

Moving Beyond the Monuments: Paths and People in the Neolithic Landscapes of the Peak District

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Introduction: Old Models and New Perspectives

This paper will place archaeological data for the Peak District into recent interpretation of the Neolithic as a period with relatively mobile as opposed to sedentary populations. This picture will be compared with a previously presented model for the region, which suggested there was a dichotomy between a central core on the limestone plateau, where settlement concentrated, and a less important peripheral zone beyond, comprising shale valleys and gritstone uplands. It will be argued that these distinctions are mis-stated. Biases in data recovery play their part. More importantly, zoned changes in the character of the archaeological data may reflect different responses to topography by Neolithic people, both in the ways they thought about and the ways they used different landscapes. Most parts of the region may well have been extensively utilised 'cultural landscapes'. While the previous model can be deconstructed, it remains to be seen if the new perspectives put forward will stand the test of time. It is hoped that by challenging long held assumptions on the sedentary nature of Neolithic society in the Peak District this paper will at least stimulate debate.

Ten years ago, it was thought that the Neolithic of the Peak District was relatively well understood. Settlement and monument data had been plotted (Hart 1981), socio-economic land-use models had been proposed (Hawke Smith 1979; Bradley and Hart 1983) and these had been placed in a wider framework (Bradley 1984). However, much of this can now be questioned.

The Neolithic evidence for the Peak District mainly comprises lithic scatters and a number of distinctive ritual monuments. Both are complemented by environmental data, mostly in the form of pollen analyses. Most of the lithic material has been recovered from the limestone plateau. However, recent re-assessment of both zonal biases in artefact recovery, and of the criteria for identifying period-specific artefacts scatters, suggest there are significant uncertainties with the way these data have been

used previously. That the monuments all occur on the limestone plateau has been taken to mean that settlement concentrated here; this may well be an unwarranted assumption. These points will be discussed below. Other aspects of Bradley and Hart's 1983 model, that draw contrasts between the Neolithic and Bronze Age and which postulate differences in status between core and periphery in the second millennium BC, have been criticised elsewhere (Barnatt 1987, in press b; Barnatt and Smith 1991).

Underlying previous interpretation of the region has been the assumption that arable cultivation and sedentary settlement were central to Neolithic lifestyle. Recently there has been a growing awareness that the Neolithic in Britain may have been very different, with the peoples' way of life having much in common with their Mesolithic forbears, moving through the countryside in a seasonal round to harvest different resources (Bradley 1987; Edmonds 1987; Pryor 1988; Thomas 1991; Barrett 1994). Livestock rearing may well have been of much greater importance than arable cultivation. In a region such as the Peak District, with a juxtaposition of valleys and uplands, people may well have been moving with their animals between summer and winter pastures.

Further interpretative assumptions that have now been questioned focus around the ways in which past peoples perceived the land and the nature of their tenure (Ingold 1986; Thomas 1991; Barrett 1994; Tilley 1994). Pre-capitalist perceptions of space are very different from our own, often revolving around people dwelling within the world rather than thinking of it from the perspective of onlooker. Tenure, or 'the way resources are contained within a network of social obligation and authority reproduced over time' (Barrett 1994, 137), is often about rights of access but not necessarily ownership. People in societies such as may have existed in Neolithic Britain often claim tenure of paths and places, and of their physical and spiritual resources, rather than ownership of territory. They travel from familiar place to familiar place, visiting locales containing powers and meanings inherited from their forbears. This contrasts with previous archaeological interpretation, as for example the models

put forward by Renfrew for Wessex and Scotland (Renfrew 1973, 1976), which assume that people in the Neolithic carved the landscape into territories. Sedentary societies whose people invested large amounts of time in permanently laid out 'family' farms, probably inhabited on an extended family or kin group basis, were not fully established in Britain until the Bronze Age. Investment in land may well have led to fundamental changes of perception of the world, which now emphasised identity of the individual with a specific place, creating a more bounded sense of being. With investment went the importance of lineal history, that defined inheritors of 'family' wealth and of social position or obligation which could be accumulated over generations.

Much new thought has also been put into how to interpret monuments (Barrett 1988, 1991, 1994; Garwood 1991; Thomas 1991, 1993; Richards 1992; Bradley 1993; Tilley 1993, 1994). Aspects of this pertinent to the discussion below include: How monuments have encoded social memories within their architecture and the objects placed there. How ancestors were brought into the present and thus became a powerful metaphor of timelessness. How their architecture often symbolised community but at the same time could be manipulated to sectionalise society and in the long term increase social differentiation. And finally, how monuments were designed to be part of the landscape, sited to be approached along prescribed 'paths', gradually unfolding their meaning as they were negotiated.

Returning to the Peak District, new data acquired over the last ten years have a bearing on the interpretations discussed below. Of particular importance is the work carried out at Lismore Fields on the outskirts of Buxton, which provides for the first time in the region a clear picture of an Earlier Neolithic settlement (Garton 1991, in prep.). This comprised at least two rectangular timber houses, associated with large freestanding posts and with pits containing cultural debris. An extensive lithic scatter across the site includes material indicating Later Mesolithic as well as Earlier Neolithic activity, although continuity of use cannot be demonstrated. Environmental data from here (Wiltshire and Edwards 1993; Garton in prep.), and from various sites on the limestone plateau (Taylor *et al* 1994), complement that long known for the gritstone upland (Hicks 1971, 1972). Other information includes that from a preliminary assessment of lithic scatters that avoided previous biases by systematically walking 29 fields along a transect across three main topographical zones of the region, the limestone plateau, the Wye and Derwent valleys, and the gritstone eastern moors (Myers 1991; Barnatt *et al* in prep.). Finally, a large defended enclosure on Gardom's Edge above Baslow has been interpreted as being earlier than the extensive prehistoric field systems here (Ainsworth and Barnatt in prep.), inviting comparison with upland sites such as Carn Brea in Cornwall and the causewayed enclosures of lowland England.

In 1991 Garton published an analytical review of Neolithic settlement studies in the Peak District. This identified agendas for further data collection and analysis,

comprising:

1. Investigation of the character and extent of Earlier Neolithic settlement.
2. Investigation of the character and interpretation of flint-scatters.
3. The acquisition of environmental and economic data.
4. Investigation of the movement of goods, particularly lithics and pottery, both into and within the region.

When considering all aspects of Neolithic studies, I would add:

5. Investigation of those topographical zones within the region where little data collection has as yet taken place (see below).
6. Investigation of the character of Later Neolithic (and Earlier Bronze Age) settlement, to assess the transition to a sedentary lifestyle (see below).
7. Investigation of the design and siting of ritual monuments with reference to the character of the landscape that surrounds them (see below).
8. The acquisition of radiocarbon dates for the Neolithic. There are as yet no dates for any of the different types of ritual monuments present (see Barnatt 1995).

The paper presented here is not seen as in competition with Garton's, but as one which complements it by postulating an interpretative framework for the region to set research agendas within.

The next section sets the topographical scene, leading on to a critical review of settlement and monument data, discussing the limitations as to how they can be used for interpretation. The final three sections put forward ways in which the character of monuments, settlement and the landscape are inter-related and suggest how people lived in the region during the Neolithic.

