and 2 was Layer 5, a layer of dark, organic soil 20 cm. thick. It was relatively rich in small fragments of carbonized wood and domestic refuse. It had 12.4 per cent of the pottery sherds found and 24 per cent by weight of the bone. In addition the deposit contained a large fragment of a saddle quern and an unfinished chalk spindle whorl. The layer represents a very rich and localized rubbish deposit. The surface of Layer 1 had been subject to modern ploughing to a depth of little more than 2 cm., while Layer 1

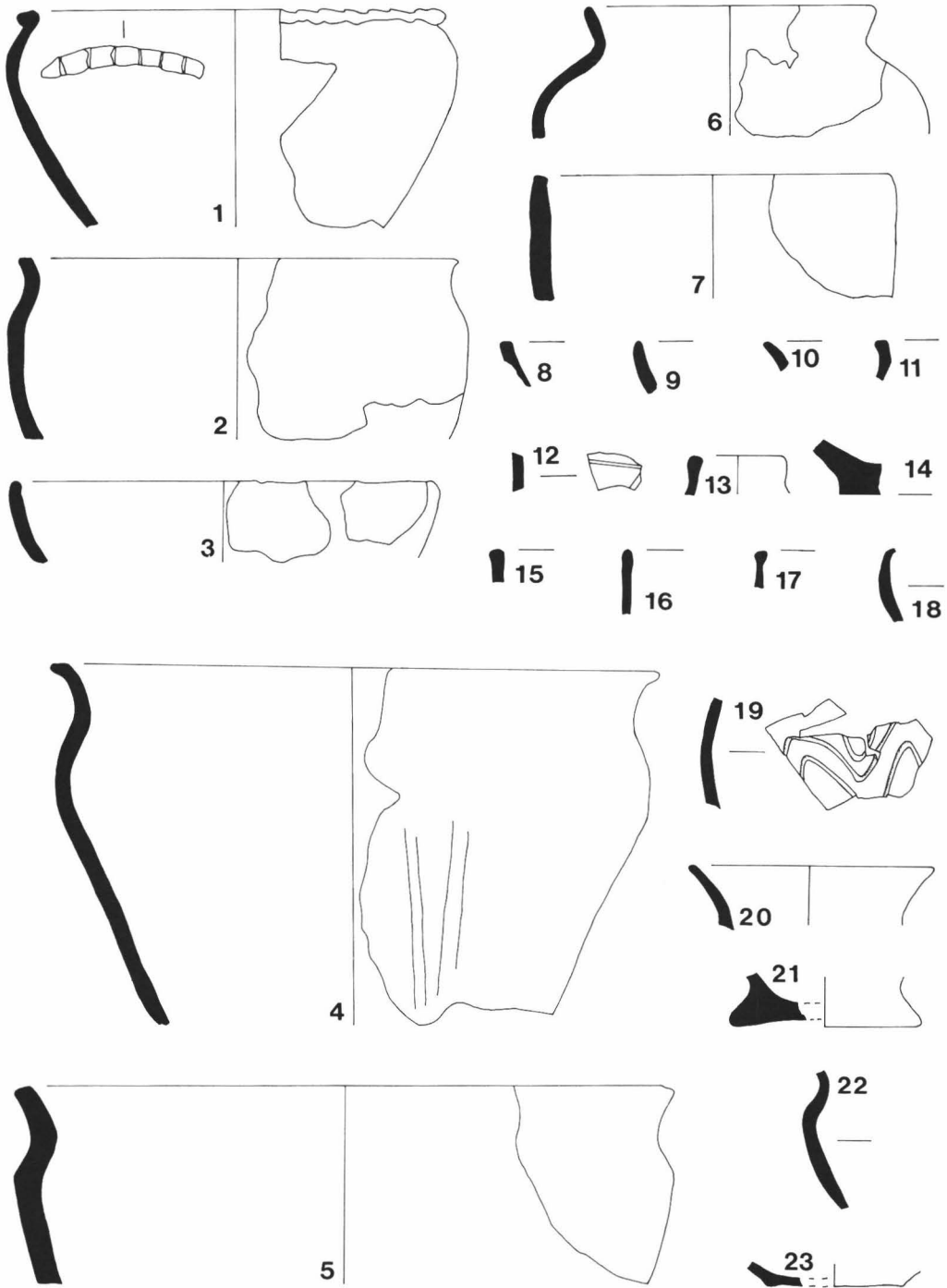


Fig. 4. Rummages Barn. Pottery ($\times \frac{1}{4}$ except no. 12 which is $\times \frac{1}{2}$).

