

# Survey and excavation at Goblestubbs Copse, Arundel, West Sussex

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*This report outlines the results of a programme of fieldwork undertaken by English Heritage in collaboration with the Worthing Archaeological Society. It focused on an area of woodland, some of it dense and unmanaged, to the west of the town of Arundel. Here, investigation centred on a cluster of enclosures at Goblestubbs Copse, and included detailed earthwork survey followed by a limited amount of excavation. The results are unequivocal: the enclosures date to the early decades of the 1st millennium AD and were likely still to have been in use at the time of the Claudian Conquest, and for a time thereafter too. The Goblestubbs complex may well be only one of a number of other contemporary foci in this particular area, suggesting that it was an important nexus of activity, complementary to developments further to the west in and around Chichester.*

## BACKGROUND

The genesis of this work lay in a programme of field investigation on the South Downs developed by English Heritage. The project had a number of aims but perhaps the most important was to engage with local groups and communities in identifying particular locales for further analysis. The survival of archaeological sites is very much predicated on location and previous history of land use. Arable cultivation, for example, has had a disastrous impact on archaeological sites, particularly since the middle decades of the 20th century, when deep ploughing began to erase sites that had survived, as earthworks, for millennia. Consequently, woodland, especially if it was established before the middle of the 20th century, is the most important repository of archaeological features in the South Downs landscape. That woodland retains traces of previous activity, and in better condition than any other bit of the landscape, is an observation of long standing, and was a principle that guided the selection of those areas to be assessed for future work (Fig. 1).

### WHY REWELL WOOD?

The archaeological potential of the woodland to the west of Arundel, particularly the area known as Rewell Wood, re-emerged during recording work being undertaken in preparation for a broadsheet publication aimed at telling the story of the development of the town (Barnwell and McOmish 2006). The history of Arundel extends back well beyond the medieval period, and indeed, the

Roman period: one of the earthwork boundaries defining the northern limit to the Castle Park (north of the Castle) may have had an origin in the mid to late 1st millennium cal BC, as part of a rampart cutting off the promontory to the south (Fig. 2).

The National Heritage List for England (formerly the NMR), as well as the Historic Environments Records for the County, provide an even more compelling case for early activity in the landscape surrounding the town. They list findspots of material such as pottery and coins, also noting the presence of other sites of prehistoric and Roman date. Many of these are well-known, such as Shepherd's Garden (Frazer Hearne 1936), lying in parkland to the west of the Castle, but a number of others are known simply as ploughed-out crop marks or parchmarks. The presence of historic woodland in the surrounding landscape is well documented: more than this, a series of earthwork enclosure complexes had also been recorded in the area and are shown on Ordnance Survey maps.

### PREVIOUS WORK

The Ordnance Survey mapping was derived from earlier plans of the earthworks, most notably by surveyors working for Eliot and Cecil Curwen. The Curwens' annotated OS maps (6" scale) are kept in the archive of the Sussex Archaeological Society at Barbican House, Lewes. They illustrate a methodical approach to field recording – a necessity in a heavily wooded environment, as elsewhere – based on gridding out an area in 100-yard squares. These reveal that they recorded at least three major enclosure complexes, which



Fig. 1. Location of the Goblestubby Copse complex.

Eliot Curwen regarded as the most extensive series of earthworks of their kind surviving in Sussex. In addition, elements of underlying field systems were noted, along with other isolated enclosures, at least one round barrow, a cross-ridge boundary, and all enclosed within what was termed a 'covered way', the War Dyke (Fig. 3).

The largest and most dispersed complex sat at the northern end of the wood, and Curwen referred to it as the 'Whiteways Lodge Group', or the 'North-Eastern group/village' (Curwen and Curwen 1920). This earthwork cluster covered 80 acres and comprised a superficially irregular layout of linear earthworks, which Curwen thought exceeded



Fig. 2. View of the earthen rampart defining the northern perimeter of Little Park, Arundel. It may well be that this medieval earthwork picks up on the line of an earlier linear boundary, perhaps of Middle to Late Iron Age date.

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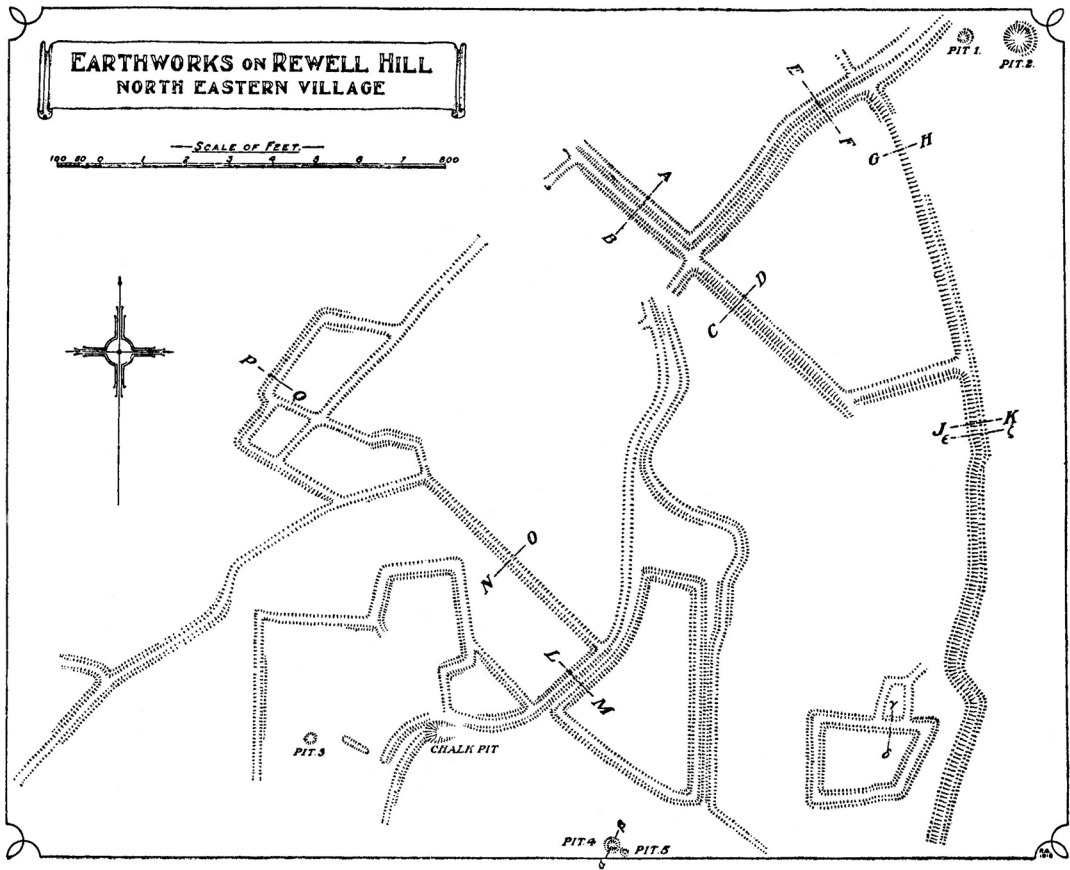


Fig. 4. Curwen's plan of the earthwork complex on Dalesdown. The small, rectilinear enclosure (bottom right on plan) was subsequently excavated by Hadrian Allcroft, producing 'Early Iron Age' pottery. © Sussex Archaeological Society.

the date and function of a number of the pits, as well as one component of the linear boundaries discovered during the survey (Hadrian Allcroft 1920). One further trench was cut across the small rectilinear enclosure at the south-eastern corner of the surveyed area. The pits were selected purely on the basis of the prevailing view at that time, which suggested that hollows such as these were sites of habitation – pit dwellings. More detailed assessment indicated that the pits were regular constructions, the circular hollows encircled by a bank, but on excavation at least one proved to be a dewpond, of unknown date. The second pit remained unexplained, but Hadrian Allcroft suggested that it might be contemporary with the nearby hunting lodge. He also trenched the easternmost linear boundary, which was assumed to

be the limit to the settlement on this side. The ditch was V-shaped in section, and just over 1m deep, and was flanked by low banks on either side. These were coarse constructions apparently, consisting of chalk rubble, flint and soil assumed to have been quarried from the ditch. Only one sherd of modern pottery was recovered from this excavation, and in a post-earthwork context too.

Hadrian Allcroft's final excavation involved cutting a narrow slot across the northern side of the rectilinear enclosure, which he took to be a 'homestead'. The form of the enclosure replicates that seen at so many of the sites on the plateau, in which a ditch is flanked on either side by low earthen banks. Again, the ditch was shown to be V-shaped in section, up to 1m deep, but, by contrast, the banks were insubstantial heaps of

chalky soil and flint. Pottery was found in primary contexts within the ditch, at least three vessels being represented, and these were pronounced by Reginald Smith, then at the British Museum, to be of Early Iron Age date. One significant conclusion reached by Hadrian Allcroft was that cultivation, ancient and more recent, had destroyed more characteristic evidence of settlement, such as compact, well-defined, enclosed spaces.

The finds made in the rectilinear enclosure were rare discoveries at that point. Curwen, for example, noted that there were no surface finds apart from fairly recent brick and tile just to the west of the rectilinear enclosure (Curwen and Curwen 1920).

In contrast, the 'South-Western Village' centring on the complex at Rewell Wood, 1.7km to the

south-west of Dalesdown, was more compact, comprising a series of contiguous enclosures, interconnected linear boundaries, and (at a distance to the north) an earthwork described as a 'circus' (Curwen and Curwen 1920, 28). The similarities between this complex and that to the north-east were noted immediately. The enclosures lie to the east of a linear boundary and are connected to it by what appears to be a double-ditched trackway (Fig. 5).

The trackway affords access to three separate enclosed components, each defined by ditches flanked by banks on either side. They cover an area of at least 1.9ha, and the largest of the three, that at the northern end, is a very pronounced earthwork. It is clear from this early survey work that these earthwork complexes overlie an earlier

field system. Curwen observed truncated lynchets, probably part of a field system aligned (roughly) north-east to south-west, in at least four locations in close association with the enclosures. Like the complex to the north-east, no other dating evidence was found apart from one sherd of Roman amphora picked up on the surface by Dr H. Millbank Smith. He was a key individual in this story, because he appears to have been responsible for finding these earthwork sites in the first place. The 'Circus' (Fig. 6) noted by Curwen sits on the west-facing slopes to the north of the main enclosure complex, close to the junction of the main north-south linear and an element that extends to the west. It is oval in outline, comprising two curving earthen banks surrounding a hollowed area.

Its scooped form and location recall other settlement sites of Middle Bronze Age date found elsewhere on the chalklands of southern England. It may well be significant that the area around the site abounded in fragments of Romano-British and Bronze Age pottery (Curwen 1920, 29).

The form of the Rewell Wood site is repeated at Goblestubbs

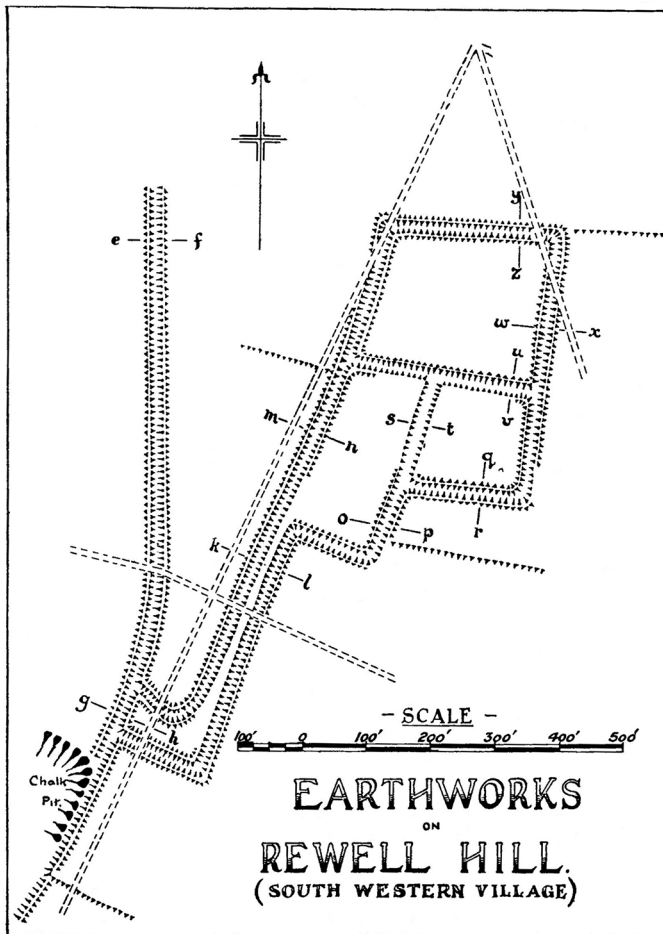


Fig. 5. Curwen's earthwork survey of the Rewell Wood enclosure complex. © Sussex Archaeological Society.

