

The Iron Age enclosure and First World War Prisoner of War camp at Felday, Holmbury St Mary, near Dorking

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Clearance of ground cover from the interior has allowed survey of the prehistoric enclosure at Felday and the remains of the Prisoner of War Camp within it. Documentary research on the latter site has been used to develop a context for this example of a poorly understood type of military complex dating to the First World War.

Background

In 1983 a previously unrecorded Iron Age enclosure at Felday was noted (Elmore 1983) and in 1984/5 it was subjected to analytical survey and limited excavation (Field 1989), but vegetation cover masked some of the earthworks and the interior. At the same time the presence of the remains of a First World War Prisoner of War (PoW) camp in the interior of the enclosure was noted and local memories of the layout of buildings in the camp were recorded, but not published. In 2009/10 vegetation was cleared from the interior, and over the boundary complex, of the Iron Age enclosure and the opportunity was taken to enhance the earlier survey and record the remains of the PoW camp. Advantage was also taken of a modern cut to record a section of the boundary complex of the prehistoric enclosure. Background research on the latter monument was also undertaken and a full report has been published privately (Newell & Winsler 2013).

Geology, topography and present land use

The Felday enclosure is located on a north-facing spur between two now-dry valleys cutting the Greensand ridge between Guildford and Dorking (fig 1). The north-facing dip-slope rises gently to heights of 294m OD at Leith Hill and 261m OD at Holmbury Hill, the site of Holmbury hillfort, to the south, but the spur on which the Felday enclosure is situated achieves the more modest height of 200m OD. The view to the north, over the Tillingbourne valley, is limited by the North Downs and to the west and south by higher areas of the Greensand ridge. Only to the east and south-east does the view extend over the southern end of the valley giving access to the Low Weald.

Geologically, the parent Hythe Beds give rise to soils of the Shirrell Heath 2 series, cretaceous and tertiary sands with an acid sandy soil. Extensive industrialisation of the Tillingbourne stream, especially during the 17th century, occasioned felling of the woodland on the Greensand ridge for fuel (Brandon 1984, 75–103), but later much of the area was replanted and the Felday spur is shown covered by a conifer plantation on 19th century OS maps. After the First World War felling episode, either further replanting or natural regeneration resulted in the present cover of Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). Away from the conifers the area supports heathland vegetation, but there has also been encroachment by rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), which necessitated the recent clearance.

The area is part of the Surrey Hills AONB and is primarily managed by the Hurtwood Trust for wildlife and for leisure pursuits.

Survey and interpretation

The level 3 survey was undertaken using the tape and offset method (Bowden 1999, 62–3) using a main, straight track running approximately north/south through the enclosure as the baseline with offsets crossing the earthworks on either side. The position of the baseline was

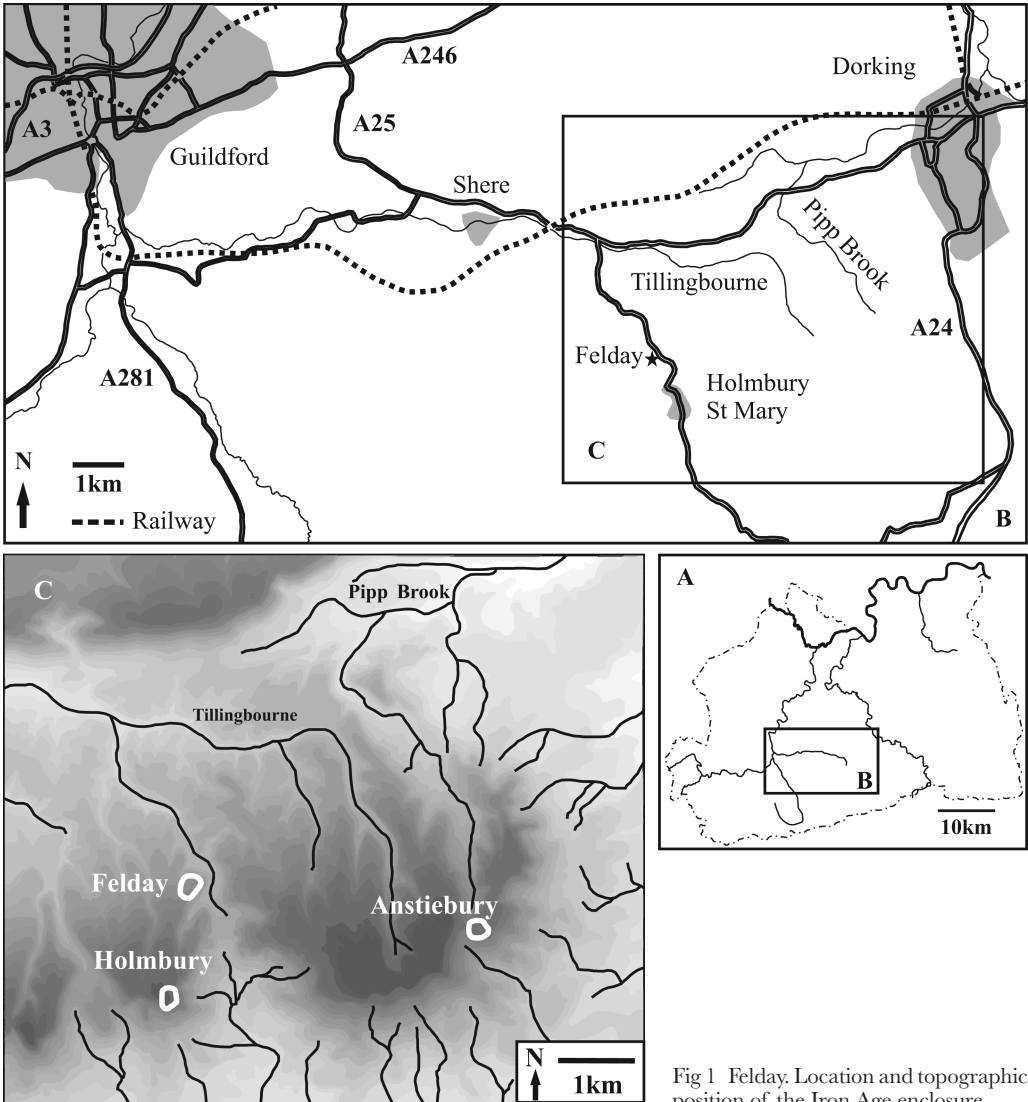


Fig 1 Felday. Location and topographic position of the Iron Age enclosure.

located using a Garmin eTrex hand-held global positioning system (GPS). While the interior was largely clear of vegetation, some of the earthworks were clad with deep heather and, towards the end of the period of the survey, bracken. In addition, the entire area was buried in a deep layer of needle mor (unrotted vegetable matter) and it is acknowledged that minor earthworks may not have been noted.