The Peak District: Living Within Contrasting Landscapes

The Peak District is a region of significant topographical contrasts (fig. 1). At the centre is a limestone plateau which measures c. 37x22km across and ranges in altitude between c. 200m and 470m OD. It is characterised by broad undulating ridgetops, dropping, often slowly, to upland basins and shelves. These in turn are dissected by steep-sided and narrow-bottomed dry-valleys and by river gorges flanked by cliffs. They were probably heavily wooded in the Neolithic and were in effect sinuous barriers that divide the landscape in dendritic fashion. In many parts of the plateau moving over ridgetops leads to valleys dropping in a variety of directions, the ultimate destination of which is unclear unless one has prior knowledge of the location. Following ridges

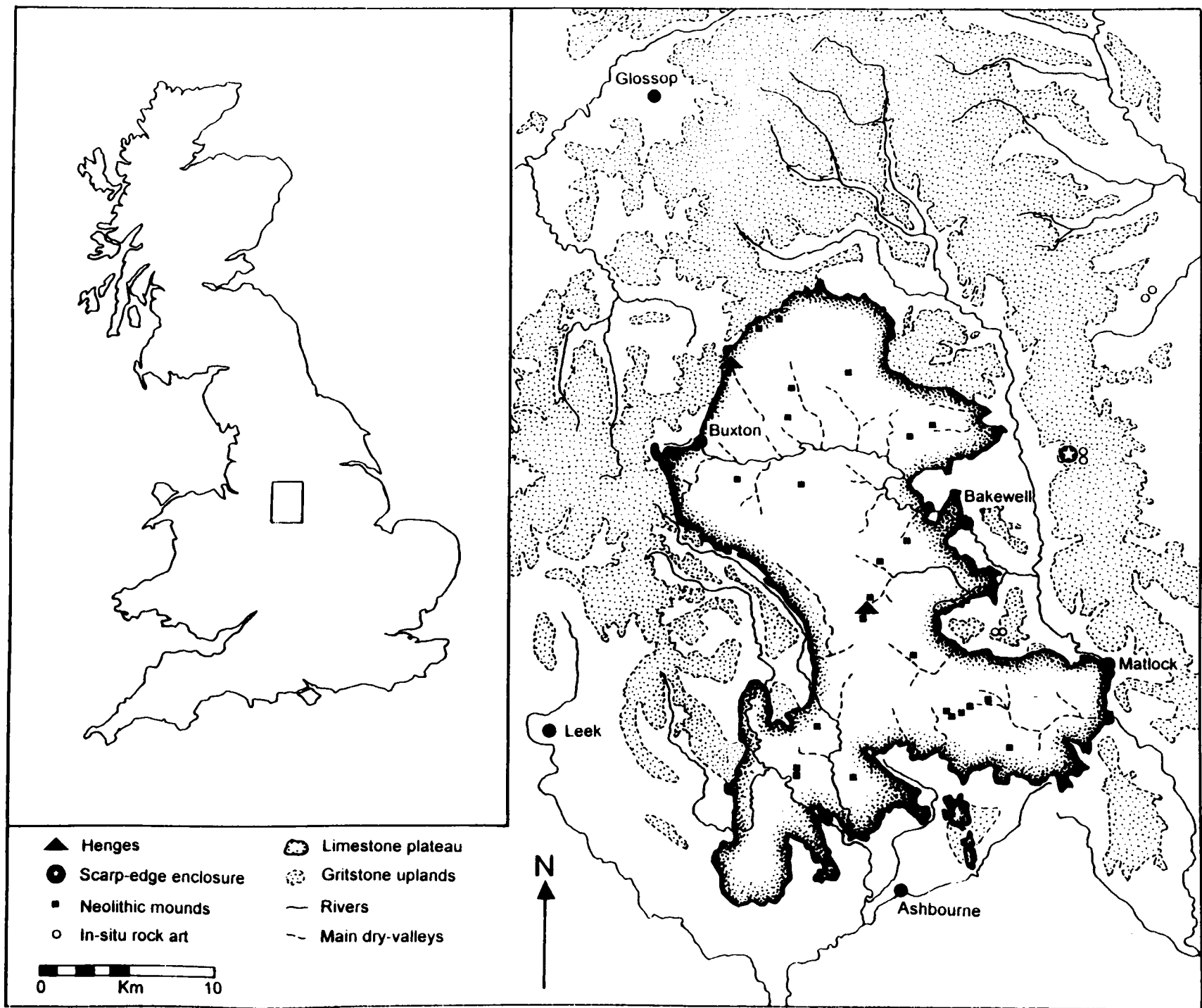


Fig. 1. The Peak District; the main topographical features.

downwards often leads to cul-de-sacs where one is surrounded on three sides by steep-sided valleys. The ridgetops have particularly thin soils, while the lower areas naturally would have had a denser tree cover.

Surrounding the plateau on all sides are the main valleys of the region, cut deeply into the soft shales which overlie the periphery of the limestone dome. The largest of these, that of the river Derwent, lies to the east and has for many centuries been the main lowland artery into the region. However, all these valleys have heavy clay soils and are likely to have been thickly forested in prehistory. Thus passage through the region in the Neolithic, in all but the most local of senses, may have been easier on the higher more open landscapes of the limestone plateau and gritstone uplands.

The gritstone uplands, which rise dramatically from the valleys just described, vary in character with direction. To the east there is a continuous linear ridge, between 3 and 6 km wide and 200-450m OD high. Above the Derwent valley the western side of this ridge has an upper and lower escarpment, with a broad shelf between, much of which was at a low enough altitude for cultivation in prehistory. The northern gritstone uplands are generally significantly higher, often above 400m OD and reaching over 600m OD in parts. By the end of the Mesolithic, large parts of the relatively flat top of this dissected, plateau-like, upland had already had its tree cover reduced and peat formation had started (Tallis 1991). Deeply-cutting valleys, such as that of the upper Derwent, are steep-sided and narrow-bottomed and were probably heavily wooded. The western gritstone upland combines characteristics from the northern and eastern zones. It is mostly high and has thick peat which started to form at an early date. However, it is more heavily dissected by valleys. There is also shelf development as on the eastern gritstones, but these are much more limited in extent.

The Peak District is flanked on all sides by land that may well have only been sparsely populated in the Neolithic, with high uplands to the north and broad expanses of infertile forested land elsewhere. The nearest resource-rich landscapes centred on the river terraces of the Trent valley to the south, and to the east on the Magnesian Limestone ridge running through Conisborough and Bolsover. The population of the Peak was probably relatively isolated and socially self-contained, people being more likely to meet groups who moved around within the Peak rather than those whose seasonal round focused on these other resource-rich areas. Thus, the Peak District makes a unit of study which is likely to have had its own identity in the Neolithic. This is not to suggest there was not less frequent contact with the outside. The presence of such artefacts as polished axes and flint tools clearly indicate the existence of inter-regional networks of resource supply, probably as part of embedded procurement strategies.

The upland topography of the Peak District to an extent acted as a constraint on what subsistence strategies were possible in the Neolithic. Thus, to take the most obvious and banal example, arable cultivation was not possible on the high northern gritstone upland. Of much

greater significance is that the region as a whole offers a significant variety of topographies, each of which had a different range of viable hunting, gathering and agricultural options that could be sensibly exploited. Thus, through its contrasts, each with constraining and advantageous aspects, the landscape presents varied opportunities within easy reach of each other. For the first farmers, the alternative available resources spaced across the land encouraged movement through the landscape, much as had traditionally been the case for their Mesolithic forebears.

The Limestone Heart

Much of the region's lithic data, and all the Neolithic ritual monuments have been found on the limestone plateau. Detailed descriptions of the monuments have been given elsewhere (Manby 1958; Barnatt 1990, in press a and b). In summary, there are various types (fig. 2):

1. 4-14 relatively small, circular, chambered barrows.
2. 6-11 long barrows, some certainly, and perhaps originally all, chambered.
3. 3-6 'great barrows', analogous with sites such as Duggleby Howe and Silbury Hill.
4. One atypical 'bank barrow' (at Long Low).
5. Two large henges (at Arbor Low and the Bull Ring).
6. An unquantifiable number of small, circular, unchambered barrows containing 'single' graves (see Barnatt in press a).

The uncertainty in establishing numbers of sites in types 1-3 results from inclusion of possible examples that are ruined or which have been identified from vague antiquarian accounts. At the chambered tombs only about half the known chambers were designed to be accessible via passages after mounds were added. The others had small 'closed chambers' with no point of entry once buried (Barnatt in press a and b). At the two part-excavated 'great barrows', at Minninglow and Tideslow, there is evidence that they are multiphased structures that have evolved from chambered circular and long barrows (Radley and Plant 1971, Marsden 1982, Barnatt in press b). In their final circular form there may well have been no access to the earlier chambers.

With a caveat that there has only been limited excavation, it is possible to postulate that the first Earlier Neolithic monuments were the small, circular, chambered barrows, followed by the larger long barrows. In the Later Neolithic these were superseded by a complex variety of monuments, comprising henges and 'great', 'bank' and small unchambered barrows (Barnatt in press b).

