

A prehistoric and later medieval agricultural landscape at Dean Way, Storrington

by Christine Howard-Davis & Bryan Matthews

with contributions by
Kate Cramp
Malcolm Lyne

Excavations at Dean Way, Storrington revealed a palimpsest agricultural landscape incorporating elements dating from at least the 1st millennium BC to the 20th century. Evidence of earlier activity, in the form of late Mesolithic microliths and a range of Neolithic flintwork, was found as largely residual material in later contexts. Analysis determined four phases of development on the site. Phase 1 was long-lived, and represents intermittent domestic and agricultural activity over an extended period, possibly from as early as the mid-late Neolithic to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age. Phase 2, a rectilinear field system and again long-lived, was possibly late Iron Age in origin, but might have been considerably later. Phase 3, parallel field boundaries and tracks, appears to have been of later medieval date and onwards, and Phase 4, plough and topsoils, is relatively recent.

INTRODUCTION

In May 2000, the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land off Dean Way, Storrington, in West Sussex (TQ 080151), on behalf of CgMs Consulting in respect of a proposed housing development by Barratt Southern Counties. In all, 27 trenches (Tr. 1–17, Tr. 19–28) and two test-pits were excavated by machine, under close archaeological supervision, and all archaeologically significant features recorded (OAU 2000). A further phase of excavation was undertaken during August 2000, when eight new trenches were excavated (Tr. 30–Tr. 37), some of which subsumed extant evaluation trenches (see Fig. 1). Topsoil and subsoil were removed by machine under archaeological supervision and all subsequent investigation was undertaken by hand.

This report presents the results of those excavations, drawing on material from the evaluation as necessary, but not dealing with it in detail; only features mentioned in the text are shown on Figure 2. Similarly, only finds relevant to the interpretation of Phases 1 and 2 are discussed in detail. Full catalogues of the stratigraphic and finds data are to be found within the archive, deposited in Worthing Museum and Art Gallery, accession no. WM2000.108.

BACKGROUND

The site lay to the west of the Stor Valley, over part of the Hythe Beds, an element of the Lower Greensand. It was an area of fairly level, low-lying pasture and scrub woodland, and to the east it sloped gently downwards towards the river Stor.

Very little is known of the archaeology of the immediate vicinity of the site. Few finds of prehistoric date have ever been recovered, although a Neolithic axe (SMR 2564) was found at Cootham, less than 1 km to the south-west. The line of a Roman road passes some 500 m to the north of the site and the few finds of this period from the area presumably reflect some agricultural exploitation (for instance, SMR 2655). Although there is some evidence for medieval or early post-medieval occupation in the area (in the form of Fryern Hall, now demolished), it is not until the first edition of the Ordnance Survey (1876) that a comprehensive picture of the area can be discerned, when the landscape can be seen to have been largely open agricultural land, although significantly more wooded than today.

THE EXCAVATION

The archaeological succession is described in order of deposition, from the earliest to the most recent.



Fig. 1. Location plan: showing the layout of the excavated trenches and test-pits.

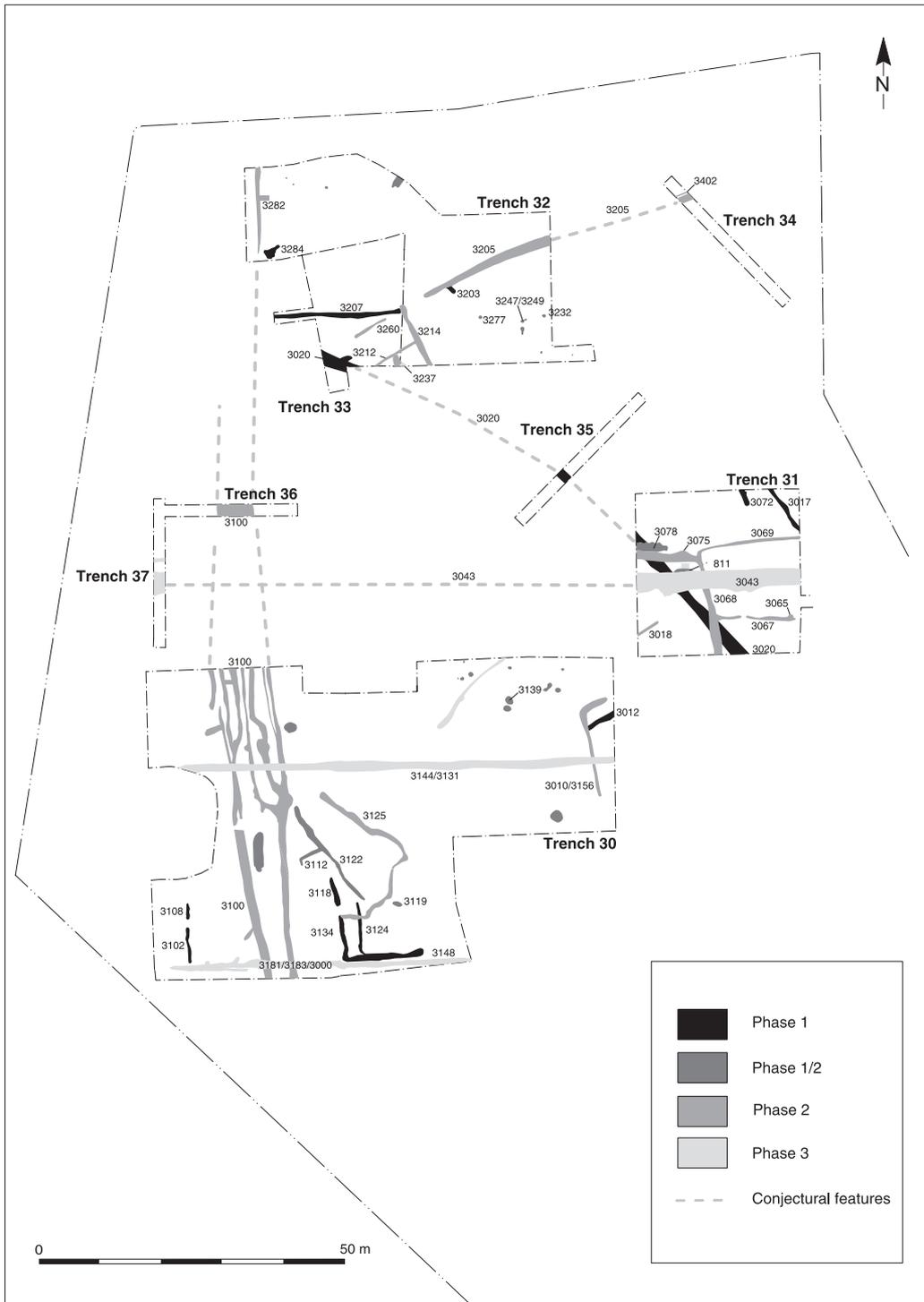


Fig. 2. General site plan showing Phases 1-3.

