

CURSUSES AND RELATED MONUMENTS
OF THE BRITISH NEOLITHIC
PART I

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ABSTRACT

CURSUSES AND RELATED MONUMENTS OF THE BRITISH NEOLITHIC - ROY LOVEDAY

Excavated sites provide the morphological criteria for cursus identification. Two principal plans exist: type A (convex terminals), type B (squared terminals); and three structural forms: ditched enclosures, pit(?post)defined enclosures and linear banks. Application to cropmarks reveals a continuum from very short (50m) to greatly elongated sites (5640m), divisible into groups titled MAJOR and MINOR CURSUSES and OBLONG DITCHES. The latter grade into cropmarks of ovate and trapeziform plan necessitating initially common treatment as ELONGATED DITCHES. Some may represent former multiple round barrows but the principal oblong ditch range is set apart. To an even greater degree than cursuses these are concentrated in the Midland/East Anglian region. Despite 1st millennium bc dates for three sites (two European) the majority can be ascribed to the Neolithic. Two types of monument are indicated: long mortuary enclosures and turf built long barrows. Long mortuary enclosures are distinguished from palisade enclosures (mound features) and regarded like shallow flanking ditches elsewhere (eg Dalladies) as delimiting the intended barrow precinct. Mounds probably stood within some prior to plough erosion but the heavy demands of turf construction ensured that they attained monumental permanence in the Midland / East Anglian region. Bank barrows with nominal mounds may also have been common there (extended oblong ditches). They represent the other element needed for Later Neolithic cursus development.

It is suggested that this ancestry best explains cursus purpose : as a temenos associated with ancestral/mortuary practices. Extreme proportions ensured siting on extensively, rather than intensively, utilized land (in some cases wooded) but exceptional demands on land and labour are indicated only in Wessex and East Yorkshire. Although cursuses were probably the earliest pan tribal monuments, the form seems to have been refined during the 2nd millennium in their early heartland to the virtual exclusion of henges.

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PREFACE

Six years ago, when this survey was embarked upon, cursuses were the undeniable cinderellas of British archaeology having, in the wake of the very disappointing returns from work undertaken in the 1950s, been almost totally neglected for two decades. Nor was there any real agreement regarding their defining features. The study and plotting of aerial photographs of the sites seemed therefore to offer a valuable and untried avenue to elucidation.

During the course of the study the situation has changed : cursuses have increasingly become the focus of excavation (radiocarbon dates are awaited from four sites), and to the writer's surprise it has been long mortuary enclosures rather than their massive relatives that have come to dominate the arguments set out here. They it seems hold the key to the cursus problem. Not that an answer to the all important question of function can claim to have been found but hopefully the structural and ritual antecedents of the class have been established. The 1 : 10560 and 1 : 2500 surveys rather than the meandering text are offered as a contribution to the final resolution of the problem.

But for the generous assistance of so many people this survey could never have been completed in the weekend and vacation periods available to the part time researcher. Particular thanks must be extended to Rowan Whimster and Terry Betts of the C.U.C. and N.M.R.; to R.J.C. Atkinson for the loan of unpublished plans of Dorchester and for valuable information regarding potential sites elsewhere; to Gordon Maxwell for a fund of information on Scottish sites and the gift of photographs to enable me to plot them; to Derrick Riley and Jim

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I also owe a deep debt of gratitude to George Secker who, with the true generosity of a friend and colleague, took over the typing of the manuscript for a few pints of beer when the money ran out. My debt to my family, the puzzled and frustrated observers of an obsession, cannot be measured; but for their patience and encouragement this study would never have been completed.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

1. To examine the characteristics of a hitherto neglected type of monument and establish a firm definition against which putative sites can be measured.
2. To produce a corpus of sites that have a claim to be considered as cursuses, to plot them to a common scale and assess the validity of their claims.
3. To establish the antecedents of these sites within the British Neolithic and, through a study of their associations, attempt to establish their likely function.

The underlying thesis is that cursuses were not novel, exotic imports, nor overblown subsidiary structures serving other monuments, but representatives of a monumental form sui generis which arose from Early Neolithic progenitors and reached its ultimate form in the Latest Neolithic/Early Bronze Age.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION - PROBLEMS OF DISTRIBUTION AND DEFINITION

The problems faced in attempting the national survey of cursus sites which follows may be divided into two types: those common to all such surveys of a series of monuments, and those peculiar to this particular type of monument. The former comprises factors which militate against the even retrieval of date across the country as a whole and the latter, the lack of agreed definition for the features of a cursus - an omission which has allowed the term to become a 'catchall' classification for almost any pair of parallel ditches.

A. LIMITATIONS OF DATA RETRIEVAL

- i) Factors biasing the evenness of sampling by aerial photography
- a) Geology and subsoil

Crop mark production is critically linked to the permeable nature of both the soil and underlying geological solid. This effectively limits its application in central England to corridors of river gravel that bisect the extensive clay deposits and ^{to} the combined river and plateau gravels of East Anglia. Similar deposits of gravel exist in the North of England, Scotland and Wales (eg. Yorkshire Ouse and its tributaries; Eden Valley; Milfield basin; Strathmore and Montrose basin; Menai coastal plain).

The chalk uplands of Southern England and Eastern Yorkshire provide further areas of crop mark potential but the Chilterns chalk ridge, which might serve to unite the heartlands of chalk and gravel subsoils, is largely unresponsive, owing to its clay with flint capping. Crop mark production is severely impaired outside these areas and over much of Britain, totally inhibited.

In addition to this correlation of crop mark potential with subsoil, the factors of post monument alluviation (cf Fengate - Pryor, 1980) and leaching (cf Catholm - Losco Bradley pers. comm) further reduce the frequency of crop mark production in areas that might otherwise be considered ideal.

In total therefore those areas of Britain where aerial photograph sites might be located are small and cannot be said to accurately reflect the extent of 3rd and 2nd millenium bc settlement (Whittle, 1977). The coincidence of cursus distribution with these receptive sub soils may then reflect no more than the limitations of technique. There is, however, some evidence to suggest that the correlation of cursuses with river valleys is positive: they tend to be located close to the flood plain rather than at the farthest extremity of river terrace deposits, a pattern that holds true even in areas such as the Breckland where barrow distribution is dispersed away from valley floor (Martin, 1981). Similarly on the chalklands a common topographical pattern of cross valley siting points to deliberate selection in specific areas.

b) Farming practices and land utilisation

In addition to the effects of geology (drift and solid), land utilisation plays a further and equally significant limiting role within areas of good crop mark potential. An obvious example is the extensive afforestation of the Breckland, but patterns of pasturing can also be of major importance on potentially productive river valley gravels. Areas such as the Dee Valley and Lower Thames probably appear as blanks on the distribution map largely because of strong local traditions of dairying and stockbreeding. In other areas where sites might be predicted (eg. Soar Valley, Leics.) seasonal flooding renders the land unsuitable as arable.

c) Military/civilian flying restrictions

Restrictions on aircraft movement within civilian and military flight control 'boxes' has a further restricting effect - this time on crop mark recognition, rather than production. Examples of this are the controls imposed by military airfields on flying in parts of the Middle Trent Valley and the restrictions in force in the vicinity of the East Midlands Airport; the latter has limited coverage of the Lockington site to two photographs taken in 1948 (CUC BR 53 & 54). A combination of flight restrictions in the Heathrow area and local patterns of pasturing represent a strong repressing factor there.

d) Gravel quarrying prior to 1960

Since 1960, when the RCHM published A Matter of Time the necessity for aerial survey of areas liable to be quarried has generally been appreciated. Prior to that date, however, the extent of coverage varied enormously; the Upper Thames Valley was well covered by the pioneering work of Major Allen, D.N. Riley and J.K. St. Joseph but areas of the Lower Thames Valley, at that time under arable but subsequently quarried away, were never surveyed - eg. the large pits at Mixnams Farm, Thorpe situated on extensive tracts of gravel and from which Neolithic material was salvaged (Grimes, 1960, 181-5).