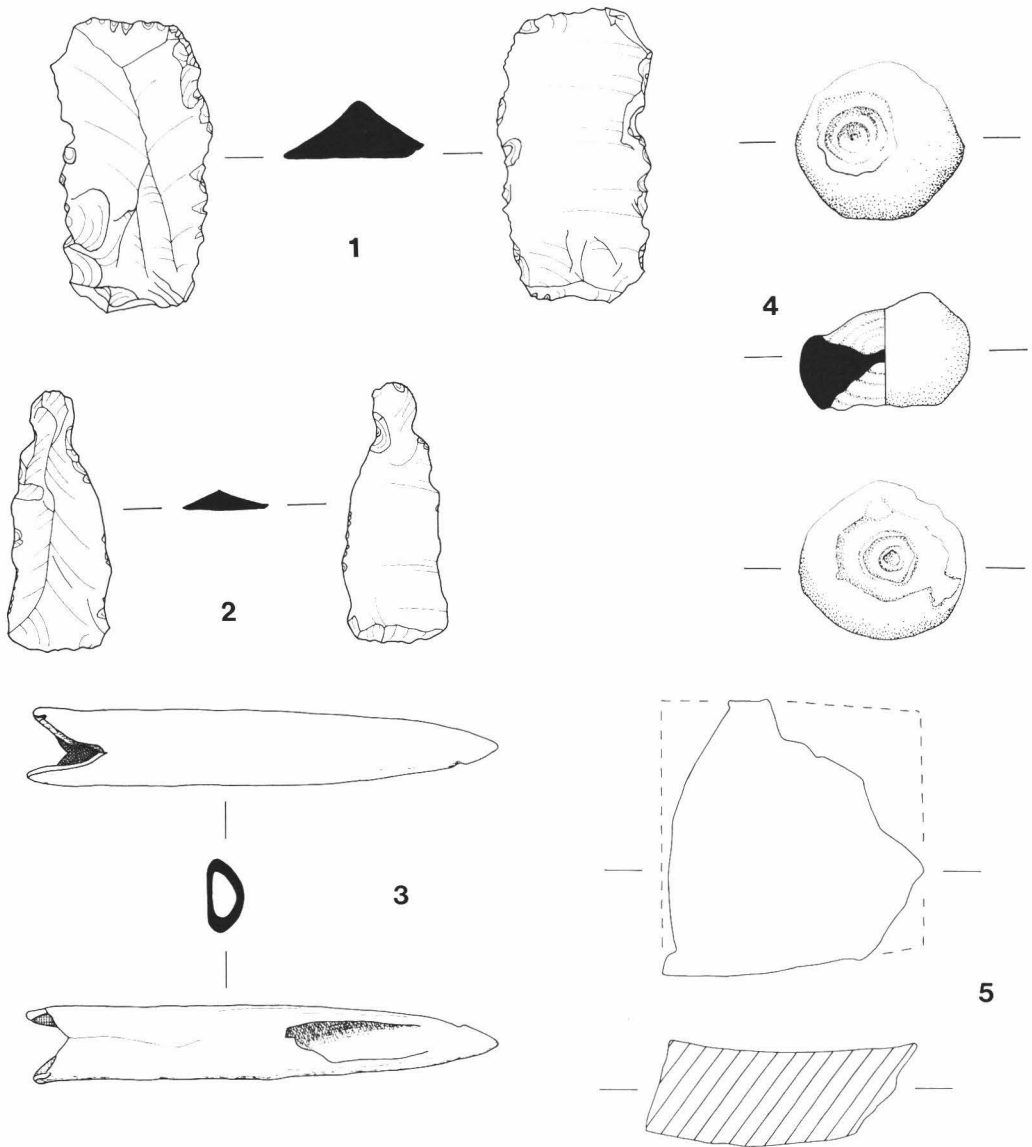


Fig. 5. Rummages Barn. Small finds ($\times \frac{1}{2}$ except no. 5 which is $\times \frac{1}{4}$).

and the upper parts of Layer 3 had been heavily burrowed by small mammals. Disturbance of the pottery found in both layers may have resulted.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The stratigraphy of the ditch shows that it

was deliberately refilled with material probably from its bank. Because of the relatively shallow silting and the complete lack of recutting of the ditch it seems likely to have been refilled quite soon after being dug. The general similarity between the fabric of pottery sherds in all the layers of the ditch supports this theory. When the fill of the ditch had settled, the depression created

was used as a dumping ground for domestic refuse.