Copse, 600m to the south, a site first recorded in 1921 when discovered by Millbank Smith (Fig. 7). Interestingly, at that time the complex sat in open countryside, an assarted clearing no doubt, in an otherwise heavily wooded environment. The Curwens immediately remarked upon a similarity to the Rewell Wood site, citing the key characteristics as contiguous rectilinear or irregular enclosures defined by a medial ditch, flanked by banks, 'wandering' linear earthworks sometimes multiple, continuity of the ditched elements, and lack of surface finds. Their plan is concise and accurate, showing the main enclosed components, associated open spaces, and linear boundaries enclosing it on the north and eastern flanks (Curwen and Curwen 1928). This eastern arm becomes very complex at the southern end and here it appears to comprise two parallel ditches, each with their own flanking banks.

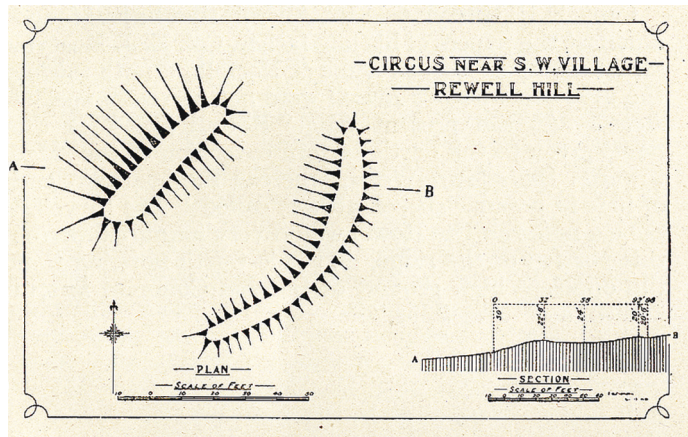


Fig. 6. Curwen's plan of the 'Circus', which lies to the north of the Rewell Wood complex, most closely resembles enclosures of Middle Bronze Age date. Pottery of this date has been found in close association, along with a hoard of contemporary metalwork - all circumstantial evidence that points to an early construction date for the site. © Sussex Archaeological Society.

However, the northern tranche of the woodland drew the most attention, in particular a number of linear boundaries on Whiteways Plantation, including an earthwork known as the 'War Dyke'

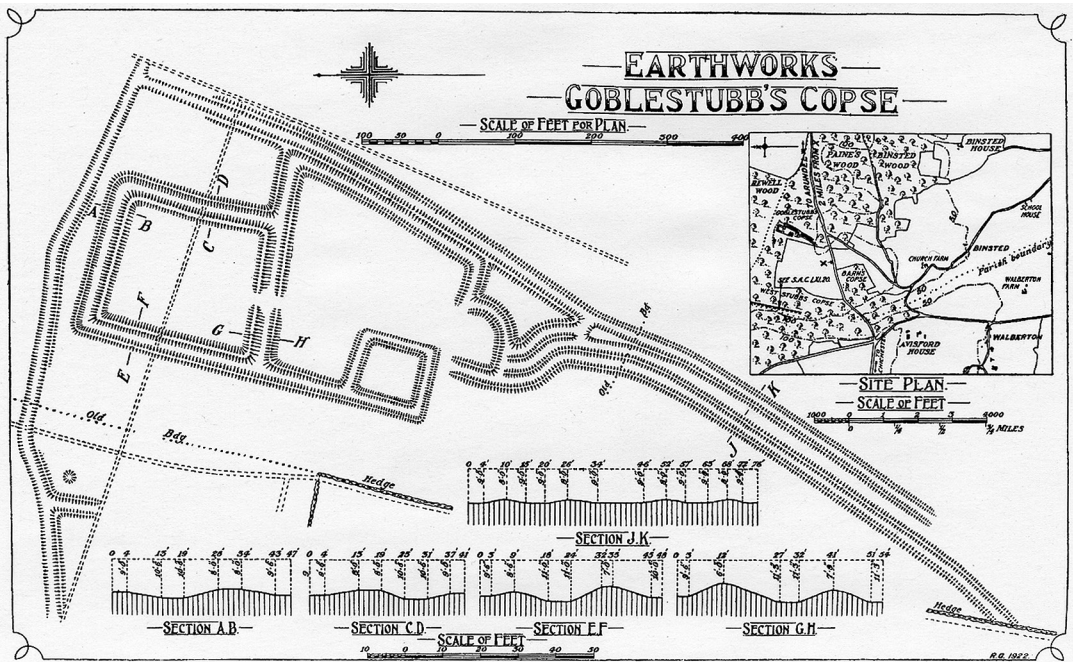


Fig. 7. Curwen's earthwork survey of the Goblestubb's Copse West enclosure complex. © Sussex Archaeological Society.

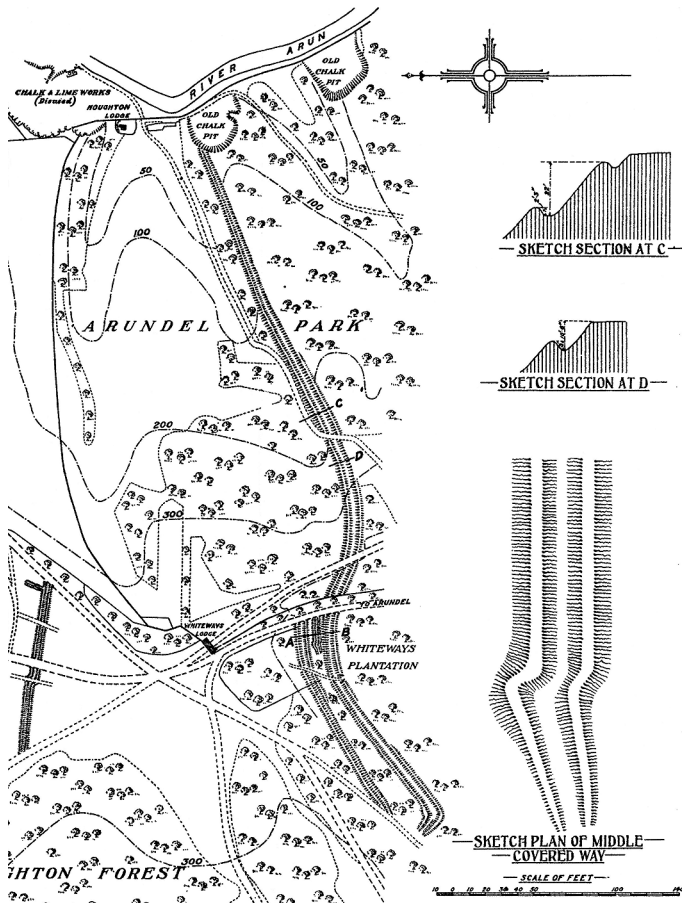


Fig. 8. Curwen's plan of War Dyke (note map orientation) shows a relatively simple earthwork with a ditch flanked by two external banks. As the linear boundary ascends the slopes to the west, it becomes more complex, and the 'middle covered way' is given a detailed plan. © Sussex Archaeological Society.

(Fig. 8). Curwen describes this as 'a most remarkable group of earthworks' (Curwen and Curwen 1918, 39), and lists a complex comprising three main components. The westernmost elements are, straightforwardly, cross-ridge boundaries of a type for which the Sussex downland is famous, but that line of linear earthwork, the War Dyke, which ascends the slope from the valley of the Arun and in to Arundel Park, certainly caught Curwen's eye because of its unusual morphology and massive scale. He regarded it as the largest example of a covered way – Curwen's term to describe a particular form of hollowed linear boundary – that he had seen, and described it in some detail at

various points along its course. His conclusion was that the earthwork was made as a road, and not for defence only. Rather presciently, he also drew a similarity between these earthworks and others on the Gussage Downs, Dorset, unaware that the latter dated to the Late Iron Age.

Curwen's plan shows a pronounced linear earthwork, a bank with ditch to the north, climbing the slope from the valley of the Arun, west towards Whiteways Plantation. Here it changes direction to a more north-west to south-east orientation, following the contour and on this high point the linear boundary is accompanied by at least one other line of earthwork. Curwen called this the 'Dummy Wardyke' as distinct from the 'Great Wardyke', and the space between it and the War Dyke, an extent close on 60m, also hosts another, slighter, linear terrace sharing the same alignment (Fig. 9). This sequence of multiple boundaries extends to the south, following the break of slope, for a distance of 300m. At this point, close to a junction with another covered way, only the course of the Great Wardyke continues to the south.

In absolute terms, these massive linear earthwork boundaries remain undated. Curwen didn't venture an opinion on date, and had resolved to carry out an excavation in order to glean more detailed information. This was never done, and no further fieldwork was undertaken on the complex. Hadrian Allcroft, and a number of others, were convinced that the linear earthworks had a pre-Roman origin. The potential significance of the nearly complete Iron Age pot found at the junction of War Dyke and a cross-ridge boundary that is cut by it was ignored (OS 495 card: NMR No. TQ 01 SW 19).

After this, the sites remained untouched until mapping revision carried out by surveyors from the Ordnance Survey. Much of this work was

undertaken in the 1970s by Keith Blood, coincidentally a former colleague of one of the authors (DSM), and in conversation Keith revealed that he, too, regarded the archaeological remains in the woodland as remarkably well-preserved, unusually so in the regional context. As well as carrying out basic surveys of the sites, Keith had spent some time searching through any related archival material. In doing so he discovered a late 16th-century map depicting what he thought were the enclosure complexes, and shown as hunting lodges alongside other components built, essentially, to manage deer. Keith admitted that he had never felt secure in this interpretation, and enthusiastically recommended a re-assessment of the sites. It was against this backdrop that the first phase of English Heritage reconnaissance took place.

#### INTO THE WOODS

The area of woodland and cleared pasture to the west of Arundel is extensive, spreading over more than 10km square. Some areas are relatively open, or well managed, making access and observation relatively straightforward. Other compartments are densely forested and unkempt. Guided by Curwen's earlier work and that of Hadrian Allcroft, the main settlement sites were visually checked against Keith Blood's Ordnance Survey plans. Interestingly, these sites were absent from Ordnance Survey maps until the early 1970s; there are no earlier plans or antiquarian accounts of any of the sites in Rewell Wood, for example. As anticipated, the plans were accurate representations of the surviving archaeology, and in one or two places added considerable new detail to the plans made half a century earlier. Closer observation revealed that a small amount of detail was missing, but this is hardly surprising, given that the Ordnance Survey was surveying at a scale of 1:2500.