Whilst the sum total of land lost in this way may not have been great, and it must be admitted that it is unlikely that a full cursus has been lost, it remains possible that smaller sites of the related long mortuary enclosure type have disappeared.

e) Density of flying programmes

Although few areas today escape the attention of fliers, the extent and duration of their coverage varies considerably, as does individual perception of sites and their characterisation in published gazeteers. It seems at least possible

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that the density of parallel sided enclosures in East Anglia derives from the initial recognition of the type there (Erith, 1971) and hence from a continued interest in them. Similar sites may lie unrecognised elsewhere under such anonymous titles as "rectilinear enclosure". In other areas they have been recognised principally because they lie on the flight paths to classic locations - eg. The North Tawton sites on the edge of Dartmoor.

It would clearly be foolish to believe that present aerial survey is even in extent and depth; it largely reflects the interests and time of local fliers.

f) Degree of search

Finally the degree of search undertaken by the writer has been unavoidably uneven. Published surveys provided an initial source of information, backed up by extensive use of the N.M.R. and Cambridge University collections of aerial photographs. Additional searches were made of aerial photographs in county sites and monuments records at Gressenhall, Peterborough, Bury St. Edmunds, Chelmsford, Northants., Bedford, Exeter, Oxford, Warwick, Leicester, Nottingham and Lincoln. Further afield greater reliance has had to be placed on information received about possible sites from authorities on the spot backed up by reference to the CUC and NMR collections and photograph purchase.

Variations in the degree of search undertaken have been set out diagrammatically in fig. 1.1.

The extent of correlation with river valley gravels and chalk subsoils can be gauged from fig. 1.2 which sets out the overall distribution of sites of cursus and long mortuary enclosure type located in this survey.

Cumulatively these biasing factors favour retrieval of sites from the gravel



Fig.I.I EXTENT OF SEARCH



Fig. 1.2 SITES OF CURSUS AND LONG MORTUARY ENCLOSURE TYPE
LOCATED IN THIS SURVEY

subsoils of the Midlands and East Anglia so it is perhaps not surprising that the majority of sites have been located there. Nevertheless several lacunae exist within the region, often despite a long history of aerial survey and time consuming searches (eg. Nene Valley). The virtual absence of small monuments in the mid Trent valley, located on the periphery of the "favoured" area, combined with detailed but largely negative information received about areas beyond this region (eg. Lower Trent valley and Yorkshire Wolds - T. Manby and D.N. Riley) argues that there may be a genuine fall off of sites towards the north. If so the distribution pattern revealed in this study may prove not to depart too far from reality.

ii) Factors limiting the identification of cursus sites in upland locations

a) The problem of structure

This will be discussed at length below so it is sufficient here to draw attention to the fact that the few surviving cursus sites need not represent the total range of original structural forms; excavation at Scorton for instance has recently recovered evidence of an axial mound contained within typical cursus enclosure ditches (Topping, 1982).

A further complication is the apparent definition of sites either by ditches or pits, the latter having been shown by excavation at Douglassmuir to have held posts (Kendrick, 1981). A range of structural forms must therefore be envisaged; ditched or posted; embanked or mounded.

It is clearly highly improbable that any sites should survive as earthworks on the heavily cultivated permeable soils of the lowlands but a search of undisturbed upland locations must encompass all these potential types.

b) Extent of earthwork survival

Owing to the enormous extension of agriculture in this century only very

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limited areas of upland England (Dartmoor, parts of Bodmin Moor, North York Moors, part of the Pennines and small areas of the Peak District) can be considered fruitful regions for fieldwork; elsewhere the Cheviots, highland Scotland and upland Wales offer greater opportunities.

The quite recent discovery that the reave banks of Dartmoor are prehistoric boundaries (Fleming, 1977) indicates the potential within these limited areas. However, several regional studies that have recently been published (Dartmoor: Fleming, 1978 & 1983; S.Uplands RCAHM 1967, 1978) have failed to produce sites of cursus type, whatever structural model is applied. Perhaps the closest are the Easington High Moor pit alignments on the N. York Moors but they lack the enclosing characteristics of a cursus.

Some more promising regions long since placed under cultivation, such as the Wessex chalk and Yorkshire Wolds, are of course open to aerial survey but this rarely furnishes the much needed structural evidence. Recourse has therefore been to pioneering 18th and 19th century surveys of earthworks in these areas - Allcroft for the country as a whole; Stukeley, Hoare and Smith for the Wessex chalk; Greenwell for Yorkshire; Bateman for Derbyshire and Worth for Dartmoor. As field surveys these vary enormously. Smith's survey of the Marlborough Downs is undoubtedly the most systematic yet even this fails to reveal any site that might be interpreted as even a small cursus.

Given the heavy erosion of the lower uplands by agriculture in this century and the probable slight nature of most cursus earthworks, their apparent absence from highland Britain cannot be considered as totally proven. The case for considering avenues as the highland equivalent of cursuses is discussed below. The presence almost exclusively of major cursus sites on the chalk uplands is better documented and supported both by 19th century fieldwork and modern aerial survey.

The distribution of sites located in this survey (fig. 1.2) cannot then be regarded as a certain reflection of reality owing to the variables operating on the even retrieval of crop mark data in the lowlands and the rapid erosion of the preserved landscape in the highlands.

B. UNCERTAINTY OF DEFINITION

Cursuses have been until very recently a sadly neglected class of field monument. In large measure this has been an understandable product of the challenge that their enormous dimensions presented to the would be excavator. Faced with such a check to the normal method of archaeological research the tendency has been to fall back on an intuitive, interpretative approach - a situation rare, if not unique, in British archaeology. Race way or processional explanations have been favoured (Stukeley, 1740; Hoare, 1810; Atkinson, 1955; Thomas, 1955; RCHM, 1960). In the absence of analysis and an agreed definition these have tended to emphasise the linearity and extended proportions of the monuments at the expense of their enclosure form. Uncertainty over the presence of terminals has further strengthened the processional interpretation and led at times to an almost total equation with avenues (Thomas, 1960, 248) and hence to their assumed ancilliary function viz a viz henges and burial mounds.

As a result virtually every pair of parallel ditches in the vicinity of a henge or ring ditches have at some time been claimed as a cursus (eg. Bedford: Copley, 1958, 284; Dennington, Morgan and Catling undated), and many others besides whose only striking characteristic has been their linearity. In addition not only have earthen and stone avenues been linked with cursuses (Atkinson, 1960, 151; Stone, 1947, 19) but single stone alignments as well (eg. Staldon Moor: Stone, 1947, 19; Nine Maidens: Thomas, 1960, 52). Even the diminutive avenue/animal trap/field boundary (12m x 0.8/1.6m) beneath the

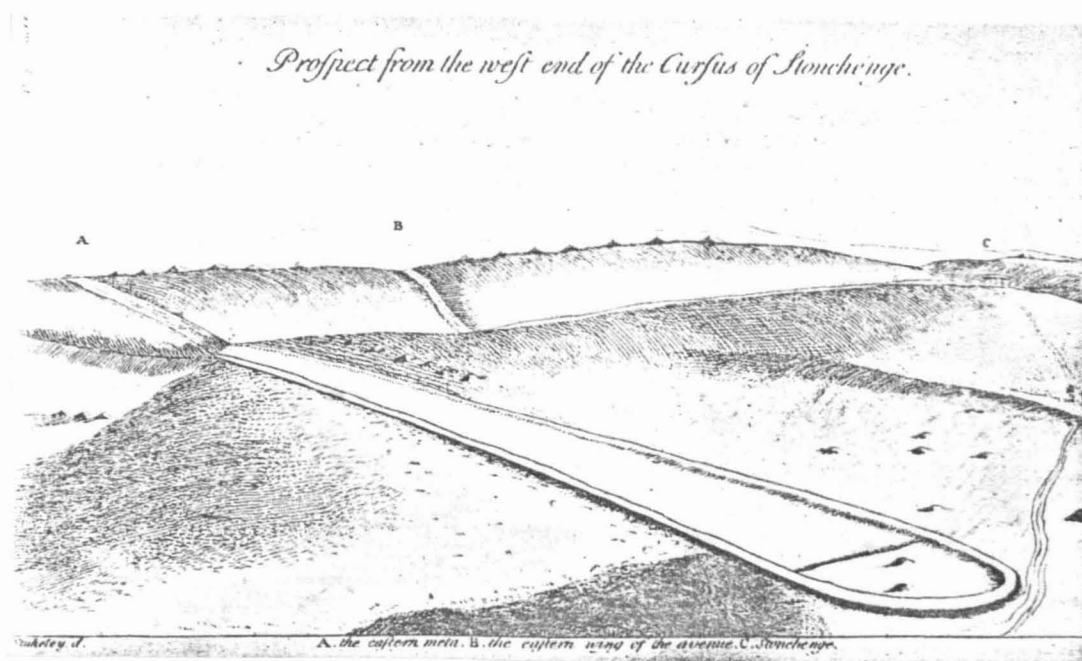
Swarkestone IV round barrow has been claimed as a "miniature cursus" (Bradley, 1970, 370 quoting Greenfield, 1960, 17). Finally Stone's suggestion that the bank barrow at Maiden Castle may have been of cursus like form for much of its length (Stone, 1947, 11) has led to it being termed a "cursus barrow" (Clarke, D. 1970).