In the absence of structures or field monuments associated with the enclosure it is difficult to assign a function to it. The amount of pottery from the lower layers of the ditch is insufficient to prove that it enclosed a settlement, while the sheer quantity of domestic refuse from the upper layers points to an unenclosed settlement close by, which may have developed from an enclosed predecessor. Only further excavation of the interior of the enclosure can prove the existence of an enclosed settlement. Because of the lack of good dating evidence from contexts corresponding to the construction and life of the ditch (only 18 per cent of the pottery came from Layers 2, 3 and 4), only a *terminus ante quem* can be given for it, by the material in the uppermost layer of the ditch. This seems to indicate an early Iron Age date for the construction of the ditch.

It is often assumed that many of the smaller early Iron Age enclosures fulfilled a primarily pastoral function (Bradley 1971); however Rookery Hill, Bishopstone (Bell 1977), an enclosure which closely parallels Rummages Barn both in date and sequence, has domestic structures and open spaces within the enclosure. Thus it may be coincidental that no structures were discovered in the enclosed area excavated at Rummages Barn. The use of a half-filled enclosure ditch for the deposition of domestic refuse from a later, unenclosed settlement on the same site is also paralleled at Bishopstone which has been shown to have had an early enclosed phase superseded by an unenclosed one. Unfortunately at Rummages Barn the settlement itself was not found, though the presence of a saddle quern, a spindle whorl and a bone weaving-pin point to a mixed agricultural economy and domestic industrial activity.

the size of inclusions into fine, medium and coarse groups (F, M, C). The fabrics recognized have been classified as in Hartridge (1978): 1, indeterminate grit or quartz sand; 2, flint grit; 3, chalk/shell particles; 4, flint, chalk and quartz sand. The two main fabric groups that have emerged from this analysis are a fine black fabric with flinty grit and indeterminate grit, and a much coarser buff or brown fabric with flint grit. The ratio between numbers of sherds of each fabric is a constant 2:1 in favour of the coarser fabric in all layers of the ditch. Diagnostically, the pottery seems to belong to a period between the 7th and 5th centuries B.C. except for nos. 19 and 21, which are probably later. Nos. 1, 4 and 5 all have identical light combing or wiping (probably with organic material) on their inner surfaces. This would seem to date them together as a group. The total amount of pottery is not really enough to give more than a general date, but for close parallels see Hartridge (1978), Bell (1977), Drewett (1982) and Bedwin (1978).

Vessel	Ditch Layer	Description
1	1	Brown/buff, 1 & 2 M/C. Thumb impressed rim. Interior surface shows light combing or wiping.
2	5	Buff, 2 C. Rim and body sherds.
3	1	Grey body with red surfaces, 1 & 2 F/M and red grog or haematite. Rim sherd.
4	1	Unevenly fired black, brown and red exterior, grey interior, 2 F/M/C. Interior surface shows light combing or wiping. Roughly incised vertical lines on exterior. Rim and body sherds.
5	1	Dark brown, 2 M/C. + red grog or haematite. Interior surface shows light combing or wiping. Rim and body sherds.
6	5	Dark grey, 2 F/M. + pock-marked due to organic inclusions or leaching of calcium inclusions. Everted rim.
7	1	Dark brown, 2 M/C. Rim sherd.
8	1	Brown/black, 1 & 2 F/M. Rim sherd.
9	1	Dark brown/black, 2 M/C. Rim sherd.
10	2	Brown, 2 F/M. + red grog or haematite. Rim sherd.
11	3	Black, 1 & 2 M/C. Rim sherd.
12	1	Black with red exterior, 1 & 2 M. Decorated with incised lines.
13	3	Black, 1 & 2 F. Rim sherd.
14	1	Dark brown/black, 1 & 2 M/C. Base fragment.
15	1	Black with buff exterior, 1 & 2 M/C. Rim sherd.
16	5	Dark brown, 2 F/M. Rim sherd.
17	2	Black, 1 & 2 F. Rim sherd.
18	1	Brown/red, 1 & 2 M. Shoulder sherd.
19	1	Dark brown, 1 & 2 F. Decorated body sherds.
20	1	Black/dark brown, 2 M/C. Rim sherd.
21	3	Black, 2 M/C. Pedestal base.
22	1	Burnished black, 1 & 2 F. Body and shoulder sherds.
23	1	Black, 1 & 2 F. Base fragment.