THE PREHISTORIC ENCLOSURE

The annotated results of the survey are shown in figure 2.

The modern track passes through the southern arm of the earthworks clearly cutting them (a) and there is no evidence that this represents the position of an original entrance. To the west of the entrance the edges of a modern trench can be seen (b) (Field 1989, trench A). Immediately west of this point the surviving earthworks are limited to a single bank, any outer earthworks having been destroyed by a modern track with a ditch (c) to its north.

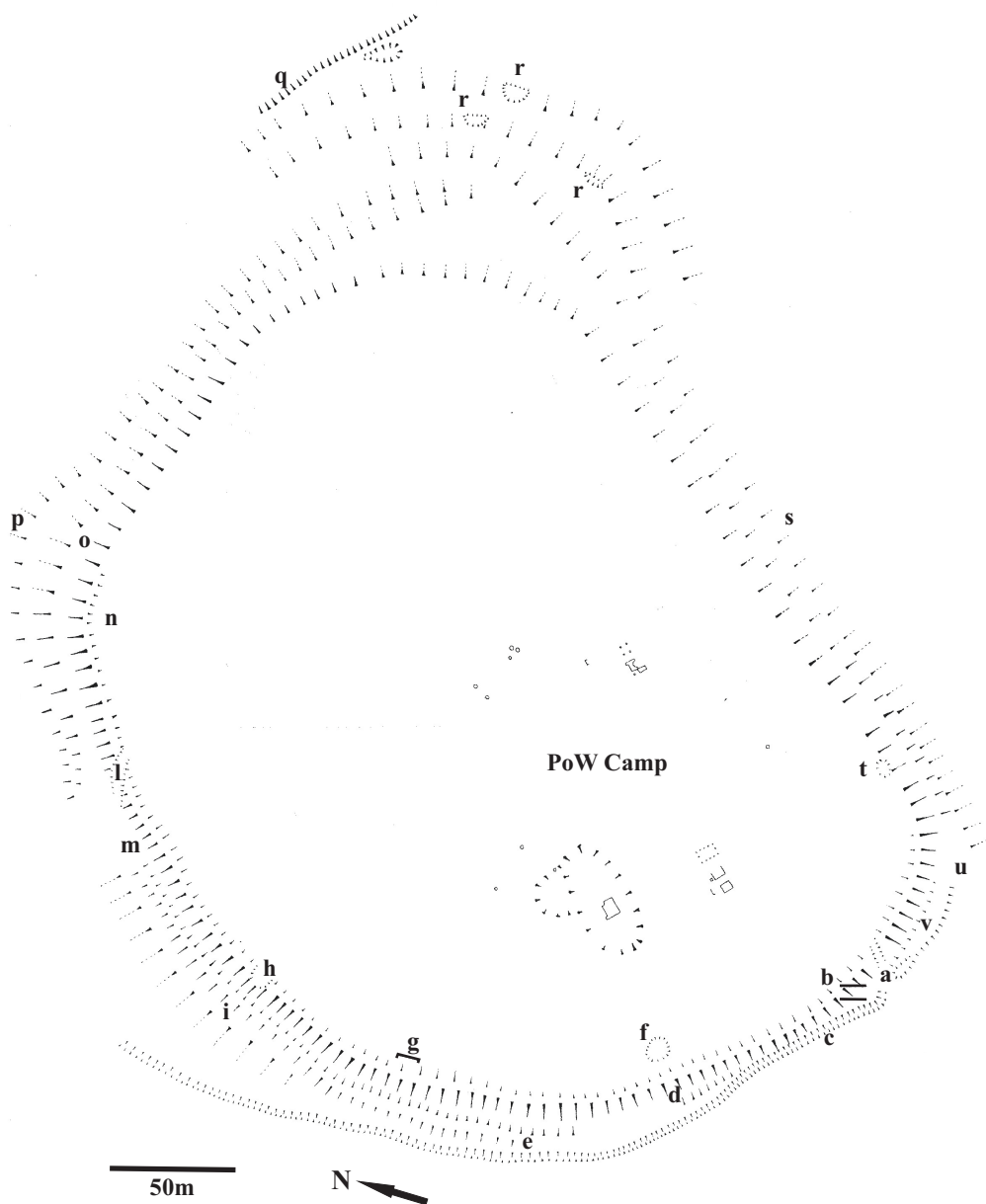


Fig 2 Felday. Analytical survey of the Iron Age enclosure.

However, farther west an exterior ditch (d) and then a second bank (e) survive as the track turns away from the enclosure. A quarry in the interior of the enclosure (f) is of unknown date, but the area was exploited for building stone at least from the 18th to the 20th centuries and the relatively 'crisp' edge to this small quarry suggests a recent date. A straight-sided depression (g) also appears to be modern and is not in a position known to have been subject to any archaeological intervention; its origin remains unknown, as does that of a cut through the inner bank (h).

The earthworks of the western arm of the enclosure comprise an inner bank and ditch and an outer bank. Outside this second bank is what appears now as a terrace (i), but may originally have been an outer ditch now infilled by erosion. However, the scarp below this terrace appears to have been an enhancement of the natural slope and it is possible that it represents a terrace and vertical cut as seen previously at both Holmbury and Hascombe hillforts (Hooker & English 2008; 2009; 2016).