Keith's plan of the Rewell Wood complex confirmed Curwen's earlier observation that the enclosures had been placed on top of an earlier

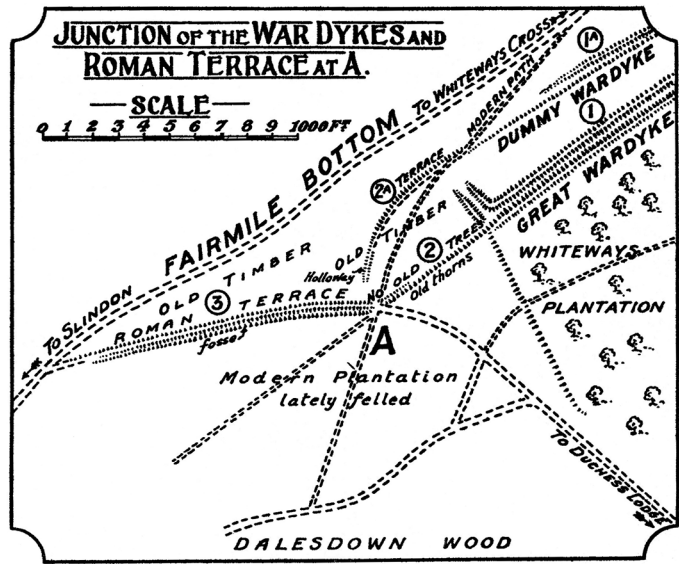


Fig. 9. Hadrian Allcroft's plan of the War Dyke on Whiteways Plantation. He was of the (correct) opinion that cultivation had eroded the line of the War Dyke to the west. © Sussex Archaeological Society.

field system. Truncated lynchets can be seen at the north-eastern corner and along the southern arm. Indeed, it may well be that the shape of the enclosed elements was dictated entirely by the influence of underlying field boundaries.

Goblestubs Copse proved an even greater revelation, as Keith's work revealed a hitherto undiscovered second enclosure complex, 150m to the east of that surveyed by Curwen. This new cluster of enclosures, here termed Goblestubs Copse East, was smaller and superficially less complex than its near neighbour, Goblestubs Copse West. Initial observation suggested that it, too, was defined by conjoined, ditched enclosures in close association with a length of linear earthwork that extended eastwards from Goblestubs Copse West. The similarity in morphology and scale suggested that the two enclosures were, at the very least, near contemporaries, but what was truly noteworthy was the excellent condition of the surviving earthworks. They are clear and crisp, sharply defined in a way suggesting that they are fairly recent creations, and certainly added circumstantial weight to Keith's belief that they were medieval (or later) compounds.

Their form, particularly that of Goblestubs Copse West, encouraged immediate comparison with other, better dated, sites in southern England,



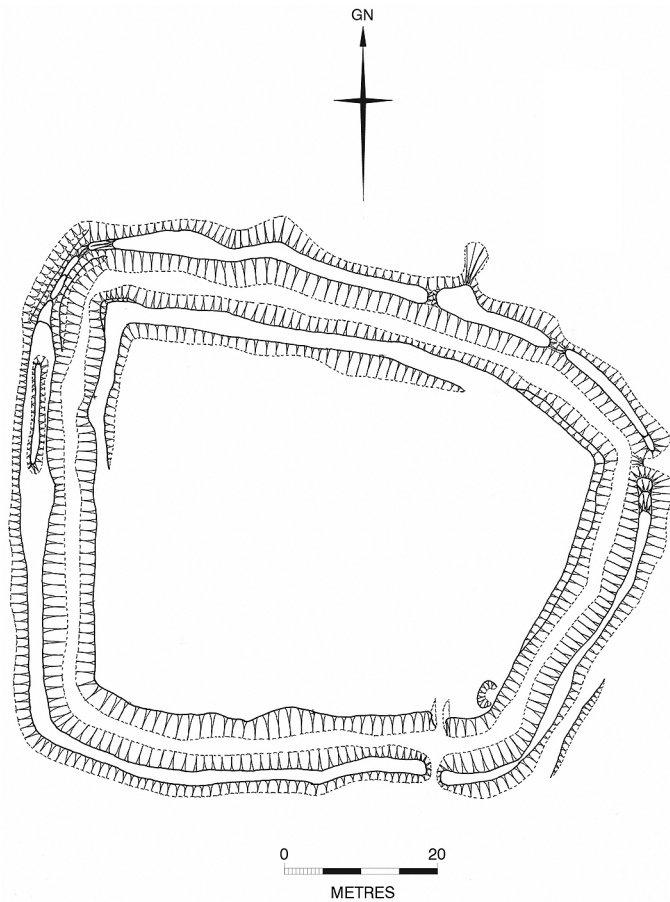


Fig. 10. Worthing Archaeological Society's earthwork survey of the enclosure on Dalesdown. © Bob Turner and Worthing Archaeological Society.

especially those known as sub-oppida settlements, a term coined by Mark Corney to describe irregular complexes of enclosed elements, and open areas, originating in the final decades before the Claudian Conquest. Many continued in use into the 1st century AD and beyond, and were intimately connected with the emergence of territorial units (Corney 1989).

Corney identified a number of key characteristics of these sites, chief among them the presence of multiple-ditch systems. Reconnaissance of the linear boundaries extending to the south of Goblestubbs Copse West revealed that they were triple-ditched, rather than the double-ditched trackway that Curwen had suggested. One obvious

working hypothesis, therefore, was that the Goblestubbs complexes were related to the sub-oppida that Corney had described and, furthermore, there was a strong likelihood that all the other foci of nucleated enclosure in this area – Rewell Wood and Dalesdown – were also part of the same chronological horizon. Recent walkover survey at the latter site chimes with Blood's suggestion that some of the linear boundaries here are of more recent, possibly medieval, date. More detailed fieldwork is required to make sense of the complex pattern and layout in Dalesdown.

A clear research agenda emerged from this initial reconnaissance, a principal aim being to clarify the form and date of the enclosure complexes at Goblestubbs Copse, focusing initially on the western element. The work plan was formulated in a partnership between English Heritage and Worthing Archaeological Society and comprised two main parts: survey of accessible earthwork complexes at Goblestubbs Copse and in the immediate area around it, followed by small, targeted excavation at the more recently discovered eastern complex at Goblestubbs Copse.

#### ANALYTICAL EARTHWORK SURVEY

The first component to be assessed using analytical earthwork survey was the small square enclosure on the south-eastern edge of the Dalesdown complex, first recorded by Hadrian Allcroft (Fig. 10). The enclosure appears to be of a single phase, comprising an internal bank with ditch outside, with slight hints of a counterscarp bank. It covers an area of 0.6ha but has no clearly identifiable entrance. There are two, later, gaps cut by a modern track, but there is a causeway across the external bank close to the northern apex of the boundary which may mark the location of an earlier point of entry. In comparison with other nearby earthworks, the enclosure boundary has been smoothed and

rounded, probably reduced by ploughing, and so the bank is a relatively low feature, reaching a basal width of 6m and a height of 0.2m at best. The ditch is similarly infilled and smoothed, 0.4m deep at best and 1.4m wide at its base, flaring out to a maximum width of 4m. The counterscarp survives intermittently, and is the least substantial part of the site and barely 0.1m high in places. The enclosure has been built on a surface that shelves gently to the south, so, although not in a prominent location, it is a position that would have afforded good views in all directions, and been visible, particularly to the south and the coastal plain – vegetation permitting, of course.

### THE GOBLESTUBBS COPSE COMPLEX

Survey work was undertaken at both elements of the Gblestubbs Copse complex (Fig. 11).

Survey work here, undertaken by Bob Turner, focused on the enclosed components, recording only a small section of the linear earthworks at their intersection with the southernmost enclosed unit (Fig. 12).

This site is dominated by a large rectilinear enclosure covering an area of close on to 0.4ha and defined by a deep and wide ditch, flanked on either side by pronounced banks. The ditch reaches a maximum depth of 0.6m below the highest points along the banks, and has a flattened U-shape section, 1.5m wide at its base. Of the two accompanying banks, the outer survives better and still stands to a height of 0.5m above the external ground surface and has a basal width of 1.2m. No internal structures or sub-divisions were found, and the enclosure does not appear to have been furnished with a formal entrance. This aspect was noted by Curwen at the Rewell Wood complex, and led him to suggest that the ditches, rather than being simple defensive features, were used as tracks. This trait – lack of a formal entrance – is commonly observed at a range of other smaller Iron Age sites. The two observable gaps through the enclosure boundary at the main

Gblestubbs West enclosure – one on the western façade, the other directly opposite on the east – were created when a modern trackway was laid out, but it is tempting to speculate that this routeway was selected because of the presence of earlier gaps through the earthworks.

A large trapezoidal compound is contiguous to the south of the main enclosed component, and is clearly integrated with it; the external bank on the southern arm of the enclosure turns to the south and forms the western edge of the appended unit. Once again, this shares the same constructional characteristics as its neighbour, in that it is defined by a medial ditch with two flanking banks. The ditch, where best preserved, matches the dimensions noted above, and the overall internal area reaches close to 0.4ha. A more complex pattern can be seen on the eastern side, where the enclosure boundary is complicated by the addition of another line of linear earthwork. This extends to the south, to become part of the multiple-ditched arrangement that leads away from the site on the south, but it also appears to form the eastern limit to this enclosure complex. The trapezoidal compound narrows to the south, but at its midpoint on the west there is a very formal entranceway which comprises an embanked hollowed passageway leading internally

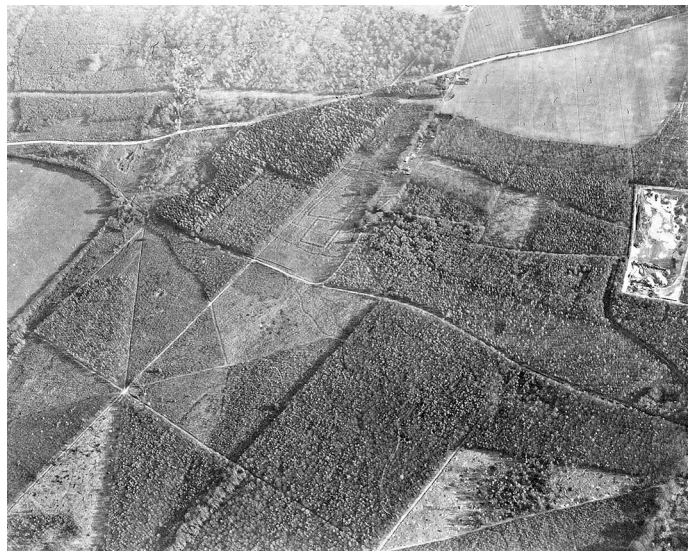


Fig. 11. This aerial photograph taken in the late 1960s shows the earthwork complex at Gblestubbs Copse West, viewed from the northwest, before planting with Sweet Chestnut. The complex to the west remained under fairly dense tree cover at the time. NMR SU9807 © Historic England.