It is the norm to find large quantities of prehistoric lithic debitage and artefacts scattered across the limestone plateau, found in variable densities wherever land is ploughed today. There are fundamental problems with the

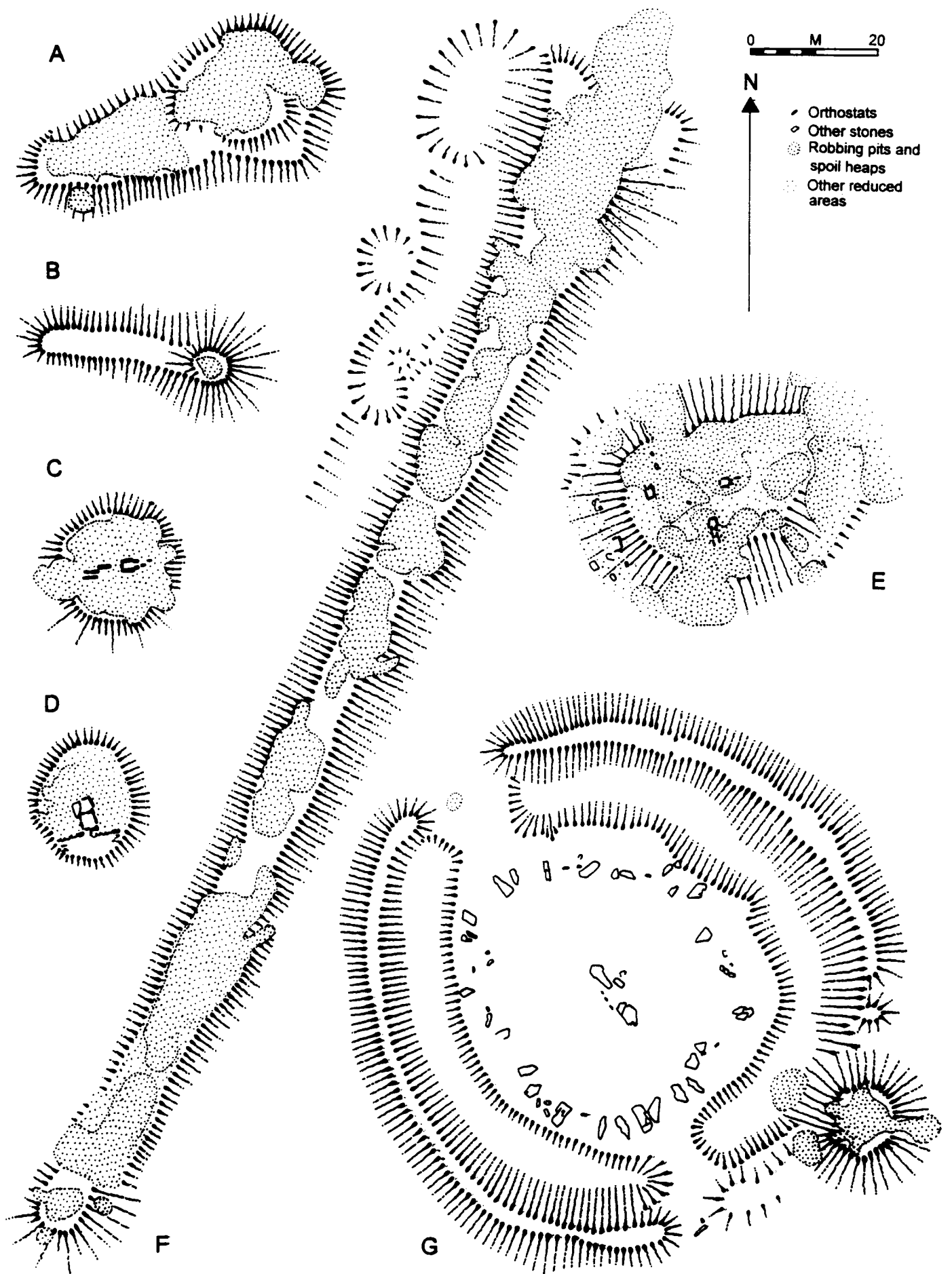


Fig. 2. Examples of the main types of Neolithic monument in the Peak District. A; the long barrow with superimposed round barrow at Perryfoot. B; the long barrow with superimposed round barrow at Longstone Moor. C; the chambered round barrow at Five Wells. D; the chambered round barrow at Green Low. E; the chambered great barrow at Minninglow in its final form. F; the chambered bank barrow at Long Low in its final form. G; the henge and superimposed round barrow at Arbor Low.

assessment of this material (Garton 1991). The general distribution of recovered material has known but unreconstructable biases. These partly reflect differential collection across the region, due to uneven work by local enthusiasts, both in the areas walked and in what material was recovered. More significantly the biases result from large differences in the amount of land that is ploughed in different zones. There are large parts of the Peak District that are moorland or permanent pasture. The heavy concentration of lithics in the south-eastern part of the limestone plateau is the product of modern agricultural practice. An even more fundamental problem arises when trying to ascribe scatters to specific periods. Given that the scatters are known to be often palimpsests of Mesolithic to Bronze Age material, that together cover much of the landscape (Barnatt *et al* in prep.), dating them from diagnostic arrowheads is probably a spurious procedure. Arrowheads are the one artefact form with a high likelihood of loss away from encampments and settlement foci. With the notable exception of flintwork from two recent intensive but local projects, at Mount Pleasant (Garton and Beswick 1983 and unpublished) and Roystone Grange (unpublished), and also material from along an experimental transect (see below), the lithic scatters of the region have not been subjected to rigorous examination of subtler dating characteristics such as flake length/breadth ratios and differences in form in artefact-types used predominantly in settlement contexts. Thus, until this takes place, most lithic data cannot be used to assess human activity in the Neolithic.

One artefact type that can be used in assessment of the Neolithic is the polished stone axe. These are found scattered across the limestone plateau as a whole (Moore and Cummins 1974; McK Clough and Cummins 1988). However, they are subject to the same biases of recovery as other lithics and therefore differences in distribution density are hard to assess. One way to minimise these problems is to focus on the south-east part of the limestone plateau where ploughing has been at its greatest (fig. 3). This was also the approach taken by Bradley and Hart (1983) in their assessment of the land-use models put forward by Hawke-Smith (1979). Axes were one of the categories of data they considered, concluding that their distribution on the limestone plateau favoured areas suitable for arable in the Neolithic. However, there is a fundamental problem with their assessment. Hawke-Smith used a very broad brush when divided the landscape into zones, creating a simplistic overview. This may have been a suitable approach for analysis of the large region he was studying, which ranged from the Peak District to the Trent valley, but problems arise when using the same approach to deal with detailed examination of a much smaller area. Bradley and Hart took the land facets maps at face value. Because of the oversimplifications made by Hawke-Smith, together with inexactitudes on his maps, the final result has little bearing on the real topography and thus land facets within their study area. For this reason the correlation of polished axes to landscape has been re-analysed here, with redefined land facets (fig. 3) based on the defining criteria on topography and soils as

given in Hawke-Smith's text rather than his simplified maps (Hawke-Smith 1979, 59-63, 90-91, 201). Only axes whose findspots are recorded to a minimum accuracy of a 6-figure map reference are used (Moore and Cummins 1974; McK Clough and Cummins 1988). Of the 43 axes plotted, only two are on the lower shelves with soils most likely to be suitable for arable, while 13 are from the highest of ridges with thin soils unsuitable for cultivation. The majority are from sites where the degree of suitability for cultivation is not immediately obvious and where detailed soil mapping would be necessary to resolve the issue. This distribution of axes, found generally rather than correlating with lower shelves, may well reflect widespread tree clearance throughout the Neolithic. This clearance, which could have been small scale at any one time, could have been undertaken to create both arable plots and open grazing (see below).

Another category of data used by Bradley and Hart were 'macehead complex' artefacts (*cf.* Manby 1974; Pierpoint 1980, 271-75). A small number of carefully-made stone objects such as edge-ground flint axes, maceheads and edge-polished knives apparently concentrate on Arbor Low. As some are from burials and others are surface finds, a variety of biases are in play; re-assessment has not been attempted here.