The north-western portion of the enclosure earthworks have been subject to considerable disturbance. A modern entrance (l) has truncated the inner bank, and the complex outside this point, if surviving at all above ground, has been buried in forestry brush (m). However, the modern cut for this entrance exposed a section through the boundary complex and advantage was taken of this to record the visible stratigraphy (fig 3).

North of this point the complex can be seen as an inner bank (n), now only surviving as a very slight earthwork, and two substantial outer scarps separated by a terrace (o), with a third, lower, scarp (p) that may be natural in origin. The original form of these earthworks cannot be determined from surface survey – any ditches may have been filled with erosion products.

Along the western portion of the northern arm only three scarps are now visible and they decrease in height approaching the north-eastern corner of the enclosure. Here the number of scarps increase but it is not possible to identify which, if any, are man-made. A large quarry into the side of the hill (q) was covered in thick vegetation and no attempt was made to survey this feature.

Three small semi-lunate platforms (r) were located on the slope below the north-eastern corner of the enclosure. Similar features have been found on the slopes below both Holmbury and Hascombe hillforts, again within areas of terracing (Hooker & English 2008; 2009; 2016). In no case can it be said that these platforms are contemporary in construction with the prehistoric enclosures. More recent purposes might include positions for planting specimen trees, but those at Hascombe do not overlook any major houses of the 17th–20th centuries when this form of planting was in vogue. A further possibility is that they are artillery platforms, Holmbury Hill being known for military training during the First and Second World Wars, although the apparent lack of any means of access militates against this suggestion. Even if they are prehistoric in origin their purpose remains unclear, but all are placed to provide good views away from the enclosures and lookout points may be suggested.

The eastern arm of the earthworks comprises three scarps (s) with no evidence of either banks or ditches visible. Again it may be that such features have been infilled but there is no softness to the ground to suggest this. A depression (t) may indicate further minor quarrying or, possibly, something allied to the PoW camp. There is a large area of quarrying (not surveyed) at the south-east corner of the enclosure that has truncated the earthwork complex in that area (u). There are, however, indications that the scarps were replaced by a ditch and bank complex at this corner (v) and continuing westwards.

The location of the original entrance is uncertain; no breaks in the boundary complex were observed during the survey and, although the present entrances clearly breach the banks, they may represent the position(s) of narrower gaps. The western gap (fig 2, l) presented a recently eroded face and two lengths of the exposed section were drawn (fig 3) with a gap where the removal of a tree had destroyed all stratigraphic evidence.

The length of the section shows a humic topsoil containing unrotted vegetable matter (01) overlying a well-developed silver/pale orange podzol (02). The matrix of the inner bank comprised hard orange sand containing a few small stones (03) with further stones overlying the crest of this bank. The ditch fill was of coarse orange sand and a tumble of pieces of sandstone, including some slabs, lay on the inner side of the ditch. It seems likely that these represent slumped revetment from the inner bank, a finding that confirms the results of excavation (Field 1989). The section could only be recorded to the depth of the modern path and this did not reach the bottom of the ditch, so it is not possible to judge whether it was rock cut in this position. The section covering the possible position of the outer edge of the

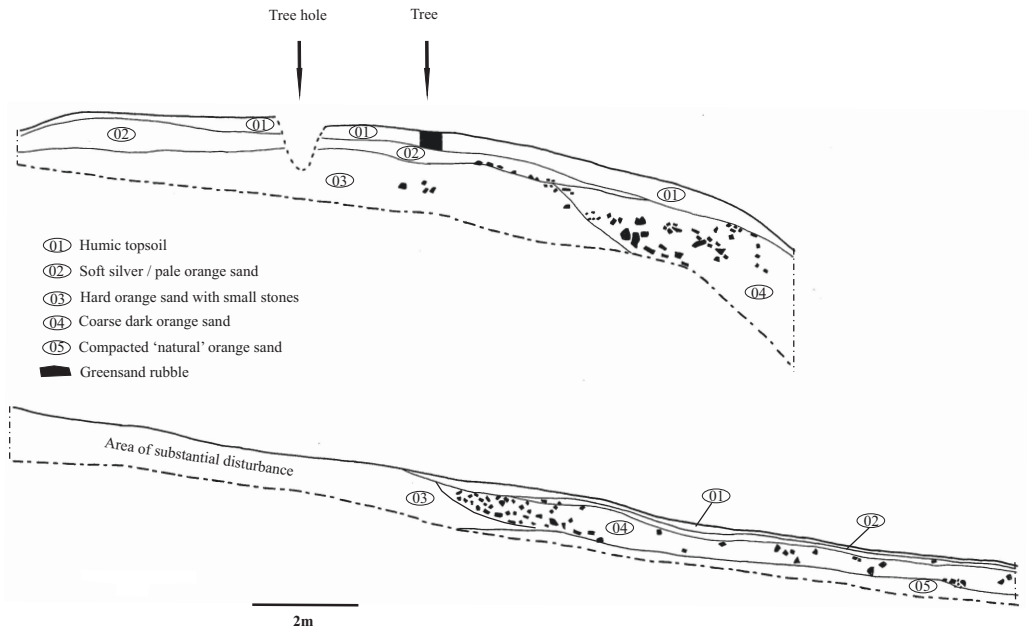


Fig 3 Felday. Section through the boundary complex of the Iron Age enclosure cut to provide the modern northern entrance.

