

Points of view

PROMINENT ENCLOSURES IN 1ST MILLENNIUM BC SUSSEX

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This paper presents an overview of 25 enclosures in Sussex conventionally described as 'hillforts'. Analysis of pottery assemblages and radiocarbon dates allows a three-phase chronological division of the enclosures, with the majority belonging to the earliest phase. Assessment of topographic positions and excavation evidence indicates that the enclosures may have functioned in distinct ways in each of the three phases. In the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age the enclosures may have been situated in peripheral locations on the Downs, from which landscapes and people were observed. In the Middle Iron Age more central downland positions were adopted and the sites may have acted as landmark monuments which were viewed from without. In the Late Iron Age enclosure activity concentrates in the Weald and suggests an involvement with ironworking. Evidence from the entrance orientations of the enclosures suggests that, despite these variations, there was an underlying symbolic ordering dictating the layout of some physical attributes of these sites.

INTRODUCTION

In this article we consider the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age sites of Sussex to which the term 'hillfort' has been conventionally ascribed. The majority of these sites are prominently placed in conspicuous hilltop locations. A particular emphasis of this article is to consider how a greater appreciation of the topographic placement of the sites might enlighten our interpretation of them. Some 25 Sussex 'hillforts' have survived and most of these sites have been known for a considerable period of time, although some were only 'discovered' in the second half of the 20th century (e.g. Garden Hill and Hammer Wood). Their overall distribution is indicated in Figure 1, where the positions of all 25 sites are marked against the dominant landforms of the county. All of the sites except two (Castle Hill and East Hill) have been the subject of limited excavation this century.

Within southern Britain Sussex is notable in encompassing a series of distinct east-west geological bands of limited north-south extent. Sequentially from south to north these are associated with strikingly different (and often dramatic) topographies and resource potentials. While the landscape of today is different in terms of vegetation and of the precise positions of river courses and the

coastline, the deeper-seated structure of the topography would have been the same during the 1st millennium BC. From south to north the main structural elements of the Sussex landscape are:

- 1 The West Sussex coastal plain (the Bracklesham and Bagshot Beds, the London Clay and the Woolwich and Reading Beds). Although lacking hillforts the coastal plain provides a resource zone for potting clays and tempers, and marine resources (Hamilton 1993).
- 2 The Chalk of the South Downs. The South Downs are today marked out in the east by the dramatically sheer cliffs of Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters (currently eroding at 0.5 m per annum: Bedwin 1985), and sequentially westwards gradually distancing themselves from the sea — until they form the northern perimeter of the West Sussex coastal plain. The majority of Sussex's hillforts are located on the South Downs. Every indication is that the greater part of the Downs was covered in open grassland and arable by the 1st millennium BC (Allen 1995; Bedwin 1978a; 1980; 1986). East-west visibility along the Downs, and north-south visibility into the Downs would have therefore have been pre-eminent. The Downs would have provided good pasture, and thin soils for arable. They notably lack good potting clays.

All Hillforts in Sussex

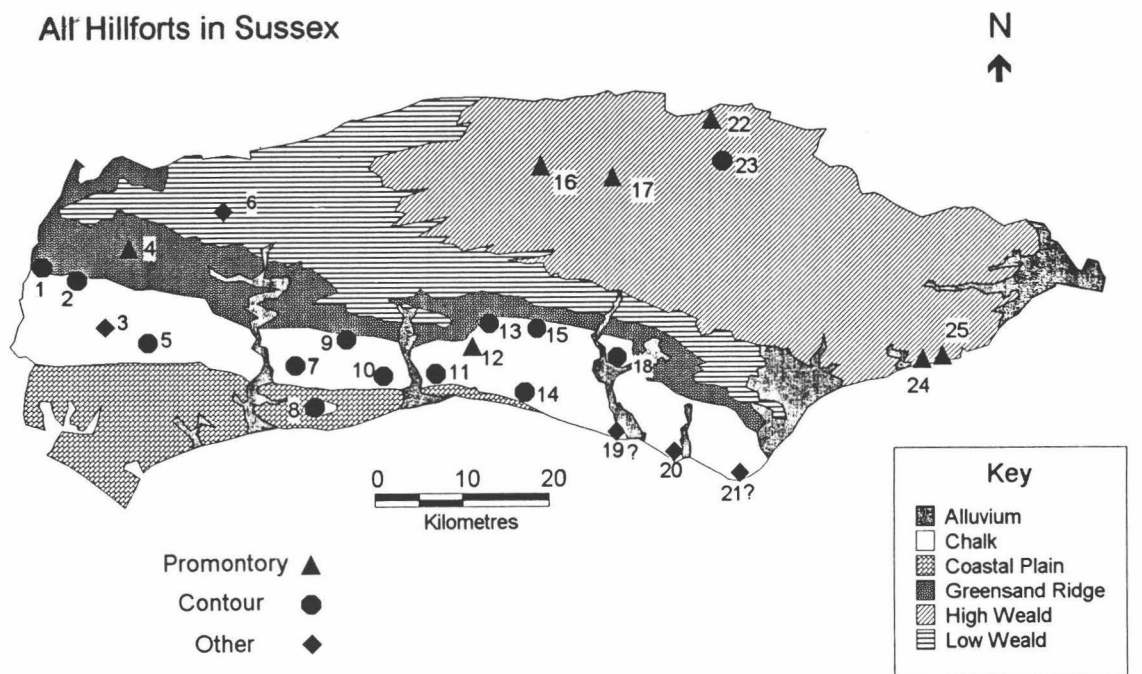


Fig. 1. Distribution of prominent enclosures ('hillforts') against the major landforms of Sussex.

Key to site names (? = dating insecure; see text):

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Torberry | 6. Piper's Copse | 11. Thundersbarrow | 16. Philpots | 21. Belle Tout |
| 2. Harting Beacon | 7. Harrow Hill | 12. Devil's Dyke | 17. Garden Hill | 22. High Rocks |
| 3. Goosehill Camp | 8. Highdown | 13. Wolstonbury | 18. Caburn | 23. Saxonbury |
| 4. Hammer Wood | 9. Chanctonbury Ring | 14. Hollingbury | 19. Castle Hill, Newhaven | 24. Hastings Castle |
| 5. The Trundle | 10. Cissbury | 15. Ditchling Beacon | 20. Seaford Head | 25. East Hill, Hastings. |

NB. Although Ranscombe Camp, adjacent to Caburn, has often been included in Sussex hillfort surveys, it has been excluded from our analysis owing to the fact that it comprises a single linear, revetted bank and ditch across a downland saddle and is not *per se* an enclosure. Finds of finger-impressed decorated pottery from the lower fills of the ditch (Burstow & Holleyman 1964) suggest the possibility that it was a Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age land boundary.

3 The Greensand Ridge and Low Weald (comprising from south to north: the Upper Greensand, the Lower Greensand and the Weald Clay). These abut, and are both substantially lower than, the South Downs. These geologies provide fertile, light soils (at the Chalk/Greensand interface), potting clays, and sandstones for rubbers, querns, and hearthstones. Only two hillforts are located in this zone — Hammer Wood, and Piper's Copse.

4 The High Weald (comprising from south to north: the Tunbridge Wells Sands and Ashdown Sands, and the Wadhurst and Fairlight Clays). Here the ground rises slowly towards the prominent dome of the High Weald where the Wadhurst Clay soils are heavy, damp and acidic, and were possibly

densely wooded. The Wadhurst Clay has substantial deposits of iron ore. Four hillforts are located in the High Weald — Philpots, Garden Hill, High Rocks, and Saxonbury. All four sites are on prominent outcrops of the Ashdown Sands in areas which were at least partly under arable during the time of these enclosures (Gardiner 1990, 43).

There is an essential visual dichotomy in these Sussex landscapes. The east–west landforms create lateral 'landscape' skylines, with the eye constantly drawn along the line of the Downs. The limited north–south extent of each outcrop, and the abrupt transition from one world/topography to another, however, engages the eye in depth across the landscapes of the Downs and the Low and High

Wealds. These east-west strata are divided by major rivers that flow from north to south — the Cuckmere, the Ouse, the Adur and the Arun. These rivers conspicuously carve the South Downs into five great blocks.

The dating and sequencing which forms the framework of the chronological groupings within which we will discuss the hillforts are derived from Hamilton (1993). The dating is based upon the stratigraphic associations of i) rampart layers and ditch fills; and ii) the fills of features within the hillforts, with datable pottery, metalwork, and associated radiocarbon dates. Six of the sites have radiometric dates (radiocarbon dates and one archaeomagnetic date). Finds of closely datable, stratified metalwork are limited. All of the sites have produced pottery, and it is the ceramic assemblages which offer the best opportunities for phasing the sites. Since the 1970s several hillfort excavations have provided high quality stratigraphic data (e.g. Bedwin 1978a; 1980; 1985; Rudling 1985). This, and Barrett's (1980) redating of early 1st-millennium BC pottery, has allowed the chronology of the earliest hillforts to be reassessed, placing a substantial number of them at the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. The data for site dating are given in some detail below because the period clustering of the sites is central to the identification of the changing nature of the tradition of prominent enclosure and landscape articulation in the 1st millennium BC. All radiocarbon dates (Table 1) given in the text are quoted in calendar years BC to two sigma and were calibrated using the CALIB programme of Stuiver and Reimer (1993).