Bradley and Hart's use of other categories of archaeological data is also open to question. The problems with lithic scatters have already been commented on. After reassessment (Barnatt in press a and b), there are only 2-5 Earlier Neolithic long barrows in the sample area. Bradley and Hart did not define what they meant by Later Neolithic burials. Only 1-7 unchambered round barrows fall into the area and there are only 2-4 great barrows. In each case there are too few sites in the sample area for meaningful evaluation. In any event, biases in survival factors for all barrow types favour higher land (Barnatt in press b).

Turning now to general land-use predictions made by Hawke-Smith in 1979, some of these need comment. For the Earlier Neolithic he presented a picture of the plateau as predominantly wooded, the higher areas used for seasonal grazing as part of transhumant activity. The degree to which the plateau was wooded must be re-evaluated. Environmental data from Lismore Fields at the western edge of the plateau (Wiltshire and Edwards 1993; Garton in prep.), and also from various rivers near the eastern edge of the plateau (Taylor *et al* 1994), indicate that clearance into a wooded environment was taking place from the late 5th millennium BC onwards. However, the degree to which the higher parts of the plateau were wooded is still unclear. The depletion of forest cover in Mesolithic times on the higher gritstone uplands, probably to stimulate browse, is well known (Mellors 1976; Tallis 1991). The possibility that a similar process had taken place on the upper limestone plateau ridges should also be considered. They are probably high enough for impeded natural regeneration of woodland to have been a factor. In any event, the woodlands here may have naturally been of a more open character than at lower altitudes. It may be that one of the main attractions of the limestone plateau

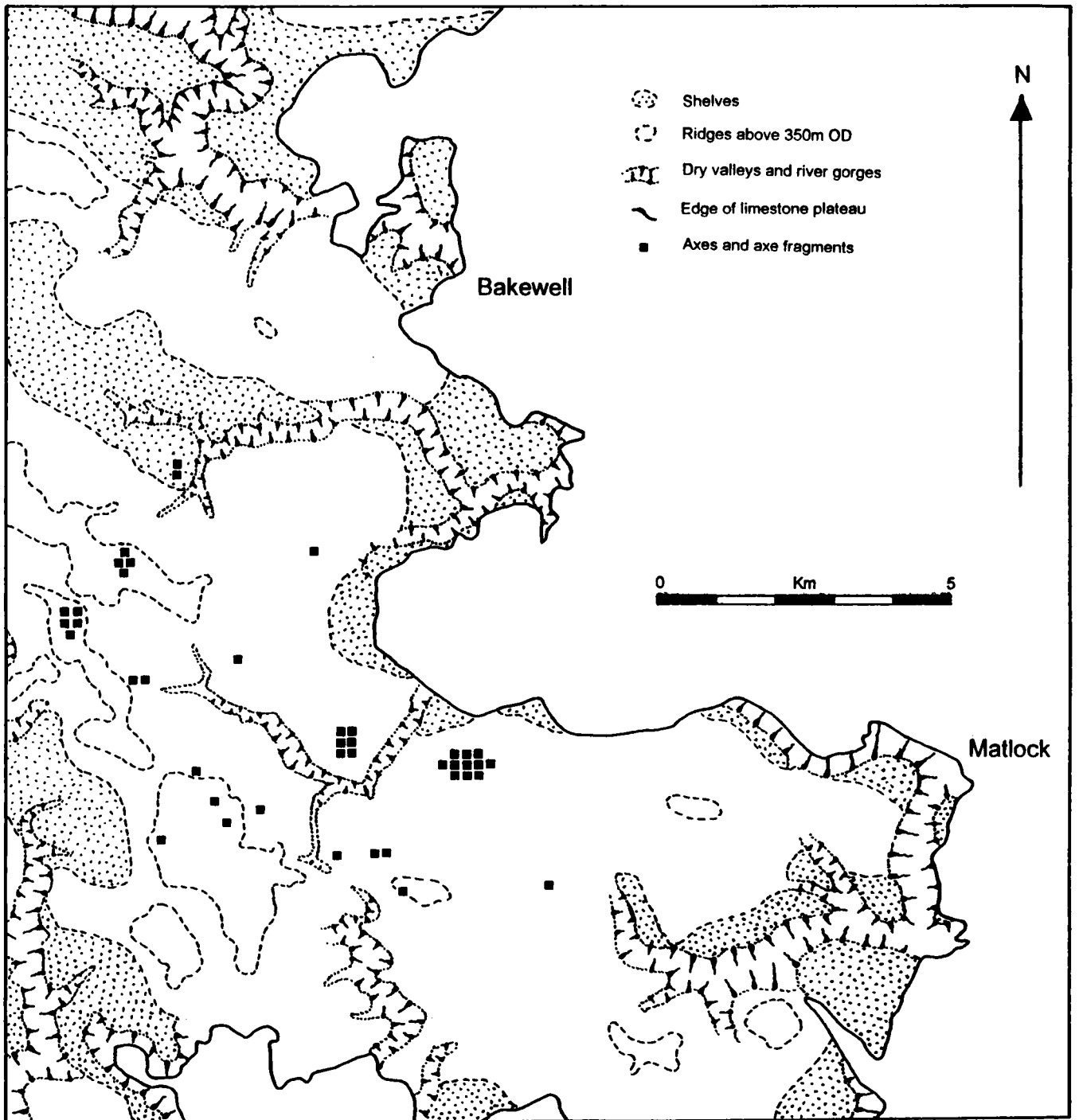


Fig. 3. The distribution of polished stone axes in the south-eastern part of the limestone plateau.

for Earlier Neolithic people was that sizeable areas of relatively open land existed that were ideally suited for pasture. The presence of Later Mesolithic people on the limestone plateau is well attested by numerous microliths and debitage (Garton 1991; Barnatt *et al* in press). Thus, Earlier Neolithic occupation can be seen in the context of a continuation of the same seasonal round that had occurred for many generations, but now this included grazing domesticates in areas that were favoured by wild species such as deer.

Hawke-Smith suggested that in the Later Neolithic substantial tree clearance took place, and that the plateau as a whole was suitable for pasture, while the lower parts were also suitable for arable production. Environmental data, again from the western and eastern edges of the plateau (Wiltshire and Edwards 1993; Garton in prep; Taylor *et al* 1994), support significant clearance at this time on the more sheltered parts of the plateau in the first half of the third millennium BC.

Beyond the Plateau

Little Neolithic data was known from beyond the limestone plateau until recent years. The most spectacular of recent discoveries have been the identification of the Earlier Neolithic settlement at Lismore Fields, in a sheltered shale basin just beyond the edge of the limestone plateau (Garton 1991, in prep.), and the defended enclosure on Gardom's Edge on the gritstone upland (Ainsworth and Barnatt in prep.).

The gritstone rocks of the region are a suitable medium for cup and ring art, a phenomenon now thought to be Neolithic in date (Bradley 1993). However, local examples are rare (Barnatt and Reeder 1982; Barnatt and Frith 1983; Ainsworth and Barnatt in prep.; Paul Ardrone pers. comm.). Only six carvings on earthfast boulders are known, two from Gardom's Edge, two from Rowtor

Rocks at the edge of Stanton Moor and two from Ecclesall Wood near Sheffield. Further examples have been found incorporated into later monuments on the eastern and western gritstone uplands. The presence of these, and the specific circumstances governing the survival of the five earthfast examples, suggests rock art was once common but that due to erosion of carvings exposed to the elements since prehistory it has not normally survived. Whether rock art existed in areas such as the limestone plateau, perhaps in purely painted form where pecked motifs were difficult to achieve, will remain a matter of conjecture.

That an apparent lack of flintwork in the main valleys and the eastern gritstone uplands may be the spurious product of differential collecting has been given support by the result of fieldwork in the artefact-collection transect noted above. This runs between the Dove valley north of Hartington to the eastern gritstone upland west of Chesterfield, passing Arbor Low and the Gardom's Edge enclosure (Myers 1991; Barnatt *et al* in prep.). The results given in Table 1 suggest that the distribution of Later Mesolithic material across the three topographic zones is similar to that in the Earlier Neolithic. In both cases there is no strong preference for activity taking place on the limestone plateau. The strongest bias suggests a potential lessening of activity in the main valley zone in the Later Neolithic and Earlier Bronze Age.