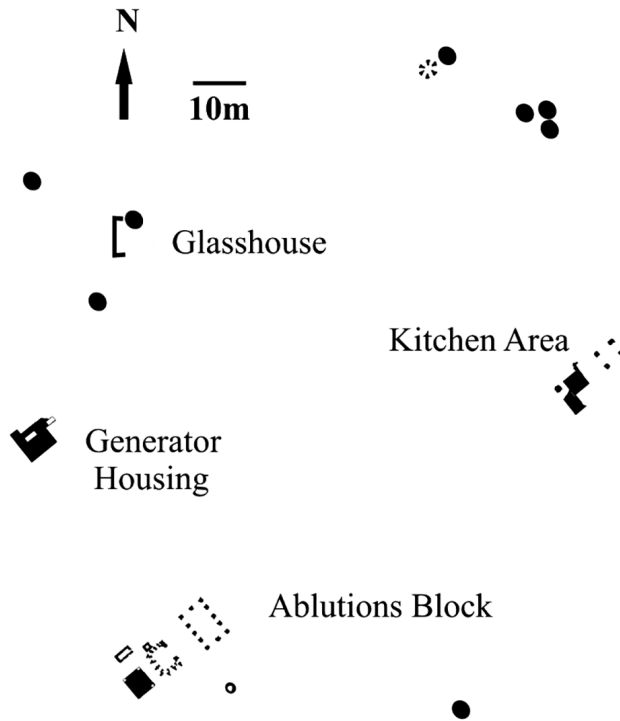


Fig 4 Felday. Relative positions of the visible remains of the PoW camp. The black dots represent heaps of calcium carbonate waste from acetylene production.

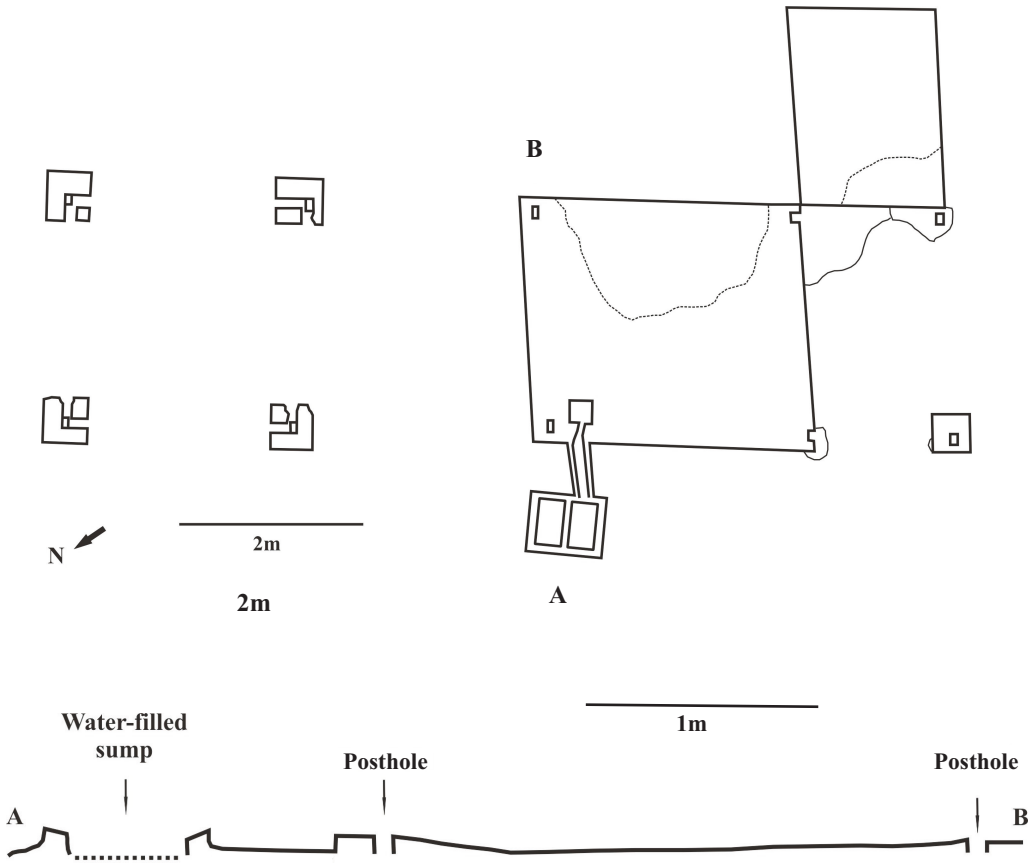


Fig 6 Felday. Plan and section of the possible kitchen area of the PoW camp.

superstructure, while a posthole set in a concrete slab may indicate the presence of a further structure, possibly a lean-to, in the angle between the two concrete bases.

In the north-eastern corner of the larger base a drain, some 250mm square, could have served to gather liquid into a waste pipe or pipes. From this a gully had been formed in the same material, through the outer wall for a distance of 1.1m, and into a double catchment pit set in the ground, again formed of local, poor-quality concrete, and with a smooth rendered interior. This catchment pit or sump, which measures 1 x 0.80 x 0.56m in depth, with a solid base, is fed on one side from the gully. The off-centre divide, which is 25mm lower than the outer rim, forms a central archway dividing the pit, leaving a gap of 0.24m to the north and 0.375m to the south.

In the catchment pit is a 65mm internal diameter outlet pipe 75mm from the top of the rim of the northern wall. This would probably have allowed liquids to run into a soakaway, possibly the slightly sunken area of soft ground to the northern side of the complex, while retaining solid material within the pit. The outer edge of the pit, which is bevelled inwards, could have supported a lid or cover.

To the north-east of the concrete bases are four concrete blocks enclosing an area *c* 3 x 3m. Each of the blocks, which measure between 0.43 and 0.57m in length and width, has an L-shaped groove, and it seems likely that these grooves would have taken wooden beams to support a timber building. As the Swiss Legation report (see below) describes a store room behind the kitchen the identification of this complex as a kitchen area seems reasonable.