Clearly the term cursus has become confused and devalued to a point where it has almost ceased to have meaning. In order to clarify the situation as a prelude to closer definition, it is useful to return to the work of the earliest investigators in order to establish what they saw as the physical characteristics of a cursus and to trace the steady widening of the concept as the number of located sites has multiplied.

i) Historical development of cursus studies: Stukeley and the early investigators

The cursus as a distinctive type of Neolithic field monument owes its recognition unequivocally to William Stukeley who records his discovery of the Amesbury example on August 6th 1723 in the first published reference to these sites (Stukeley, 1740, 41). His field sketches of its western and eastern terminals survive at the Bodleian library (Gough maps 122; 125; 127) but unfortunately his first description of it betrays the colouring effect of his fertile mind: "Directly down the avenue you see the cursus, a work which has never yet been taken notice of. Being a space of ground included between two long banks going parallel east and west, at 350 feet distance, the length 1,000 feet. This was designed for the horse races and games, like the Olympic..." and "A most noble work, contrived to reach from the highest ground of two hills, extended the intermediate distance over a gentle valley: so that the whole cursus lies conveniently under the eye of the most numerous quantity of spectators".

The distorting effect of Stukeley's imagination is well known for its effect



PI 1.1 Stukeley's published drawing of the western end of the Amesbury cursus

upon his field observation at Avebury, and it can be seen at work again here. His interpretation of the site as a race course for Celtic chariots - hence the name *cursus* - led him to seek a conformity between its plan and that of the classical hippodrome. When the observed features did not fit they were adapted. This process is documented in his field sketches of the western terminal which he described eventually as: "curv'd into an arch, like the end of the Roman circus's. And these probably the chariots ran round, in order to turn again. And there is an obscure barrow or two; round which they return'd, as it were, a meta" (Stukeley, 1740, 41).

His first field sketch, however, (Gough maps 122) shows the terminal clearly squared with slightly rounded corners. It carries the scribbled instruction "draw this all closer together". The changed perspective of his second sketch (G. maps 123), which became the basis of his published illustration (Tab xxx. 58), fails to disguise his deliberate alteration of the terminal shape to convex.

As both forms have eventually proved to be features of *cursuses*, this adaption was perhaps responsible for purely local confusion but his alteration of the observed features of the eastern terminal to fit his hypothesis was more serious. Two field sketches of this survive and clearly show that he appreciated that the *cursus* terminated some distance from the transversely orientated long barrow (Gough maps 125 & 127). Preferring the long barrow as a dramatic termination of the race course however, he described the eastern end as being: "... composed of a huge body of earth, a bank or long barrow, thrown up nearly the whole breadth of the *cursus*. This seems to be the plain of session for the judges of the prizes and chief of spectators." (Stukeley, 1740, 41). Perhaps not wishing to alter the evidence too blatantly he omitted to publish an illustration of this eastern terminal, preferring instead a general view

of the whole site from the north (1740 Tab xxxix). Nevertheless he gave no indication in this of the true nature of the terminal, indicating somewhat faintly instead that the long barrow indeed closed the site.

Much of the subsequent confusion about cursus form and function can be laid to the door of this single piece of interpretative adaption, which is still frequently perpetuated in generalised literature on the subject. As the Amesbury cursus remains the most familiar and best preserved of all cursuses it has to a large extent determined perception of other possible sites, and Stukeley's distorted description and powerful image have proved difficult to eradicate. Consequently cursuses are still often conceived as open ended sites performing an ancilliary (normally processional) function towards other monuments. Stukeley stands therefore both as the discoverer and falsifier of the cursus monument.

With characteristic verve he added other sites as cursuses or "places of sports and racing": Rawdykes at Leicester; Dyke Hills at Dorchester; "upon the River Lowther by Penrith"; and in a "chalky valley just without the town of Royston" (1740, 43) but it was left to Richard Colt Hoare to locate the Winterbourne Stoke "Lesser" cursus (Hoare, 1812, I, 158) and to publicise William Cunnington's discovery of the Gussage and Pentridge ("Dorset") cursuses (1819, II, 33). The obvious open ended character of the Winterbourne Stoke site and the apparent open terminations of the Gussage cursus on either side of a long barrow - an arrangement coincidentally mirroring that claimed by Stukeley for the eastern terminal at Amesbury - further encouraged the belief that these were indeed open avenues or race ways. Although Colt Hoare accepted Stukeley's interpretation of them as "race courses of the Britons" (1812, 158) he was more discerning about their physical details: his plan in Ancient Wiltshire clearly showed the Amesbury cursus terminating before the

long barrow at its eastern end and he also recorded the partially squared plan of the western terminal. He perpetuated Stukeley's bifurcation of the Stonehenge avenue, however, with one arm leading towards the cursus, which ensured that Stonehenge (and later henges in general) would remain closely associated with cursus monuments.

But for the advent of aerial photography the study of cursuses would have stopped at this point; Greenwell (1877, 253-7) had excavated the southern terminal bank of cursus A at Rudston but failed, because of the degraded nature of the lateral banks, to realise its significance.

ii) The early impact of aerial photography 1934 - 1960

It is fortunate for cursus studies that the aerial photographic pioneering work of Major G.W. Allen took place over the Upper Thames Valley - an area rich in cursuses. He brought a series of photographs showing crop marks of "remarkable rectangular enclosures" to the notice of E.T. Leeds, who in 1934 published them under the title "Rectangular Enclosures of the Bronze Age in the Upper Thames Valley" (1934, 414-6), having just accidentally established the date of one site during his salvage excavations at Sutton Courtenay gravel pits (Leeds, 1934, 266). O.G.S. Crawford rapidly responded to the article by pointing to a possible connection between them and the so called "Stonehenge cursuses". In so doing he incidentally first placed in print the Anglicisation of the Latin plural cursūs (Crawford, 1935, 77-8). He emphasised that just as Allen's rectangular enclosures appeared to be integrally associated with ring ditches so the Stonehenge sites might have a better claim to be connected with the surrounding barrow groups than with Stonehenge itself.

As a result of these developments emphasis now began to change from long barrows

15

to round barrows/ring ditches as the most frequently associated monuments. The most important development however - establishment of the fact that these sites were almost invariably complete enclosures - unfortunately received much less attention. In large measure this was an unexpected result of excavations subsequently carried out in advance of gravel extraction at one of Allen's sites - Dorchester, Oxon. The potential of the site, the largest in the Thames Valley, had already been established by Allen's detailed survey (1938, 169-170) but it had proved impossible to trace its N.W. terminal which lay under pasture, and the S.E. one was complicated by a series of random ditches. Its enclosure characteristics were far from clear therefore.

Volume 1 of Excavations at Dorchester, Oxon (Atkinson et al 1951) proved to be a seminal report for the development of archaeological method but as such gave prominence to a limited section of an apparently open ended cursus. The intimate association of the cursus with a long mortuary enclosure seemingly paralleled the pattern of association with long barrows observed in Wessex where the inclusion of the Maiden Castle long mound in the series (Riley, 1944; Stone, 1947) had further diverted attention from closing terminal ditches.

Although Atkinson's work in Dorset succeeded in locating the terminals of the Gussage and Pentridge cursuses (Atkinson, 1955), and the term cursus enclosure or long rectangular enclosure was becoming increasingly common (Riley, 1944, 734; Piggot, 1954, 65; Atkinson, 1960, 150; St. Joseph, 1956, 278), the publication of a plan of the cursus at Maxey (St. Joseph, 1956, fig. 81; RCHM, 1960, fig. 6) gave prominence once again to an ostensibly open ended site of Wessex proportions. Published plans of the rectangular enclosures of the Thames Valley were still lacking.