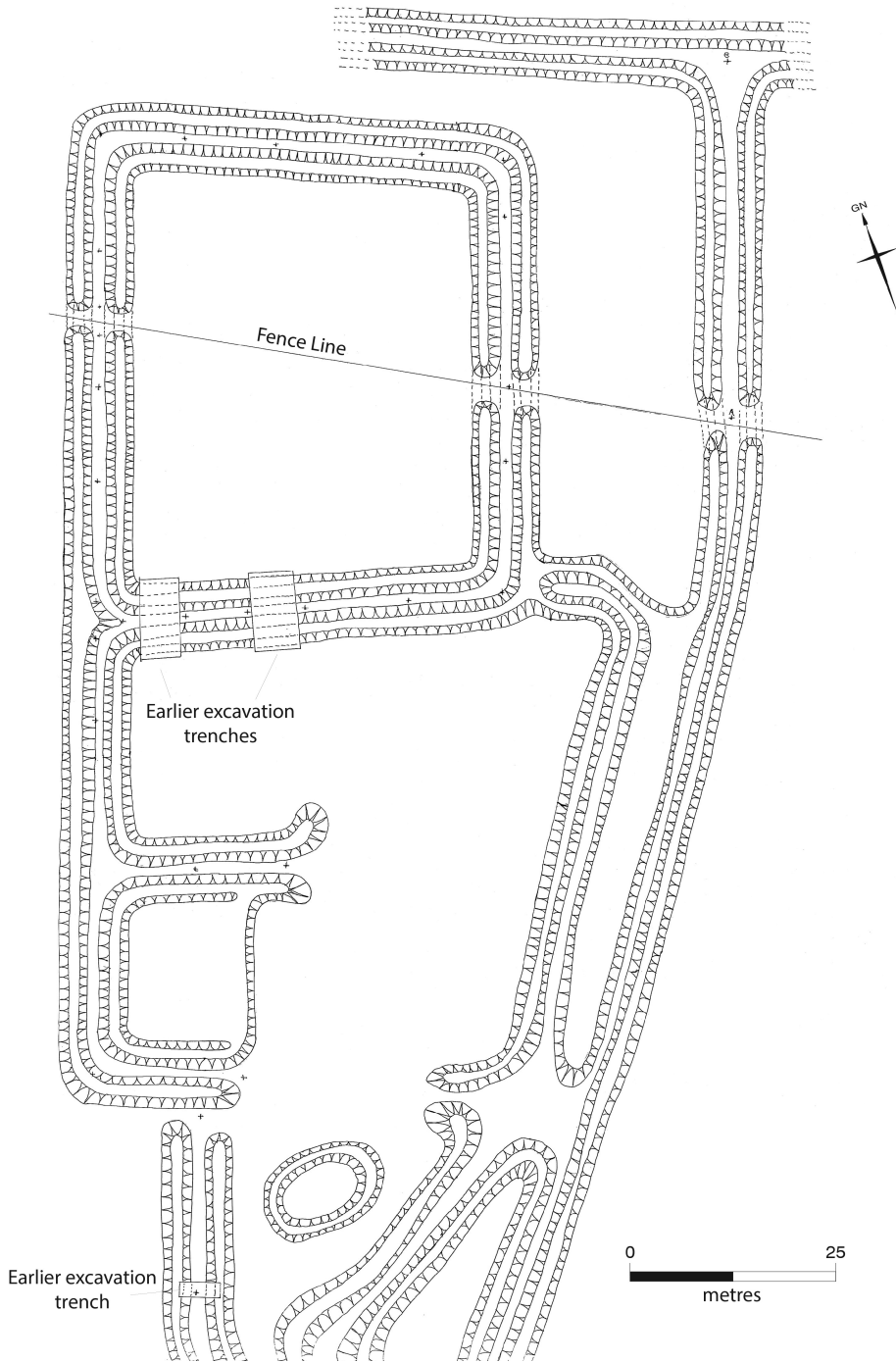


Fig. 12. Goblestubbs Copse West. Earthwork survey plan of the main enclosed elements at Goblestubbs Copse West. Note the location of ground disturbance, marking the positions of earlier excavation trenches. © Bob Turner and Worthing Archaeological Society.

directly from the ditch. It has a flattened U-shape profile, 1.5m wide at the base, and extends for a length of 25m. The defining banks are also well-preserved, and surface observation suggests that they are well-made, built using large amounts of flint and flinty soil, most probably deriving from the clay-with-flints drift material that covers the Downs in this location. The terminals of these banks are notable for their funnel-like arrangement: they flare out quite dramatically. This was clearly part of the original constructional intent, and the sharply defined, rounded end points have not been damaged by later activity.

The entrance opens out into an apparently empty space, but at least one internal compartment is visible, tacked on to the south side of the entrance passage and defined by the enclosure boundary on the west and south, and by a small east-facing scarp on the east. The defined area is small, 25m x 30m, and resembles a terraced platform rather than an enclosed component.

Immediately to the south of this enclosed element, there is a further sub-circular hollow defined by a low, spread soil bank. It reaches a maximum diameter of 25m and is 0.3m deep; an irregular surface points to recent disturbance here. Survey suggests that it might be an earlier component in the complex: it is free-standing and not physically conjoined with the compound to the north, and the linear earthworks to the east sweep round as if avoiding a pre-existing structure, a space also referenced by the linear boundaries to the west.

Significantly, as it would turn out, Bob Turner also recorded a number of irregular hollows at various points within the main enclosure. They included at least one very deep hole in the ditch, as well as more regular scrapes in its interior. Bob suggested that, on balance, they resembled the remains of an earlier, and undocumented, episode of excavation.

The linear earthworks are intriguing, and those sections recorded close to, or in association with, the enclosures are clearly part of a more extensive array in this area. All the enclosure complexes here are connected or lie close to substantial lengths of linear earthwork. At Goblestubbs Copse there is an east-west aligned earthwork that can be traced for at least 100m to the west and extends to the east for some 150m before looping to the south-east, flanking the eastern façade of the second Goblestubbs complex. Its form and condition mirror those of

the enclosures and consist of a single ditch with banks on either side. A spur leads south from it, parallel to and 20m east of the main enclosure; it then forms the eastern side of the trapezoidal compound, continuing south to become part of the multiple-ditch system.

The multiple-ditch system is more complex than previously thought. Bob Turner's survey indicates that there are three clear lines of ditch, each flanked with accompanying side banks. The ditches vary in depth and width, as do the banks, and despite more recent cultivation they still retain a strong coherence. The whole visual effect is of a strip of land that is markedly corrugated (six banks and three ditches), and their form has clear parallels with multiple-ditch systems recorded across southern England by the RCHME, such as Hamshill Ditches, Ebsbury and Stockton, Wiltshire, and Blagdon Copse, Hampshire, and always in association with Late Iron Age and Roman period sub-oppida mentioned previously.

It is difficult to be categorical on the basis of ground survey alone, but similarities in the form, condition and extent of the earthworks recorded, and the constructional techniques used, argue for near contemporaneity, at least, between the various components. Recent reconnaissance has revealed a shallow length of ditch, in a reversed-L pattern, that extends the line of the eastern arm of the main enclosure into the area now occupied by the annexe to the south. The southern element of this ditch shares the same alignment as the internal passageway of the annexe and may well be a forerunner of it. It suggests that the current arrangement of enclosures overlies an earlier compound that covered an area of 0.65ha.

#### GOBLESTUBBS COPSE EAST

This complex is a fairly recent discovery, having been 'found' during the Ordnance Survey work in the 1970s. It went unnoticed by Curwen despite lying so close to the west of the site he had surveyed. It is much less intricate and multifaceted than its near neighbour but, again, the key elements – ditched enclosures with associated linear boundaries – are present (Fig. 13). There are two main constituent parts to this site: one large enclosure and a rectilinear annex on the south and south-east corner. That they are contemporary or, at least part of a unified phase of development,

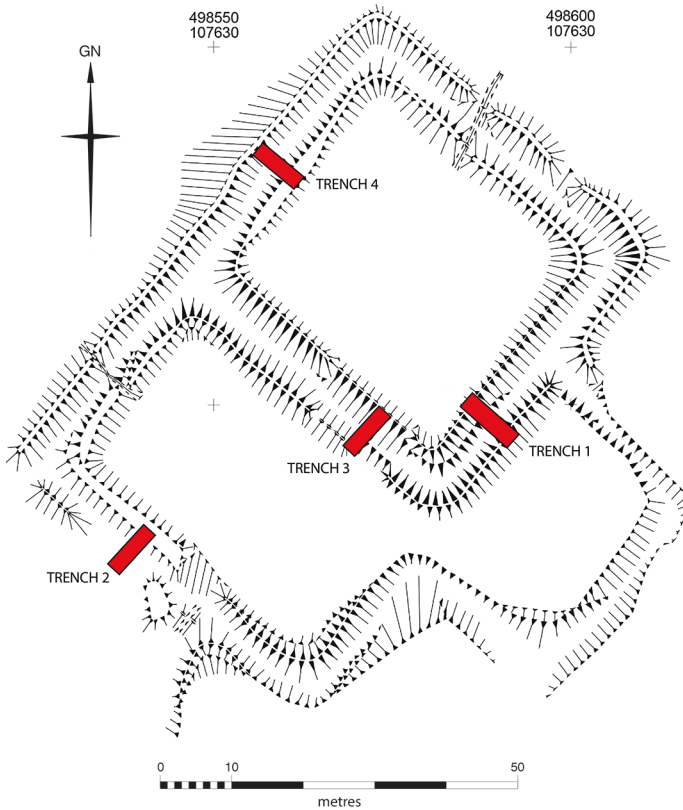


Fig. 13. The Worthing Archaeological Society's earthwork survey of the complex at Goblestubbs Copse East. The locations of the excavation trenches are marked. Recent reconnaissance suggests that there is at least one other enclosed element to the south, and the whole complex overlies earlier fields.

is implied by the interconnectedness of related building components. Specifically, the enclosure boundary on the west side continues to the south and defines the edge of the annex here too.

The main enclosed component is square, covering an area of 0.27 ha, and defined by a single ditch, 1.4m wide and 1.2m deep at best, with a flattened U-shape section. In scale and overall morphology it is very similar to the enclosed elements at the neighbouring site, but the banks are not as well preserved. Here, too, they are present on either side of the ditch, but the internal bank is low and spread, intermittently surviving as a terrace or scarp to the rear of the ditch. The outer bank is more intact and sharply defined, standing to a height of 0.3m above ground level in places, 1.2m wide at the base. This bank is not confined to this enclosure, and extends around most of the perimeter of the

entire site, adding to the superficial impression of contemporaneity. Once again, no apparent entrance point can be easily and securely discerned, though there are gaps through the external bank in two places on the northern side. The westernmost of these is clearly a recent cut made by a trackway across the earthworks, but that to the east is more convincing as an original break in the circuit, with rounded terminals evident on either side of a narrow gap. No corresponding causeway across the ditch can be seen, and the interior bank remains intact at this point. No internal features were noted, but any slight remains would doubtless have been damaged when the trees were planted in the 1970s.

The annex to the south and south-east consists essentially of two elements: a rectilinear compound immediately to the south, and a smaller enclosed space, square in this instance, which juts out from the south-eastern apex of the main enclosure. The total area covered extends to 0.23ha, but it is clear that the boundary has been damaged, probably by tree-planting activities, conceivably also by cultivation in

this area. The boundary to the annex is thus best preserved on the west and can be seen to comprise, again, a medial ditch, flanked on either side by low banks, and the overall dimensions of the constituent parts mirror the enclosed component to the north. The larger segment of the annex is furnished with an entrance break close to the midpoint on its southern line. This consists of a simple gap between ditch terminals, but the original form is unclear due to more recent damage. It is clear, though, that the outer bank to the east of the entrance turns to the south, forming one side of an elongated approach. Vegetation cover precluded more detailed recording, but observation of the earthworks suggests that this entrance was approached from the south by an embanked hollow way of at least 30m in length – a different position, of course, from the entrance passage

noted at Goblestubbs Copse West, but the physical similarities are nonetheless clear.

Recent reconnaissance also suggests that the enclosures overlie the very slight remains of an earlier field system. At least two lynchets can be seen to the west, and both have been cut by the enclosed elements. The full extent of the fields here could not be followed, due to vegetation, but the likelihood is that they extended well away from this location, and it is feasible that they are part of the same layout that underlies the Rewell Wood complex to the north.

Although not surveyed in this instance, the linear earthwork that extends to the north of Goblestubbs Copse West continues on the same east-west alignment and survives to the north of the eastern complex. Its course can be followed on the ground, though later activity has diminished its form. It swerves gently to the south, skirting close to the eastern side of the main enclosure, as if enclosing it too. The course of the linear earthwork is lost thereafter, but its line may well be reflected in a more recent track that continues south on the same line towards an intersection with the A27 road.

The overall layout and arrangement of the Goblestubbs Copse East complex is curious. The survey work suggests that there are two components – the main enclosure, and the annex – but it may well have been more complex than this. Indeed, the shape of the annex appears to combine two separate rectilinear compounds, and it may be that an earlier enclosure (the enclosed space at the south-eastern corner of the main enclosure) was incorporated into a later, and larger, layout. Unfortunately, the subtleties of phasing have been compromised by later activity.