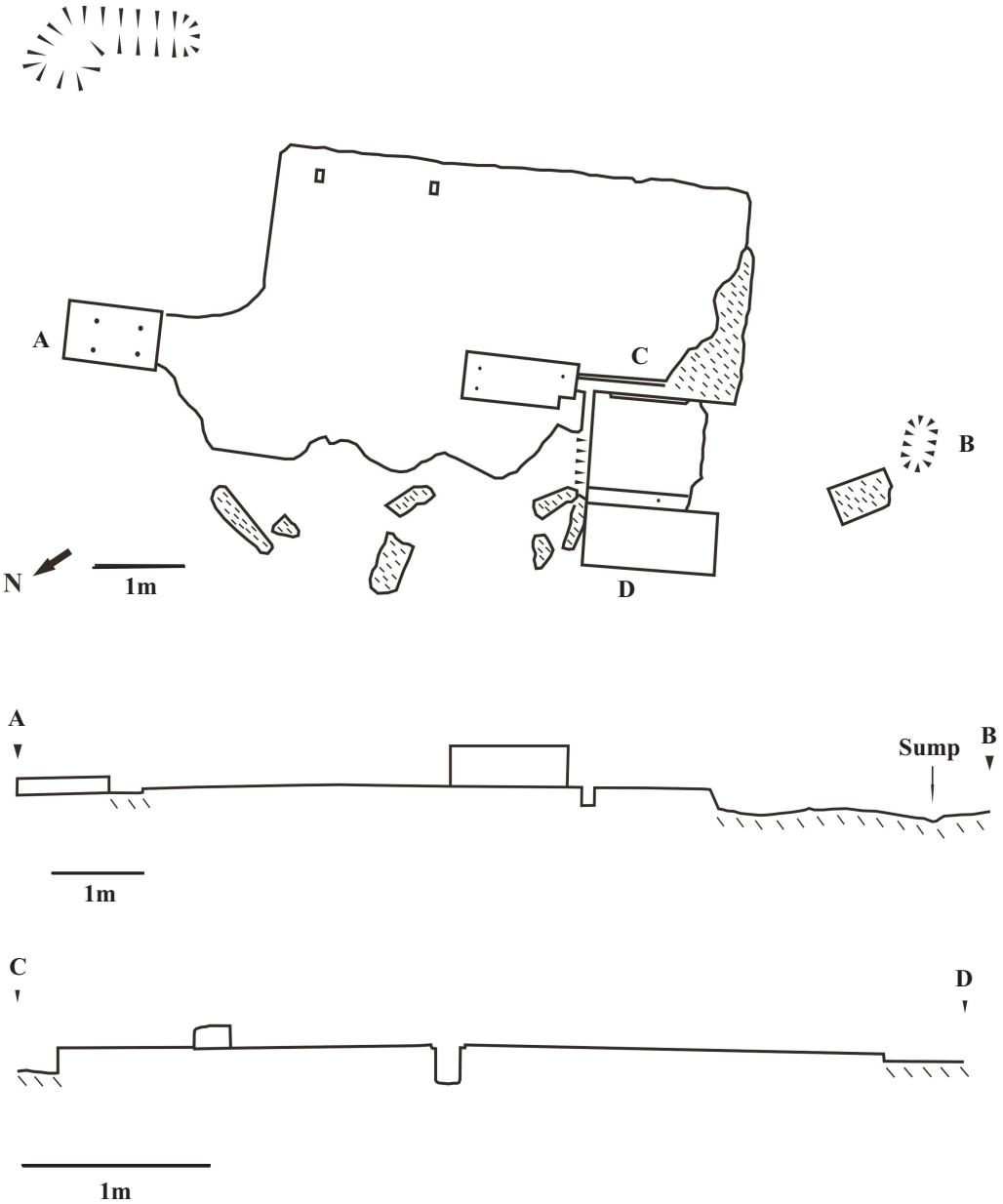


Fig 7 Felday. Plan and sections of the generator housing at the PoW camp.

b) The generator house (figs 7 and 10b)

In the north-western corner of the camp are two rectangular concrete plinths standing on a concrete base, set 3.6m apart and each with four metal bolts on the upper surface. The easterly block measures 1.1 x 0.7m and 40mm high, while that to the west is 1.3 x 0.6m and 40mm high. The concrete base measures 3.6 x 5.6m and two postholes close to its eastern edge may have supported either a roof or shelving, perhaps for batteries, or a control panel. A number of ducts or channels lead away from the western block.

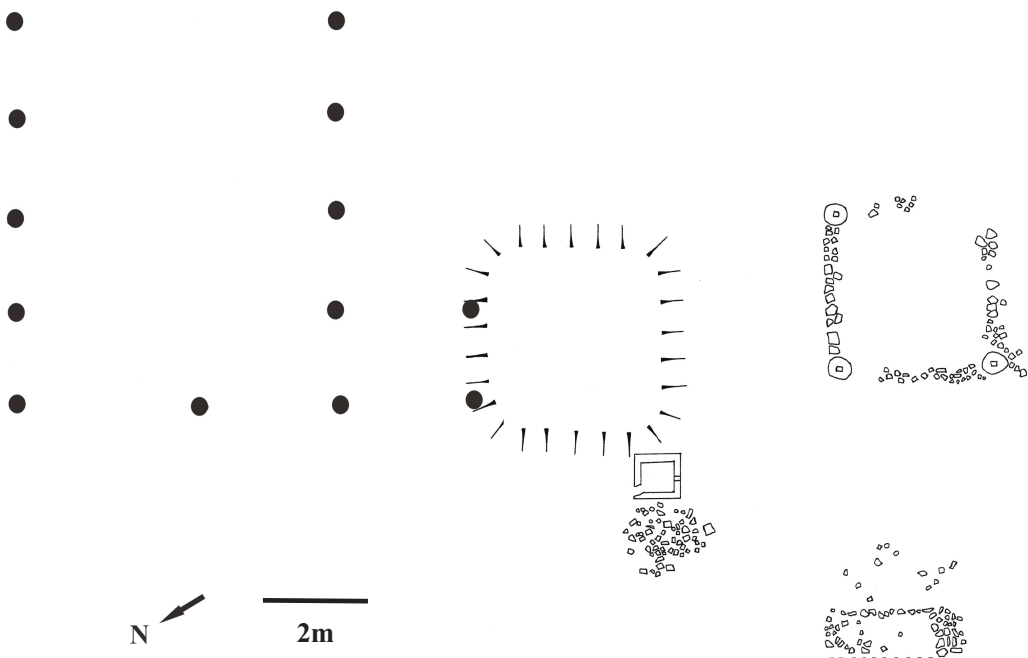


Fig 8 Felday. Plan and section of the possible ablutions block.