Most of the sites can be allocated to one of three broad phases which span the 1st millennium BC;

conventionally these are the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age, the Middle Iron Age, and the Late Iron Age. The distributions of the hillforts in the three phases can be seen in Figures 2, 3 and 4. Two sites remain undated and are not indicated on the phasing maps: East Hill and Hastings Castle. The characteristics of the sites in each of these three phases can now be considered in more detail — with particular reference to Table 2, and with regard to dating, description and discussion.

LATE BRONZE AGE/EARLY IRON AGE
MULTI-LOCI ENCLOSURES

DATING

A striking aspect of a re-analysis of the dating of Sussex later prehistoric enclosures is that the greatest proportion of the sites belong to the Late Bronze Age.

On present evidence four sites can be ascribed to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age: Thundersbarrow Hill pre-hillfort enclosure, Wolstonbury (Plate 1), Seaford Head, and perhaps Belle Tout. The Thundersbarrow Hill pre-hillfort enclosure (Rudling unpubl. excavations) produced Late Bronze Age plain ware pottery characteristic of the earliest 1st millennium BC (c. 9th century BC) from the middle ditch fills (Hamilton 1993). The basal fills were sterile except for a piece of antler which provides a date of cal BC 1670–1320 (HAR-8182). This suggests a Middle Bronze Age date for the pre-hillfort enclosure, and its continued use into the Late Bronze Age. Wolstonbury's 'henge-like' morphology (with its ditch inside its main rampart circuit) has elicited suggestions of a Neolithic dating (Drewett *et al.* 1988). Recent excavation trenches across the main rampart have produced Late Bronze

Table 1. Radiocarbon dates from prominent enclosures in Sussex.

| Site | Laboratory No. | Context | Radiocarbon Age (BP) | Calibrated date range (BC): two sigma |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Chanctonbury Ring | HAR-2703 | Upper fill of pit 110 | 2320±80 | 760–190 |
| Ditchling | HAR-5935 | Base of rampart ditch | 2560±100 | 902–340 |
| Harting Beacon | HAR-2411 | Upper fill southern ditch terminal | 2220±80 | 400–50 |
| Thundersbarrow Hill | HAR-8182 | Base of pre-hillfort enclosure ditch | 3220±70 | 1670–1320 |
| Wolstonbury | BETA-94959 | Lower ditch fills of main enclosure | 2730±80 | 1030–790 |
| | BETA-94958 | Upper ditch fills of main enclosure | 2410±80 | 790–260 |



Plate 1. Wolstonbury from the north, a landmark on the north edge of the Downs.

Table 2. Phasing of prominent enclosures, and some principal attributes of each enclosure. Area is given in hectares and height in metres OD. Note that low level activity at the asterisked** sites could have commenced in the Middle Iron Age.

| Prominent Enclosures | Type | Area | Height | Date Dug | % Dug | Structures | 4-posters | 'Storage' Pits | Rampart | Multi-vallate | C14 Date |
|---|---------|------|--------|----------|-------|-------------|-----------|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------|
| <i>Late Bronze Age & Early Iron Age</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chanctonbury | cont | 1.25 | 234 | 1977 | 10 | none | none | none | dump | | 1 |
| Ditchling | cont | 5.5 | 248 | 1983 | 1 | none | none | none | dump? | | 1 |
| Goosehill | h/slope | 1.8 | 155 | 1950s | 1.5 | circular? | none | none | dump? | | none |
| Harrow Hill | cont | 0.4 | 167 | 1936 | 3 | none | none | none | timber-revet | | none |
| Harting Beacon | cont | 12 | 242 | 1970s | 2 | rect | 4 | none | timber-revet | | 1 |
| Highdown | cont | 1 | 81 | 1988 | 10 | circ&rect | none | none | timber-revet | | none |
| Hollingbury | cont | 2.7 | 178 | 1960s | 10 | circular | none | none | timber-revet | | none |
| Seaford Head | coast | 4.2 | 86 | 1983 | 0 | none | none | none | timber-revet | | none |
| Thundersbarrow | cont | 1.2 | 138 | 1985 | 1 | none | none | none | dump? | | 1 |
| Wolstonbury | cont | 2.2 | 206 | 1995 | 1 | none | none | none | unknown | | 2 |
| Belle Tout? | coast | 25 | 80 | 1995 | 1 | none | none | none | dump | | none |
| Castle Hill? | coast | unkn | 50 | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Middle Iron Age</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Caburn | cont | 1.4 | 140 | 1996 | 3 | none | none | several | timber-revet | yes? | none |
| Cissbury | cont | 24 | 183 | 1930 | 1 | none | none | several | unknown | yes | none |
| Torberrry | cont | 2.4 | 156 | 1950s | 1 | none | none | several | timber-revet | | none |
| Trundle | cont | 4 | 206 | 1930s | 1 | circular? | none | several | unknown | | none |
| Castle Hill? | coast | unkn | 50 | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Late Iron Age</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Garden Hill** | prom | 2.7 | 170 | 1970s | 4 | circular | none | none | top-palisade | | none |
| Hammer Wood** | prom | 3 | 75 | 1957 | 1 | none | none | none | stone-revet | | none |
| High Rocks** | prom | 10 | 100 | 1950s | 1 | 'horseshoe' | none | none | stone-revet | yes | none |
| Philpots** | prom | 6 | 152 | 1931 | 0 | none | none | none | unknown | | none |
| Piper's Copse** | plateau | 0.5 | 40 | 1930s | 1 | none | none | none | unknown | | none |
| Saxonbury** | cont | 0.5 | 202 | 1930s | 10 | wall | none | none | stone-revet? | | none |
| Castle Hill? | coast | unkn | 50 | | | | | | | | |
| Devil's Dyke? | prom | 15 | 205 | 1935 | 1 | circular | none | none | unknown | | none |
| <i>Undated</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| East Hill | prom | 15 | 85 | | | | | | | | |
| Hastings Castle | prom | 5 | 60 | 1960s | 1 | none | none | none | unknown | yes? | none |

Age sherds and a radiocarbon date of cal BC 1030–790 (BETA-94959) for lower ditch fills (Russell 1996b). Seaford Head has minimal dating evidence, but is ascribed a Late Bronze Age date on the basis of the presence of a substantial rim sherd from a plain, convex jar in the lower secondary fills of the ditch (Bedwin 1986, fig. 6). Despite a long history of excavation, the Belle Tout hillfort earthwork lacks clear dating (Bradley 1971a; Drewett 1982; Russell 1996a). A few abraded sherds of Late Neolithic/Beaker pottery and small quantities of Neolithic flintwork have been recovered from the secondary silts of the ditch, and also from the bank (Bradley 1971a; 1982; Russell 1996c), but these could be interpreted as residual and relating to the inner Beaker enclosure which the hillfort enclosure encompasses. On the basis of morphology (large size and insubstantial earthworks) the outer enclosure at Belle Tout is, for our present purpose, placed in the Late Bronze Age. The interior of the Beaker enclosure has produced some Late Bronze Age pottery which might be current with activity at the outer, hillfort enclosure (Bradley 1971a, fig. 3).

Two major enclosures, Harting Beacon and Chanctonbury Ring, are associated with well-stratified, single-phase later Late Bronze Age decorated pottery assemblages. These assemblages are characterized by fine-ware bowls with fingernail-/tip-impressed decorated rims and shoulders which are dated to c. 8th/7th century BC (Barrett 1980; Hamilton 1993). At both sites the earliest stratified pottery comes from rampart ditch silts resting immediately over the primary silts (Bedwin 1979; Bedwin 1980). Additionally at Harting Beacon, the pottery from the northern ditch terminal of the western entrance was associated with a gold penannular ornament of c. 7th/8th century BC date (Hamilton 1993, 149; Keef 1953, 205). At Chanctonbury, the major context for the pottery was a shallow pit (Bedwin 1980, area B, feature 110). Animal bone from this pit produced a date of cal BC 760–190 (HAR-2703).

Other sites which can be dated to the end of the Late Bronze Age are Harrow Hill, Highdown Hill, and possibly Castle Hill, Newhaven and Hollingbury (pre-hillfort enclosure). Harrow Hill is ascribed to the Late Bronze Age on the basis of a few sherds (including a decorated rim) comparable to Chanctonbury Ring Fabric 1 (Hamilton 1980; 1993, 198) one of which came from post-hole 1 of the main gateway (Holleyman 1937, 250, figs 11–13).

None of the Hollingbury pottery is stratigraphically associated with the construction and earliest use of Hollingbury (pre-rampart enclosure), but local finds of Middle Bronze Age and Late Bronze Age metalwork may relate to a Late Bronze Age phase of site use (Thomas 1983; White 1991). The finds from Castle Hill, Newhaven, are stratigraphically mixed (Field 1939; Hawkes 1939). The typologically earliest pottery from these collections comprise Late Bronze Age decorated wares which may date the original, now destroyed, enclosure. Highdown Hill has produced Middle Bronze Age and early Late Bronze Age pottery ('plain ware') from pre-rampart contexts (Wilson 1940, figs 1 & 2:f–m; Hamilton 1993, 8.8.2, 9.8.3). Enclosure, however, probably took place towards the end of the Late Bronze Age, indicated by the presence of Late Bronze Age decorated wares (c. 8th/7th century BC: Barrett 1980) in the fill of the first rampart ditch (Wilson 1940, 180, fig. 3). A subsequent, second ditch which cuts through the silts of the first ditch also produced Late Bronze Age decorated wares.