The popular concept of a cursus was therefore still based in the late 1950's

on the Wessex model with excavation almost exclusively restricted to those sites on gravel soils that conformed to this pattern - Dorchester (Atkinson et al, 1951); Maxey (Alexander, 1958, 213/Selkirk, 1967); and Thornborough (Thomas, 1955). The only work on a site of rectangular enclosure type had been Leeds' accidental trench at Sutton Courtenay, and on a small site, that at the anomalous North Stoke ditches which were nonetheless heavily elongated (Leeds, 1934, 266; Case, 1983a,).

This concentration on major sites led inevitably to increased observation regarding the close relationship of cursuses and henges, despite the fact that the stratigraphic and artefactual evidence, where it had been recovered, pointed to a marked chronological dislocation (Thomas, 1955; Alexander, 1958). The relatively greater difficulty experienced at these extended sites in locating the terminals also allowed the equation of cursuses with avenues (Stone, 1947; Thomas, 1955 - in which a circle/avenue - henge/cursus overlap was postulated).

The RCHM's review of the current state of knowledge regarding cursuses in 1960 reflected many of these ideas but was able to increase the number of sites from the four known prior to 1934, and the eight (including the Maiden Castle long mound) recorded by Stone (1947), to fifteen (1960, 24-7).

iii) Recent developments

The most important development in the recent study of cursuses occurred in 1964 when Webster and Hobley published (and plotted) the rectangular "cursus like enclosures" of the Warwickshire Avon valley. These small sites seemed unsuited as either processional ways or race tracks and were apparently unassociated with henges proper or, to any marked degree, with ring ditches. They demanded both by their size and association, therefore, a total rethink

of the cursus problem, if indeed they were to be classified as monuments of that type. Morphologically they were identical to the rectangular enclosures published by Leeds thirty years earlier so exclusion could not be justified. One of them - Barford - was excavated in 1976 but the results await publication. A comparable but larger site at Springfield in Essex became as a result the first extensively excavated cursus of rectangular enclosure type to be reported. (Hedges and Buckley, 1981).

At the same time two further developments from aerial survey and excavation widened the range of potential structural forms that a cursus might take; excavation by Topping (1982) confirmed that parching along the axis of the Scorton cursus did in fact represent the remnant of a mound and aerial photography by Maxwell and St. Joseph revealed a series of cursus like sites in lowland Scotland defined by pits.

Finally two radio carbon dates have recently been published for sites on the periphery of the main cursus series: $2722 \pm 49\text{bc}$ (BM 1405) for the North Stoke linear ditches and $2870 \pm 55\text{bc}$ (no reference published) for the diminutive pit defined site at Douglasmuir.

Placed beside the Late Beaker ware recovered from cursus A at Rudston (Dymond, 1966) and Fengate and Beaker sherds from the interior of Springfield, they emphasise the longevity of a tradition which, when Stone wrote in 1947, was considered largely synchronous with that of long barrow construction.

Recent work has then in part further blurred the definition of cursus monuments

by extending the range of structural forms that demand to be considered under that label. However, recognition and publication of a larger number of small sites has emphasised the enclosure characteristics of their ditches. This was a feature obvious to Stukeley but which he chose largely to ignore. Subsequent work between 1934 and 1960 inadvertently emphasised sites of apparent open ended form. Atkinson's emphasis on the enclosure characteristics of these monuments (1960, 150) deserves to be restated now in the light of recent knowledge.

CHAPTER II

CURSUSES - CHARACTERISTICS AND DEFINITION

The preceding historical review has emphasised the need to establish a firm definition of the features of a cursus, to avoid ill founded assumptions about their function viz a viz other monuments, and as a criterion against which putative sites can be measured. It would be dangerous, however, to base this upon published lists of cursus sites as by no means all those originally identified have proved to be of Neolithic date. The characteristics of the class can only be securely established from:

- A. excavated sites
- B. surviving earthwork sites.

A. CURSUS SITES AUTHENTICATED BY EXCAVATION

In all, twenty cursus sites have been excavated but it will be obvious from table 2.1 that in relatively few cases has investigation been extensive. In most cases it has been restricted to small scale trenching, which has obvious implications for the poverty of our knowledge of internal or external structures. It also places a question mark over the reliance that should be placed on statements about bank location, it being notoriously difficult to establish the overall pattern of ditch silting from a single section.

Our initial concern, however, is with ditch morphology and the supporting evidence that this is a valid indicator of Neolithic/EBA date. The enormous length of many of the sites and the small scale nature of most excavations has militated against the recovery of diagnostic artefacts. Characteristic worked flints or flint debris are therefore considered acceptable. An indication on the table that a site is of proven Neolithic

Table 2.1

SITE	PROVEN NEOLITHIC DATE	EXTENT OF EXCAVATION	NUMBER OF LOCATED TERMINALS
Amesbury	●	T	2
Winterbourne Stoke	●	A	1(2)
Gussage	●	T	2
Lechlade		T	1
Dorchester	●	A	1
North Stoke	●	A	1?
Sutton Courtenay/Drayton A	●	T	1
Sutton Courtenay/Drayton B	●	A	-
Springfield	●	A	2
Maxey	●	A	-
Barford	●	A	2
Findern		T	-
Aston		T	1
Scorton	●	T	1
Rudston A	●	T	2
Rudston C	●	T	2
Rudston D	●	T	1
Llandegai		A	1
Offerton (Hasting Hill)		T	1
Thornborough	●	A	1
T = trench A = area (Details of the excavations are contained in the descriptive register - appendix I)			

date may then be based upon dateable artefacts, worked flints or flint debris, stratigraphy or, in one case, a C¹⁴ date. No attempt has been made at this stage to distinguish between them.

In three cases trenching failed to recover any evidence of date and this also seems to have been the case at Llandegai, despite large scale area excavation (Houlder, 1968). The prehistoric date of the site seems certain, however, to judge from its integral relationship with two henges and a

series of hengiform sites, and its stratigraphic relationship to an overlying medieval cemetery. Inclusion of Llandegai would bring the total of authenticated sites to sixteen - a sufficient number to establish the characteristics of these monuments.

In length the sites in table 2.1 range from 5,640m (Gussage St. Michael) to 185m (Barford) and in width from 100/150m (Amesbury) to just 11/12m (North Stoke and Llandegai). A range of this magnitude clearly raises the question of the unitary nature of the series - Gussage St. Michael is three times the width of Barford and thirty times the length. It seems unlikely that sites differing so greatly could have performed identical functions. Nevertheless in the present state of knowledge it is not possible to point to internal or structural features that would justify separate treatment, as may be the case in the henge series (Wainwright, 1969; Catherall, 1976). Not only do the largest and smallest sites share a common range of ditch plans, they also on occasions exhibit a common configuration of associated monuments; the long mortuary enclosure set parallel to the terminal at Barford mirrors the long barrow at Amesbury whilst the long mortuary enclosure crossed longitudinally by the Dorchester cursus ditch mirrors the long barrow incorporated in the bank of the Pentridge cursus. Common treatment - at least initially - seems justified therefore.

Characteristics

i Parallel ditches

The principal and obvious shared feature of all sites in table 2.1 is their definition by parallel ditches. These may vary in layout from precisely straight (eg Aston and Springfield) to irregular (eg Thornborough and Llandegai) - a feature that seems in part to be related to their

terminal form. The more irregular ditches possess a larger number of causeways but are in no sense causewayed ditches.

In size the ditches also vary. The recently excavated section at Gussage St. Michael (Bowden et al, 1983) revealed a ditch 3m wide and 1.2m deep whereas that at Maxey was only 2m wide and 0.3m deep. This distinction should not be overstated however, as most ditches are between 2 and 3m in width irrespective of the overall area enclosed.

ii Terminal or closing ditches

Although, as outlined in the historical review, terminal ditches have received too little attention, they are a consistent feature of sites in table 2.1. Only two of the twenty sites lack certain evidence of them - Findern and Maxey. At the former a terminal probably coincides with a hedge boundary and at the latter its absence probably results from the extremely shallow nature of the ditches which excavation has shown in places to hardly cut the subsoil.