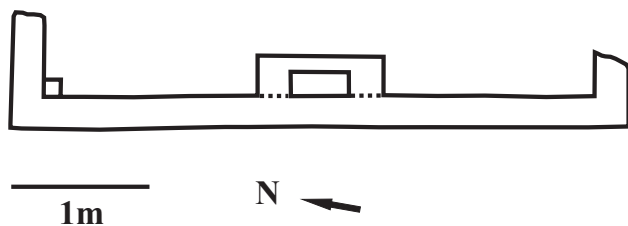


Fig 9 Felday. Plan of the possible glasshouse or detention cell.

The sketch by Beattie Ede (fig 5) suggests that this was the location of a generator unit. An interpretation (Tony Harcombe, pers comm) implies that a generator had been belt driven from a single cylinder, horizontal bore, open crank oil engine run on paraffin oil also known as kerosene. It would have provided a supply to a control panel, which then charged banks of batteries to provide a direct current for lighting and other uses. One of the ducts in the base would have carried the exhaust pipe outside to a silencer let into the ground to dampen the noise, and the other duct would have carried the fuel supply pipe from a tank set, probably for safety reasons, outside the building on a separate platform. A small gully in the main concrete base may have been intended to remove spillage caused while servicing the batteries.

Inspection reports (see below) suggest that when the prisoners moved into the camp in August 1917 it was intended that lighting would derive from burning acetylene, made from water and calcium carbide. The presence of piles of waste material on site (calcium carbonate being produced by contact of the waste with carbon dioxide in the atmosphere) suggests that this method was indeed used. However, sale of materials from the camp in 1919 (see below)



Fig 10 Felday. (a) The possible kitchen area (top) and (b) the generator area (bottom) both from the south-west.

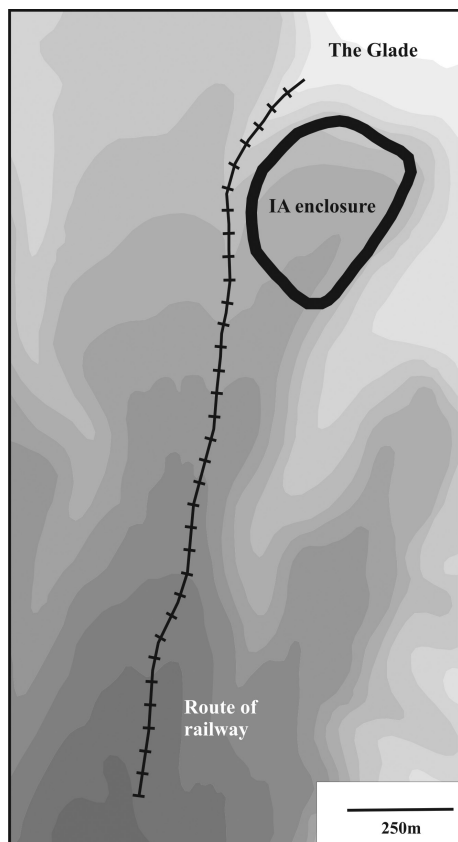


Fig 11 Felday. Route of the Decauville-type railway.

with concrete pads at three corners. A fourth concrete pad found some distance away may have been dislodged by recent clearance work and these pads, each with a central posthole, probably supported timber uprights. Concentrations of stones to the west of this suggest the presence of further buildings.

d) The possible glasshouse or detention cell (fig 9)

Further masonry was located down-slope from the possible kitchen area but it is unclear that it represents the remains of a building. A 4.6m length of concrete, possibly the base for a timber wall, with returns at either end is set into the slope. There does not appear to have been a solid floor. The blocks central to the surviving wall and in the northern corner may have supported a superstructure.

The only reason for the tentative identification of this feature as the glasshouse or detention cell, is the presence of such a structure on the sketch by Beattie Ede (fig 5).

e) The perimeter lights

In addition to the building remains, small piles of a white powdery substance, shown to be calcium carbonate, were located (fig 4). It seems likely that this represents the waste product from the burning of acetylene lamps on the perimeter of the camp.

include an electric light plant – it seems likely that the generator housing described here was added after the camp had been in use for some time.

c) The possible ablutions block (fig 8)

In the south-eastern corner of the camp there is a series of building remains that might represent the site of the ablutions area. The inspection reports (see below) describe the earliest facilities as a shed with ten taps and a pail-based latrine system. There was concern over the lack of a bath or shower and, although additions were requested, it is not certain that the improvements were made.

A series of postholes delineate a possible building of wooden construction, *c* 6 x 7m. Adjacent to this is a 3 x 3m raised platform with a sump outside its western corner. The sump, some 0.8 x 0.8m is lined with concrete with a double catchment pit outside its western corner. The pit, some 0.8m square, is lined with concrete and appears similar to that associated with the probable kitchen area (above). The depth could not be determined owing to the build-up of silt.

Among the rubble to the west of the sump were bricks stamped with the name of the Rowfant Brickworks, based near Crawley, West Sussex. To the south are the remains of rough stone foundations of a building *c* 2.5 x 2.5m

f) *The railway line* (fig 11)

In describing the nature of the work undertaken by the PoWs the inspection report (below) mentions the construction of a Decauville railway, and Beattie Ede's recollections suggest that the wagons were controlled by a chain mechanism on the descent and, when empty, pulled by horses back up the hill. The main innovation from Paul Decauville (1846–1922) was the use of ready-made sections of light, narrow-gauge track fastened to steel sleepers; this track was portable and could be disassembled and transported easily. The system became a military standard and the British and French eventually built thousands of miles of track in the trenches during the First World War.

A deep gully runs from the south, skirting the western boundary of the prehistoric enclosure at Felday and following a valley towards the site of the village sawmill (now Hurtwood car park no 9). This route may have originated prior to the First World War – stone had been quarried from Holmbury Hill since at least the 18th century and would presumably have been removed by horse and cart. However, the narrowness of the bottom of the gully, and the presence of a 'platform' visible in places running along its side, suggests that this became the route of the railway, with the horses walking along the 'platform'. The route was located by a series of points obtained from a hand-held GPS unit and runs from the plateau south of the camp (TQ 10375 43420), skirting the western side of the Iron Age enclosure before running down-slope to join the present track (TQ 10602 44678).