Some of the Bronze Age enclosures continued in use into the Early Iron Age. At Highdown Hill the third recut of the enclosure ditch contained Early Iron Age bowls with incised decoration of c. 6th/5th century BC date (Wilson 1940, fig. 4:a–c). Wolstonbury has Early Iron Age pottery and a radiocarbon date of cal BC 790–260 (BETA-94958) from its lower-middle ditch fills (Russell pers. comm.), and 'Iron Age' sherds in the upper ditch silts (Curwen 1930, 242–3). At Harting Beacon a human skull from a rubbish scoop cut into the lower ditch silts has a date of cal BC 400–50 (HAR-2411), perhaps indicating 'low-level' ritual activities at the site beyond its primary period of use.

Four further hillforts were established during the Early Iron Age: Hollingbury hillfort; Thundersbarrow Hill hillfort; Ditchling Beacon; and Goosehill Camp. The pottery from the rampart phase of Hollingbury comprises a coherent, single-period Early Iron Age assemblage of c. 6th-century BC date (Hamilton 1984). Sections through the Thundersbarrow Hill hillfort rampart have variously produced 'Hallstatt/La Tène I' sherds from the pre-rampart turf line and the base of the hillfort ditch (Curwen 1933, 118–21), and residual Early Iron Age sherds from the middle and upper ditch fills (Hamilton 1993; Rudling unpubl. excavations). Ditchling Beacon can be dated to the Early Iron Age on the basis of a date of cal BC 902–340 (HAR-5935) provided by animal

bone from the bottom of the rampart ditch (Rudling 1985), and by sherds in fabrics (e.g. iron oxide wares) characteristic of the East Sussex Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (Hamilton 1980; 1993) found in the body of the rampart bank (Rudling 1985). The lower ditch fills of the Goosehill enclosure earthworks have produced pedestal bases and round-shouldered forms dating to approximately the 5th to 3rd centuries BC (Boyden 1956, figs 4 & 7; Hamilton 1977; 1993, 261).

The only Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age enclosure that continues in use into the Middle Iron Age (and later) appears to be Castle Hill, Newhaven which has produced substantial quantities of Middle Iron Age saucepan pottery, and indeed its ceramic assemblage suggests sustained activity at the site throughout the 1st millennium BC.

The two East Sussex coastal sites of East Hill and Hastings Castle lack any artefactual dating evidence. Based on the dating of other East Sussex prominent coastal enclosures such as Castle Hill, Newhaven, and Seaford Head (Plate 2), they may well have been established within the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age.

DESCRIPTION

Of the 10 or 11 sites which are allocated to the beginning of the 1st millennium BC, the majority can be assigned to the earliest phase. Their distribution is exclusively on the Chalk, with a tendency to occupy 'peripheral' locations on either side of the Downs (Fig. 2). It is noteworthy that the four sites along the northern edge of the Downs occupy the highest altitudes with panoramic views into the Low Weald and beyond (Table 2 — Chanctonbury, Ditchling Beacon, Wolstonbury and Harting Beacon). On the south, coastal side of the South Downs the location of Highdown Hill is still a prominent landmark for seafarers and was clearly a 'special place' for very different generations (e.g. its Saxon cemetery). The location of Seaford Head allows a currently dramatic coastline view east to Belle Tout and west to the former location of Castle Hill, Newhaven and is placed at the only point along the coastline from where a view into the Weald (via the valley of the Cuckmere) is possible. In terms of distribution, the enclosures are fairly evenly sprinkled along the Downs, with no great gaps nor any marked concentrations.

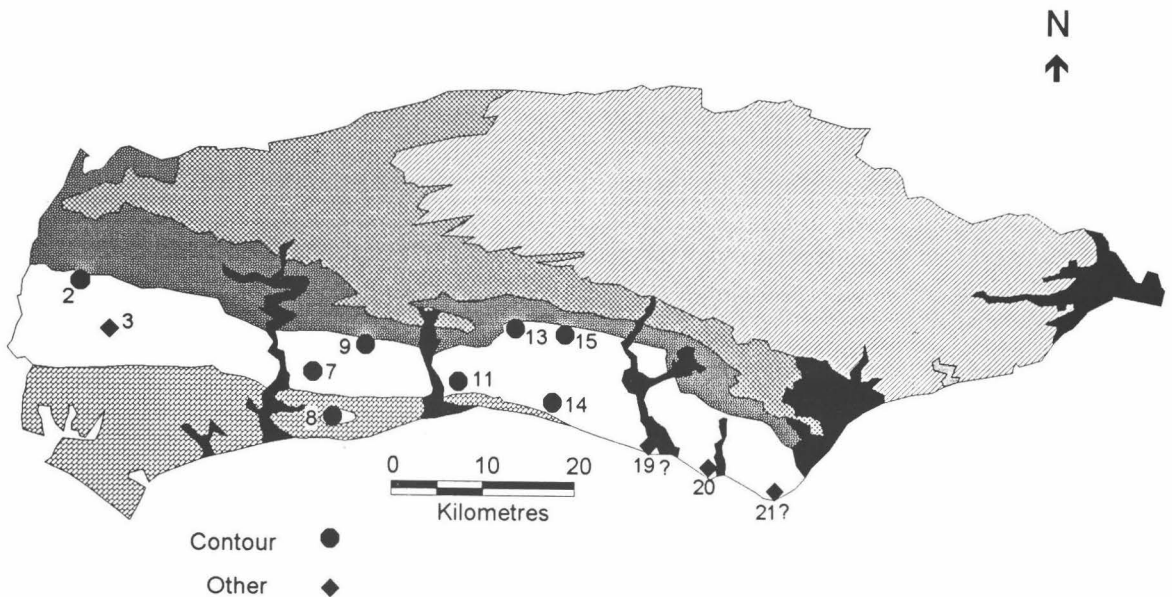


Fig. 2. Distribution of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age prominent enclosures ('hillforts') against the major landforms of Sussex. Key to site names (? = dating insecure: no securely stratified LBA/EIA finds; see text):

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 2. Harting Beacon | 8. Highdown | 13. Wolstonbury | 19. Castle Hill?, Newhaven |
| 3. Goosehill Camp | 9. Chanctonbury Ring | 14. Hollingbury | 20. Seaford Head |
| 7. Harrow Hill | 11. Thundersbarrow | 15. Ditchling Beacon | 21. Belle Tout?. |

In morphological terms most of the sites are traditionally classified as contour forts. Wolstonbury is very suitably described as such, but the majority are not *sensu strictu* contour sites (in the sense that the defining inner rampart follows the same contour height completely around the perimeter). The east and west sides of Harting Beacon follow a contour but the south side comes up and over the shoulder of the spur to complete the enclosure. The very small enclosure on the wide summit of Harrow Hill appears not to have been sited with respect to the contours of the hill on which it sits. Hollingbury is asymmetrically positioned so that it slopes gently to, and seems to 'face', the east, rather than taking a more balanced view. Goosehill, lying on the eastern side of Bow Hill, is not sited on its crest. The Seaford Head enclosure follows the contours on its west side while cutting off level land on its north and east sides. Given the rate of coastal cliff falls in East Sussex the original forms of Belle Tout and Seaford Head will always be a matter of debate.

Inter-site visibility is an interesting issue — the intervisibility between Seaford Head, Castle Hill, Newhaven and Belle Tout has been noted (*see above*). From Chanctonbury Ring the sites of Harting Beacon (its northern edge), Thundersbarrow, Harrow Hill and Wolstonbury can all be seen. A larger-scale, systematic analysis of site intervisibility is now in progress. It is important to establish what can, and cannot, be seen from each site, and which way a site 'faces'. In addition, there is the difficult problem of the local extent of tree-cover during the 1st millennium BC; you cannot see Goosehill from Harting Beacon because of the trees. At present it seems that intervisibility was probably of more significance in this early period than later.

The ramparts or perimeter banks and ditches of these sites are mostly weak in present-day appearance, but there are obvious dangers in estimating original strengths from contemporary observations or even the invariably small-scale examination of the earthworks to date. The two types of rampart (dump, and wall-and-fill) seem equally represented with perhaps the most formidable example of the latter being the classic Hollingbury reconstruction (Holmes 1984). The surviving bank around Seaford Head remains impressive, and in excavation evidence of wooden revetting at the front of the bank was recovered (Bedwin 1986, 30). Chanctonbury Ring has a well-defined simple dump rampart. However, it is hard to envisage the bank around

Harrow Hill as a defensive barrier, while the well-known ditch at Wolstonbury (Russell 1996b) lies inside the bank and the earthworks around Goosehill were surely constructed for reasons other than defence against other human beings. There is no hint of complex defence, as perhaps would be indicated by multivallation, at any of these sites. On the contrary, there is a suspicion that the banks and ditches delimit rather than physically protect. Within this phase there is also evidence of perimeter redefinition and replication, either through the rebuilding of rampart and ditch on approximately the same lines (e.g. Highdown Hill), or of the enlarging of smaller and earlier enclosures (e.g. Thundersbarrow Hill, Hollingbury and Wolstonbury).