In only six cases (about a third of the total of authenticated cases) can a second terminal be claimed but this largely reflects the fact that excavation has been concentrated on larger, incompletely traced sites. This may not be the case at Maxey where the ditches at the NW extremity seem to run almost up to the river; a terminal may lie under the narrow strip of pasture verging the river or have been truncated by the meandering river channel (plate 2:1). At Scorton the absence of a NW terminal is explicable in terms of the considerable depth of hill wash at that end (Topping, 1982, 7).

The Offerton (Hasting Hill) and Winterbourne Stoke sites were undeniably open ended, however. It is possible that they were left incomplete - recent



Pl. 2.1 Maxey : general view of north western
arm extending from henge in foreground
to river in middle distance

work at the latter has revealed the restructuring of the earlier complete western enclosure (J. Richards, pers. comm). One end of the Pentridge site was also strictly open ended, where it abutted the Gussage cursus, and the atypical North Stoke site similarly lacked a terminal where it met the long mortuary enclosure at its southern end.

Sites with a single open end do then exist but are unusual; figures here are inflated by lack of excavation of the more completely traced "rectangular enclosure" series.

iii Banks or mounds

Internal banks survive at the excavated sites of Amesbury, Winterbourne Stoke, Gussage St. Michael and Rudston A and can be inferred from the silting pattern of ditches at Dorchester, Springfield and probably Lechlade. At Aston an external bank was postulated from the observed silting pattern of a single ditch section (Reaney, 1966) but other structural evidence there, namely the swelling out of the cursus ditch to incorporate a ring ditch in the projected alignment of an internal bank, does not support this. A second external bank may have been present at the western terminal of the Amesbury cursus where Christie located a deeper ditch and residual traces of preserved chalk outside as well as inside the terminal. It is strange that Stukeley's early field sketches do not record it, however. An alternative function of the deeper ditch may have been to provide added height to the terminal bank (cf Gussage St. Michael and Rudston A).

A low mound rather than separate banks has been shown to have occupied the centre of the Scorton cursus and a similar structure probably best explains the internal silting patterns and limited enclosed area recorded at



PI 2.2 Hollywood B showing internal
 pit setting

Llandegai (Houlder, 1967).

At the other excavated sites no significant pattern could be discerned in the direction and volume of ditch silts. Banks, if they existed, were presumably set well back from the ditches. It should be noted in this context that Stone found no evidence of bank collapse in the ditch section which he excavated across the Amesbury cursus and it would be impossible to determine bank location purely from the silting pattern of the sections dug by Christie (Stone, 1947; Christie, 1963). Similarly the section cut through the ditch adjacent to the terminal of Rudston A revealed no directional silting (Dymond, 1966, 91) from the surviving bank.

iv Post holes and post settings

Single post holes have been recorded at Scorton and Dorchester, and lines of post holes at Lechlade and Maxey. A convex setting of post holes was located within the squared terminal at Springfield and a continuous alignment of pit crop marks along the inner ditch edge of Holywood B may represent a similar setting (pl. 2:2).

They cannot be considered a consistent feature however and would only appear as crop marks if of some considerable size.

v Pit defined sites

A series of pit defined sites (pl. 2:3) have been located that appear to be of cursus type (St. Joseph, 1976; Maxwell, 1978). To date only one small example of the series has been excavated (Kendrick, 1982). This has no claim to be considered as a cursus (and so has been excluded from table 2.1) but bears a sufficiently striking resemblance to the greatly elongated sites to be recorded here as another example of cursus structural



Fig. 2.3 A pit defined cursus : Inchbare A

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form. Its close set pits proved on excavation to have held posts but it would be dangerous to automatically assume that all the pit defined sites were similarly posted. The morphological similarities are such that a common Neolithic date can be postulated, however.

B. CURSUSES SURVIVING AS EARTHWORKS

Cursuses survive as earthworks only on the chalk downlands and even there only partially. Stukeley was able to trace the full extent of the Amesbury cursus and Colt Hoare could do the same for that at Winterbourne Stoke but large sections had already disappeared from the Gussage and Pentridge cursuses and only the terminal of Rudston A survived to puzzle Greenwell.

Today the situation is far worse: Winterbourne Stoke has been completely levelled as have large sections of the Amesbury cursus (RCHM, 1979, 15); the junction of the Gussage and Pentridge cursuses is very nearly ploughed out as are the banks for a considerable distance in each direction; and the surviving terminal of Rudston A is regularly ploughed during rotations of pasture improvement. Only the SW terminal of the Gussage cursus (located on former common land on Thickthorn down), parts of the eastern banks of the Gussage and Pentridge cursuses utilized as a field bank on Bottlebush Down and a length of some 1,100m of the Amesbury cursus bank immediately east of Fargo Plantation can be claimed to have survived intact.

Characteristics

i Lateral banks

The most notable surviving feature of all the sites are their internal banks. These appear to have been largest on the Gussage and Pentridge cursuses where the surviving bank on Bottlebush Down (pl.2:4) measures 8-9m at the base and 1m in height (RCHM, 1975) - a size commensurate with



PI 2.4 The surviving bank of the Pentridge cursus on Bottlebush Down

the large ditch recently revealed near there (Bowden et al, 1983).

The Amesbury cursus banks were apparently slighter even before the recent effects of ploughing; Stone's section through the undisturbed bank gave a spread size of 6-7m x 0.6m but the area of underlying residual chalk ("compo") measured only 4.6m in width (Stone, 1947, 13). Berms are a feature of all sites to survive as earthworks.

ii Terminal banks

Surviving cursus earthworks provide some evidence that terminal banks were of larger proportions than the lateral ones, a factor that may have aided the survival of the Gussage and Rudston A terminals on Thickthorn Down and the Wold Gate respectively. The Gussage terminal bank (pl. 2:5) is a considerable earthwork bearing comparison with the adjacent long barrows. Slip from it, rather than the lateral banks, gives the impression of a ramped interior to the terminal. At Rudston the terminal bank is similarly of greater height than the lateral banks (Dymond, 1966, fig.1) and the deeper terminal ditch at the western end of the Amesbury cursus may have served the same purpose (Christie, 1963, 370-2). The greater width of preserved chalk denoting the base of the terminal bank (6.4m, with a thinner tail off running into the cursus interior) points to structural similarity with Thickthorn.

A low rise on the field surface in the vicinity of the Holywood A terminal appears to represent the vestige of a similarly large transverse bank; no evidence survives of the lateral banks.

A feature of the Thickthorn, Rudston A and vestigial Pentridge terminal banks were corner expansions, which Greenwell took at Rudston to be round barrows placed at the junction of three conjoined long barrows (Greenwell, 1877, 253-4).



PI 2.5 The south western terminal of the Gussage cursus on Thickthorn Down

Heywood Sumner provided the more prosaic answer, that they arose from ditch material being dumped from two sides at a right angled corner, and produced a diagram to prove his point (Heywood Sumner, 1913, 35-b, plxvi). Neither it should be noted realised the nature of the site with which they were dealing.

Sumner was undoubtedly correct in his explanation but, as it is not a feature often remarked on in rectangular enclosures constructed for more mundane purposes, it is possible that it was in fact a deliberate feature of bank architecture.

iii Cross banks

A cross bank and ditch located near one terminal is a feature of the Winterbourne Stoke and Amesbury cursuses yet these appear to have been of fundamentally different origin. Recent work at Winterbourne Stoke has confirmed that the example there initially constituted the eastern terminal of an independent western enclosure with internal bank. This was later extended by parallel ditches running to the east; all ditches were then recut on a more substantial scale and the position of the bank of the old eastern terminal (now cross ditch) changed to the outer, eastern side (J. Richards pers. comm). The Winterbourne Stoke cross ditch appears to correspond to the septa within several of the pit defined sites of Strathmore where adjacent constrictions in the lateral pit lines, like those in the ditch lines at Winterbourne Stoke, point to two phase construction. The postulated earlier enclosure forming the SE terminal at Dorchester presents a further but uncertain parallel.

The cross ditch cutting off the two round barrows within the final 100 metres of the Amesbury cursus appears by contrast to have been a

secondary feature. Its ditch grazes the southern cursus bank but it is contained within the cursus and its condition indicates construction in association with some phase of use of the monument (RCHM, 1979a, 14). It was certainly present in Stukeley's day (1740, Tab.XXX, 58). He seems to have been unconcerned about its impact on careering chariots although Colt Hoare took greater account of it (1812, 59)!