Documentary records of the PoW camp

In September 1916 a *Prisoners of War Employment Committee* was established to advise the War Office on the feasibility of employing enemy combatants taken prisoner to undertake work on the land in Britain. After several meetings an Interim Report was published in 1918 detailing the conclusions to which the Committee had come and which, presumably, had already been acted upon. It had been decided that officers should not work, and non-commissioned officers should only be put to work on a voluntary basis. PoWs should not work together with civilian British or civilian alien labour, and working camps, which should be huted unless operating solely during the summer months, should house at least 100 men. In February 1918, of 44,755 non-commissioned officers and men held in Britain, 23,749 were in work camps, 6168 were awaiting accommodation so that they could be employed and 1006 were undertaking duties in the larger 'parent' camps (Hope *et al* 1918). In total, 141 were resident in the camp at Holmbury St Mary (Felday) and of these 111 were engaged in tree felling and 30 in agricultural work. Elsewhere in the country prisoners were employed in constructing waterworks at Rosyth Naval Dockyard, quarrying iron and tungsten ores for the Ministry of Munitions, extending the steelworks at Port Talbot, erecting the Army Ordnance Department Stores at Bramley (Yorkshire), and repairing the sea wall at Leasowe Castle (Cheshire); such work on military sites would now be illegal (Convention III relative to the treatment of Prisoners of War, Part III, article 50, Geneva 12 August 1949). However, the majority of prisoners were engaged in forestry and agricultural work.

The camp at Felday was prepared for use by men of the 60th Royal Defence Corps whose senior officer was given a walking stick with a silver knob inscribed 'PRESENTED TO REGT. SERGT. MAJOR CUSHING BY NCOs, MEN AND FRIENDS AT P/W CAMP HOLMBURY ST. MARY 60TH R.D.E XMAS 1917' (pers comm, Mrs Cushing, granddaughter by marriage). This work had been finished by 15 August of that year when a Smoking Concert was held in Holmbury St Mary as a farewell to the soldiers (Holmbury St Mary Parish News September 1917) and an inspection report dated 16 October states that the camp opened on 24 August (SFA: CH-BAR#E2020#1000-130 #480#9).

The inspection report, undertaken by A L Vischer, Special Attaché to the Swiss Legation in London and supplied to, among others, the Swiss Legation in Berlin, gives details of the camp itself and the treatment of the PoWs. Extracts from it read:

DIRECTION. The Commandant is Lieut K H Thorneycroft. Dr Cory, a medical practitioner at Shere, about 6 miles distant, is camp physician.

PRISONERS. There are at present 147 German military prisoners in the camp, including the Camp Leader Feldwebel Meerbute and 4 Unteroffiziere.

DESCRIPTION OF CAMP. The camp is healthily situated on high ground, and is surrounded by pine woods. The prisoners have, until lately, been under canvas, but they have now built huts, into which the last batch of men were moving on the day of my visit. The huts are of the standard army type – length 18 metres, width 4.75 metres, height at the side 2.35 metres, height at the gable 3.65 metres. The roofs are of wood, covered with rubberized felt. Each hut is capable of holding 30 men. Stoves for heating are now being put in, and the Commandant informed me that the lighting would be supplied from an acetylene plant. Each man has the usual bed board and trestle bed and four blankets. Two dining huts are in course of construction. In the meantime the prisoners take their meals in a marquee tent.

SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS. The water is good and sufficient. The sewage is drained into a pit at some distance from the camp, and the garbage is incinerated. The latrines are on the pit system. There is an ablution shed with ten taps.

NUTRITION. The kitchen is in a shed and is fitted with one boiler and a roaster. There is a good storeroom. All the men receive the increased ration for working prisoners of war. No canteen has been installed as yet, but the men are able to buy through the camp authorities certain articles from local shops.

MEDICAL INFORMATION. Dr Cory calls twice a week at the camp, and when required. A marquee is kept in readiness for erection as a hospital should it be needed. So far no cases of serious illness have occurred. There has been one minor accident in which a man had the last phalanx of his thumb cut off. He is now being treated at the Belmont Military Hospital. The prisoners are allowed to visit a local dentist if necessary. [It should be noted that this refers to Belmont, Sutton, not Belmont House/School in Holmbury St Mary].

WORK. The work consists of timber felling and the construction of a Decauville railway. I inspected one of the working parties and found the physical condition of the men satisfactory. They are paid 1d an hour, and the foremen 1½–2d an hour. The tailor and shoe maker are paid 1½d and the clerk 1d an hour from Government funds. The 2 cooks are paid out of the Canteen Fund.

RESUMÉ. No definite opinion of the camp arrangements can yet be formed, as the men are hardly settled in their new winter quarters. The chief needs are proper lighting in the huts, some bathing accommodations (a shower bath if possible), and an additional boiler in the kitchen. I brought these matters to the notice of the Commandant. The mentality of the men seems satisfactory which may be attributed in a large measure to the fine situation of the camp, and the healthy work in which they are engaged.

A further inspection in May 1918 (SFA: CH-BAR#E2020#1000-130#480#8) reported that 280 German PoWs under the leadership of the senior non-commissioned officer,

‘Vizefeldwebel Karl Meerbote’ (153 Inf Reg), were being held and added that the dining room had been completed, an extra boiler installed in the kitchen and that the eight dormitory huts were clean and well kept. There was a special hospital hut with a Royal Army Medical Corps orderly in attendance and the prisoners were fit and healthy. Concern was expressed about the lack of bathing facilities in view of the hot weather, but the inspector was told that construction of a bathing hut was intended.