When considering the positions of the entrances to these sites it is important to distinguish the position(s) of the entrance(s) on the perimeter earthworks from their alignment(s). It is maintained here that the alignment of entrance breaks and passages is possibly more significant than the simple location of where on the perimeter entrance(s) occur. It is noteworthy that in all of the sites where entrances can be discerned they are aligned in the arc from north-east to south-east. Six sites have more than one entrance and these additional entrances are all aligned in an arc from west to south-west.

The interiors of the sites are different in area and topographic appearance. Belle Tout encloses a massive 25 hectares, with an interior that slopes markedly towards the north. Goosehill is all on a slope. Wolstonbury is rather domed. All of the others are fairly flattish and could be utilized for structures or settlement if that was what was required. All of the sites have seen some excavation during this century, although in percentage of internal area excavated (Table 2), the excavation samples from Hollingbury, Chanctonbury Ring and Highdown Hill are the most significant. Despite a reasonably large area excavation of the interior at Chanctonbury Ring, very few features were uncovered, suggesting that the site was not used for occupation (*see Discussion below*, and Bedwin 1980, 185–6). Similarly, Harting Beacon was relatively empty (apart from a rectangular six-post structure and 4 four-post structures), prompting the excavator to view it as a stock-enclosure (Bedwin 1978a, 230). Hollingbury has several round timber structures in the interior (Holmes 1984). At Highdown Hill there are circular and rectangular structures, and moderate quantities of Late Bronze Age pottery (Wilson 1940; 1950; M.

Gardiner pers. comm.). Excavation in the remaining sites has been too slight to elicit substantive conclusions. There are hints of deliberate deposition, for ideological reasons, at several of the sites: the mandibles of 50–100 oxen from one small excavation trench at Harrow Hill (Holleyman 1937, 250); the single pit rich in finds (including fragments of human limb-bones) from Chanctonbury Ring (Bedwin 1980, 186); the human skull and the gold penannular rings from Harting Beacon (Bedwin 1978a, 227); and, perhaps, the burial of a lamb in the internal terrace at Goosehill (Boyden 1956, 82).

None of the sites evidence continued use into the Middle Iron Age. They may even have been deliberately avoided; yet they surely cannot have been forgotten. Some of them were respected in some way during the early Roman period (*cf.* the temple established on Chanctonbury, the Romano-British settlement outside Thundersbarrow Hill, the early Roman material and bathhouse to the west of Highdown Hill, the Romano-British settlements to the north and south of Harrow Hill).

DISCUSSION

The distribution of early-1st-millennium BC enclosures focuses on the north and south perimeters of the Downs, leaving the middle of the Downs as a 'hillfort-free zone'. The cross-ridge dyke systems of the north edge of the Downs are traditionally dated to the Late Bronze Age. Such dykes are, for example, preserved close to Harting Beacon and run eastwards from the site suggesting that some major divisions of pasture/landscape blocks existed (Cunliffe 1976, fig. 23; Bradley 1971b). This begs questions about which landscapes the enclosures are accessing or articulating. On the north edge of the Downs, Harting Beacon, Chanctonbury Ring, Wolstonbury and Ditchling Beacon have extensive views northwards to the Low and High Weald, and are well-positioned to access both downland and Wealden catchments. Chanctonbury, Harting Beacon and Ditchling Beacon evidence use of resources or products up to *c.* 15 km from site, namely Wealden sandstones for querns and Wealden clays for potting. Evidence for domestic activities at all of these sites is restricted.

Ditchling Beacon and Wolstonbury have produced virtually no artefact finds, and Chanctonbury Ring and Harting Beacon equally lack characteristic evidence of domestic use. The interior of Harting Beacon has produced pottery

(predominantly fine-ware bowls), loomweights, quernstone fragments, and four-post structures — interpreted as store houses or raised granaries (Bedwin 1979). Given the relatively large area excavated, and the large area now disturbed by ploughing, the density of finds is low. Similarly with Chanctonbury Ring, the site was unploughed and the excavated areas were widely spaced, yet internal features were minimal and occupation debris meagre (Bedwin 1980). Chanctonbury Ring and Harting Beacon have snail assemblages indicative of short-tufted grassland (Petzoldt 1979; 1980) suggesting seasonal grazing. The site assemblages suggests that the precise activities that took place at each site were variable. Fine wares, for example, represent 44 per cent of the Harting Beacon pottery, but only 10 per cent of the Chanctonbury Ring pottery. The wide range of vessel types and the small numbers of vessels of any one type at Chanctonbury Ring particularly suggests intermittent site use. The small amount of pottery recovered from Harrow Hill and the lack of internal features suggests a similar situation. 'Practical' interpretations of the finds of ox-heads from Harrow Hill such as seasonal slaughtering of surplus stock, or specialist processing of animal remains have been put forward, but it is hard to explain why other 'unusable' parts of the animals are not present or why processing did not take place off the top of the Downs nearer settlement locations, and the use of the site for intermittent ritual deposition provides an alternative suggestion (Manning 1995).

None of the enclosure earthworks of these sites are dramatic, although some thought has been applied to the proximate visual impact when 'approaching' the sites. The western rampart at Harting Beacon is false-crested, and Wolstonbury has been placed in a location which maximizes its local visibility, suggesting that 'the enclosure clearly had some special significance beyond that of purely settlement' (RCHME 1993, 5). Given the significance of the 'cult' deposition in pits and shafts in the 'Celtic World' (Ross 1968; Wait 1992), the surface morphology of Harrow Hill with its numerous depressions marking the filled-in shafts of preceding Neolithic mines may have made it a visually sacred place to 1st-millennium BC communities (Manning 1995). The break in the north-east corner of the Harrow Hill enclosure respects the largest flint-mine shaft just outside its perimeter, making the gap impossible for access and suggesting that the

juxtaposition had some symbolic significance (RCHME 1994, 13). The sites as a whole, however, seem to function best in terms of 'looking out', perhaps to enable the co-ordination and planning of activities in the landscape that is being exploited around these sites (e.g. stock and people-watching). The coastal enclosures on the south side of the Downs may have functioned in a comparable manner to the sites on the north edge of the Downs: they were placed in terms of



Plate 2. Caburn from the north-east, a landmark on the south edge of the Downs.

'looking out' and viewing between sites. They have likewise produced minimal finds (Belle Tout, Seaford Head, Thundersbarrow). All have dramatic seaward views and are particularly well-positioned to see both west and east along the coast.

The locations, and occupation evidence from Highdown Hill and Hollingbury, however, appear to be rather different. Both have substantial earthworks, round 'houses', metalwork hoards, fine-ware pottery and other occupation debris. These sites perhaps herald the Middle Iron Age pattern of the association of 'domestic evidence' with prominent enclosures which encircle distinct, 'landmark' hills.

Collectively, these various Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age enclosures suggest a predominant interest in locations which facilitate survey and access to surrounding landscapes and sites, with an emphasis not generally on full-time occupation but rather on intermittent use. They cannot, therefore, be seen as 'central places', but rather as 'peripheral' locations, from which landscape use could be viewed and evaluated, and rituals occasionally enacted.

MIDDLE IRON AGE REGIONAL LANDMARK ENCLOSURES

DATING

Four hillforts dominate the Sussex Middle Iron Age: the Caburn (Plate 2), Cissbury, the Trundle, and Torberry (Fig. 3; Table 2). All of these sites have Middle

Iron Age saucepan pottery assemblages (Wilson 1939; Drewett & Hamilton 1996). The Caburn, the Trundle (Curwen 1931) and Torberry (Cunliffe 1976) additionally have Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pre-hillfort occupation (dated by pottery assemblages). Torberry was initially a promontory enclosure and has Early Iron Age pottery of c. 5th/4th century BC associated with this phase (Cunliffe 1976). The saucepan pottery at the Caburn and the Trundle comes predominantly from pits within the interior (often stratigraphically mixed with Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery). At the Trundle, saucepan pottery additionally comes from post-holes relating to a sequence of gateway changes (Curwen 1931, figs 6 & 7). Two of these post-holes have, however, produced fragments of Early Iron Age bowls (Curwen 1931, fig. 3), suggesting some activity relating to the enclosure prior to the Middle Iron Age. At the Caburn, the first hillfort rampart (the inner rampart) seals a turf line containing Early Iron Age 'Caburn I Ware' (Hawkes 1939) and Middle Iron Age saucepan pottery (c. 300–100 BC). It also includes saucepan pottery within its dump material (Hawkes 1939, 229) indicating that the first rampart was established during the Middle Iron Age. The establishment of Cissbury hillfort can be placed at the beginning of the Middle Iron Age on the basis of saucepan pottery from pits within its interior, and sherds of Early Iron Age 'La Tène I' pottery incorporated in the body of the original rampart (from pre-rampart activity?;