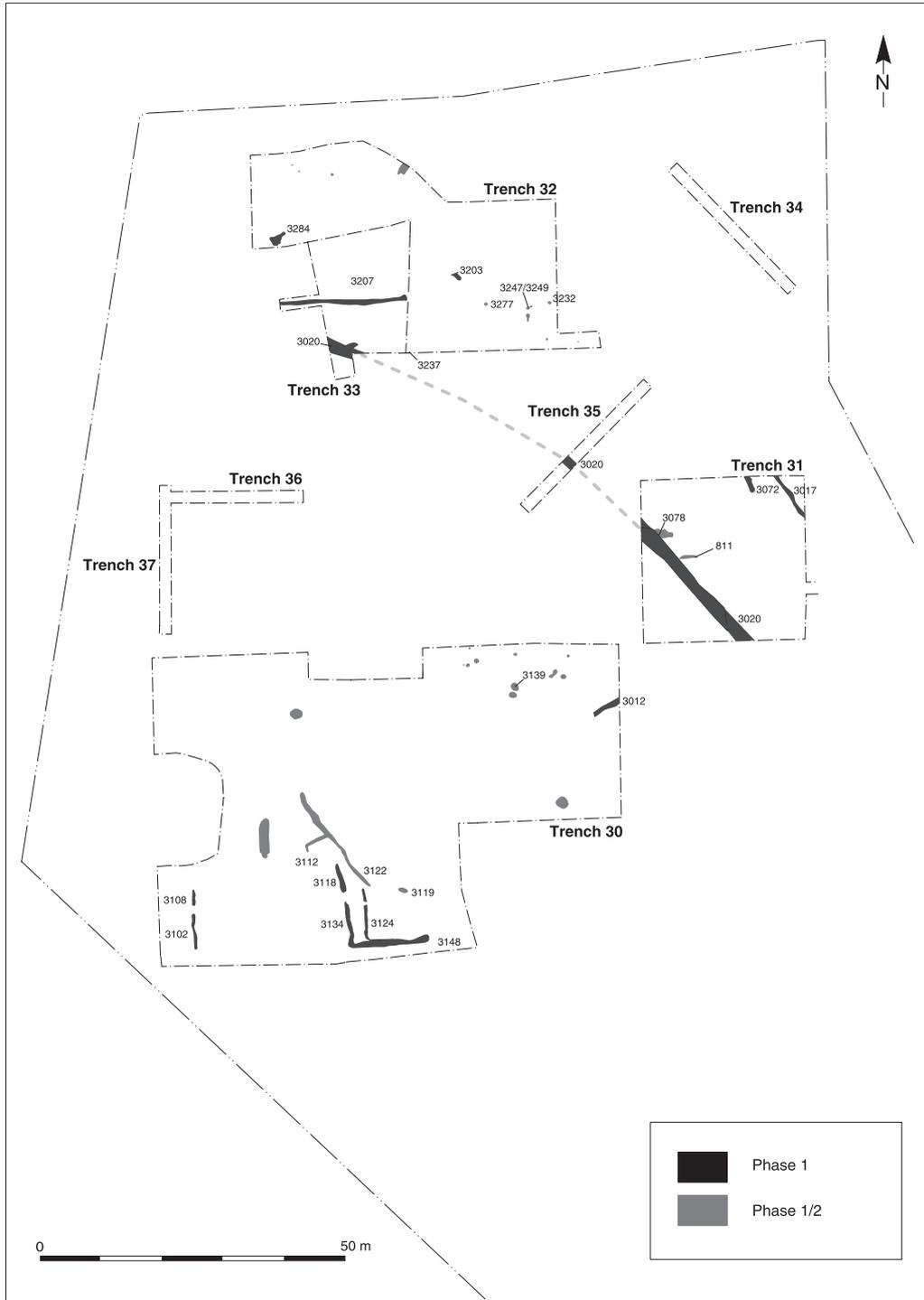


Fig. 3. Plan of Phase-1 and Phase-1/2 features.

Several linear features appeared in a number of trenches and were consequently allocated context numbers; however, to reduce confusion in this text they are identified by a single context reference. Concordances can be found in the archive.

NATURAL DEPOSITS AND FEATURES

The underlying natural deposits were fragmentary and decayed sandstone (Lower Greensand) and clayey sands, which also presumably comprised part of the natural geological succession. A number of shallow and effectively amorphous disturbances (3104, 3106, 3129, 3127, 3140, 3224, 3245) dotted the site, each cutting the natural deposits, on occasion cut by later features. These have been interpreted as tree-throw holes, the fills of which (3105, 3107, 3130, 3128, 3141, 3223, 3246) were devoid of finds.

PHASE 1 (Fig. 3)

Ditch 3020 is the most significant feature associated with Phase 1, running diagonally from north-west to south-east across the study area (Tr. 31, 35, 32). Examined over a length of *c.* 85 m, it varied between 1.2 m and 2 m in width, and survived to a depth of between 0.4 m and 0.6 m. The primary fill, 3021, produced flint and pottery in small quantities, and was, towards the southern end of the excavated area (Tr. 31), overlain by a second fill, 3057, which also produced flint and pottery, along with burnt stone, presumably the remnant of domestic rubbish. Redeposited natural sandstone (3074) near the edge of the ditch might represent upcast from its construction, perhaps the deliberate creation of a bank. At its northern extremity (Tr. 32), there was evidence for a recut (3220, fill 3219), which might suggest that elsewhere only the final line of the ditch was preserved. The length and relative size of this feature suggests that it represented a boundary of some significance within the local landscape.