In about 1986 the late Pat Nicolaysen of Surrey Archaeological Society spoke to an elderly Holmbury resident, Beattie Ede, who had visited the PoW camp when she was a child and recorded both her memories and a sketch she made of the camp as she remembered it. The sketch is shown as figure 5 and her statement reads:

One dark night during the year 1916 [*sic*], myself, who was six years old, and my sister Elsie who was two, woke up to hear the tramp of marching feet. This was the arrival of the German prisoners of war, who would spend about two years in Holmbury, at the camp on the hill. We heard them silently climb the hill. Later on there were steps from top to bottom, this was one of their first tasks.

Their main job of work was to fell the fir trees for timber. A saw mill was worked at the top of the Glade (on the bonfire site) and another beyond the old village school. A source of delight for us children was playing in the huge mounds of sawdust, after the prisoners had returned to camp. To us they were quiet and in offensive [*sic*], and were clever woodworkers. A small piece of wood would become an opening fan. They were dressed in grey uniforms, which included the small round soft fatigue cap. They slept on straw palliasses. This straw, when finished with, was brought to my father’s stables, at the foot of the hill, and used for bedding for the horses. My sister and I would stand and watch them, but we were not allowed to speak to them.

After about two years they went as silently as they had arrived. I never heard of any escaping. I know their food was exceptionally good, and I never heard of anyone returning to see their old camp. Primrose Cottage, bought after the war ceased, is one of the original huts [this still survives, extended and refurbished in brick]. The resinous smell of newly cut fir will remain with me always.

The only time I really saw the camp was when a balloon came down and landed on the Cookhouse. Nothing and no-one would have stopped the local, very excited, children from ascending that hill, in double quick time.

Beattie Ede’s recollections also contain: ‘I was four years old when the War started and before it ended we had a German Prisoner of War camp on the common. Their main work was to cut the pine trees which were pulled by huge shire horses’ (R Bullen, private family archive).

The lack of contact remembered by Beattie Ede probably resulted from legal restrictions and on 4 May 1918 the local *Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser* reminded its readers ‘that under the Defence of the Realm Act it is an offence to speak to, hold any communication with, or make gifts of any kind to, prisoners of war in this country’.

By September 1919, the PoWs had been dispersed and the camp closed with any useful materials being sold by the government at an auction on the site. A contemporary report (*Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser*, 20 September 1919) carries the following details:

Recognised as one of the most successful of the prisoner of war camps, and followed as a model by many others, that at Holmbury St Mary which has been carried on under the Timber Supplies Department of the Board of Trade, and has supplied large quantities of timber of great value to the country, was dispersed under the hammer of Messrs Crowe, auctioneers, Dorking on Wednesday September 10th, a very satisfactory result being obtained. There were 32 huts, 24ft by 15ft, which realized from £30 to £37 10s; non-sectional huts of larger size fetched about the same figures, and smaller

ones in proportion, but some were under the jurisdiction of the Disposals Board, and on several of these an unobtainable reserve had been placed; the auctioneers expect, however, to receive instructions enabling them to deal with these at reasonable figures privately. The sale was greatly assisted by the fact that Government haulage was available, and portable coppers, hut stoves and similar small items made full value. The electric light plant was sold as a whole for £230. The 100 lots of sawn timber made from £3 5s to £11 10s per lot, attracting many timber merchants and builders beside private buyers.

Discussion

THE IRON AGE ENCLOSURE

Limited excavation of the enclosure (Field 1989) produced only a small pottery assemblage; recent reappraisal suggested the majority to be Late Iron Age in date, but with a small Middle Iron Age component (Mike Seager Thomas, pers comm). Holmbury hillfort, on the top of the scarp some 1.8km to the south-west, had its main period of occupation in the Middle Iron Age, with little evidence of continuation into the Late Iron Age (Seager Thomas 2010). The meager assemblage recovered from Felday may therefore overlap in date with that from Holmbury, but a generally later occupation is suggested, possibly contemporary with Anstiebury hillfort, 4.6km to the east, but, unlike that latter site, not in use in the early Romano-British period.

Both Felday and Anstiebury enclosures are set on the western sides of gaps through the greensand ridge, which provide access points between the Tillingbourne/Pipp Brook valley and the Low Weald. Anstiebury, set above a wide valley has the greater viewshed; that from Felday only 'sees' the northern end of the valley, with its spring point for one of the sources of the Tillingbourne, and the main valley below the North Downs. Visibility of the Felday enclosure is likely to have been limited to the northern approach up the dip-slope and to higher ground on the Downs and on the eastern side of the gap. These enclosures may have been positioned relative to routes used for movement in and out of the Low Weald (Hanworth 1987; Field 1989).

THE PRISONER OF WAR CAMP

The location of the PoW camp within the prehistoric enclosure is most unlikely to result from anything other than coincidence. The poor-quality concrete used and the off-rectangular shape of the bases of the possible kitchen block suggest rapid, and perhaps relatively unskilled, construction, but the inspection reports indicate that conditions under which the PoWs lived and worked were considered to meet the required standards. The camp was intended to be temporary, presumably when the immediate vicinity had been felled the men might have been moved to a new area. However, occupation only commenced towards the end of the First World War and the camp had been cleared by September 1919; 11 November 1918 marked an armistice, not necessarily the end of the war, and many PoWs were not repatriated until well into 1919. The remains described here are a rare survival from a largely forgotten aspect of the First World War.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Friends of the Hurtwood, particularly their Ranger, Mark Beaumont, allowed the survey to take place. Keith Winser and Ken Waters sourced local memories from Holmbury St Mary with the help of Lin Haynes, present curator of Holmbury St Mary Parish Magazine, who made historic issues available, Malcolm Covey and Ned Potter provided anecdotal evidence, Tony Harcombe interpreted the generator area for us, Wayne Cocroft suggested

accessing the Swiss National Archives, and the staff of Dorking Museum and the National Newspaper Library staff at Colindale (now relocated at the Newsroom in the main British Library in London) assisted in researching the PoW camp. The survey was undertaken by the authors with the help of Jan Blatchford, Mike Edwards, Rose Hooker, Pauline Hulse, Nicky Humphries, John Jennings, Seb Fry and Ken Waters. To all these the authors wish to express their grateful thanks.

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