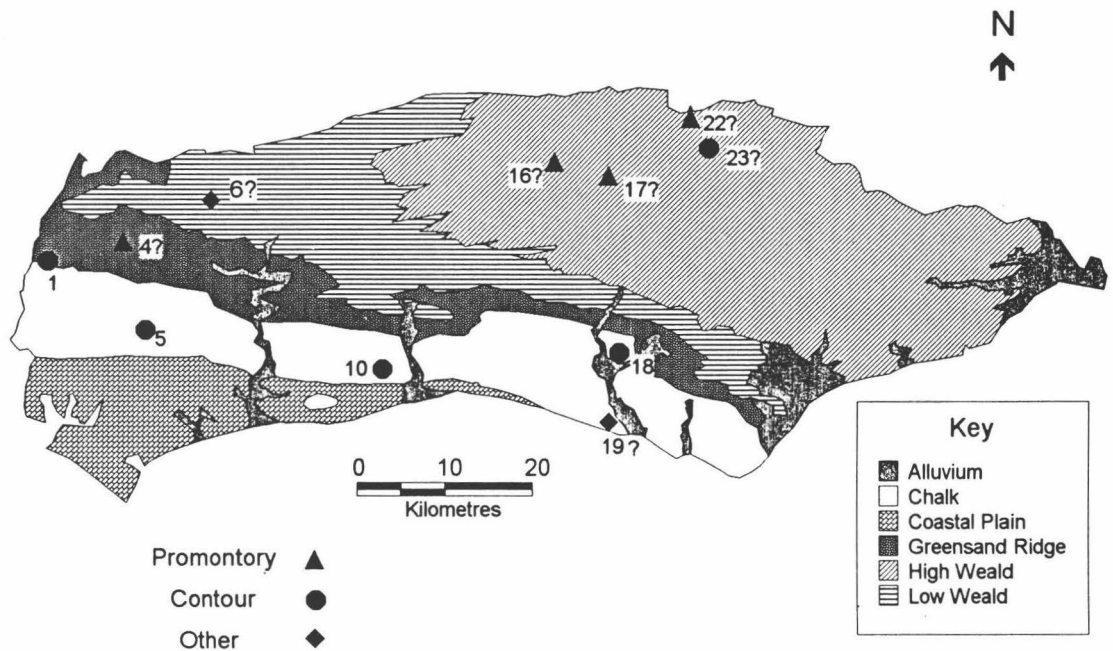


Fig. 3. Distribution of Middle Iron Age prominent enclosures ('hillforts') against the major landforms of Sussex.

Key to site names (? = dating insecure: no securely stratified MIA finds; see text):

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Torberry | 6. Piper's Copse? | 17. Garden Hill? | 22. High Rocks? |
| 4. Hammer Wood? | 10. Cissbury | 18. Caburn | 23. Saxonbury? |
| 5. The Trundle | 16. Philpots? | 19. Castle Hill?, Newhaven | |

Curwen & Ross Williamson 1931, 22). Torberry's reconstruction as a contour enclosure can be dated to the Middle Iron Age (perhaps the 3rd or 2nd centuries BC). A large collection of Middle Iron Age saucepan pottery comes from the abandoned entrance of the preceding promontory enclosure phase, and further modifications of the contour enclosure entrance are all associated with Middle Iron Age pottery (Cunliffe 1976).

Limited finds of saucepan pottery from some of the Wealden promontory forts suggest that some of these sites may have been established by the Middle Iron Age. If so, they seem to be associated with very low-level activity (see the Late Iron Age section below for further discussion). These sites do not yet evidence major activity until the Late Iron Age. The following discussion therefore focuses on the Middle Iron Age downland sites.

DESCRIPTION

The Caburn, Cissbury, the Trundle and Torberry are reasonably spaced out along the Downs, and at

significant altitudes (Fig. 3). Torberry is perhaps the most extreme position, distanced slightly from the main northern scarp of the Downs, but gaining in improved visibility lines to the east and west. The Trundle looks very much to the south across the West Sussex coastal plain, while the major perspective from Cissbury is also to the south. Caburn is uniquely sited on the southernmost tip of its own minor chalk landscape block, dominating the valley of the Ouse. None of these sites are intervisible with the unaided eye.

All four hillforts are contour 'forts', albeit that Torberry began life as a smaller promontory 'fort' and then was extended to become a true contour site. Although there have been only minor excavations of the ramparts, two sites (Caburn and Torberry) demonstrate the wall-and-fill technique, and it is highly likely that ramparts at the Trundle and Cissbury were also revetted in some way. But there are also some major dissimilarities. Firstly, 1st-millennium BC multivallation can only be demonstrated at Cissbury (at the Caburn the

'multivallate' effect of the north side of the enclosure postdates the Iron Age (Avery 1993). Secondly, there is the unique perimeter layout of the rampart at the Trundle. The plan clearly demonstrates that it must have been laid out in straight segments, probably nine in all, rather than the more usual circular or oval arrangement. There must be some significance to this layout, although much more excavation would be required to gather sufficient evidence for suggestions. Thirdly, there is a considerable difference in the internal areas of the sites, with Cissbury at 24 hectares completely overshadowing the more modest areas of the other three. Fourthly, the internal areas of these four sites do not totally lend themselves to settlement activities. Caburn has limited internal areas for putative occupation, being a prominently dome-shaped hill. The spaces sheltering behind the main northern rampart are the only obvious locations, whereas the southern interior is far too steep. At Torberry, the rampart on the north side lies well down the slope and indeed some of the interior is too inclined for settlement. Only at the Trundle and at Cissbury do the ramparts enclose areas that could potentially be fully used for occupation. Intra-site visibility is, however, quite restricted at the Trundle. Cissbury has the additional 'problem' of the areas occupied by the Neolithic flint mines. While a few of the backfilled shafts were overbuilt by the rampart builders (indeed as the Neolithic ditches were overbuilt at the Trundle), the rest were avoided during the Middle Iron Age use of the hillfort. A recent survey of the site detailed some 270 remaining backfilled shafts, and suggests that some were reclaimed for agricultural use in later Iron Age (Donachie & Field 1994, 31). On this basis *c.* 25 per cent of Cissbury's interior could only have been used as rough grazing during the Middle Iron Age. The entrances of all four sites are aligned in an arc from north-east to south-east. Two sites have additional entrances and these are both in the south-west.

Excavation at these four sites has been very limited (Table 2), and, apart from ongoing research excavations at the Caburn (Drewett & Hamilton 1996), not particularly recent. One of the most striking similarities is the presence of substantial pits at each site. Their primary use was probably as grain storage pits. The subsequent use of such pits for structured depositions has been isolated, by Hill (1995), for Wessex hillforts and settlements. The

wealth of finds (e.g. loomweights, latch-lifters, whetstones, iron slag, quern fragments) from especially the Trundle and Caburn, suggests the range of artefacts that could be anticipated if the sites had been intensively occupied. It is perhaps notable, however, that most of the finds from these two sites, have come almost exclusively from the contents of pits. We need to consider how the artefacts actually got into the pits before we can assume them to be direct reflections of occupation. The number (139 — mostly Iron Age, but some are Roman and possibly later: Drewett & Hamilton 1996) and content of the Caburn pits are quite extraordinary (Curwen & Curwen 1927, 47ff.). Curwen commented on the 'inverted stratigraphy' in some of the pits at the Trundle, and on the frequency of quern fragments — such that it might appear that their fracture was intentional (Curwen 1929, 63; 1931, 116; *see* Discussion below). Significant new information from the Trundle has come from a Royal Commission survey. Fourteen possible circular building platforms were identified, lending weight to the argument that this site was used intensively during the Middle Iron Age (RCHME 1995, 22–3). Similarities and differences can be provided by the apparently unenclosed but contemporary Middle Iron Age site at Lavant (near Chichester) excavated in 1993. Here at least 13 circular 'houses' were found in close proximity alongside four- and six-post structures; there were no pits, and the range and number of artefacts were both more impoverished than at the adjacent site of the Trundle (J. Magilton pers. comm.).

All of these sites seem to have gone out of use by the Late Iron Age. By that period the interior of Cissbury was turned over to what must have been a continuation of the farming landscape that had previously existed outside the perimeter (Donachie & Field 1994). The Trundle became deserted subsequent to an abandoned grandiose reorganization of the east entrance (Curwen 1931, 131). At Torberry a similarly massive east gate was destroyed by pulling up the huge timbers of the gate structure and throwing down the flanking wall to block the entrance roadway (Cunliffe 1976, 25). The Caburn too, is interpreted as going out of major use by *c.* 100 BC, with the later multivallation on its northern side being associated with Roman/immediately post-Roman, and Norman activity (on the basis of the pottery incorporated in its ramparts; Avery 1993).

DISCUSSION

The Middle Iron Age landscape of enclosure presents a very different picture. The number of enclosures is dramatically reduced. It has long been noted that they are well spaced, with one located centrally within each of the downland blocks defined by the north-south rivers of Sussex (the Cuckmere, Ouse, Adur, and Arun: Cunliffe 1991, fig. 14.27; Bedwin 1978b). This re-configuration has traditionally been seen as relating to the emergence of central-places which replaced socio-economic functions previously dispersed across several enclosures. Their morphology and topography, however, suggest a very different form of landscape articulation and use, one which may have more to do with the communities outside the enclosures rather than any communities inside. Each site encloses a distinct hill, and would have been dramatic local landmarks in their own right prior to enclosure. The Caburn and the Trundle in particular are striking, conical hills which can be seen from some distance. In each case the ramparts not only emphasize the hills by following their contours, but 'inscribe' and emphasize the hill shape by being placed downslope of the hilltops. From a distance, the ramparts therefore fail to obscure the activities of the hill interior, but instead provide a presentation of them. This feature argues against a primarily defensive role for the ramparts, and has been noted for other hillforts in southern Britain (Wilts.: Bowden & McOmish 1987; Hants.: J. D. Hill pers. comm.). In this vein, the elaborate entrance corridors associated with Torberry, the Trundle, and the Caburn may have been as much to do with the theatre of presentation and approach, than with 'military' tactics.