THE POTTERY (Fig. 4)

Of the 430 sherds found only those which show diagnostic features have been illustrated. Pottery fabrics have been briefly examined by naked eye and graded according to

SMALL FINDS (Fig. 5)

1. Ploughsoil. Flint blade segment with distal end missing.

Possibly part of a sickle. Badly worn and chipped edges. Probably Neolithic.

2. Ploughsoil. Flint awl with retouched point showing extensive damage due to use. Probably Neolithic.

3. Enclosure ditch, Layer 1. Bone gouge or awl. Probably used in weaving. Many examples from Iron Age contexts, for example Slonk Hill, Shoreham (Hartridge 1978) and Maiden Castle, Dorset (Crowfoot 1945).

4. Enclosure ditch, Layer 5. Spindle whorl of hard chalk in the process of manufacture. Roughly carved chalk lump with bow-drill holes started from both top and bottom. Chalk spindle whorls occur in many periods; in fact a very similar unfinished one came from a medieval context at Kiln Combe, Bullock Down, Eastbourne (Drewett 1982).

5. Enclosure ditch, Layer 5. Large part of the lower stone of a saddle quern with concave upper surface smoothed by use. Possibly Lower Greensand. Not uncommon in early Iron Age contexts, as at Bishopstone (Bell 1977).

CONCLUSIONS

The Enclosure

The enclosure lies on a gentle southerly slope (Fig. 6). Its internal dimensions are approximately 270 metres north-south by 250 metres east-west and it encloses an area of 1.33 ha. There is no obvious sign of an entrance on aerial photographs nor is there evidence to indicate any internal division or other features. Its function, therefore, remains a little obscure though the quantity of occupation debris recovered from the ditch would appear to indicate settlement either within or close to the enclosure. At least three other hill-slope enclosure sites are known on the downs within 7 km. of Rummages Barn and these may be roughly contemporary with it. One, at Lordington, Stoughton, comprises two univallate enclosures close to each other whilst the other two sites, Goosehill Camp, West Dean, and Carne's Seat, Goodwood, are multivallate.

The larger enclosure at Lordington (Fig. 6; SU 78241016) (Aldsworth 1979b) covers an area of 0.65 ha. whilst the smaller one to the south covers an area of 0.07 ha. The site lies on the west side of the valley of the river Ems at 50 metres O.D. Apart from a small trial trench dug on one of the enclosing ditches in 1978, no further excavations have been undertaken though the size of the enclosure would seem to indicate farmstead or stock enclosures.

Goosehill Camp (Fig. 6; SU 82971265)

comprises an earthwork with two concentric lines of defence lying on the east side of Bow Hill immediately above a very steep slope. The outer ditch encloses an area of 1.72 ha. overall whilst the inner ditch encloses an area of 0.48 ha. There are original entrances to both lines of defence. Excavations were undertaken between 1953 and 1955 both across the lines of the defences and on one hut site (Boyden 1956). The dating evidence was inconclusive although a date of c. 250 B.C. for its construction was suggested. It is described by Bedwin (1978) as an early Iron Age hill-fort, and the discovery of a hut site must be taken to indicate that it was a settlement rather than a stock enclosure.

The site at Carne's Seat (SU 88760945) is, as yet, known only from aerial photographs (King 1979; aerial photographs R.A.F. 1949; N.M.R. SU 8809/1/5027 1950; Meridian 1965 9/65 023-4; BKS 1971 151485-6 and NMR SU 8809/1 1976). It lies on a south westerly slope at 90 metres O.D. and comprises at least three lines of defence which may not all extend around the east, uphill, side (Fig. 6). There are entrances in all three lines of defence. The inner ditch encloses an area of 0.25 ha., the intermediate ditch 1.69 ha. and the outer ditch 2.29 ha.