Although the presence of an axial mound should exclude several sites from the cursus category as envisaged by Stukeley and the early investigators, a modern definition to be applied to plough eroded, crop mark sites can only reasonably be based on shared features in ditch morphology. Furthermore the sort of interpretative definition favoured in the 19th and early 20th century probably has little basis in fact and unnecessarily restricts the range of sites that have a claim to be considered under the cursus label; stone circles may similarly have either open or mounded interiors (Burl, 1976). If this point is accepted it raises questions about the continued validity of the overtly interpretative title - cursus. Like henge, however, this now largely has the advantage of archaic neutrality, as well as familiarity, and would be extremely difficult to supercede. It is therefore maintained in this study but cursuses are redefined, using the criteria just established as:

Elongated parallel sided sites normally totally enclosed by their defining ditch or pits, but on very rare occasions having one open end. Structurally they may possess either internal banks or more rarely an axial mound and are sometimes accompanied by post settings.

For an untested crop mark site to be designated as a cursus in the descriptive register (App. I) it must accord with this definition, at least to the extent of displaying one closing terminal ditch. Only those

parallel ditches of exceptional width or exceptional precision will be seriously considered if they at present lack a certainly located terminal ditch (eg. Findern/Maxey/Buscot B). There is a danger that this unnecessarily removes a series of narrow sites that may eventually prove to be cursuses (eg. Buscot A drawn as a trackway by Benson and Miles - map 2, 1974 - but revealed as a 'cursus' by C.U.C. C80 40-42) but it has been the large number of roads and trackways classed as cursuses that have bedevilled the study of these monuments in the past. Open ended sites have therefore been consigned to the possible or doubtful categories to be treated with reserve for the present.

There are other admitted dangers in a rigid approach of this sort, not least the fact that it fails to take account of the variability of human accomplishment - when does a poor copy of a cursus undertaken at some considerable geographical or chronological remove from the flourish of the series cease to be classified as a member of the group? Perhaps equally dangerous is the assumption that all sites that conform to the defined pattern are necessarily members of the group; Mucking, Thwing and now Springfield detail the dangers of such cropmark typology in henge studies (Jones, 1979; Manby, 1979; Hedges pers. comm).

Only further excavation can provide the answers, however, and for this to be most usefully employed priorities must be defined. The analysis that will be set out here is an attempt to clarify these.

CHAPTER III

CURSUSES - FORM AND CLASSIFICATION

Cropmark sites which satisfy the morphological criteria set out in the preceding chapter are included in the descriptive register as Grade II sites; they follow the Grade I (excavated) sites already discussed. These, and the less certain Grade III sites, have all been plotted at scales of 10:560 or 1:2500.

A. SUBDIVISION BY SIZE

With the addition of these cropmark sites the problem of size, mooted during discussion of excavated cursuses, presents itself again, but now more compellingly. A large number of small, parallel sided cropmark sites have been identified that are morphological identical to cursuses yet smaller even than the shortest excavated site - Barford (185m). They reduce the lower end of the size range dramatically: the rectangular Charlton site at just 50m in length is the smallest claimed "cursus like enclosure" (Webster & Hobley, 1964, 5) but others of comparable size (eg. Kettlestone, 45m) also have these characteristics. Sites of these dimensions have normally been termed long mortuary enclosures after Atkinson's establishment of the type at Dorchester (Atkinson, 1951, 57) but it is apparent from this survey that they grade steadily upwards to lengths of 140m and more, overlapping with claimed cursus sites such as Barnack - 118m (Philips, 1935, RCHM, 1960, 27). They seem therefore to represent only the lower end of a size continuum that extends to the massive cursus sites of the Wessex chalkland.

Nevertheless to label all sites in this continuum as cursuses would be to seriously devalue the term once again. Such enormous variations in size (45m - 5640m) clearly demand explanation which can best be achieved by

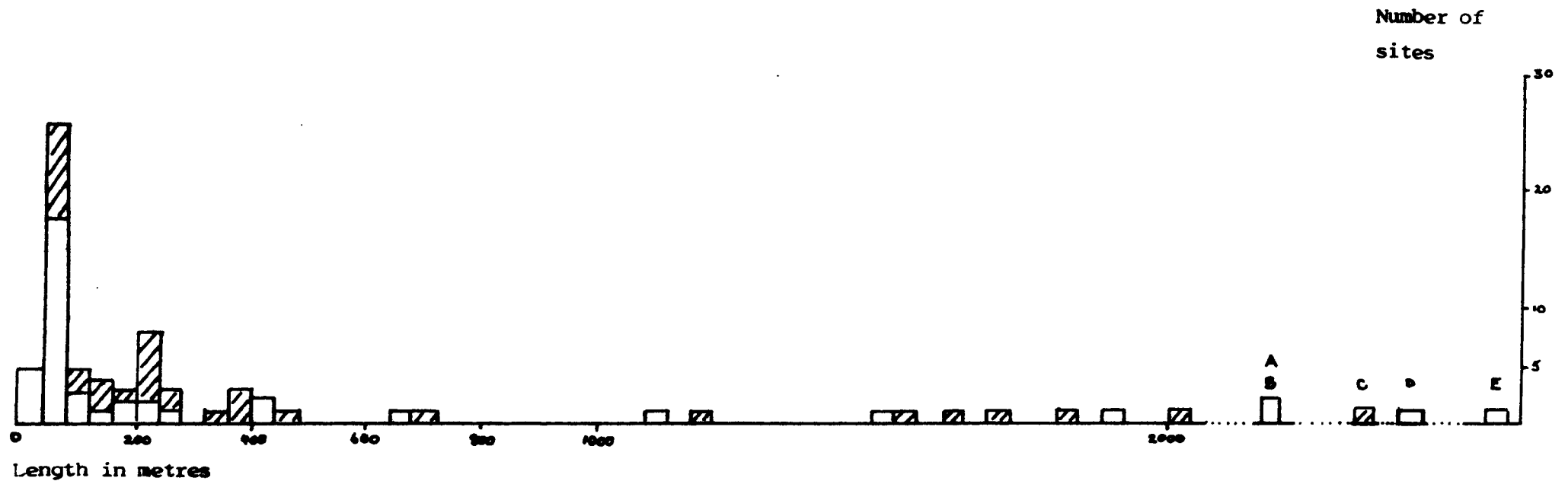
subdivision and separate analysis, but at what point and on what basis should classification change? The common range of terminal forms and ditch types throughout the continuum makes raw size the only effective basis for a comprehensive subdivision of the series: sites such as Charlton (50m), Barnack (118m), Barford (185m), Longbridge, Warwick (270m), Springfield (680m), Benson (1090m) and Aston (1800+m) can only be distinguished in this way.

Whilst classification of this sort, carried out on purely numerical terms, has the value of greater objectivity it must meet the argument that the distinctions drawn are in some measure arbitrary - reflecting the mathematics of recovered data rather than real differences of function. A similar division of the henge series (Wainwright, 1969) has provoked discussion and dissent (Catherall, 1976). The classification offered here is not claimed as a final, functional categorisation of sites, however. This will only be achieved, if at all, when a greatly increased body of data has been recovered by excavation. It is intended rather as a working division of unwieldy size continuum.

i Length

Length provides the obvious initial basis for subdivision within the continuum; a similar exercise with long barrows, detaching those of extreme size, has long received support (Wheeler, 1943; Grinsell, 1953; Ashbee, 1970). Unfortunately there are difficulties. The sheer size of many sites makes it almost inevitable that they will enter areas of housing or pasture which prevent recovery of their full dimensions. In all only 15 of the total sample of 36 sites (41%) have been traced in their entirety. Figure 3.1 sets out their length ranges, in so far as they are known, in histogram form, distinguishing complete from partially traced sites. The

Fig. 3.1 THE 'CURSUS' LENGTH CONTINUUM



Incomplete sites hatched

A	Rudston A	2700 metres	D	Pentridge	4290 metres
B	Amesbury	2730 metres	E	Gussage	5640 metres
C	Rudston D	4000 metres			

results must be viewed with caution given the incomplete nature of the data but distinct clusterings seem to exist between 0-120m (largely complete sites) and 180-500m (largely incomplete sites). It may be permissible to include those sites ranging up to 700m with the latter, as this seems certain to be the maximum length attained by most incomplete sites of this group; several are limited from further extension by the presence of a river across their projected alignment (eg. Charlecote and Sonning) and others fail to reappear amongst cropmarks located after breaks in their ditch alignment (eg. Lechlade). Those cursuses in excess of 1,000m in length are widely dispersed.

ii Width

Monument width provides a further approach to the problem of subdivision. It has the advantage of easy measurement however inponderable the question of site length may be, and when due allowance has been made for irregularities, provides a rapid basis for subdivision. If cursuses like bank barrows simply resulted from the elongation of a basic monument, width measurement would provide no indication of length but width variation in the cursus series (12m Llandegai - 100+m Amesbury) seems largely to reflect the degree of elongation. This is not to say that all cursuses have common proportions but it is certainly true that there are no short sites of great width, nor extremely long sites just 12m wide. Width therefore seems to provide a general guide to length as well as an independent means of analysis.