It seems reasonable to conjecture that the two earthwork complexes in Goblestubbs Copse were broadly contemporary. They share basic traits such as overall scale and form, and condition, and are further connected by their close co-location with a linear earthwork. It is not easy to get a sense of the topographical situation of these enclosures. They lie on fairly level ground, but their relationship to the local micro-topography is interesting. Here, the land slopes very gently from north to south; these are shelving slopes on the dip slope of the chalk, covered in drift geology of clay-with-flints, but the enclosures are at that point where the slope levels out to a very flat plateau. It isn't a prominent location, and certainly can't be compared to those

places chosen by builders of hillforts, for example, but with no tree cover, this would have been a conspicuous place, affording good views to and from the enclosures in all directions.

## THE EXCAVATIONS

A clear working hypothesis had emerged from the fieldwork. These enclosures were less likely to be medieval than to belong to a much earlier, and on balance, Late Iron Age–early Roman origin. More detailed investigation, it was hoped, would answer the basic question about chronology, improve our understanding of the site and its context, and provide updated information that would allow better management of the adjacent designated site. Goblestubbs Copse East lay outside the scheduled area, and it was decided to focus attention on this complex by excavating a small number of trenches at strategic locations.

As part of the preparatory work before the excavation, members of the Worthing Archaeological Society carried out an assessment of the archive at Worthing Museum, specifically to check for the presence of any material relevant to the current fieldwork. This produced unanticipated evidence of a previous campaign of fieldwork at Goblestubbs Copse West, confirming Bob Turner's assertion that this complex had been excavated at an earlier stage (Fig. 14).

### THE REWELL WOOD EXCAVATION 1972

One box of pottery was found in the archive, evidently deriving from work at Rewell Wood, and within this a note explaining its provenance: 'West Sussex archaeologists spent weekends probing a huge Roman site in Rewell Woods on the A27 just west of Arundel called Gobble Stubbs Copse'.

This had to be Goblestubbs Copse West, and the emergence of another note, written by Mr A. J. Pudwell some time after the excavations, confirmed that it was indeed this site, and that it was excavated by a team led by Con Ainsworth (then of Worthing Museum) and Dr H. B. Ratcliffe-Densham. The excavation took place at a time when the area had just been planted with Sweet Chestnut, and the concern was that these trees, as they grew, would severely damage the underlying archaeology. Con opened up seven trenches, scattered throughout the complex, four of them focusing on the main enclosed element. A trench across the enclosure



Fig. 14. Con Ainsworth, and colleagues at Goblestubbs Copse West, Summer 1972. This trench sits on the south side of the main enclosed element, and shows the site before it was engulfed by woodland.

ditch showed that it was dug to a depth of 12ft, and at the bottom a complete samian cup was found. The draft section drawing shows a very symmetrical cut ditch, V-shaped in profile, with no hints of re-cut (Fig. 15).

Instead, the fill consisted of a uniform sandy soil with flint cobbles inclusions. Lenses of more mixed soil were noted at the base, and the location of the samian cup, and some charcoal too, are shown on the drawing. Further work on the ditch, as part of an attempt to find an entrance way in the north-eastern corner, revealed a similar ditch profile but with a very different infill. Here, above the primary silts, were two episodes of what look like deliberate infill: one dump of soil pushed in from the exterior, and above this another dump, but from

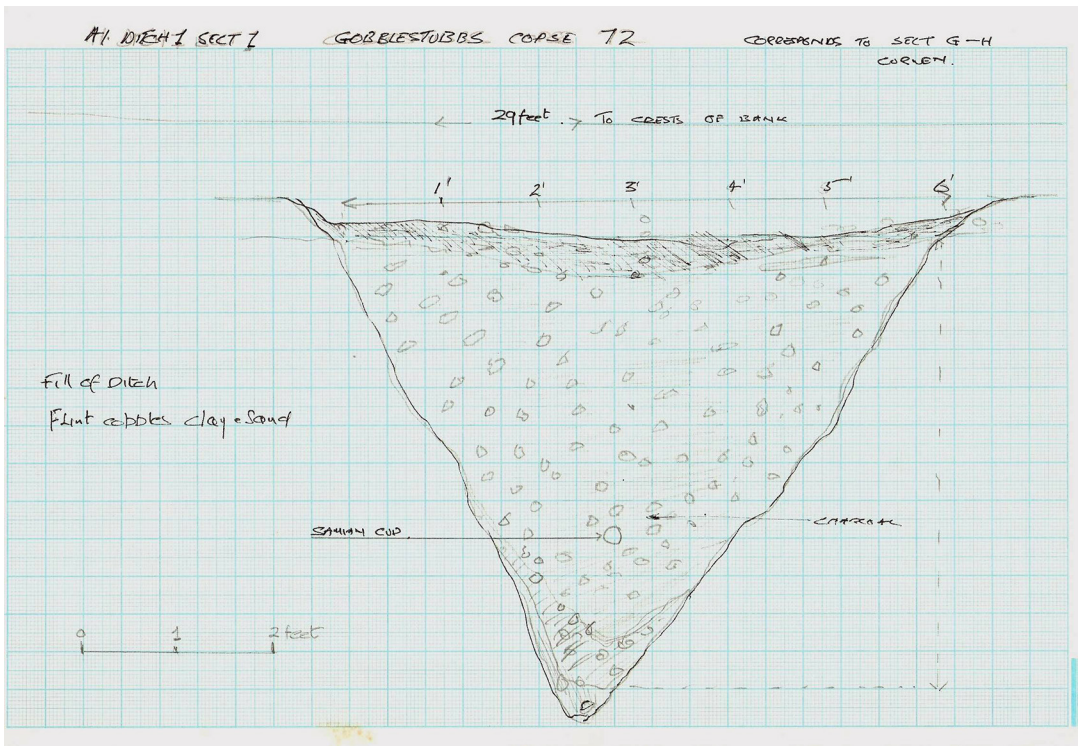


Fig. 15. Con's section drawing showing location of the samian cup.

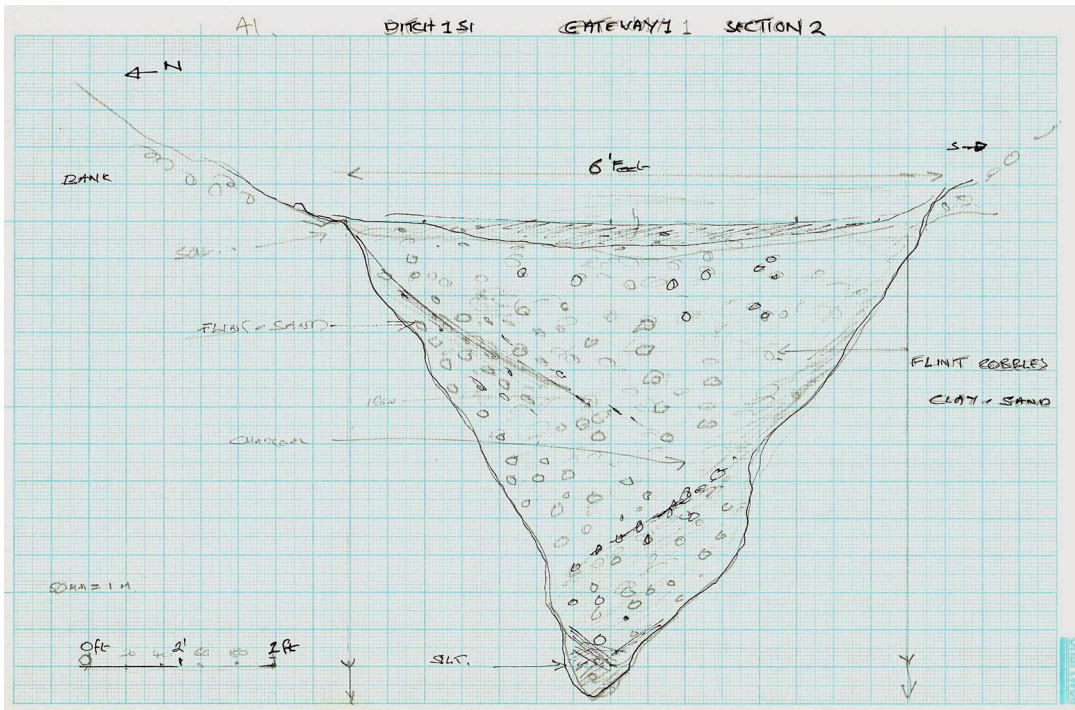


Fig. 16. Con's section close to the north-eastern corner of the main enclosure. A different fill sequence is apparent, and it may include burnt material.

the interior. Thick lenses of charcoal are also drawn on the draft section plan (Fig. 16).

Pudwell noted that this burnt material was intermixed with large amounts of pottery, including samian (Fig. 17), and 'looked as though it had just been thrown into the ditch'. Adjacent to this, on the interior, the discovery of a square arrangement of four large postholes led to the view that it was the foundation for a watchtower that formerly stood here.

A second area also produced much material, which matched with the heavily disturbed oval area recorded by Bob Turner, to the south of the southern annex. Pudwell describes this in more detail than the other excavated segments, confirming that it was an enclosure, and that it hosted a well-built structure. Excavation revealed that the hollow had been sub-divided by a low flint



Fig. 17. Samian cup of Dragendorff form 24/25 datable to the Claudian-Neronian period found during Con Ainsworth's excavations in 1972.

and chalk wall, north of which was a cobbled floor, presumably the interior of the building: the area to the south was a 'large black area and a fire hearth'. Added description suggests that it was some sort of midden deposit. This was where most of the pottery



came from, including more fragments of samian, as well as a range of coarsewares.

Sadly, the excavation was truncated abruptly by the death of Ratcliffe-Densham in that first exploratory season, and Pudwell, writing some time later, commented that the 'site today is lost under a forest of trees. I tried to find it some years ago but the bramble made it impossible'. The purpose of this work, according to Pudwell, was to find the 'function' of the site, but it was never realised. Con and his team were firmly of the opinion that it was an early Roman military complex.

#### GOBLESTUBBS COPSE EAST: EXCAVATION JULY 2006

(All tables referred to in the text can be sourced at the ADS Supplement.)

Six trenches in total were opened, but only two of them, Trenches 1 and 3, were seen through to completion. Two – Trenches 5 and 6 – were 1m square test-pits within the interior of the main enclosure and produced nil results, so are not reported on here. Two others – Trench 4, which lay across the western boundary of the main enclosure, and Trench 2, placed along the southern side of the southernmost enclosed element – were commenced but terminated soon afterwards for lack of available resources.

*Trench 1 (for location, see Fig. 13)*

This was positioned close to the south-eastern apex of the main enclosure, in anticipation that it would reveal the relationship between the enclosure and the external outworks where the survey evidence had hinted at a complex sequence. The homogeneous character of the sub-surface soil made it very difficult to identify the junction between archaeology and the underlying natural terrain. The inner bank was recorded to a height of 0.6m, and no junction between it and the external ditch was evident. Instead, the sand layer continued unbroken into the cut ditch, which was shown to be V-shaped in profile, very symmetrical in outline, and with a small flattening out 0.2m above the ditch base (Fig. 18).

The fill of the ditch was dominated by sand and clay with occasional large flint nodules. Slight gravel lenses were also observed. The ditch extended for a depth of c. 1.75m below the current ground level, and was just over 3m wide at its uppermost levels, narrowing to a base of c. 0.3m. The external bank was much slighter than its internal partner, 0.4m in height here, but composed of the same sandy parent material with flint inclusions (Fig. 19).



Fig. 18. Trench 1, south-west face. The ditch was V-shaped in section and with an homogenous, sandy, fill.