Other features attributed to this phase are all considerably less substantial. As they lay both north and south of the boundary, it is suggested that they represent elements of smaller enclosures or boundaries, loosely oriented on the principal boundary. To the north (Tr. 31), ditches 3072 and 3017 lay *c.* 16 m and 21.5 m respectively from boundary ditch 3020, and were loosely parallel. Flint and early Iron Age pottery from 3072 (fill 3073) place

it within this phase and 3017 appears to fit more comfortably within this phase than with any later activity.

Towards the north-western extremity of the study area (Tr. 32) ditch 3207 ran more or less east-west. Whilst relatively insubstantial, it appears as a second significant element of the Phase-1 landscape, perhaps converging with boundary 3020 to the immediate west of the excavated area. Its fill (3208) produced small amounts of heat-shattered stone, again suggesting a domestic origin. A pit or short stretch of ditch (3203, fill 3204), to the east, ran southwards at right angles to the line of 3207. Flint and flecks of charcoal in this again hint at the deposition of domestic rubbish.

To the south of boundary 3020, the surviving Phase-1 features lay at some distance and links between them must remain largely conjectural. At the south-western extremity of the study area (Tr. 30), two short and somewhat similar ditches, 3102 and 3108 (fills 3102 & 3109), with a gap of 1.3 m between them, formed an alignment running more or less north-south. The presence of a tree-throw hole (3104), symmetrically placed in the gap between them, might be of significance but cannot be associated with them on any grounds other than location.

A second pair of short ditches, 3118 and 3134, this time with a gap of *c.* 1.45 m between them, lay *c.* 24.5 m to the east, on the same alignment. Their fills (3117 & 3135) were not alike: the former an orange-brown loamy silt; the latter, brown sandy clay which produced a single small fragment of medieval pottery, suggesting either late disturbance, or that they are not contemporary. The southern end of 3134 coincided with ditch 3148 running east-west; the relationship between the two was not ascertained. The latter, filled by silty clay 3149, was *c.* 13.5 m long, 1.15 m wide at its eastern terminus, and *c.* 200 mm deep. Together, these features suggest an enclosure at least 13.74 m north-south and 13.5 m east-west. Severe truncation of the deposits suggests that it could originally have been considerably larger.

A second shallow ditch, 3124 (fill 3123), lay parallel to and *c.* 2 m to the east of 3134. The relationship between its southern end, curving slightly to the east, and ditch 3148 was not explored, but in plan it seems that the latter might have cut the former, thus indicating that they were not precisely contemporary.

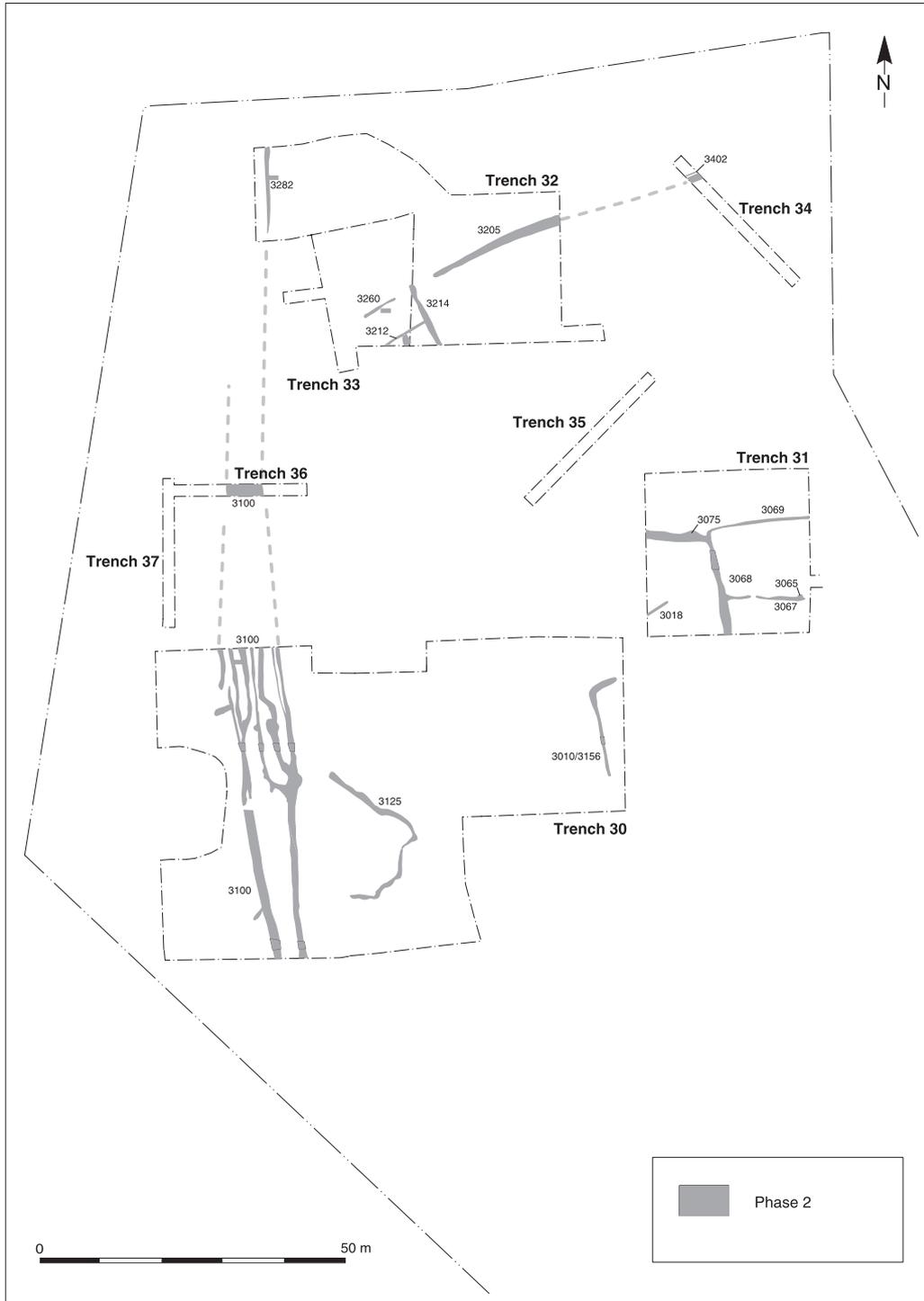


Fig. 4. Plan of Phase-2 features.