If it is accepted that Goosehill Camp is an Iron Age hill-fort, then on the basis of size and complexity it must be assumed that Carne's Seat is also. The enclosures at Lordington are probably best seen as farmstead or stock compounds. Rummages Barn would appear to lie somewhere between the two types and it seems likely that its true function will only be determined as a result of more extensive excavation.

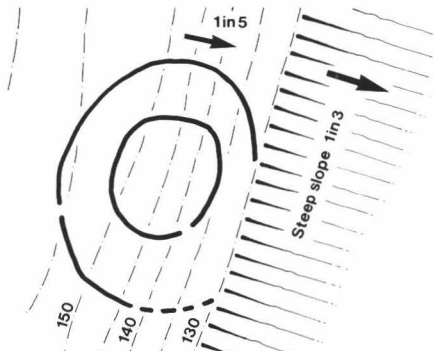
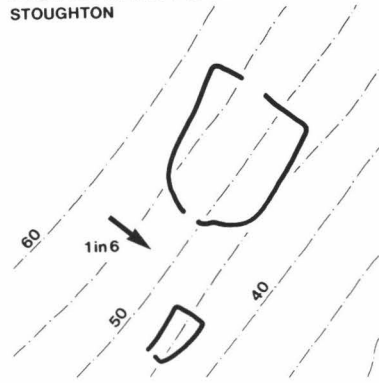
The Roman Road

Over Heathbarn Down the road, which crosses the lynchets of a pre-existing field system, appears on the air photographs as a pair of roadside drainage gullies, about three or four metres apart, and zone ditches about 18 to 20 metres apart. Margary (1953, 12) gave the distance between the zone ditches as 60 ft. (18.3 metres) and in the excavation the drainage

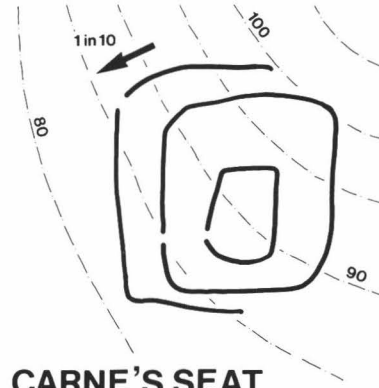
RUMMAGES BARN
BINDERTON



LORDINGTON
STOUGHTON



GOOSEHILL CAMP
WEST DEAN



CARNE'S SEAT
GOODWOOD

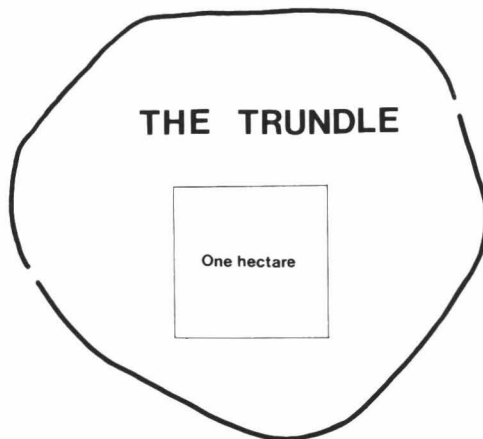


Fig. 6. Four hill-slope enclosures on the South Downs. The plan of the Iron Age hill-fort on The Trundle is shown for comparison only.

gullies were found to be three metres apart. The zone ditches also appear on Jerome O'Hea's oblique air photograph, but were not traced in the excavation and can be assumed to have been ploughed out. It is now clear that the line of the road was adjusted on the crest of Heathbarn Down by an angle of about 6° east to bring the alignment to Chichester. The precise point of realignment appears to be at SU 8445312495. The new position for the centre line of the road from Heathbarn Down to Binderton is 5 metres west of that published on the Ordnance Survey 25-in. map SU 8412 (1977 edn.) on Heathbarn Down, 18 metres west of the line published on the O.S.

map SU 8411 (1977 edn.) in the vicinity of the 1983 excavation, and 22 metres west of the line published on the O.S. map SU 8410 (1977 edn.) in the vicinity of Binderton Lane. Further south the road has not been traced but it can be assumed that it continued in a straight line to the north gate of Chichester (SU 86110521), passing about 160 metres west of St. Nicholas' church, Mid Lavant, and through the Chichester entrenchment about 100 metres west of the former Chichester-Midhurst railway line south-east of Lavant House where the earthworks have been levelled.

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