That Neolithic people exploited the eastern gritstone upland is given further support by the recovery of 10 polished axes/axe fragments (Moore and Cummins 1974; McK Clough and Cummins 1988; Barnatt 1994). Although this is a small total, much of this region is moorland and the recovery rate is low. Four out of the six axes found east of the river Derwent are from within 3km of the Gardom's Edge enclosure. Some of the lithics from Swine Sty, the only excavated prehistoric settlement on the gritstone upland, may be of Later Neolithic rather than Bronze Age type (Garton and Beswick in prep.). On stratigraphic grounds it has been suggested that the extensive Bronze

	Limestone Plateau		Main Valleys and Low Intervening Ridges		Gritstone Upland	
Later Mesolithic	5	50%	3	25%	2	29%
Earlier Neolithic	2	20%	4	33%	1	14%
Later Neolithic and Bronze Age	8	80%	3	25%	4	57%

Table 1. The distribution of dated lithic scatters from a fieldwork transect across three topographic zones of the Peak District (cf. Myers 1991). The data are expressed both the number of fields in which dated material was found, and as a percentage denoting the number of fields with dated material compared with the total number of fields in the zone in question.

Age field systems on the eastern moors may have Later Neolithic origins (Barnatt 1986, 1987). Environmental data shows that the earliest clearances took place in the Earlier Neolithic (Hicks 1971, 1972; Barnatt 1995). Cereal pollen shows that arable cultivation may well have been practised in the Later Neolithic (Barnatt 1994).

The pollen data from deep bogs on the eastern gritstone upland (Hicks 1971, 1972), taken at face value, suggests that here tree cover was almost total in the Neolithic. However, this may present only a relative picture, with the extent of cover only being high when compared with later periods. Relating pollen percentages to how the actual landscape would have appeared is full of unresolved problems. These revolve around the direction and distance different pollen types travel, differential production of amounts of pollen by different species, the relative survival rates of different pollens, and differences between local and regional pictures that are dependant upon the nature of the deposit in which the pollen is found and upon the relative tree cover at the time of deposition. Although the picture for the eastern moors peat bogs is certainly one in which trees were common, serious consideration should be given to the possibility that extensive clearance in specific locations such as the main shelves was already taking place, or even that significant parts of the eastern upland were already above a local tree line.

Monuments in Time and Space; Instruments for Changing the Timeless

As noted above, the Neolithic may well have been a time when people seasonally passed through the landscape along traditional paths. On the limestone plateau of the Peak District, where the region's large ritual monuments are found, the paths would have run between extensive upland pastures over which groups had established traditional rights of access but not ownership. Each such pasture may well have been used by more than one group, as part of a complex palimpsest of shared tenure of local resources, at a time when the concept of territory was wholly alien to the people who built the first monuments. The building of chambered tombs would have established reference points in space that identified to all people the places in the landscape that had meaning to the groups who created them. The ancestral associations and powers of such places became actively appropriated through the construction of monuments. Their chambers, containing bones and offerings both to and from the ancestors, added a time depth to the timelessness of the seasonal round. Also monuments stabilised the cultural memory of places, time became symbolically frozen by bringing the past into the present. However, as structures were used over an extended period, long beyond the span of individuals' memories, they could be manipulated for sectional social interests. Thus, while symbolising community through the presence of the stored bones of ancestors, they

introduced social differentiation through distinguishing between the powerful and probably threatening interior, to which there was probably restricted access by chosen mediators, and the outside, where the audience remained. Ironically, the initial construction of monuments thus presumably helped begin the long process of break down of what the architecture symbolised, ending eventually with hereditary social hierarchies.

Tilley argues that ritual monuments are sited with careful consideration for the visual character of the place, the landscape being visually captured by the architecture, through such aspects of design as the orientations of long barrows and of chambered tomb entrances (Tilley 1994). While in some cases this may well be true, in others, as with the Peak District long barrows, no meaningful correlation of architecture with landscape features has been observed (Barnatt unpublished). It is probable that orientations are sometimes referenced to other factors, as for example the direction of rising and setting sun or moon. In henges such as Arbor Low the high bank effectively cuts out the world. None of the nearby landscape is visible and a self-contained space is created, in one sense much as with a tomb chamber, but in this case with an open sky above. The location of monuments such as the henges and long barrows of the Peak District may well be governed by where the place is and how it relates to other places (see below), rather than what the landscape looks like from the site.

The large enclosure on Gardom's Edge is defined by a massive rubble bank with several entrances along its length. If it functioned anything like its counterparts further south, it may have been sited in a location peripheral to the main subsistence locales used by the people who built it. Such monuments were created for seasonal gatherings of supra-local communities, used for threatening or socially or spiritually 'polluting' activities (Thomas 1991; Edmonds 1993). These may well have included dealing with strangers for the acquisition of goods, the slaughter of livestock for communal feasting, and the treatment of the newly dead before they were transformed into the bones of the ancestors. The Gardom's Edge site is located high on the gritstone upland, but overlooks the Derwent valley and limestone plateau beyond. Its position on the eastern moors is non random, conveniently placed above the largest available low-lying valley area in the Peak District, a place that may have been of particular importance for home bases for over-wintering (see below). The enclosure also lies above the confluence of the only two streams that cut the upper gritstone escarpment. These present visually clear routes to the upper parts of the ridgetop and the eastern foothills beyond. This was perhaps of significance for the importation of one of the most important resources brought into the region, flint from the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire Wolds. It may be that the Gardom's Edge enclosure was built in the mid-Neolithic at around the time that this resource first became widely used. Wolds flint only seems to become important in Later Neolithic lithic scatters (Daryl Garton pers. comm.).

The distributions of the different types of Neolithic

monuments in the region contrast with each other (fig. 4). The circular chambered tombs are found in a variety of locations, whereas long barrow siting becomes non-random. These larger mounds, which may well be somewhat later in date, are all at or near watersheds. They may have been designed to be peripheral to the main upper basin pastures over which traditional grazing tenure had become firmly embedded. Therefore the sites were perhaps chosen so that the ancestors oversaw the living. It may be that watersheds were places of uncertainty where people moved along paths that crossed from one land to another. Also, the probable lack of dense tree cover here presumably allowed monuments to be seen, while distant panoramas could be viewed from the tombs. The openness of such ridgetops would have encouraged their use as topographical features to follow, acting as obvious routes between relatively widely-separated places across and beyond the plateau. Each such route may have been used by more disparate groups of people than other parts of the land. For some or all of these reasons watershed may have been seen symbolically as an appropriate place to negotiate transformations from the land of the living to that of the dead.

Later Neolithic monuments exhibit further contrasts in design and location. By now their architecture had changed radically in that they stressed the 'external' or 'visible'. The passages of many chambered tombs were no longer accessible by the middle of the Neolithic (Thomas 1991, 1993; Barrett 1994). In the Peak District some chambers had been incorporated within great barrows. The henges were a radical new departure, built as open monuments to contain people within an enclosed space.

The major Later Neolithic monuments of the Peak District are distributed in five loose concentrations that are similarly spaced across the limestone plateau as follows:

1. North-west: Bull Ring henge.
2. North-east: Tideslow great barrow.
3. Central: Arbor Low henge, Ringham Low and Bole Hill great barrows.
4. South-west: Long Low bank barrow, Pea Low great barrow.
5. South-east: Minninglow and Stoney Low great barrows.

It is hard to dismiss the repetitive spacing between these five monument groups as coincidence, as it contrasts with the distributions that went before and because similar patterns recur over large parts of Britain (Barnatt 1989). It is tempting to see the monuments within each group linked by sacred paths similar to those given form by avenues at Avebury. Each path would have taken its users to the 'great barrows' and henges past other monuments, such as the Gib Hill long barrow at Arbor Low, which were earlier foci at long-venerated sacred locales. Each of these five monument groups has at least one of its main components on a prominent watershed.