A short stretch of ditch (3012, fill 3013) running east–west, lay considerably closer to boundary 3020 and can also be attributed to this phase. Approximately 0.7 m wide, it was 250 mm deep, and again the fill produced struck flint. The western end of this ditch appeared to have cut across a single small post-hole, 3014 (fill 3015), *c.* 150 mm in diameter and 100 mm deep.

Two tree-throw holes (3191 & 3284) can possibly be attributed to this phase, as the fills of the former (3192–4) were rich in worked flint and late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery, and some flint was recovered from the fill of the latter (3283). It must be noted, however, that 3191 (Tr. 30) either survived as a surface hollow for some time or was disturbed by later ploughing, as fill 3192 also produced a fragment of later medieval pottery.

PHASE 2 (Fig. 4)

A substantial and often renewed trackway (3100) ran north–south down the western side of the entire study area (Tr. 30, 33, 36). It comprised a number of individual elements up to 1 m wide and up to 0.5 m deep, which were either parallel or at slight angles to each other, some clearly recut, giving the impression of use over a protracted period. Dating for the feature was restricted to four small late Iron Age sherds, and nowhere was there a direct stratigraphical relationship with features of the preceding phase. Thus, its attribution to this second phase of activity is based upon its alignment with other elements of the Phase-2 field system where relationships were more clear-cut.

All other Phase-2 features lay to the east of this trackway. Elements of what has been interpreted as a rectilinear field system were better preserved towards the north of the study area (Tr. 32/33, Tr. 34) where ditch 3205 lay at a slight angle to the line of the track, some 30 metres to the east. It was generally up to 1.14 m wide, increasing to 2 m at one point, and up to 0.54 m deep, increasing in depth towards the east. Some 23 m of this ditch were exposed in Tr. 32/33, and as its projected line coincided closely with small stretches of ditch seen to the east in Tr. 34 (3401, 3402), they have been regarded as the same feature. A shorter and rather truncated stretch of ditch (3260) carried its line further westwards after a gap of *c.* 7.2 m; this was 5 m long, but only 0.61 m wide and 110 mm deep, its diminishing dimensions reflecting an apparent truncation of all deposits towards the west. This

break in the line of the ditch would appear to have been left deliberately as an entrance. Ditch 3214, a third element of the enclosures in this part of the study area (running broadly north-west to south-east), came to an end at this entrance, effectively bisecting it. About 1 m wide with a steep-sided, V-shaped profile, it was up to 0.62 m deep. A much less substantial ditch, 3212, branched off westwards from it and was probably contemporary, running parallel to 3260. Ditch 3212 was subsequently cut by feature 3237 (fill 3238), which, although only a short stretch was revealed, seemed likely to represent the terminal of another ditch running broadly north–south.

Further to the south (Tr. 31) elements of two conjoined enclosures survived. Ditch 3068 ran north–south, up to 500 mm deep and varying in width between 450 mm and 1.6 m. Its fills suggested that it was open for some time, with erosion of the sides (fill 3024), followed by a slow accumulation of silts, including some domestic rubbish (fill 3023). It turned abruptly westwards at its northern extremity (3076, fill 3075) continuing beyond the excavation.

Ditch 3067 branched from ditch 3068 at 90°, running eastwards, and was much less substantial, only 350 mm wide and 90 mm deep. The single fill, however, produced only pottery of medieval date, calling into question its contemporaneity, although its shallow depth may suggest severe truncation and plough disturbance. The eastern extremity of ditch 3067 was cut by a relatively large post-hole (3065), 0.7 m in diameter and 150 mm deep. About 11 m further north, a second east–west ditch (3069) was again relatively insubstantial, a maximum of *c.* 0.7 m wide and 120 mm deep, reduced in places to only a few centimetres, again indicating substantial truncation of the remaining archaeological deposits in the eastern half of Tr. 31.

To the south-west (Tr. 30), the corner of another rectilinear enclosure cut Phase-1 features. Ditch 3010/3156 ran broadly north–south; around 1.05 m at the widest, it was up to 140 mm deep. The fill, 3011/3157, again produced flint and late Iron Age pottery. At its northern end, ditch 3010/3155 turned eastwards as 3150 (fill 3151), forming a right-angled return, presumably the north-western corner of an enclosure.

Still further west, an irregular, sinuous feature, 3125, meandered across part of the area to the immediate east of the trackway (Tr. 30), cutting

several Phase-1 features. Its purpose is not obvious although it did, in a loose sense, define an area to the east, pockmarked with isolated post-holes and pits (*see below*).

PHASE 1 AND/OR 2 (Fig. 3)

It proved impossible to link a considerable number of ditch segments, post-holes and pits with the features described above, their only common link being that all cut the natural Greensand and were sealed by subsoil. Few seemed to form any discernible patterns, or even hinted at a commonality of purpose.

The most significant was ditch 3122 (Tr. 30, fill 3121), the southern end of which lay close to Phase-1 ditch 3124. It lay at an angle to all other features within the study area, and might even represent a separate phase of activity. Running north-west-south-east, it was more than 19.5 m long; only the southern terminus was excavated, where it was 400 mm wide and only 80 mm deep. Approximately 11 m north of its southern terminus, ditch 3112, of similar dimensions, branched to the west at an approximate right angle. At its western end it turned southwards again, forming a corner, and thus implied a relatively small enclosure to the south.

Ditch 3078 (fill 3071) clearly post-dated the Phase-1 boundary (ditch 3020); irregular and ill-defined, it was some 1.7 m wide and 180 mm deep. It was noted by the excavator that the undulating base might suggest a series of intercutting pits rather than a ditch.

Two relatively large sub-rectangular pits (3119 & 3139), which lay to the east of feature 3125 in the southern part of the study area, both produced flint but also, in the case of 3139, medieval pottery. A group of three post-holes to the east of Phase-1 enclosure ditch 3207, in the northern part of the study area, seem close enough and similar enough to be related in some manner. From west to east, post-holes 3277, 3247, and 3232 were between c. 0.55 m and 0.75 m in diameter, and 70 mm–

250 mm deep. Whilst the fill of 3277 was sterile, those of the other two were flecked with charcoal and what appear to have been small fragments of burnt clay, hinting at fires in the vicinity. Post-hole 3247 was cut into feature 3249 (fill 3250), interpreted as early (Phase 1) tree-throw disturbance. All other small cut features are listed in the archive.