Figure 3.2 sets out the width of all sites in the sample. Again an obvious clustering occurs at the lower end of the range (10-25m) with a further more dispersed grouping from 30-45m. Beyond 45 metres widths are widely spread.

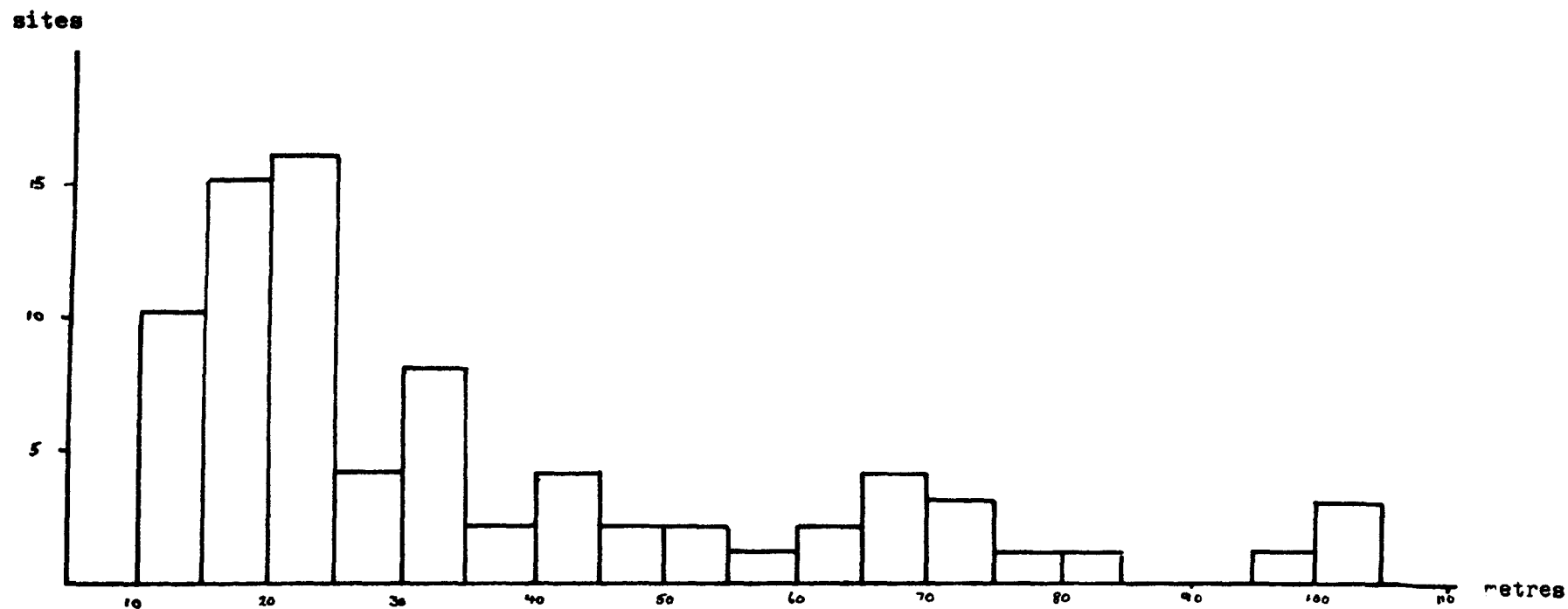


Fig 3.2 Histogram of the transverse dimensions of sites in 'cursus' continuum

A scatter graph (fig. 3.3) opposing site width against length has been produced to measure the degree of correlation of these two variables. It does in fact indicate the cohesive nature of the two groupings of smaller sites and the dispersed nature of the larger examples.

iii Subdivision of the size continuum

Three basic divisions within the continuum seem then to be justified:

1. A lower group ranging up to 140m in length but not exceeding 25m in width. Sites of this sort are normally referred to as long mortuary enclosures and will be dealt with separately below (Chapter 6).
2. A grouping of small sites that appear to progressively extend the length and width range of 1, yet have a claim to be considered as cursuses. These normally range from about 180-420m in length and 25-50m in width. The large number of incomplete sites in this group necessitates setting the upper limit beyond their bare proven lengths. In the absence of any certain indication of the ceiling of the group an arbitrary figure of 500m is proposed.

Inclusion of the Winterbourne Stoke ("Lesser Stonehenge cursus") in this category suggests the less cumbersome, collective title of MINOR CURSUSES.

3. Full scale cursus sites ranging from about 800-5640m in length and normally 40-100m in width. The presence of the Amesbury ("Greater Stonehenge cursus") in this group suggests the title MAJOR CURSUSES.

It must be emphasised that although these three groups have been established as a result of analysis of site dimensions they cannot claim to be absolute divisions: the critical dimensions are not sacrosanct and will undoubtedly