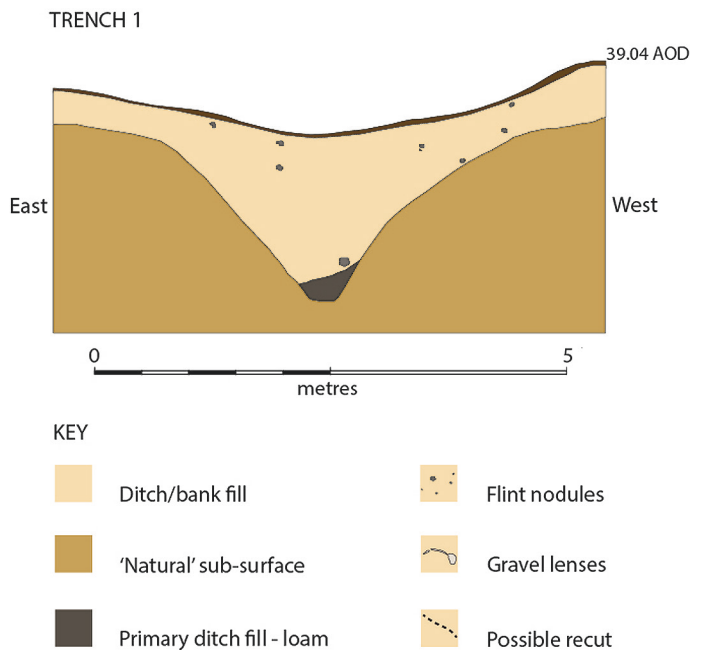


Fig. 19. Trench 1 section, south-west side.

*Trench 2*

The trench (Fig. 13) was on the south side of the southern annex. It was positioned just to the west of the assumed entrance gap and associated passageway here. The upper levels exposed were somewhat different in character from that revealed in Trench 1, in that they were dominated by a more 'loamy' soil, though still sandy and with flint inclusions.

*Trench 3*

Trench 3 (Fig. 13) was close to the midpoint on the south-facing side of the main enclosure, and was dug with the aim of clarifying the stratigraphical relationship between it and that part of the annex to the south. The sub-surface soil made it very difficult to identify the boundary between the cut feature and the natural sub-soil, and no clear stratigraphy was identified during the excavation of this trench (Fig. 20). Its fill, however, appeared to comprise largely undifferentiated sandy clay loam with at least two dense lenses of flint nodules and natural flakes. Closer to the basal levels, and against the inner face of the ditch, there were lenses of darker soil, in all likelihood rapid infilling of loamy soil immediately after the ditch was cut.

The section drawing (Fig. 21) shows that the ditch was cut into a rather undulating sub-surface that had been subject to much churn, presumably in a previous glacial episode – similar undulations and inversions have been noted along this geological bench in West Sussex – and gave the appearance of separate dumps of gravel and other lenses confusingly similar to features with an anthropogenic origin. Closer inspection of the ditch fills does indeed suggest that the main ditch preceded an earlier cut to the south, i.e. the main ditch replaced an earlier line. The edge of the south side of the ditch was not at all clear, but the north side could be discerned, and mirrored that recorded in Trench 1. It is likely, therefore, that the ditch extended to a depth of close to 1.7m and was 0.25m wide at

its base. It was slightly wider at the upper level than its near neighbour, reaching to a probable width of 3.5m. The accompanying banks were relatively well preserved: that on the inner edge of the ditch stood to a height of c. 1.2m, and that on the south was around about 0.75m in height. This was a relatively prolific ditch, in terms of material recovered from it.



Fig. 20. Close-up of the west side of Trench 3. A more complex, but still indistinct, ditch fill is apparent. This may well include at least one phase of ditch re-cutting, perhaps when an earlier enclosed element was re-modelled in a later configuration.

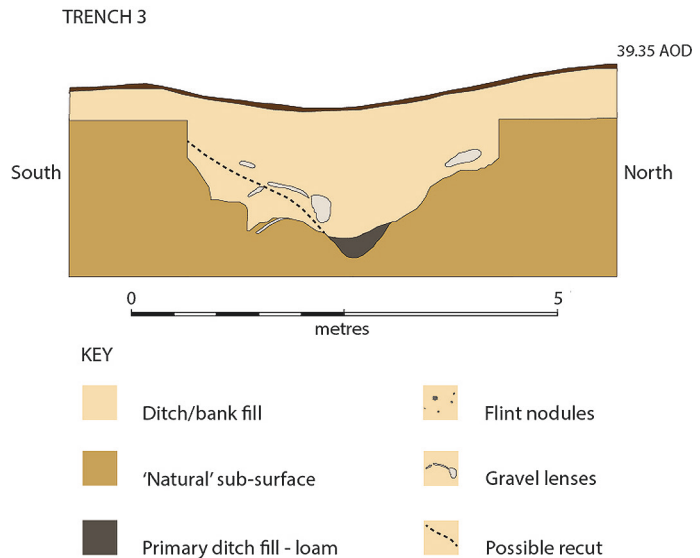


Fig. 21. Trench 3 section, west-facing side, showing more complex stratigraphy than in Trench 1.

## The Pottery

In the absence of any scientific dating from the site, answers to questions relating to sequence and chronology rest entirely on a detailed assessment of the pottery retrieved. This was carried out on ceramics found during the 2006 campaign of fieldwork, and also incorporates a re-assessment of the pottery recovered during the 1972 excavation.

The 2006 pottery assemblage yielded 173 sherds (weighing 1948g) from eight contexts. Most of this assemblage is likely to date to *c.* AD 20–60, but there is also a very small amount of earlier prehistoric pottery present. This contrasts with the pottery collected during fieldwork at Goblestubbs Copse West in 1972, which yielded 297 sherds (weighing 4079g), and appears to represent a largely subsequent occupation phase in the vicinity dating from the mid-1st to mid-3rd centuries AD.

### *Earlier prehistoric pottery from the 2006 assemblage*

There were four flint-tempered fabrics (Table 1) but, given that most consist of featureless body sherds, close dating is difficult. All appear as residual material. Fabric FT1 appears to be possibly Late Neolithic or, more probably, Early Bronze Age in date; Fabrics FT2 and FT3 appear to date to the Early–Middle Iron Age, whilst the rim found in Fabric SFT1 is Late Iron Age. This last fabric is comparable to Fabric AF.1, found at Ford Airfield and likely to date to the 1st century BC (Lyne 2004). Most of this residual material emanated from a single context (201) in Trench 2, which also contained worked flint of later Mesolithic/early Neolithic date, and burnt daub/fired clay fragments.

### *Late Iron Age derivative pottery from the 2006 assemblage*

All the fabrics in this category are handmade, primarily sand-tempered, and were subsequently finished using a turntable/tournette, or had their outer surfaces burnished (Table 2). Fabrics ST1 and ST2 are regional wares emanating from the Reading Beds clay outcrops in Hampshire and West Sussex (Hayden 2011, Table 2). All the remaining fabrics were made

using a clay matrix, which is regionally unique to the Arun Valley area (Table 2). Some of the fabrics bear a resemblance to Late Iron Age–early Roman period pottery found at the Ford Airfield site (Lyne 2004, Fabrics S.2, S.6A, S.11 and S.18). Only one sherd of imported pottery, namely a Gallo-Belgic White Ware beaker dating from the early 1st century AD to pre-Flavian period (Davies *et al.*, 1994, 146), was recovered during the 2006 fieldwork.

An unforeseen element in this assemblage is the presence of a single sand and grog-tempered fabric (Fabric SGT1). It has been suggested that quartz sand had become the most common form of temper by the beginning of the 1st century AD. (Lyne 2003, 141). The use of grog as a tempering agent is more often found in pottery produced in East Sussex during the Late Iron Age and Roman periods (Green 1980). As this fabric is produced locally, it may suggest some form of experimentation by local potters, rather than a potter migrating from East Sussex. The former is more likely because most of the sherds appear to emanate from one vessel, the form of which is more typical of the West Sussex area (Fig. 22).

### *The 1972 assemblage*

The fabrics from the earlier 1972 fieldwork are listed in Table 3. Most date to the Roman period. Unfortunately, insufficient marking of a large percentage of the material meant that this assemblage has been treated as being purely unstratified. The assemblage appears to represent a predominantly later period of occupation in the vicinity, and bears typical characteristics seen in pottery assemblages dating from the mid-1st to mid-3rd centuries AD in this area of West Sussex. It displays certain similarities to the pottery that survives from the nearby Shepherd's Garden site, though it is clear that pottery from Shepherd's Garden overlaps the AD 43 divide (*see* Frazer Hearne 1936, 229 and fig. 5, nos. 2 and 10). With the exception of one Iron Age sherd, an overall date in the range of *c.* AD 60–220 can be postulated for the 1972 Goblestubbs Copse West material.



Fig. 22. A necked jar in sand and grog-tempered fabric.

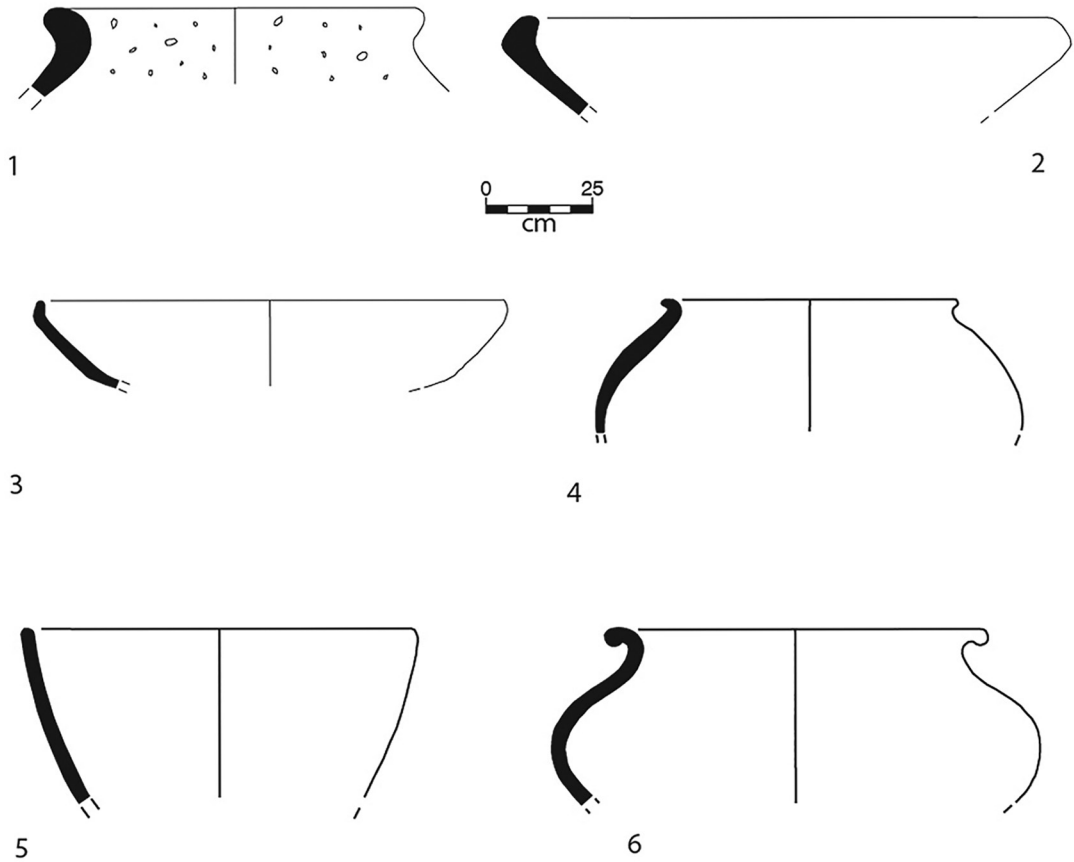


Fig. 23. The 2006 illustrated forms.

Amongst the 1972 assemblage, notably, is a samian cup of Dragendorff form 24/25 datable to the Claudian-Neronian period. This vessel has had the manufacturer's stamp punched out of the base, and then the void has been filled with a clay plug. This trait has been observed on other samian vessels dating to the Claudian-Neronian period, specifically on rural sites in the Chichester area, where manufacturers' stamps have either been punched or scratched out. It is not evident on sites of major Romanised occupation such as Chichester and Fishbourne. One could therefore assume that during the pre-Flavian period (pre-69 AD), in particular areas of less Romanised activity, the manufacturers' stamps were being deliberately removed. Whether this was a deliberate attempt to hide its origin – if it had been stolen, for example – or whether owning or consuming from an object exhibiting the written word was something local rural people would, at that time, perceive as 'polluting' or dangerous to their culture, is unclear.