PHASE 3 (Fig. 2)

Almost all significant prehistoric features on the site were cut by one or another of three large, straight ditches, associated with metalled tracks, which crossed the site from east to west, each producing some evidence for maintenance or renewal in the form of resurfacing or recuts. From north to south, these were ditch/track 3043, ditch 3144/3131, and ditch 3000 (which split at its western end into ditches 3181 and 3183). These are thought to represent medieval or later field boundaries obscured by modern ploughing.

The most northerly of the ditches was cut by a number of small post-holes, presumably indicating some insubstantial structure of no great antiquity (3029, fill 3039), and irregular linear feature 3033 (fill 3034), 3031 (fill 3032). An amorphous disturbance (3239, fills 3240, 3241) cutting late Phase-2 feature 3237, and interpreted as a tree-throw hole, and numerous modern tree-throw holes, were also noted during the excavation.

PHASE 4

All preceding features were overlain by plough-disturbed subsoil (3003), and modern topsoil (3004). Pottery from Phase-4 deposits comprised a range of fabrics, all clearly residual, dating from the 5th to the 17th centuries. Several drains, for example 3273, represent modern services. Two large pits (3229 & 3217) lay in the south-east corner of Tr. 32, both c. 1.8 m × 0.5 m; their fills contained significant amounts of modern material, suggesting that they had been intended for a similar, but unknown, purpose.

THE FINDS

THE FLINT (Fig. 5) By Kate Cramp

The site produced a total of 590 struck flints and 57 pieces (834 g) of burnt unworked flint. The majority of the assemblage appears, on the basis of technological traits, to be of a middle to late Neolithic date. Among other diagnostic types, the presence of two narrow-blade rod microliths suggests that a small component derives from the later Mesolithic.

Methodology

The flint assemblage was classified on the basis of typology, according to broad artefact/débitage type. Cores were characterized by the type and number of removals they exhibited, and were weighed individually. Further observations with regard to aspects such as technology, raw material type, and the general condition of the flint were also recorded. Unworked burnt flint was described and quantified by piece and weight.

Raw material and condition

The flint employed for flake production appears to have been procured from two distinct sources, which seem to have been roughly equally exploited. The first was a medium-dark brown flint of variable quality, probably originally derived from the gravels, likely to have been obtained locally from surface deposits. A number of pieces exhibit thermal fractures, which occur frequently in cores and tested nodules, and perhaps contributed to their abandonment. Where present, the cortex on these pieces is relatively thin and buff-coloured; several have been weathered and stained a mid-brown colour.

Good-quality, mid- to light grey flint with a thick chalky cortex represents a second source. It is likely that this material was imported to the site from on or near the South Downs. Slight weathering and discoloration of the cortex suggests that the flint was not mined, but collected from surface deposits. The majority is uncorticated, although a number of the pieces display a dense white, sometimes mottled, cortication on their surfaces.

In general, the flint is in a fresh condition. Post-depositional edge damage is mostly confined to the thinner flakes, which are more vulnerable to breakage. Twenty-six flints from the evaluation exhibit signs of post-depositional damage, mainly minor edge damage, and the degree of damage to flints within the excavation assemblage is comparably slight; some contexts, however, revealed a greater frequency of rolled or abraded flints. The fill of ditch 3068 (Phase 2, fill 3036) and Phase-3 ditch/track 3043 (fill 3026), in particular, contained a relatively high proportion of flints in poor condition, confirming their residuality. A number of flints display sand-gloss spots on their surfaces, whilst 11.3 per cent (73 flints) of the assemblage was burnt, and 23.3 per cent (151 flints) broken.

The assemblage

Technologically, the flintwork forms a relatively coherent assemblage, with the majority of the worked flint consisting of broad, thin flakes with fine flake or blade removals on their dorsal surface. Flakes and blade-like flakes provide 50.7 per cent of the assemblage total.

Numerous flakes exhibit platform edge abrasion. Knapping errors such as hinge fractures and snaps are not common. The use of both soft- and hard-hammer techniques is represented and there appears to be a loose association between the percussion used and the type of raw material. Thus, flakes manufactured from the high-quality, grey flint seem to be more frequently associated with soft-hammer percussion than flakes based on the dark-brown gravel-derived flint. The flake material would appear to date mainly to the middle or later Neolithic on the basis of these technological traits (Fig. 5:1 & 3).

Blades also occur with relative frequency, a total of 40 blades and 13 bladelets being recovered, representing 8.2 per cent of the assemblage. The majority of the complete blades are thin, narrow, and long in form. Most exhibit two or more blade scars on their dorsal surface, and flat, commonly abraded platforms (Fig. 5:4–6). Two heavily corticated, soft-hammer blades from the subsoil (201) of Tr. 2, are probably Mesolithic or early Neolithic in date, thereby demonstrating a small, though probably residual, late Mesolithic component.

Tested nodules and cores are well-represented, the latter usually consisting of multi-platform flake cores. Although most of the cores seem to have been directed towards the production of flakes, some blade scars were present. Several of the flakes

appeared to have been struck from a keeled core (e.g. Fig. 5:2). The tested nodules recovered from the site reach reasonably large dimensions, weighing up to 600 g. Many were probably abandoned owing to the poor quality of the raw material, primarily the presence of thermal fractures. The fill (3190) of Phase-3 ploughmark 3189 contained one blade core, manufactured from dark brown flint, which exhibits several blade and bladelet removals taken from two adjacent platforms, each of which shows considerable abrasion; this is probably of Mesolithic date (Fig. 5:11). Two flint hammerstones, 47 pieces of irregular waste, and 53 chips were also recovered, suggesting that the assemblage contains a strong element of knapping débitage.