Undoubtedly, a greater intensity of activity took place on these sites than is apparent for the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age enclosures. The numerous pits at the Caburn and the Trundle in particular have produced large quantities of pottery, metalwork (ornaments, agricultural tools, and weapons: e.g. the broken sword from the Caburn), weaving equipment (spindlewhorls, loomweights, weaving combs), human jaw bones (the Caburn), dog bones and dog coprolites, and horse bones. It is odd, therefore, that actual house structures have not been identified from the enclosed phase of the Caburn. The pattern of deposition in these pits is undoubtedly skewed, not only in the selection of particular types of material rather than a complete range of domestic refuse, but also in the pattern of layering of deposits.

Early Iron Age and Middle Iron Age artefactual material occurs in alternating layers in many of the Trundle pits, and pottery from both periods is mixed together in the Caburn pits. This suggests that the sites may have had a long history of 'rubbish' accumulation, and that 'rubbish' deposition may have been a separate and later activity. It is suggested that one of the functions of the enclosures was as regional 'landmark sites' where special activities took place, and that these activities might have included periodic symbolic deposition. Indeed, the shape of these 'landmark' hills, particularly in the case of the Caburn, would have made the co-ordination of commonplace domestic activities all but impossible. The convex nature of the enclosed area makes the maximal visual contact between points — either horizontally, or up- or down-slope, restricted to approximately 40 metres.

These sites seem therefore to have functioned differently to the majority of the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age enclosures; the Middle Iron Age sites were more about 'looking-towards' from the outside, rather than 'looking-out' from the inside. As such, they would have provided dramatically inscribed regional landmarks for scattered downland communities. In this context substantial ramparts would have been essential for viewing from a distance. A marked contrast between these enclosures and those of the preceding phase lies, with the exception of Torberry, in their more 'central downland' positions. The Middle Iron Age sites, again with the exception of Torberry, were hidden from the Weald. However, it cannot be ruled out that some of the enclosures from the preceding phase remained semi-dormant loci, maintaining landscape articulation between the Downs and the Weald.

LATE IRON AGE PROMONTORY FORTS

DATING

The general absence of Late Iron Age hillforts from the Downs suggests a dramatic change (Fig. 4). Devil's Dyke is the only downland enclosure that might have been established during this period, but its dating as such is very weak. An unspecified amount of Late Iron Age pottery recovered from the interior of Devil's Dyke (apparently associated with a circular structure; Burstow & Wilson 1936) provides its only dating evidence.

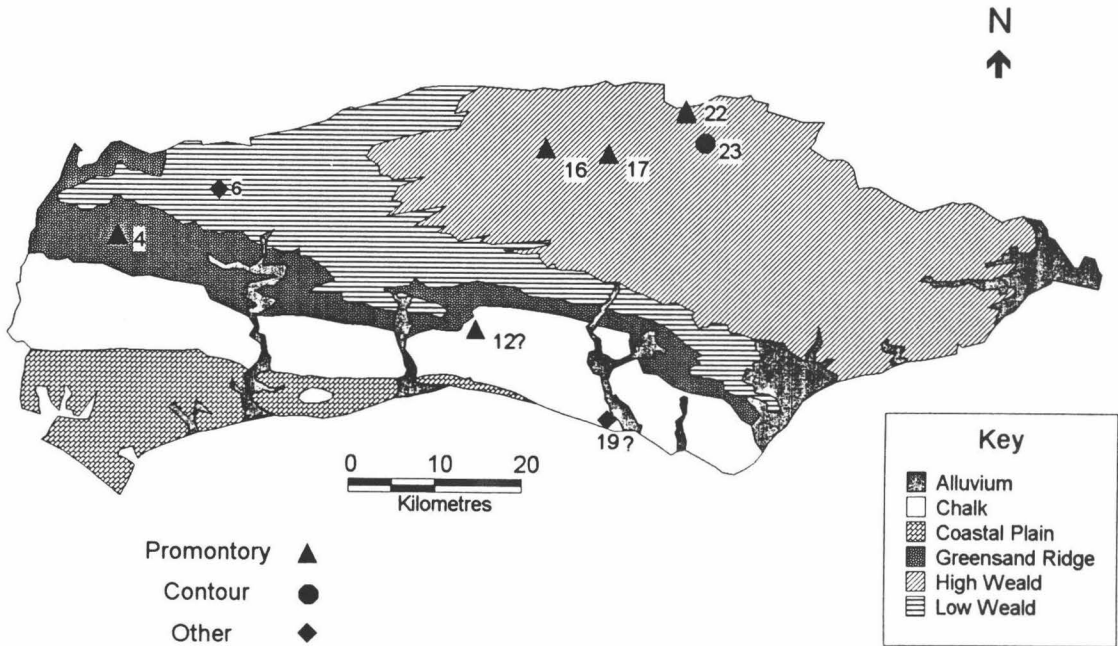


Fig. 4. Distribution of Late Iron Age prominent enclosures ('hillforts') against the major landforms of Sussex.

Key to site names (? = dating insecure; see text):

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| 4. Hammer Wood | 12. Devil's Dyke? | 17. Garden Hill | 22. High Rocks |
| 6. Piper's Cope | 16. Philpots | 19. Castle Hill?, Newhaven | 23. Saxonbury |

Instead, the focus of enclosure activity moves northwards to Weald where a cluster of promontory enclosures are functioning by the Late Iron Age. These include Philpots, Piper's Cope, and Hammer Wood, all of which are all somewhat barren of finds. Their dating is secured by their topographic and morphological comparisons with better-dated sites such as Garden Hill and High Rocks. Two sealed hearths situated between the two ramparts at Hammer Wood have produced Late Bronze Age pottery, and are interpreted as being earlier than the construction of the ramparts (Boyden 1958). A hearth situated just inside the rampart bank at Piper's Cope produced 'La Tène II/III' pottery in association with nodules of iron ore (Winbolt 1930, 246).

Garden Hill has no stratified evidence to date its Period I rampart. The Period II rampart produced Early Iron Age sherds and Middle Iron Age saucepan pottery from low down in its ditch silts, suggesting that the site might have been enclosed by the Middle Iron Age. The greater evidence, however, is for Late Iron Age and Romano-British activity (notably iron-making and iron-forging). A hearth and baking oven

dug into the Period II rampart provide mid-1st-century BC archaeomagnetic dates (Money 1980) and two circular structures have produced Late Iron Age pottery (Money 1977). At High Rocks one Late Bronze Age decorated rim and Early Iron Age pottery have been variously recovered from different parts of the old land surface sealed by the second (inner) rampart (Money 1968, 187, fig. 16:1,2). Middle Iron Age saucepan pottery has also been recovered from the interior. Again, it is possible that the Early Iron Age/Middle Iron Age activity on the site may be concurrent with the construction of the first rampart. The site was then re-fortified after an interval of abandonment (pollen evidence: Dimbleby 1968, 184). Pottery stratified in the Period II defences is scanty and residual, but unstratified Late Iron Age sherds (Eastern Atrebatian tradition (Cunliffe 1991), and wheel-thrown quartz-tempered wares) suggest a Late Iron Age dating (c. post 50 BC) for the second rampart. Lastly, the interior of Saxonbury has produced finds of iron-slag, Late Iron Age grog-tempered S-profile pottery, together with a coin of Vespasian or Titus (AD 69-81) and Roman pottery which collectively suggest a predominantly Late Iron

Age and later use of the site. No dating evidence has been recovered from the earthen rampart or for the preceding oval dry stone wall enclosure phase (Winbolt 1930, 228).

DESCRIPTION

In the century and a half before the Roman Conquest the Downs, bar one possible exception, were devoid of hillfort-based activity. Suddenly, or so it would seem, the site type is transplanted into an alien world, the Weald. Indeed, for the present day visitor, the Wealden examples have completely different resonances. Gone are anticipatory views of hillforts seen from a distance; gone are the long walks upwards towards landmark sites ringed by ramparts. Instead these sites are hidden by present-day woodland, and not stumbled upon casually. As a result some of them are quite recent 'discoveries' (cf. Garden Hill and Piper's Copse).

Five of the seven sites that make up this group can be classified as promontory 'forts'. The only downland example that might find a place in this phase is the fort at Devil's Dyke, right on the northern scarp of the chalk. Rocky outcrops form the sides and ends of the promontories on which were constructed High Rocks and Philpots. Piper's Copse, while oval in shape, is situated on fairly flat ground overlooking a small stream to its west. Saxonbury is the only real example of a contour 'fort'.

The ramparts of these sites are often not inconsiderable. The banks and ditches which run across the necks of the promontory enclosures are invariably either larger or the only banks and ditches on the sites. The bank that cuts off the neck of the promontory at Devil's Dyke, for example, is substantial and much larger than the banks that surround the other sides of the promontory. The latter are so far down the slope of the hill as to suggest that they could not have operated in any real defensive capacity. Hammer Wood has multiple lines of banks and ditches, with a curiously offset entrance. The single bank around Piper's Copse survives well, while excavation has demonstrated the multivallation around the impressive entrance to High Rocks (Money 1968, 179).