*The 2006 Illustrated Forms (Fig. 23)*

No. 1: A necked jar with a slightly out-turned flattish rim, slightly similar in profile to an example found at Ford Airfield

(Lyne 2004, 40 and fig. 19, no. 6). Late Iron Age in date, most likely dating to the 1st century BC. Fabric SFT1. Trench 2: *context 201*.

No. 2: A platter/shallow dish with an upturned rim which may have also had the dual function of being used as a lid. Produced from the early 1st century AD until c. AD 60 (Lyne 2005a, 105). Fabric ST2. Trench 3: *context 303-1*.

No. 3: A platter with a simple rim broadly copying the profile of an imported Gallo-Belgic CAM 1 form, slightly similar to examples found at Fishbourne and North Bersted but in a totally different fabric (see Lyne 2005b, 71 and fig. 8, no. 14). Fabric ST4A. Trench 3: *context 303-1*.

No. 4: A carinated jar with an out-turned rim. Fabric ST4A. Trench 3: *context 303-1*.

No. 5: A straight-sided bowl with a beaded rim. Fabric ST4C. Trench 3: *context 303-3*.

No. 6: A carinated necked jar with an out-turned rim which may have been the precursor to later forms, such as the Fishbourne type 181, which has been found on a number of early Roman-period sites in the West Sussex area (see Cunliffe 1971, 214 and fig. 103, nos. 181.1-2). Fabric SGT1. Trench 3: *context 303-4*.

### *The regional significance of the 2006 assemblage*

This assemblage is significant in that most of the Late Iron Age derivative fabrics appear to be handmade precursors to the mass-produced and widely distributed pottery produced in the Arun Valley during the Roman period. Production sites in the Arun Valley are known from the Wiggonholt, Hardham and Littlehampton areas (Lyne 2003, 142 and fig. 11.1); however, the pottery found at Goblestubbs Copse, certainly at the Eastern site, appears to pre-date these production sites. The handmade to wheel-thrown transition in West Sussex has traditionally been assumed to have started soon after AD 43, but this view has recently been reassessed, and it may have taken until c. AD 70 to mature into fully wheel-thrown production (Hayden 2011).

There is a small amount of Southern Atrebatian Overlap pottery including platter and lid forms. Southern Atrebatian Overlap wares have been noted at a number of Late Iron Age–Roman transitional sites in West Sussex and eastern Hampshire (see Hayden 2009 for the distribution). Yet the forms from Goblestubbs Copse were not present in the early ditch at Fishbourne (dated c. 10 BC–AD 25), where a significant amount of this type of pottery was found (Lyne 2005b). With this in mind, a date range of c. AD 20–60 has been postulated for the Goblestubbs Copse Southern Atrebatian Overlap wares. This date, and the contemporaneous date of the single piece of Gallo-Belgic fineware, would make it likely that these locally produced Arun Valley products are of a similar period. Several of these locally produced forms appear to be prototypes to those seen in Period 1 (c. AD 43–75) levels at Fishbourne (Cunliffe, 1971). They are an early attempt at producing forms which later appear in fully wheel-thrown wares. This suggests that people were beginning to adopt new ideas and perhaps reflects changes in dietary habits. The presence of platter types that are similar in shape to imported varieties may indicate a shift by local people towards consuming foodstuffs with a dryer consistency and adopting the notion of formal table dining.

This pottery assessment is significant because it bridges the gap in the ceramic record, for the area, in the period immediately pre-dating the Claudian Conquest. Most of the assemblage is locally produced, but consists of handmade vessels that are subsequently finished using a turntable. The vessel forms appear to be precursors to fully wheel-thrown wares produced in the Arun Valley during the Early Roman period, and therefore indicate localised production in a period directly before changes in ceramic technology brought about by the Claudian Conquest. The assemblage illustrates a shift from flint-tempering to that of quartz sand, and the copying of certain forms imported into the West Sussex area at the end of the Iron Age. This suggests that people were beginning to adopt new ideas, and possibly changing their dietary habits, whilst still being slightly resistant to external influences.

## DISCUSSION

Before the fieldwork at Goblestubbs Copse, much debate had centred on the condition of the earthwork enclosures, and further afield in Rewell Wood, the prevalent opinion being that their excellent state of preservation implied a relatively recent construction date. The OS fieldwork of the

1970s had suggested that many of the earthworks could be of medieval or later date, associated with lodges, or management of deer stocks, in the hunting estate attached to Arundel Castle. Interestingly, this debate about whether or not the ‘freshness’ of appearance signifies more recent origin resonates with a similar argument half a century before, about the date of the Chichester Entrenchments. Two prevailing views had emerged at that time. One suggested that these earthworks had a medieval origin (Holmes 1968); a counter view suggested that they dated to the Late Iron Age (Bradley 1969). It is now generally accepted, of course, that whilst there had been a certain amount of re-use and modification in the medieval and post-medieval periods, the system of linear boundaries was established in the decades immediately before the Claudian Conquest. The excavations at Goblestubbs Copse, both the 1972 and 2006 campaigns, have established beyond reasonable doubt that the earthwork complexes in this area were built in the early 1st century AD and that, when abandoned, they were not subject to any further re-working. No evidence of later (medieval or more recent) activity – neither structural remains (re-cuts in the ditch sections, nor later earthwork enclosures, for example), nor material culture (pottery or other residues) – was found during the two separate episodes of excavation. The assessment of the pottery sequence unequivocally places the construction of the main enclosure at Goblestubbs Copse East at c. 20 AD, perhaps one or two generations or so before the final episode of construction at the neighbouring Goblestubbs Copse West. The recently identified earlier enclosure here is undated. The pottery sequence ends fairly abruptly by the AD 60s (possibly during the late AD 50s) at the former, whilst Ainsworth’s excavations at the western site show that it was rebuilt and expanded in c. AD 60–70 and here activity extended into the 3rd century AD. It is important to emphasise, however, that recent work suggests there are **earlier** enclosed elements at both sites. They remain undated, but are likely to be closely contemporary, based on shared character, scale and, of course, location.

### **BEFORE THE ENCLOSURES**

The scale of interventions at Goblestubbs Copse is limited, and it may well be that a more intense programme of investigation would produce

evidence so far missing, but the supporting data for earliest activity here is confined to a scatter of lithics, mostly of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Early Bronze Age date, alongside a very small number of sherds of prehistoric pottery. There are a number of small circular mounds, probably Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age burial mounds, in the general vicinity of the sites, but earlier monumental foci are rare. Nearby, at least one element in the Dalesdown complex – the small rectilinear enclosure excavated by Hadrian Allcroft – has produced Early Iron Age pottery, though this pottery appears to be lost and so can't be verified. The small isolated enclosure lying 600m to the north of Goblestubbs Copse has been heavily over-ploughed, but it does share morphological similarities with the Dalesdown example, and may well be of later prehistoric date. LiDAR data held by the Environment Agency reveal at least one other enclosure to the west of Goblestubbs Copse, which is certainly earlier than the linear earthwork integrated with the complex here. Undoubtedly, further LiDAR survey will reveal other, earlier, elements in these woods.

It is clear that the Late Iron Age/Early Roman enclosures have been constructed on top of an earlier field system. Truncated lynchets can be seen at various points around the circuit of the Rewell Wood enclosure, for example, and these extend away from it to the east, on a (roughly) east-west alignment. Lynchets also underlie the site at Goblestubbs Copse East, where they are part of a co-axial system that extends across several hundred metres, much of it now cloaked in heavy woodland. The date of the field system is unknown, but we could speculate that the construction of the enclosures decommissioned those elements closest to the sites – there is no evidence of subsequent lynchet build-up on their peripheries – and, maybe, across a much wider area. A prehistoric origin for these fields is likely, and recent work by English at a range of other sites on the Sussex Downs suggests that these large regular systems first emerged in the middle of the 2nd millennium cal BC (English 2013). Identifying related settlement of this period is not at all easy. In other areas of the South Downs, and further afield across the chalklands of southern England, there is an association with open settlement and, frequently, small rectilinear or scooped enclosures. They survive, famously, at Itford Hill (Burstow and Holleyman 1958), and at Plumpton Plain (Holleyman *et al.* 1935; McOmish

2004). We suggest that the platform settlement, Curwen's 'circus', located 270m to the north of the Rewell Wood enclosure complex, is of Middle Bronze Age date, and therefore possibly contemporary with the earliest monumentalised fields in the area. The nearby discovery of a Mid to Late Bronze Age hoard of metalwork, including a late palstave, a fragment of another, and 10 lumps of melted scrap, may provide circumstantial support for a late 2nd millennium cal BC date (Aldsworth 1983).

There is a strong likelihood that the boundary defining the northern edge of the Little Park near Arundel Castle, although certainly used in the medieval period, made use of an earlier feature comprising a bank with ditch to the north. This earthwork has been placed at that point where the natural spur narrows, and so cuts off land to the south, very much in the manner of a promontory fort. Dating for the earliest phase of enclosure here is not at all secure, but excavation following the storm of October 1987 produced a sherd of Middle Iron Age pottery, so-called 'saucepan pot' style, from a primary context in the ditch (Place 1992). There are other finds of later prehistoric material in the general area, but the scale and extent of sites increase markedly towards the end of the 1st millennium cal BC and into the first centuries AD.

#### THE LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN LANDSCAPE

The Late Iron Age and Roman period earthwork complexes in the woods to the west of Arundel now join a remarkable inventory of contemporary places on the West Sussex coastal plain and adjacent chalk downs. They include well-known sites such as that at Shepherd's Garden, on a south-facing spur, just over 3km to the east of Rewell Wood, and now within the park at Arundel. Again, the key enclosed characteristics are present, and the date range matches that for Goblestubbs Copse East, with an origin in the first decades of the 1st millennium AD. The distribution map of the area around Arundel is a busy one indeed, even more so when further, now plough-levelled, sites are added. At least one enclosure complex can be seen in the ploughed fields to the east of Goblestubbs Copse East (King 1979). This comprises a number of conjoined rectilinear compounds, with associated lengths of linear ditch, the entire complex covering close on to 2ha and, therefore, very much in scale with the Goblestubbs Copse sites and Rewell Wood. The cropmark site may well incorporate an earlier



Fig. 24. Ploughed-out enclosure complex to the east of Goblestubbs Copse.  
© Historic England.

component, as there is a large and highly visible ring-ditch, possibly a ploughed-out round barrow, at the heart of it (Fig. 24).

Other foci, possibly settlements, are also evident, and the record is further embellished by the development of villa complexes and other larger, more substantial, entities of 1st–4th century AD date. It is likely, for example, that the earliest components in the ‘villa’ or riverside industrial complex at Arundel (Rudling 1984) are contemporary with much of the activity at Goblestubbs Copse, particularly the later, western, elements, and recent work by Worthing Archaeological Society has revealed evidence for a new villa complex to the west of Binsted Wood which, again, has a chronological overlap with the Goblestubbs Copse complex, 1.5km to the north (Hayden 2014). Better summaries of the general distribution of Roman period activity are outlined in Rudling (1999), Russell (2010) and Manley and Rudkin (2005), for example.

Casting the net more widely, and looking at the sub-regional pattern of activity drawn from the

inventory of known sites, as well as spreads of material culture, it is worth speculating that the Arun valley marks some sort of social boundary. This has been suggested for the historic period, especially in relation to the occurrence and composition of Anglo-Saxon burials, but more generally in the absence of a strong post-Roman presence to the west of the Arun (Down and Welch 1990). It is worth speculating that the concentration of later prehistoric and early Roman activity to the west of the river was an earlier incarnation of an emergent social divide.