The assemblage contained a relatively large number of retouched flints, providing 7.1 per cent (46 pieces) of the total. The most frequently occurring retouch item was the flake, of which a total of 25 (3.9 per cent) was recovered. The majority were relatively thin, with a limited amount of abrupt retouch applied to one or more of the flake margins (e.g. Fig. 5:8). Single narrow-blade microliths, which have been dated to the late Mesolithic, were recovered from Phase-1 fills 3070 (ditch 3020; Fig. 5:9) and 3149 (ditch 3148). These conform to Jacobi's type 5 (1978). In addition, there were four side scrapers and three end and side scrapers (e.g. Fig. 5:7), exhibiting a carefully applied, abrupt edge-retouch. Two piercers (e.g. Fig. 5:10), one spurred piece, two serrated flakes, three notched pieces, and four flakes exhibiting miscellaneous retouch were also recovered. The pieces exhibiting miscellaneous retouch generally consist of irregularly-shaped flakes with limited areas of retouch applied to the flake margins to produce a working edge. A total of 119 flints (18.4 per cent) showed macroscopic signs of use wear. No evidence of silica gloss was detected macroscopically.

Discussion of the flint

The flintwork from the site represents a relatively coherent assemblage, despite the large number of contexts from which it was derived. The material is mainly of a mid or late Neolithic date, although the presence of a blade core, two corticated soft-hammer blades, and two narrow blade microliths suggest that there is a smaller late Mesolithic component. The degree of post-depositional damage is slight, with the majority of the flintwork in remarkably fresh condition. It may therefore be inferred that the material is contemporary with associated features and has not been subjected to any great post-depositional movement. Similarly, the flint retrieved from the subsoil is in good condition, which again suggests that it had not moved far from its original location.

The assemblage is characterized by a broad range of different artefact types, including scrapers, piercers, notched pieces, cutting tools, and flaking débitage. The presence of numerous cores, hammerstones, and sieving chips indicate that the assemblage contains an additional knapping element. The relatively large proportion of retouched and utilized pieces, combined with the broad range of types represented in the assemblage, suggests that the material was deposited in the context of general domestic activity (Holgate 1988). The evidence of discrete concentrations of material, especially in fills 3192 and 3194 (Phase-1 tree-throw hole 3191), and fill 3190 (plough mark 3189), indicates an uneven deposition of flint that would require further investigation to establish the pattern of lithic distribution.

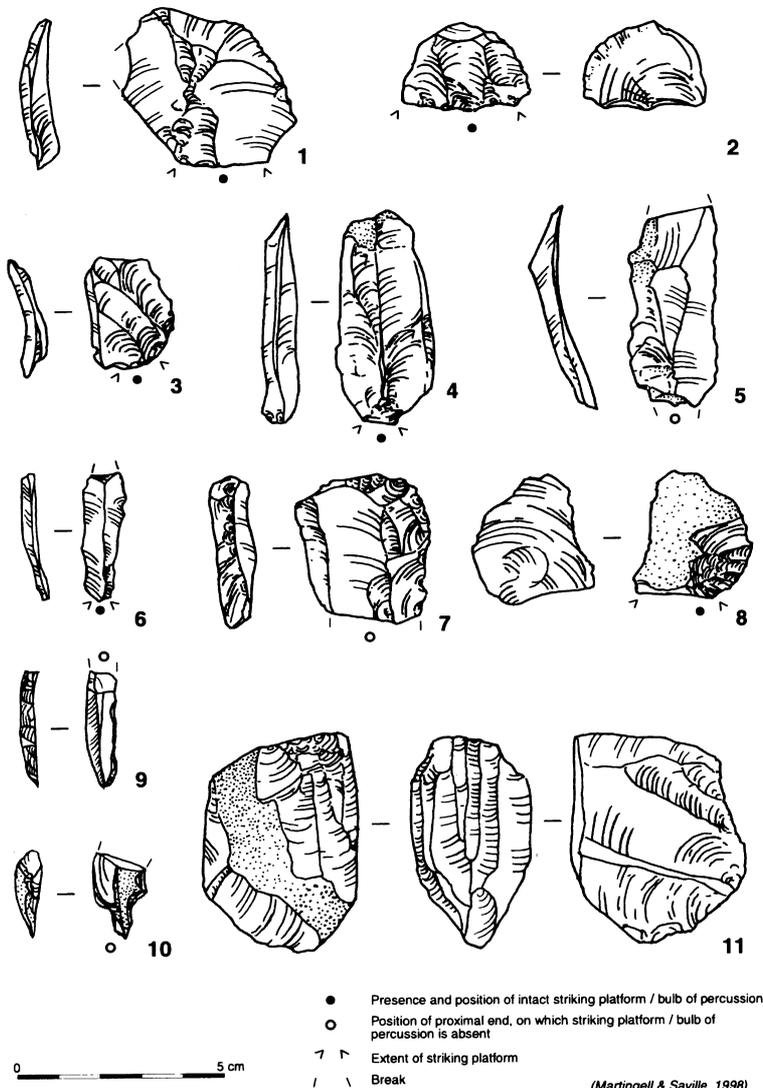


Fig. 5. Worked flints: 1–3, flakes; 4–6, blades; 7, scraper; 8, retouched flake; 9, microlith; 10, piercer; and 11, blade core.

Catalogue of illustrated flints (Fig. 5)

1. Flake. Context 3138 (Tr. 30, Phase 1, fill of pit 3139). Late Neolithic.
2. Flake from a keeled core. Context 3193 (Tr. 30, Phase 1, fill of tree-throw hole 3191). Mesolithic/Neolithic.
3. Flake. Context 3193 (Tr. 30, Phase 1, fill of tree-throw hole 3191). ?Late Neolithic.
4. Blade. Context 3138 (Tr. 30, Phase 1, fill of pit 3139). Mesolithic.
5. Blade. Context 3045 (Tr. 31, Phase 3, fill of ditch 3043). Mesolithic.
6. Blade. Context 3193 (Tr. 30, Phase 1, fill of tree-throw hole 3191). Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic.

7. End and side scraper. Context 3603 (Tr. 36, Phase 2, fill of 3064, part of trackway 3100). Late Neolithic/Bronze Age.
8. Retouched flake. SF 3002, context 3016 (Tr. 31, Phase 1, fill of ditch 3017). ?Late Neolithic/Bronze Age.
9. Narrow-blade rod microlith (Jacobi type 5). Context 3070 (Tr. 31, Phase 1, fill of ditch, part of 3020). Late Mesolithic.
10. Piercer. Context 3026 (Tr. 31, Phase 3, fill of ditch 3043). ?Neolithic.
11. Blade core. Context 3190 (Tr. 30, Phase 3, fill of ploughmark). Late Mesolithic.