Recently it has been proposed that the change from communal tenure, where resources were used in common, to one of family holding of land concomitant with fundamental changes in attitude towards the land, did not take place until the Later Bronze Age (Barrett 1994). It is suggested here that the transition was not rapid but spanned the Later Neolithic and Earlier Bronze Age. In the Peak District the development of a sedentary lifestyle was probably well advanced in the Earlier Bronze Age, as indicated by the extensive field systems that can be shown to have already existed by this date (Barnatt 1987, 1994; Barnatt and Smith 1991) and by the presence of a multiplicity of 'local' monuments (Barnatt 1989, in press b). Small unchambered round barrows which stressed the individual burial of family members had begun to be built in the Later Neolithic (Barnatt in press a), while at the same time the use of local and supra-local monuments whose architecture symbolised community and echoed past practice continued well into the Bronze Age (Barnatt 1989, 1990, in press b). The stance taken here, that there was a long transition period, supports the contention that two of the major break points in British prehistory are half way through the Neolithic, when the transition began, and at the end of the Earlier Bronze Age, when the transformation was completed (Burgess 1980; Bradley 1984).

Monuments become increasingly ranked through time. Earlier Neolithic tombs present simple oppositions: inside/outside and 'chosen individuals'/'the people'. By the Later Neolithic the situation is more complex. There is a hierarchy of monuments, ranging from large communal henges, through 'great barrows', to small 'family' barrows. Within larger henges there is nested access, as at as Arbor Low (Barnatt 1990) and reaching ultimate complexity in sites like Avebury (Thomas 1991, 1993). Such sites have central coves, access to which was probably restricted to shamen or other chosen mediators, while the henge earthworks and stone or timber circles contained people but at the same time excluded outsiders. This latter aspect of their design fostered tribal identity, while the internal features created hierarchical divisions.

The Later Neolithic can be seen as a time of growing tensions and oppositions between people and their views of the world (Bradley 1984, Thomas 1991, 1993, Barrett 1994). The new order is signified by the decline of chambered tombs and the building of henges for the first time with their more abstract architectural symbolism. These new monuments were more involving in that they contained many people, and more binding in that presumably you had to be a member of a chosen group to enter the site. As monuments became larger they could speak to more people, becoming impressive signals from a distance to members and outsiders alike. Siting in locations that increase their impressiveness, either generally or when approached along specific paths, often seems to play an important part in their design. The trend for communal monuments to become larger reached its optimum in regions where competition between groups can be predicted to be greatest, as in Wessex (Barnatt 1990), again suggesting that hidden behind idealised

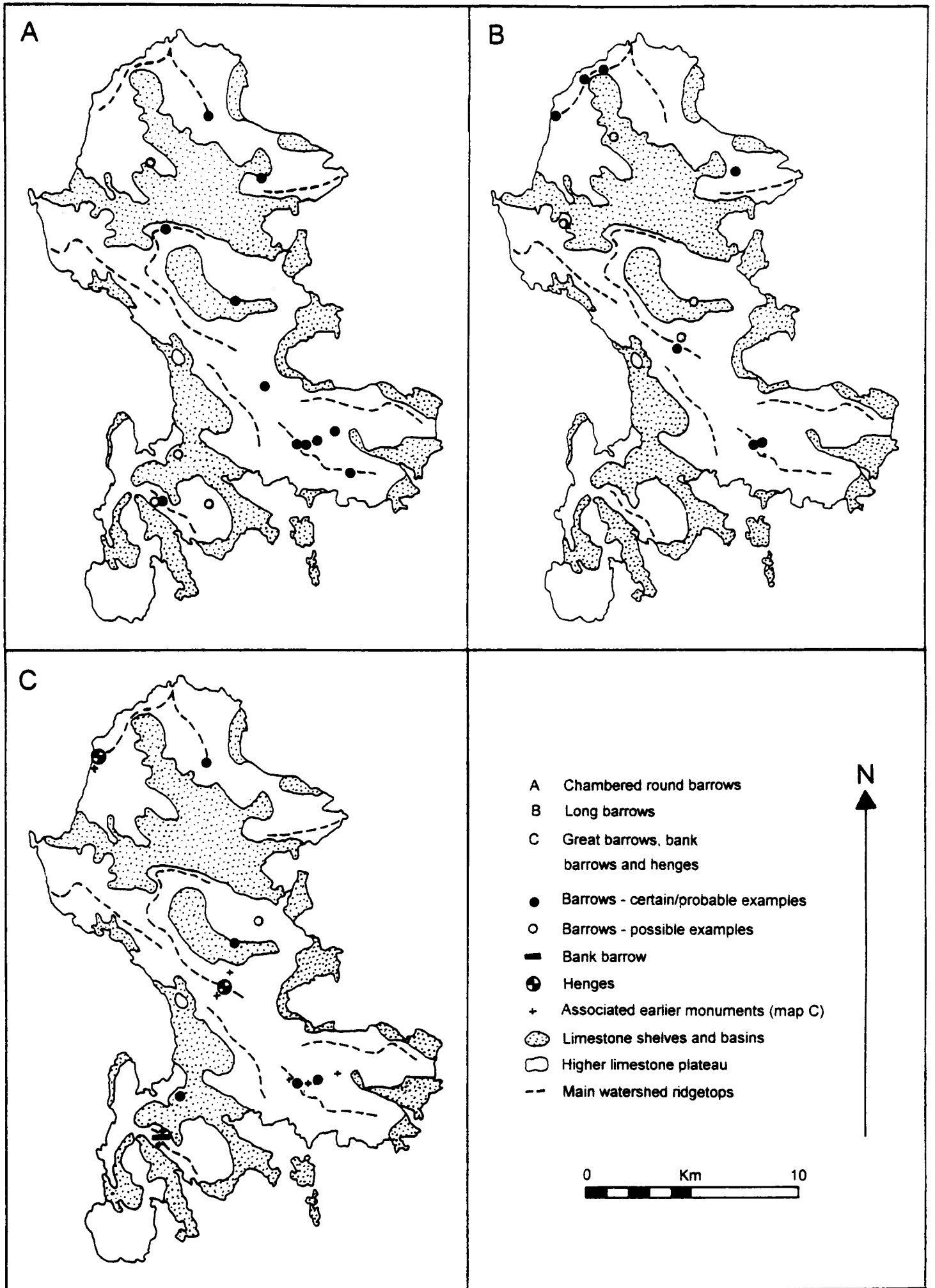


Fig. 4. The distribution of Earlier and Later Neolithic monuments on the limestone plateau.

symbols of community, social conflict was growing. Contrasted with all this are the small and unchambered round barrows, which also started to be built in the Later Neolithic. In the Peak District these have a variety of sitings often governed by strictly local criteria and were built in association with 'family' farms (*cf.* Barnatt in press b).

While monuments such as henges were probably designed to be used by 'tribal peoples', this does not necessarily mean they had a sense of ownership of the land or had yet developed the concept of well defined tribal territories. The Later Neolithic may well have been a transitional period, where grazing rights had become established through long tradition, although any given area need not have been in the exclusive tenure of any one group. The siting of henges and 'great barrows' in zones of topographical transition or of neutrality may well have played an active part in social transformation. The placing on neutral ground, as can be suggested for the two Peak District henges, may well have allowed different groups within segmented communities to come together to build and use the monuments. Doing this would have welded social identity, creating larger coherent groups and thus through time peripheral locales became central ones. Problems with unravelling the details of how Later Neolithic monuments relate to the development of 'social territories' in the Peak District has been discussed further elsewhere (Barnatt in press b).

Settling Down: Inhabiting Family Farms

It has been suggested above that a sedentary lifestyle evolved gradually in the Later Neolithic and Earlier Bronze Age. In contrast, Barrett (1994) has postulated that this developed in the second millennium BC with the introduction of large field systems, such as those defined by reaves on Dartmoor and the celtic fields in Wessex. He suggests earlier evidence for cultivation, such as that at the cairnfields of the British uplands represent temporary arable plots made by farmers on the move. In the Peak District at least, this interpretation of cairnfields is highly unlikely. Here the clearance cairns lay within hedged fields in a large number of small field systems that were used through the second millennium BC (Barnatt 1987, 1989, 1994). Some of these small field systems may have origins in the Later Neolithic, as indicated by pollen data (Hicks 1971, 1972; Barnatt 1994), and possibly by the lithics from Swine Sty, the only excavated prehistoric settlement in the Peak District (Garton and Beswick in prep.). However, no positive evidence was found to indicate that the Later Neolithic lithics were stratigraphically associated with the enclosed plots and yards in which they were found (Daryl Garton pers. comm.).