Six of the seven sites ascribed to this phase have entrances aligned in an arc from north-east to south-east (the one exception is Devil's Dyke). The ground plan of Hammer Wood is particularly informative. Here an obvious entrance position, aligned near to true north, was eschewed for a deliberate entrance

alignment focusing on the north-east, even though such an alignment causes an unorthodox position for the main gate.

The internal areas of these sites varies considerably, ranging from the 15 hectares of Devil's Dyke to the very small Piper's Copse. There is no obvious conclusion to be drawn from area comparisons, except to observe that internal area does not equal area for potential occupation, as the very steep contours within Devil's Dyke illustrate. Exploratory excavation to establish dating has only been undertaken at two sites, Garden Hill and Saxonbury. Undoubtedly, excavations at the former, conducted in the 1970s, have been the more productive (Money 1977). At least two circular timber structures were located, apparently associated with traces of ironworking. That activity continued into the Roman period with the construction of a bathhouse and rectangular timber buildings inside the ramparts. Whether the occupancy was continuous or interrupted cannot be ascertained. Earlier excavations at Saxonbury revealed an oval-shaped enclosure with defining walls of stone underneath, but not aligned with, the principal rampart (Winbolt 1930, 222). There are no parallels for such a feature from any of the other Sussex enclosures. Internal structures, therefore, are known from three sites. Ironworking debris is a consistent discovery in the Wealden forts (e.g. Piper's Copse, Garden Hill, Saxonbury), while Roman material is also reasonably common (e.g. Garden Hill, Piper's Copse, Saxonbury, and High Rocks).

The Wealden enclosures are located at various heights. The obvious elevations of Saxonbury give it some command of the lower ground in that part of the Weald. The pollen evidence from High Rocks places the hillfort in an area already used for arable agriculture (Dimbleby 1968; Gardiner 1990; Money 1980) and it is important to consider how these sites might have functioned in at least partially cleared landscapes. Philpots in particular is at an elevation and position that (apart from the present-day trees) would have allowed wide views into and across the valleys to its west and east, as well as over the comparatively level country towards the north. However, intervisibility between the Wealden sites cannot (either in terms of topography or any woodland cover) have been a significant factor in determining their location, and they would have been inconsistently visible from a distance.

DISCUSSION

The Sussex Late Iron Age enclosures form a distinct grouping. Although they are ill-understood in terms of the range of activities which are/are not taking place on them, there is a general consensus that they relate to the increasing exploitation of the iron ore deposits of the Weald during the Late Iron Age. The evidence for both the smelting and forging of iron at Garden Hill in particular would be in line with this interpretation. While a few of the sites (e.g. Saxonbury) may have had long-distance views, the locations do not generally facilitate visual articulation between enclosures, suggesting a more fragmentary 'view' of space and place than in preceding periods.

UNDATED SITES

Three sites cannot be assigned definitively to any of these three chronological phases. Hastings Castle and East Hill (Hastings) are promontory enclosures overlooking the sea within a kilometre of each other. East Hill is the larger of the two, and has a characteristically bigger earthwork cutting off the neck of the promontory. The full extent of the promontory enclosure underlying, and extending to the north beyond Hastings Castle is not known. The earthwork that once delimited the enclosure on Castle Hill, Newhaven, no longer survives, partly destroyed by the 19th-century fort overlooking the entrance to the river Ouse. Estimates of its original length suggest an earthwork of over 400 metres, and it is possible that the site resembled Belle Tout. Pottery collected from the location during the 1930s spans the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age through to the early Roman period (Field 1939). On this basis it appears, albeit tentatively, on each of the three phase maps (Figs 2, 3 & 4).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has demonstrated that there is a clear locational shift over three time periods for the group of sites in Sussex that are conventionally labelled 'hillforts'. In itself, as others have indicated, there is an inescapable poverty in a terminology that calls the feeble enclosure of Harrow Hill and the great footprint-shaped contours of Cissbury both by the same name. This locational shift has been perceived before and can be traced through the works of Curwen (1939) and Cunliffe (1984), although the current paper perhaps illustrates it most graphically

for Sussex. It must be remembered that the assignation of a particular site to a definite phase is sometimes achieved using restricted evidence from very small excavations. It cannot be ruled out that some of these sites could 'belong' in more than one of the phases outlined here.

The locations of the larger and earliest group of downland enclosures notably permit the accessing of non-chalk landscapes and resources — both in terms of visibility and in terms of physical proximity. It is hard to believe, therefore, that the location of sites such as Harting Beacon, or Chanctonbury Ring, relates simply to their use as stock-enclosures.

Initially, it does seem, from the limited data at our disposal, that the idea of a 'developed hillfort' (such as Danebury, Hants.) would find most favour in the four downland sites that can be assigned to the Middle Iron Age. The evidence of actual occupation at these sites is, however, not secure. It is instead suggested that they provided prominent, enclosed 'central landmarks' for surrounding scattered communities. Their enclosures, although substantial, are not particularly effectively positioned to provide 'defence'. In the cases of the Trundle and the Caburn, the earthworks appear to be 'inscribing' sites with included substantial storage facilities (pits) which subsequently became foci for 'patterned deposition'.

The hillforts of the Downs lack material evidence of Late Iron Age use. Concurrently the enclosure activity shifts to the Weald. Rather than adhering to an articulated strategy of landscape placement, these Wealden sites appear placed primarily to utilize local deposits of iron.

The great variability of the Sussex enclosures defies single-function explanations. Their placement into a tripartite chronological grouping does, however, serve to emphasize that the sites, irrespective of their variability within these phases, were functioning in the landscape in essentially different ways during the three periods isolated. This makes it inappropriate to 'explain' the sites in terms of continuums of development, such as increasing socio-economic centralization and developing hierarchies. Each of our 'phases' seems instead to point to unique and specific resolutions of landscape use and the placement of communities within the landscape. It is clear, for each phase, that we need to document and locate the contemporary sites outside the enclosures, as much as to initiate further work within the interiors of the enclosures.

It is also noteworthy that there is a persistence

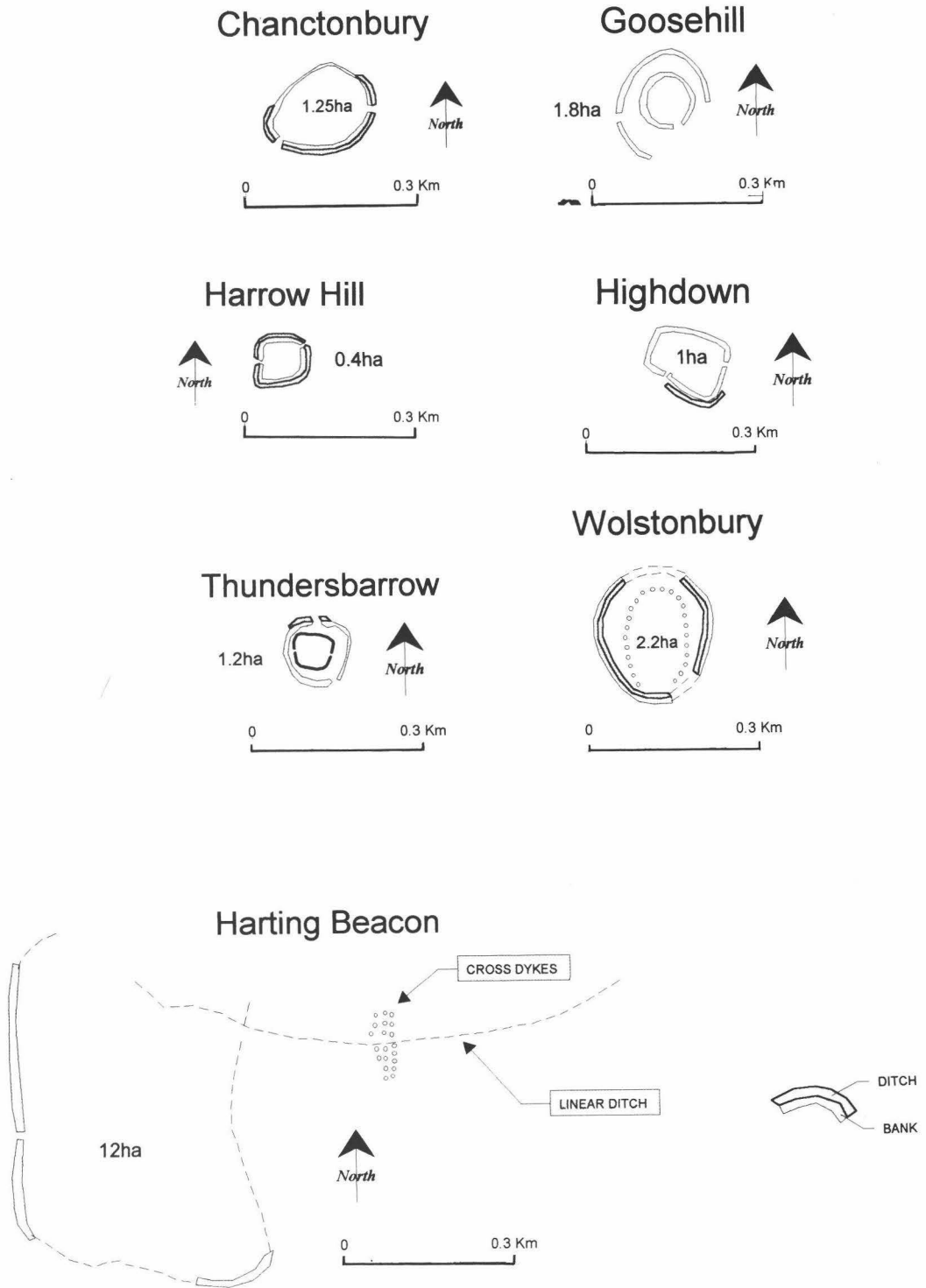


Fig. 5. Schematic plans of some hillforts.