THE POTTERY By Malcolm Lyne

The various evaluation trenches and test-pits (test-pit 1, Tr. 6, 8, 10, 12, 19, 24) produced 18 sherds (142 g) of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pottery, all of which, with the possible exception of one sherd, were unstratified in the subsoil and tree disturbances and tend to be abraded. The main excavations yielded a further 77 sherds (182 g) of pottery in similar condition, but including Iron Age material as well as further medieval and post-medieval sherds. This pottery is nearly all somewhat abraded and for the most part appears to be from field-marling. Some of the fragments are very ground up and their dating is by no means certain.

Methodology

All of the sherds were examined through a $\times 8$ magnification lens with built-in metric scale for determining the nature, form, size and frequency of inclusions. The following numerical fabric series was then created:

Catalogue of pottery

1. Micaceous handmade smooth grey fabric with profuse silt-sized quartz and occasional soft ferrous inclusions and up to 0.3 mm, irregular colourless quartz. ?Early Saxon.
2. Gritty fabric fired patchy reddish-brown/black with profuse angular up to 1.3 mm, alluvial multi-coloured quartz, ironstone, flint and chert grit. Saxo-Norman. Equivalent to Gardiner's Fabric CSW 2 (1994) at Ashington.
3. Sandy rough reddish-brown fabric with profuse ill-sorted sub-angular, up to 0.5 mm, multi-coloured quartz filler. c. AD 1200–1350.
4. Sandy grey fabric with profuse up to 0.5 mm, iron-stained quartz filler. c. AD 1200–1350.
5. Hard grey fabric fired smooth buff-brown with sparse up to 2 mm, irregular and rounded soft ferrous inclusions

- and profuse silt-sized quartz. Probably a 15th- to 16th-century earthenware.
6. Red earthenware with internal green-brown glaze. 17th century.
 7. Very fine-sanded buff to cream fabric with profuse up to 0.5 mm, quartz and ironstone filler. Medieval.
 8. Handmade patchy orange/brown/black with sparse to very sparse ill-sorted 0.1 mm to 5 mm, calcined flint and soft red ferrous inclusions. Early Iron Age.
 9. Handmade grog-tempered brown fabric fired black with orange margins and up to 1 mm, rounded voids. ?Late Iron Age.
 - 10A. Handmade grey-black fabric with profuse up to 0.5 mm quartz filler. ?Late Iron Age.
 - 10B. Handmade brown-black fabric with profuse up to 1 mm multi-coloured quartz filler and smooth surfaces. ?Late Iron Age.

Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery

Several sherds in coarse calcined-flint-tempered Fabric 8 were recovered during the excavation: two abraded sherds came from the fill of ditch 3072 (Phase 1, 3073), 40 sherds from the fill of tree-throw hole 3191 (Phase 1, 3192) and one abraded sherd each from the fills of ditches 3286 and 3400 (both Phase 2, part of 3205). The assemblage from the tree-throw hole was accompanied by two fragments from an abraded late medieval jug handle and thus may be residual in its context: the state of the other sherds suggests that they were also residual.

Late Iron Age pottery

Three contexts yielded sherds of this date: the primary and secondary fills of ditch 3020 (Phase 1, 3056 & 3057) produced seven tiny sherds in ?Fabric 10A and a single sherd in Fabric 10B respectively, and the fill of ditch 3100 (Phase 2) yielded a further four in Fabrics 9 and 10A. The sherds from these two features are very broken up but probably date the ditch and postulated trackway.

Saxon to medieval pottery

The range of fragments indicates that the area was used as

arable from the late Saxon/Norman period until at least the 17th century, although not necessarily continuously. A possible early Saxon sherd and one of the only two fragments in Saxo-Norman Fabric 2 do, however, come from tree disturbances 810 and 1907 respectively (Tr. 8 & 19) and may be indicative of earlier phases of tree clearance during the Saxon period.

A single sherd in Fabric 4 from the Phase-1 and/or Phase-2 (?) tree disturbance pit, 1203 (Tr. 12, fill 1204), is somewhat fresher than the rest of the fragments and probably owes its condition to being in rubbish dumped in the tree hole during the 13th or early 14th centuries and remaining below the level of the subsequent plough activity. This sherd and two others from tree disturbance 3191 indicate that tree clearance was still taking place during the 13th and 14th centuries.

Sub-rectangular pit 3139 (Phase 2) produced one small abraded sherd from a cooking-pot, dated c. 1200–1350, suggesting that the flintwork from this feature may be residual in a pit which, from the condition of the sherd, could even be post-medieval in date.

The single sherd from fill 3051 (Phase 2, ditch 3067) is of the period c. 1150–1250, and apparently dates elements of the otherwise sterile Phase 2 rectilinear enclosure ditch complex encountered in Tr. 31 to that period or later. The similarly-phased enclosure ditches in Tr. 32 (ditches 3214 & 3212) produced one residual early Iron Age sherd in Fabric 8 from fill 3285, and a tiny chip in medieval Fabric 7: it is therefore probable that both groups of ditches are contemporary and the pottery suggests that they could be as late as the 12th to 14th centuries in date.

Two sherds of late medieval to Tudor pottery in Fabrics 5 and 7 came from the fills of ditch 3078 (Tr. 31, Phase 1 and/or 2) and indicate continued activity in the area after the 14th century.

Archive

A catalogue of the pottery can be found within the archive. Catalogues and reports on the palaeoenvironmental evidence, animal bone, slags, and ironwork have also been deposited there; none contribute significantly to the interpretation of the site.

DISCUSSION

The excavation revealed what is essentially a palimpsest agricultural landscape incorporating elements dating from at least the 1st millennium BC (and probably before) to the 20th century. The earliest activity on the site, dating to the late Mesolithic period, was indicated by the presence of narrow blade microliths and a blade core amongst the flint assemblage, which, although likely to be residual in their respective contexts, imply activity, however short-lived, on the site during this period. This is not unexpected and Jacobi (1978) has noted a clustering of Mesolithic activity on the Lower Greensand from Hassocks in the east through Storrington to West Heath in the west. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that the

division between later Mesolithic and early Neolithic activity in Sussex is effectively artificial (Gardiner 1990, 42) and it seems likely that many sites were visited and revisited over a long period.