Complex co-axial field systems have a variety of dates, ranging from the Later Neolithic in Western Ireland to the Iron Age or later in the Yorkshire Dales and Essex (Fleming 1987). While in some areas these

ambitiously laid out fields are the earliest visible evidence for cultivation this does not necessarily mean they were the first 'permanent' fields of their regions, in fact it would be surprising if they were. In most or all regions they may well have been preceded by smaller fields developed piecemeal round individual farms before the need for greater planning arose. Equally, the advent of these simpler field systems may not be synchronous across Britain.

The archaeological visibility of ancient fields depends on two main criteria. One is the degree of stoniness of the land and thus the extent to which stone clearance features were created; thus, often relatively poor land has the most obvious remains of fields. Secondly, the extent to which arable cultivation took place, and whether fields continued to be ploughed once soil deterioration and loss had started, determines both the degree of lynchet formation and stone clearance; thus, visible evidence for fields often reflect the later phases of the lives of field systems. In favourable conditions, ancient fields defined by fences or hedges may well have left little trace in the landscape once abandoned. Thus in areas like Wessex, so influential in the interpretation of British prehistory, evidence of the earliest of fields is difficult to find.

Deterioration of the land within early field systems is likely to have started first in areas of thinner soils and/or higher rainfall, both in upland areas like Dartmoor and the Peak District, and in the far west as in Ireland. The building of large field systems can be interpreted as a response to stress, replacing earlier less ambitious and more organically evolved fields. It is in upland areas which never supported high populations, such as the eastern gritstone upland of the Peak District, where evidence of the earlier type of fields survive because they were never swept away by large co-axial systems. The later, in contrast with earlier fields that stressed local consciousness, placing emphasis on the 'family' and the first 'owning' of the land, marks the reintroduction of corporate planning on a scale not seen since building of large henges. Such field systems can be seen as new expressions of community, built at a time when large monuments may have ceased to have had relevance.

Barrett suggests that the difference between the permanent fields of the Bronze Age and earlier cultivation plots of the Neolithic was that short fallow periods were the norm in the former, while in earlier times the practice was to leave long fallow periods of many years. In terms of upland farming in Britain this suggestion presents problems. Leaving a piece of land for an extended period between ploughings may have worked well if forest regeneration took place, as burning new clearings and hand cultivating between larger tree stumps was presumably relatively easy. However, if grassland developed once cultivation ceased, as must have happened over large areas of the Peak District's limestone plateau and the downland of Wessex, then breaking up long-established turf may have been an unattractive option, due to the lack of advanced traction ploughs capable of doing this easily. On the other hand, this problem could be overcome by

using pigs within enclosed plots, which would both break the turf down and manure the soil (Daryl Garton pers. comm.). More significantly, it may be that little or no cultivation of established pastures took place in the uplands irrespective of period because upland soils would have become depleted if short fallow regimes were imposed. Once permanent farms were established long fallow periods were probably the norm, as the subsistence base was probably livestock rather than arable and few arable fields would be needed at any one time.

It seems more likely that the difference between farming practice in the fourth millennium BC and that which gradually superseded it is one of scale and location not fallow period. When wanting to establish new arable plots while avoiding the necessity of breaking up long established turf, or when wanting to increase the extent of grasslands, it may have been that early farmers concentrated on woodland fringes where scrub could be more easily removed than dense numbers of mature trees. Alternatively, clearings could have been burnt within the forest. Such a practice was in keeping with the postulated long established Mesolithic tradition of creating clearings to stimulate browse (Mellors 1976). In an area like the Peak District, the creation of clearings within or at the edges of upland wooded areas may well have continued to lower the tree line through the Neolithic. Alternatively, or in addition, frequent grazing of the woodlands would in itself inhibit new tree growth by killing saplings and thus again reduce the forest cover. The reduction of woodlands may well have become an increasingly vicious spiral by the Later Neolithic or Earlier Bronze Age, with the depletion of wild game reserves and new areas ideal for cultivation. This in turn set the scene for permanently established fields which may have been created once there had been significant loss of tree cover across the most favourable arable areas such as the lower limestone and gritstone shelves and there was a need to partition the land to facilitate stock management and to isolate 'private' arable plots for their protection. It is in these areas that permanent 'family' farms may well have developed extensively as demand for land forced its partition. The possible decrease in use of the main shale valleys in the Later Neolithic/Earlier Bronze Age, noted above in the discussion of the lithic collection data, may result from the heavily wooded character of this area and its clay soils which were difficult to cultivate, leading to a lessening in importance once 'family' farms became the norm.

In conclusion, the Later Neolithic and Earlier Bronze Age can be argued to be the period of critical agricultural transition, from communal use of the landscape to the rise of personal or family power through holding land and resources. This is likely to have been a gradual process. It seems probable that the transition started with earlier establishment of traditional tenurial rights of pasture. When right of tenure over any one area came to be seen as in the control of a 'single people' through the socially unifying influence of henges, this set the scene for the dividing up of the landscape. 'Family' farms may well have been established both on the limestone plateau and the gritstone uplands. While large co-axial field

systems never developed in the latter zone and many of the farms here were abandoned in later prehistory, it remains a matter of conjecture if co-axial fields were ever laid out on the limestone shelves. All traces of prehistoric farming have been swept away here, as they continued as the main arable zone of the region into historic times.

The Character of the Land; Topographic Variations and Cultural Landscapes

In this final section I turn to a consideration of Neolithic people and the character of Peak District landscapes (fig. 5). Economic factors are briefly reviewed, followed by integration of these into what can be described as 'social landscapes'.

From a subsistence perspective, modifying what Hawke-Smith proposed in 1979, the region can be divided into four zones which contained complementary characteristics and resources:

1. The Shale Valleys and the Lower Limestone Shelves. These areas are characterised by being low-lying and having been naturally heavily wooded. They would have been ideally suited for 'home-bases' used for over-wintering. The lower limestone shelves would have been ideal for cereal cultivation, initially at least in plots in woodland clearings. Such clearings may also have provided winter grazing. Settlement at the edges of the limestone outcrop, as at Lismore Fields, had the advantage of a good water supply. The main valley bottoms had heavy soils and may have been best suited for woodland pannage and hunting.

2. The Higher Limestone Plateau. These extensive upland areas have thin soils which, once trees were removed, would have been good grassland pasture capable of sustaining relatively large numbers of grazing animals. Their main problem was a common lack of surface water. Therefore, if cattle as opposed to sheep were grazed, they would have had to be frequently moved between small natural meres and springs, found here and more commonly on the limestone shelves below.

3. The Eastern and South-Western Gritstone Uplands. Although soils are degraded today, on the shelves and ridgetops there were light acid brown earths in prehistory, suitable for arable cultivation or grass pasture. Between these areas were extensive heavy clay soils overlying shale and head deposits. These may have been wooded throughout the period and could have been used for hunting.