#### THE WEST SUSSEX OPPIDUM

The density of settlement and related activity along the West Sussex coastal plain is noteworthy in itself, but it is given further emphasis by association with a remarkable and extensive system of linear boundaries. Many of these, though by no means all, are massive constructions, comprising a bank

with ditch, sometimes several metres high and deep, and typified very much by the War Dyke.

This earthwork has drawn the attention of several researchers, but only relatively recently has a Late Iron Age date been suggested for it (Hamilton and Manley 1999). The plan produced by Curwen in 1920 is the only one of any detail that is available – all subsequent Ordnance Survey plans are based on it, for example – but even here recent reconnaissance suggests that there is a great deal more complexity to the monument than hitherto recognised, particularly in the area of the Whiteways Plantation. Here, there are at least three main lines of boundary. The innermost (Fig. 25), referred to by Curwen as ‘Great Wardyke’, is the most substantial, and is shadowed at a distance of 60m by what he called the ‘Dummy Wardyke’. In addition, there is at least one other parallel line of linear earthwork, as well as slight remains of lynchets. It is certain that further survey work here will add more detail but, regardless, this locally prominent hill has witnessed repeated episodes of use, modification, and then expansion.



Fig. 25. The War Dyke on Whiteways Plantation. The ditch here is at least 3m below ground surface, and is flanked on both sides by low, earthen, banks. Postmedieval cultivation has eroded its course to the southwest. © David McOmish.

The course of the Dummy Wardyke is lost after a distance of about 300m, but the Great Wardyke continues to the southwest, hugging close to the break of slope above the re-entrant valley, Fairmile Bottom. The massively monumental form visible at Whiteways Plantation is replaced by a linear earthwork that diminishes in stature the further south travelled. Indeed, for much of its length through the Dalesdown section it is defined as a wide, and much plough-reduced, double-lynchet trackway, surviving intermittently, with a notable gap well to the north of Rewell Wood. It seems likely that in the late 18th century the War Dyke was used as a field boundary for a series of intakes in the area of Whiteways (James Kenny pers. comm.). Only in that area, much further to the southwest, immediately to the north of the Rewell Wood complex, does it increase in scale, and here it bifurcates. One element, deeply hollowed in character, descends the

slopes of Madehurst Wood, and thereafter extends to the west; another line resumes the more north-south alignment. The western arm extends further to the west and is known as the Devil's Ditch – an integral part of the Chichester Entrenchments – whilst the north-south line extends across the line of the A27 and on towards Binsted church. It has been sectioned in three places just to the south of the main road and, although no dateable material was found, a Late Iron Age date is in keeping with the form and structure of the remains examined (Keith Bolton pers. comm.; Magilton 2003, 158). Aerial photographs show that the ditch continued to the south of the church, following the upper edge of a shallow slope on the east flank of a stream, before disappearing from view to the south-west of Marsh Farm. The total length, therefore, of this section of the War Dyke is close to 8.3km. The position of the War Dyke, sweeping south from the



Arun north of Arundel, to a terminal in the marshes to the south of Binsted, encourages the view that it was constructed so as to enclose that space, **and** the associated earthwork complexes. If so, the total area of enclosure reaches just over 22 square km.

### THE CHICHESTER ENTRENCHMENTS

The work at Goblestubbs Copse, and the reassessment of the War Dyke, provide further detail on an already extraordinary concentration of Late Iron Age and Early Roman activity on the West Sussex coastal plain. It is dominated by an array of linear boundaries, known more generally as the Chichester Dykes, which extend east from tributaries of Chichester Harbour towards the Arun valley (Fig. 26).

These earthworks have been interpreted as defining a pre-Roman, territorial, oppidum (Magilton 2003) which may well have had an origin in the 1st century cal BC, but it is clearly a system of polyfocal enclosure and linear boundaries that continued to be respected throughout the 1st–4th centuries AD and into the medieval period. ‘Oppida’ is a rather ‘catch-all’ term, used to describe disparate complexes of enclosures and linear boundaries that emerged at the end of the 1st millennium cal BC (Pitts 2010; Moore 2012) and which may have had settlement, religious and industrial foci (McOmish 2013). This is perhaps not the place to indulge in a detailed review of oppida, other than to note that it is a description – drawn from early literacy sources, predominantly Caesar’s *De Bello Gallico* – that is increasingly being challenged. Regardless, the prevailing orthodoxy is that these sites are, in some way, connected to the emergence of tribal enclaves on the eve of the Claudian Conquest.

The linear boundaries are found across an area of at least 150 square km of the coastal plain, and two trends are apparent – east to west, and north to south – grouped in three segments and comprising an intensively enclosed area between the Bosham Stream and the river Lavant, a large central sector defined by the War Dyke on its east, and an eastern portion from the War Dyke

to the Arun (Hamilton and Manley 1999). The key element in all this is the Devil’s Ditch, of which the War Dyke is the easternmost extension. This linear boundary extends along the break of slope to the south of the South Downs chalk dipslope, and it is suggested here that it may well be one of the earliest elements in the entire system, defining and providing a geographical locus for subsequent activity. Its intermittent course can be discerned for a length of 22km, but conclusive evidence relating to the date of its construction is wanting. It was not a ‘complete’ earthwork; instead it is composed of isolated segments, of varying length, and some sections of it are evidently of medieval date (Magilton 2003, 156). It is not clear, however, whether these more recent sections re-use the line of a pre-existing linear, but there are places where an earlier date is more secure, such as Ounce’s Barn (Bedwin and Place 1995). Excavations of an enclosure close to the terminal of the linear boundary here produced moulds for Late Iron Age coins; the presence of coin mint is often cited as a key constituent of oppida.

South of the line of the Devil’s Ditch/War Dyke, it appears that a number of separate, early, foci emerged between the Caesarian campaigns of 55/54 BC and the Claudian Conquest nearly

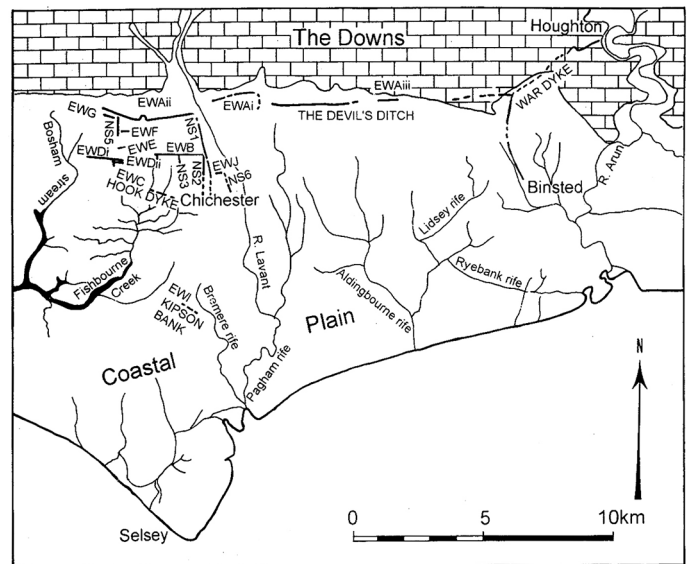


Fig. 26. John Magilton’s plan of the linear boundaries on the West Sussex coastal plain. Reproduced with kind permission of Eleanor Magilton. © Eleanor Magilton

a century later. It may have been dominated by activity in an area now lying off the coast close to Selsey Bill (Kenny 1989), but other important nodes developed to the north, within the area later occupied by Chichester and, evidently, within a massive enclosure on the western flank of the Arun.

The date of the enclosure complexes at Goblestubbs Copse is now secure, and by inference so are the other enclosed elements, but their 'function(s)' remain(s) obscure. The fieldwork was targeted directly at dating the enclosure boundaries, but no attempt was made to assess any of the internal spaces in a concerted way. Ainsworth certainly viewed the western site at Goblestubbs Copse as an early Roman military site, close to a military route way, in a strategic position, above the coastal plain, and overlooking a possible Roman invasion bridgehead, but this seems unlikely. The material recovered from the excavations, whilst showing a certain amount of external influence, is typical of other regional assemblages. There are no surface features indicating the possible position of structures within the Goblestubbs Copse or Rewell Wood complexes, but Ainsworth certainly found buried structural elements during his fieldwork. The enclosures may well be domestic residences, but evidence from other territorial oppida indicates that polyfocal enclosure complexes are a recurring constituent, and that they perform a myriad of functions, sometimes changing over time too. Recent fieldwork on the coastal plain has revealed an intermittent distribution of Late Iron Age activity characterised by areas of intense land use, separated by areas devoid of contemporary activity (James Kenny pers. comm.). Some may well be farmsteads, others related to small-scale industrial activity; a smaller number are high-status and possibly related to 'tribal' rule and administration (Corney 1991). It is likely, though, that subsequent developments in the Roman period, including the development of ports at a number of locations, such as Selsey, Bosham and Pulborough, and the creation of a formal road network, reflected pre-existing patterns of land use (James Kenny pers. comm.).

The presence of elongated hollow ways leading to entrance ways at both Goblestubbs Copse and Rewell Wood has led some to suggest that they were related to stock management, perhaps with a main residential compound and associated corrals. Given the value of cattle as signifiers of wealth and status, this could suggest that we are

dealing with the homesteads of relatively wealthy individuals, certainly wealthy enough to be using rare and imported pottery. Who they were, and what they were doing within the enclosures and surrounding landscape, will have to await further investigation.

The accompanying historical narrative is largely speculative, derived from an amalgam of historical sources with specific items of material culture, principally coins, but it bears closer scrutiny, since it may well provide an explanation for this incredibly intense burst of activity at the end of the Iron Age along this section of the Sussex coast. All the available evidence points to a tumultuous period in southern England largely following Roman attempts at conquest in Gaul. At this time, in the middle decades of the 1st century BC, tribal affiliation may have been somewhat fluid, deals being struck and new alliances made in the light of Roman military expansion (Russell 2010). It is assumed that shared clan affiliation stretched across the Channel, and there are strong reasons to believe that people and resources moved back and forth in response to developing political and economic conditions on the European mainland. A key player, and somewhat iconic figure in this, is an individual named Commius. He is first mentioned in c. 57 BC by Julius Caesar in his *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* as being appointed King of the Atrebates – the tribe newly conquered by Caesar – and by about 30 BC he was issuing coins from *Calleva Atrebatum* (Silchester). (For fuller discussion, see Creighton 2000). His assumed 'sons', Tincomarus, Eppillus and Verica, subsequently ruled this Atrebatian dynasty, which eventually split into two separate entities: a northern enclave with a focus in northern Hampshire, and a southern one, defined by the Chichester Dykes.

The southern Atrebatian area was governed initially by Eppillus, and he was succeeded by his brother, Verica, in about 15 AD. The available chronology suggests that the earliest enclosed elements at Goblestubbs Copse, perhaps the War Dyke as well, were built during his reign. According to written sources, the Atrebates were engaged in near-continual war with another tribe, the Catuvellauni, who, under Cunobelin, were pressing from the east. It is worth speculating that the construction of the extensive system of linear boundaries was a response to this internecine warfare, and that the Devil's Ditch/War Dyke was

constructed to define and protect an Atrabatic enclave. More research is required to test this hypothesis, but by the early 40s AD Caratacus had completed the Catuvellaunian expansion and Verica had fled to Rome, where he sought Roman intervention. This, in turn, could well have provided justification for renewed attempts, under Claudius, at Roman conquest. When this arrived in the summer of 43 AD, it did not entirely disrupt the trajectories of land use that had been established earlier. Indeed, it may well have given added impetus to an already vibrant local community, and bequeathed us the remarkable sites we now see surviving in woods to the west of Arundel.

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## ADS SUPPLEMENT CONTENTS

Table 1. Breakdown of the pottery fabrics found at Goblestubbs Copse 2006.

Table 2. Late Iron Age derivative sandy fabrics produced in the Arun Valley area.

Table 3. Breakdown of the pottery fabrics found at Goblestubbs Copse 1972.