It is generally accepted that much of the south-east of England was heavily wooded (Drewett *et al.* 1988, 24) in the 5th and 4th millennia BC. There is, however, increasing evidence for localized sporadic clearance during the Neolithic period, with short-lived episodes of woodland clearance noted at causewayed enclosures such as Offham Hill (Drewett 1977, 238), Court Hill, Singleton (Bedwin 1984, 18), or Barkhale Down, Bignor Hill (Leach 1983, 29). The inference of relatively widespread Neolithic clearance can be drawn from research by Scaife and Burrin (1983; 1985) further to the east in the Cuckmere and Ouse valleys and by Allen (1995) on

the Malling-Caburn Downs. Several tree-throw holes investigated at the Dean Way site clearly predate the earliest cut features, a phenomenon also noted by Bell (1977, 7) at Bishopstone, and interpreted there, on the presence of Neolithic flintwork and charcoal, as direct evidence for contemporary clearance. As tree-throw hole 3191 produced a relatively large and unabraded collection of Neolithic flint, it seems reasonable to suggest that it, too, reflects clearance at that time, when it may have been used as the basis for an *ad hoc* shelter or as a dump for domestic waste. Indeed, the utilization of tree-throw hollows is a widespread and increasingly recognized phenomenon amongst Mesolithic and Neolithic groups (Brown 1997). Abraded Bronze Age and later pottery from the upper part of the same feature is regarded as intrusive, the result of later disturbance as the site was taken into agriculture.

Much of the Neolithic flintwork derives from ditch fills, especially those of Phase 1, and it is tempting to see it providing a date for their creation. It must, however, be noted that evidence for Neolithic linear landscape divisions is very uncommon indeed within Sussex, and the accepted view to date is that the discovery of a Neolithic field system is unlikely. There is, however, evidence from the Neolithic settlement at Bishopstone (Bell 1977, 13, 251–7) to suggest adjoining arable fields marked by shallow ditches and/or fences, with ploughing causing sufficient soil displacement to create lynchets. Elsewhere, the tangential ditches noted running up to (or away from) the outer causewayed enclosure at Whitehawk, Brighton are interpreted by the excavators as ‘an attempt to separate significant portions of the surrounding landscapes’ (Russell & Rudling 1996, 47) but, at 90 m long, they could as easily be seen simply as marking field or trackway boundaries.

The Neolithic flint assemblage is regarded as domestic in nature and, even if the material from the ditches is dismissed as residual in its context, it is clear that it has not moved far from its original place of deposition, suggesting the presence of a settlement in the immediate vicinity. Again, the evidence for open agricultural settlements of Neolithic date in Sussex remains ‘scanty’ (Drewett *et al.* 1988, 44; Allen 1995, 34) but at least two are known on the Greensands: Selmeston (Drewett 1975) and Rackham (Holden & Bradley 1975). Others, such as Bishopstone (Bell 1977), and Bullock Down, Eastbourne (Drewett 1982) on the South

Downs, have been relatively extensively excavated, but provide very little evidence beyond flint scatters including burnt material and the occasional pit. To that end, material from Dean Way could be regarded as ample evidence for Neolithic settlement. Although the good-quality flint from the site derived from downland chalk, it is not thought to have been mined, but it is perhaps worth noting the proximity of extensive flint mines and a later Bronze Age enclosure at Harrow Hill, a few kilometres to the south of Storrington (McNabb *et al.* 1996) and it seems likely that such mines were a significant source of supply for many settlements.

Whether or not the origins of the linear features of Phase 1 lay in the late Neolithic must remain open to debate, but it would seem reasonable to place them at least as early as the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age on the dating of pottery from the fills, broadly contemporary with downland settlements such as Black Patch, near Alciston (Drewett *et al.* 1988, 96), Itford Hill (Drewett *et al.* 1988, 107–9) and the nascent field system at Bullock Down (Drewett 1982, 99). The eroded nature of pottery from the ditch fills perhaps suggests that they no longer lay in close proximity to a settlement, but received domestic debris at one remove, in the course of agricultural activity. All that remained was a single sinuous ditched boundary, probably renewed, and short stretches of isolated ditch which lay on roughly the same alignment, presumably indicating a series of irregular rectilinear enclosures oriented on the principal boundary.

The later field system (Phase 2) does not appear to have been simply a reorganization, and a considerable lapse of time may well have occurred between Phase-1 activity and its establishment (at the earliest in the later Iron Age, but probably later). Its layout appears to be predicated on an obviously very long-lived trackway, which ran down the entirety of the western edge of the study area, and can possibly be dated to the late Iron Age, on the basis of pottery from one of its elements. Extensive late Iron Age and Roman rectilinear field systems and trackways are well known from the chalklands (Bedwin 1978, 41–2) and the evidence from Dean Way would seem similar, although it must be noted that a similar complex, and frequently reinstated, track or boundary feature was noted at Market Field, Steyning, where it was regarded at Anglo-Saxon (Gardiner 1993, fig. 3). Evidence suggests an extensive system of interlinked rectilinear enclosures,

the entrances perhaps indicating that they were intended for stock. Although many of the features associated with this phase produced flintwork and pottery similar to that of the preceding phase, it is likely that it is all residual. Certainly, the small group of badly rolled flint from the secondary fill of ditch 3068 seems to confirm an element of residuality. Medieval pottery recovered from the fills of several tree-throw holes investigated during the evaluation suggests a significant episode of clearance at some time during the 13th and 14th centuries and it may have been during this period that the site was taken into arable farming on a permanent basis, with medieval pottery from the fills of several of the enclosure ditches and subsoil reflecting repeated

agricultural disturbance. There is no doubt that Phases 3 and 4 date to the later medieval or post-medieval periods, and that all the pottery and flint recovered from them is effectively residual.

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Authors: Christine Howard-Davis & Bryan Matthews, Oxford Archaeology, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES.

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