4. The High Northern and Western Gritstone Uplands. The high, relatively flat, upper expanses of these uplands had probably been transformed to poorly drained moorland by the end of the Later Mesolithic. However, the steep-

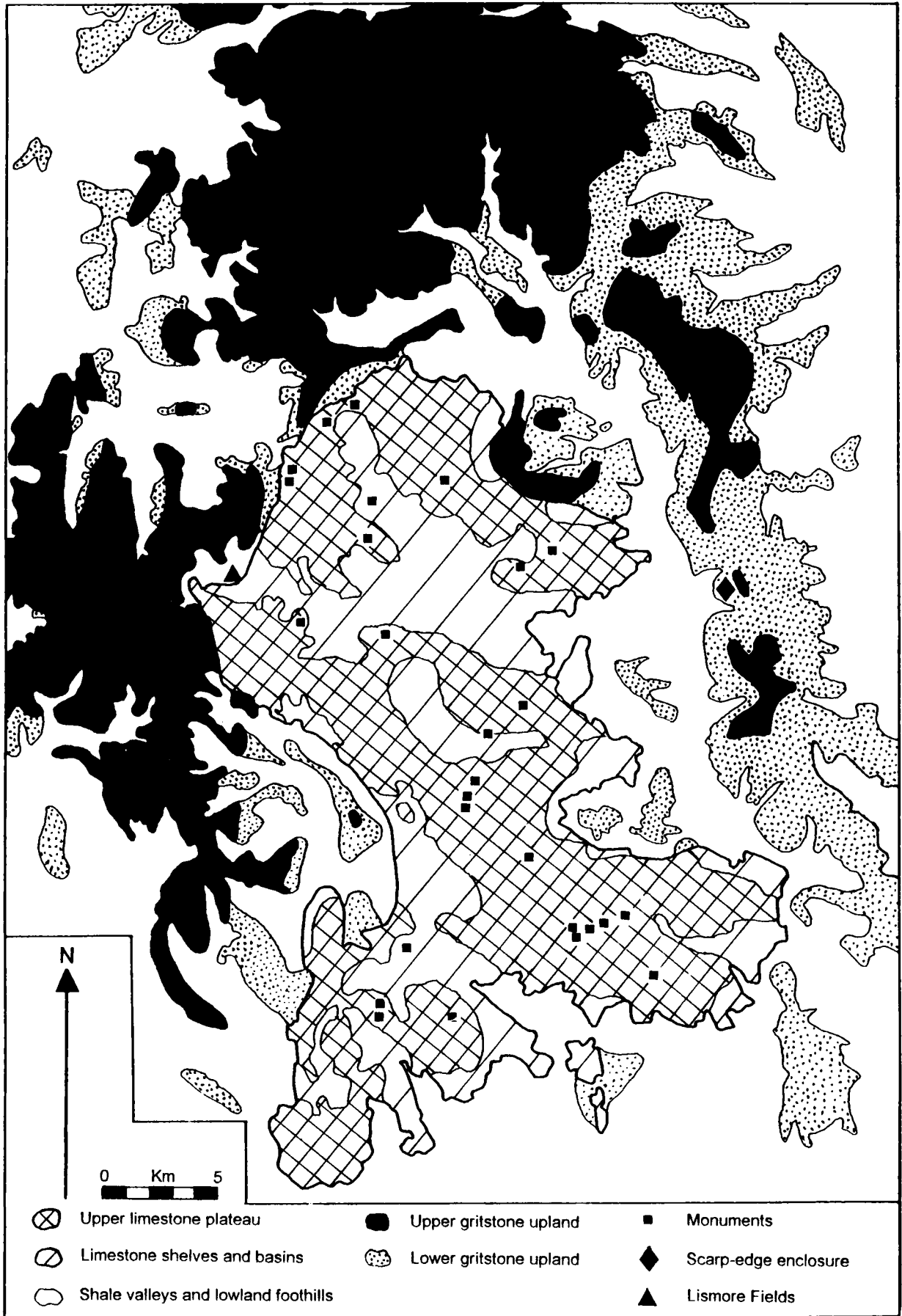


Fig. 5. The Peak District - contrasting topographies, monuments and landscape zones.

sided valleys in this zone were probably heavily wooded and may well have been extensively used for hunting. It is worth noting that at the only Peak District long barrow where recovered animal bones have been looked at in any detail, both wild and domestic species were identified; including red and roe deer, boar or pig, cow, sheep or goat, horse and dog (Pennington 1877). This mound, at Perryfoot, lies at the northern end of the limestone plateau, only a short distance from the northern gritstone upland.

Complementing subsistence factors is the way the character of the land affected social behaviour. As Tilley observes (1994, 26) 'People routinely draw on their stocks of knowledge of the landscape and the locales in which they act to give meaning, assurance and significance to their lives. The place acts dialectically so as to create the people who are that place'. The same four zones will be discussed:

1. The Shale Valleys and the Lower Limestone Shelves.

As noted above, these areas may well have contained locales used as home bases. As the valleys are linear in nature, it was no great distance to complementary resources on uplands to either side. One important characteristic of the linearity of these valleys, which are tightly defined by steep slopes, is that this gave them an easily understood boundedness; *'paths pass along or out of this land'*. Although wooded there would have been many vantage points from which to initially learn its character. In any event, by the Neolithic the land was *'where the people had always been'*; knowledge had been acquired long before.

2. The Higher Limestone Plateau.

These areas, vital for their rich pastures, are at the centre of the region and surrounded by shale valleys and lower shelves with their postulated 'home bases'. Thus, the limestone heart is likely to have had people entering it from all directions, particularly along the 'open' ridgetops of the higher plateau. Added to this was the potentially confusing and unpredictable nature of the topography, with its gently rolling ridges running to valleys in all directions, cut in turn by precipitous dry valleys and gorges that were hard to negotiate. Thus, this area was one that was 'threatening', both because of its topography and because you were likely to meet strangers. These factors were probably crucial in deciding to build monuments here rather than in other zones within the region, as monuments provided a means of dealing with uncertainty and resolving or safeguarding against conflict by providing places where accepted ritual codes of understanding and conduct were imposed. *'Here, when we come together, we act out our place in the land and reaffirm how others are related to us'*.

3. The Eastern and South-Western Gritstone Uplands

The eastern gritstone uplands in particular have a predictable linear character, with upper moor and broad western shelf. The latter was probably seen as the most valuable agricultural land here. This shelf, while continuous, is

divided at intervals by streams. Travelling to the gritstone uplands from the 'home-bases' in the main valleys would involve moving outwards in radiating fashion. Therefore, it would be relatively easy for groups to 'identify' their own traditional areas, while only having a limited number of neighbours that they would meet regularly. Because of this, and the linear nature of the upland, again it would be relatively easy to say *'I know where I am and how this place fits with others around it'*.

4. The High Northern and Western Gritstone Uplands

These areas may well have been perceived differently from the rest of the region in the Neolithic, being the last remaining 'wildscape' rather than a 'cultural landscape'. They may have normally been the preserve of hunting parties who made intermittent forays into them. Other activities here may also have been vital, such as the use of these 'other' places for activity outside the normal, as with rites of passage at puberty. *'Here I survived the land beyond and returned changed'*.

It should not be assumed that all members of groups travelled together throughout the seasonal round. Obvious oppositions such as young/old and male/female could have been in play. While flocks and herds needed movement, the year's cultivation plots may well have required periodic tending. If these plots were near home-bases, as suggested for the Peak District, some people may have remained close to 'home' for large parts of the year. A second type of dichotomy is that of group size. At some times of the year these may have been small, while at others large gatherings may have occurred. It was at these times that the monuments may have come into their own.

If the suggestion that some segments of groups remained at the 'home bases' throughout the year is correct, then in effect sites such as that at Lismore Fields may have been permanent settlements. However, this does not negate the model central to this paper which stresses an essentially mobile lifestyle in the Neolithic. Within this paradigm 'permanent' settlement does not take on unwarranted dominance within our interpretative framework. More importantly, interpretation focuses on the radically different mind-sets that may well have existed between people who placed emphasis on a seasonal round and others who saw themselves as based exclusively in one place.

Bringing the four zones together, in a sense there is still a core and a periphery, but the latter area was no less important than the centre. The distinction rather reflects a zone for meeting people, probably at prescribed seasons, while dispersal outwards to the periphery was directional and therefore groups were less likely to meet other bands of people while here.

The limestone plateau, the central area where people most commonly met, became the theatre for manipulating social change.

As the Later Neolithic and Earlier Bronze Age trend towards sedentary farming developed, some of the relationships with the land would have lost aspects of their

meanings while new ones formed. Places in a sense became the same, in that whatever they were like then they were the one place where people lived and came to terms with the world. At the same time different oppositions may have come into play, as farmers on the limestone and gritstone perhaps developed differently due to contrasting constraints and opportunities. Unequal access to local resources also fostered social hierarchy as some were able to acquire greater wealth than others.

Investigation of the types of relationships between people and landscape explored here may well have wide application, but it would be wrong to see the same solutions, revolving round centre and periphery, being arrived at in all cases. For example, in Wessex major Neolithic monuments at Avebury, Durrington and Mount Pleasant are not in a central zone but one of transition between uplands and lowlands (Barrett 1994, 145). Landscapes are infinitely variable in their combination of different characters. Thus each region will have its own inherent dynamics and present a different variety of choices for people to make.

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