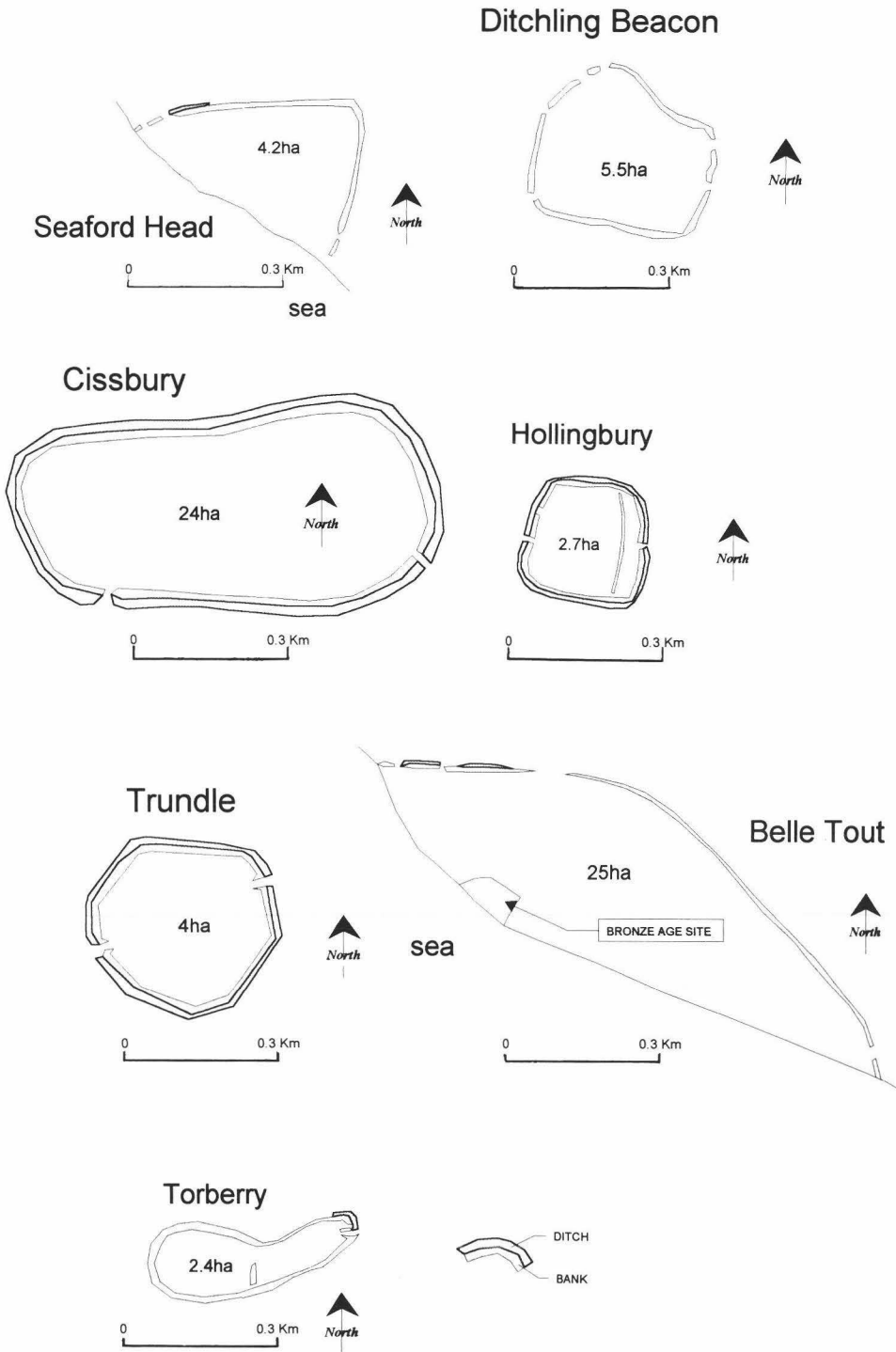


Fig. 6. Schematic plans of some hillforts.

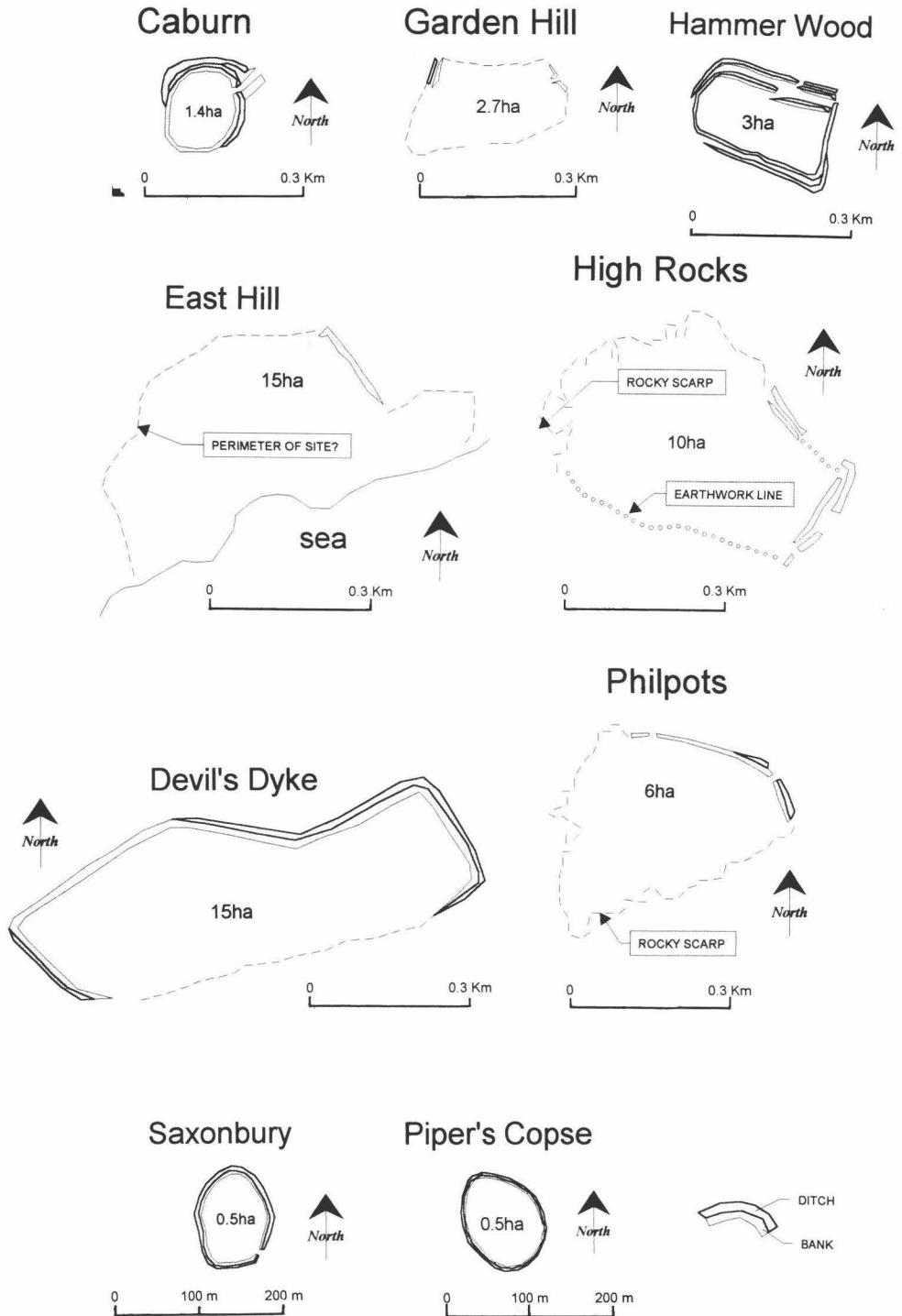


Fig. 7. Schematic plans of some hillforts.

of favoured entrance alignments in the prominent enclosures of the three phases, in spite of topography. This regularity of orientation has been documented for round 'houses', non-'hillfort' enclosures and 'hillforts' proper in southern England (Hill 1996, 108–10). Such an enduring tradition suggests that, despite changing functions and varying locations, there is an over-arching cosmological ordering shaping the layout of such sites, and no doubt other social variables, throughout the 1st millennium BC in Sussex.

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Postscript

The work which is presented in this article is a developed statement of that summarized in Manley and Hamilton (in press). The authors' work is ongoing, particularly with respect to inter- and intra-site visibility, and the extent to which the broad generalizations isolated for each phase of Sussex 1st-millennium BC prominent enclosures hold true with regard to the phasing and topographic placement of hillforts of Kent and Surrey. This continued research will be the subject of a future article.

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