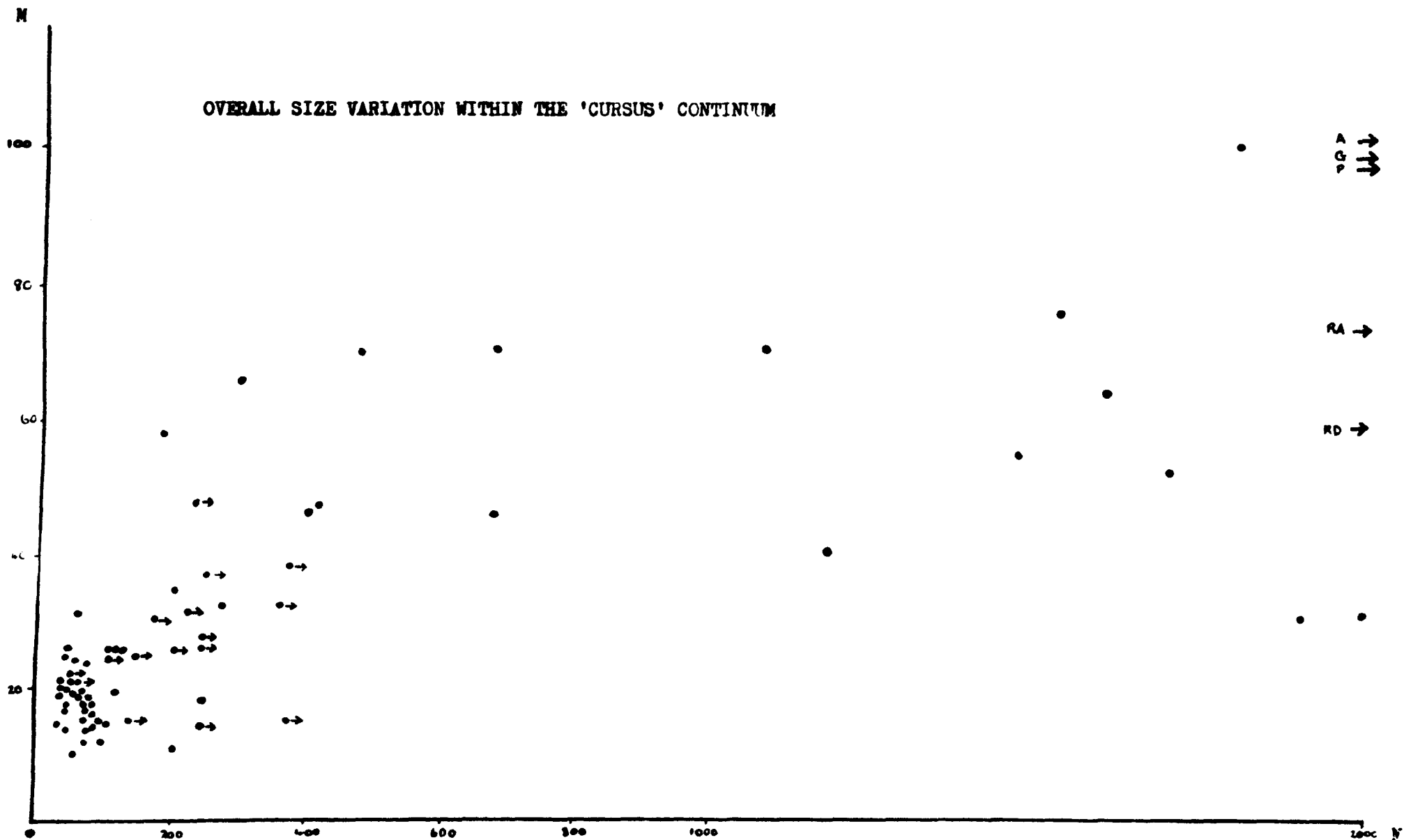


Fig. 3.3

•→ Incomplete sites

A → Sites extending beyond the limits of the graph

) A - Amesbury
) G - Gussage

P - Pentridge
RA/RD - Rudston A & D

have to be revised in the light of future discoveries. In addition some flexibility is required in handling the categories as site dimensions do not in every case conform to both the length and width limits laid down for the groups: the prodigiously long Fornham All Saints and Scorton sites demand by virtue of sheer length to be classified as Major Cursuses yet are only some 28-34m wide, whilst the anomalous Cardington E and Stratford St. Mary sites are uncharacteristically broad (58m & 65m) for sites of Minor Cursus type. In addition Llandegai and Welshpool have apparent lengths of 200-400m (sufficient to place them firmly in the Minor Cursus bracket) yet attain widths of only 11-15m - narrow even for the "long mortuary enclosure" group. In fact they appear to be direct linear extensions of sites of this type rather than cursuses which, if they are to justify classification as a total distinct form of monument, must exceed sites in group 1 both in length and width.

The same problem of linear extension without greatly increased width arises with the pit defined series. These sites (as at present recorded) appear to be restricted to a width range of only some 20-30m despite variations in length of 70-400+m. The occurrence of septa at some sites, probably denoting earlier terminals, gives support to the idea that both short and elongated examples form part of a unified series. Rigid application of the base width for the Minor Cursus group of 25m would arbitrarily and absurdly divide them. It would neither be possible to measure with sufficient accuracy from an aerial photograph to be certain of which side of the divide a site lay, nor reasonable to suppose that a figure of this kind, arrived at statistically, had any reality to the builders. A degree of overlap must therefore be accommodated.

Irrespective of the complications posed by the pit defined series, an

immediate effect of assigning lower length and width limits to the Minor Cursus group (albeit flexibly) has been the removal of three well known sites from the cursus category - Llandegai and North Stoke (discussed above) and the small rectangular site at Barnack (118m x 25m) (Phillips, 1935). Possibly more positive results of the size classification exercise has been confirmation of a distinct grouping of long mortuary enclosure sites at the lower end of the continuum that justify separate treatment, and validation of a minor cursus category. Clustering of the latter sites just beyond the limits of the lower ("long mortuary enclosure") group, and very much detached at the end of the main cursus spread, indicates their value as a link between these two monument types. Given the insuperable problem of major cursus excavation, the linking sites of this group may well hold the key to the "cursus question". An area possessing both "long mortuary enclosures" and minor cursuses with shared siting, orientation and morphological features, such as the Warwickshire Avon and Great Ouse valleys, deserves particular examination.

B. SUBDIVISION BY DITCH MORPHOLOGY






As already indicated it is not possible to equate variation in size with distinctions in ditch morphology - a common range of forms is exhibited throughout the continuum. Morphological features nevertheless provide a basis for longitudinal subdivision which may prove to be of value in resolving questions of date and function. The appearance of cursuses of differing forms at the complexes of Rudston, Holywood, Amesbury and Cardington/Cople encourages the idea that details of plan and ditch layout may have altered through time.

The features in question are: terminal shape, ditch layout, monument alignment, causeway location and internal divisions (septa).

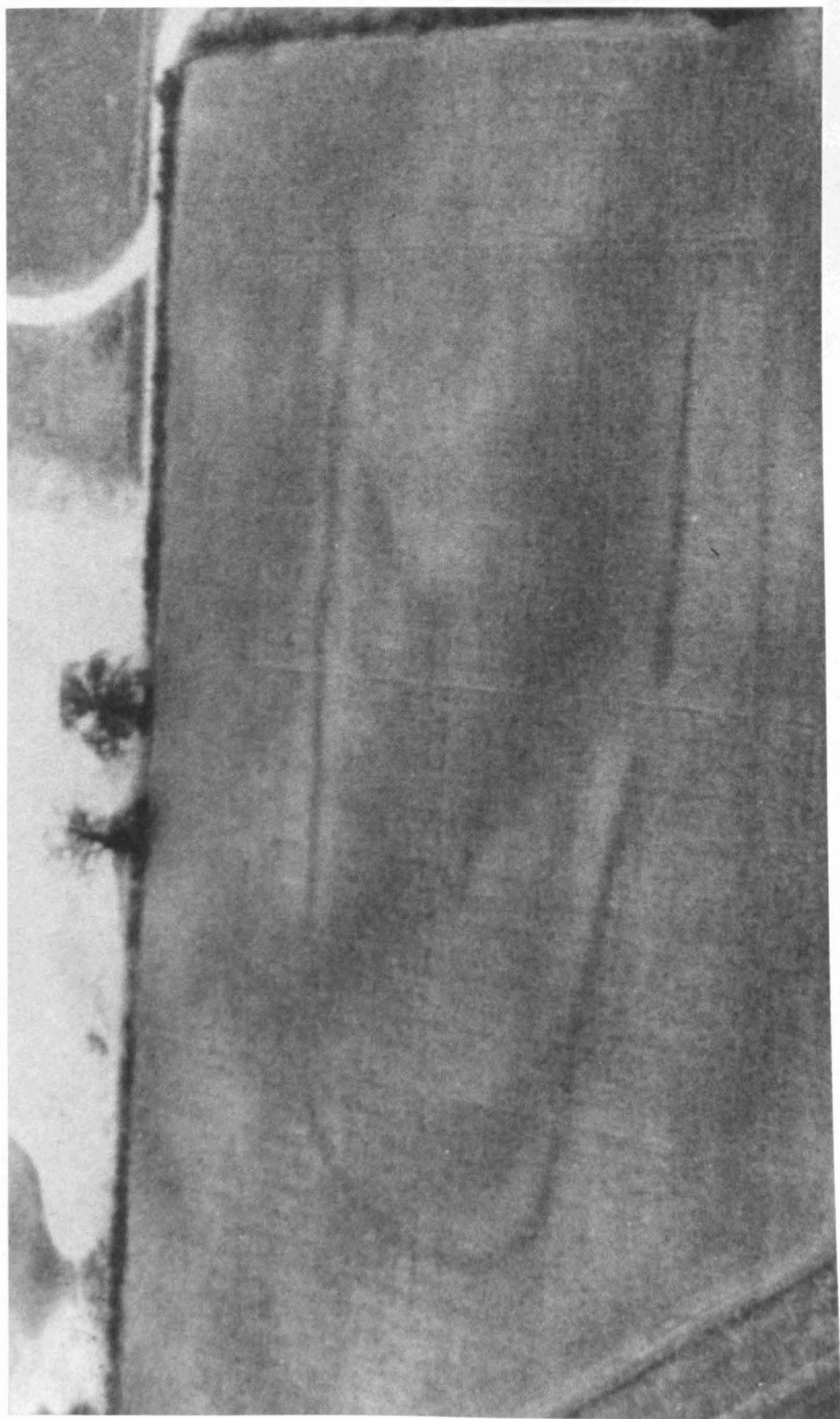
i Terminal shape

Terminal form offers an obvious initial basis for classification. Two shapes have frequently been remarked upon - a fairly accurate, semi-circular ditch and a neatly squared rectangular ditch. They have normally been referred to as 'elliptical' and 'squared' (Webster & Hobley, 1964). Although it is possible to find many examples of these in pure form (pls. 3:1/3:2), several gradations exist between and beyond which tend to blur the division. All, however, can be classified under CONVEX or SQUARED labels, allocated according to the degree of curvature of the ditch. The following types are suggested:

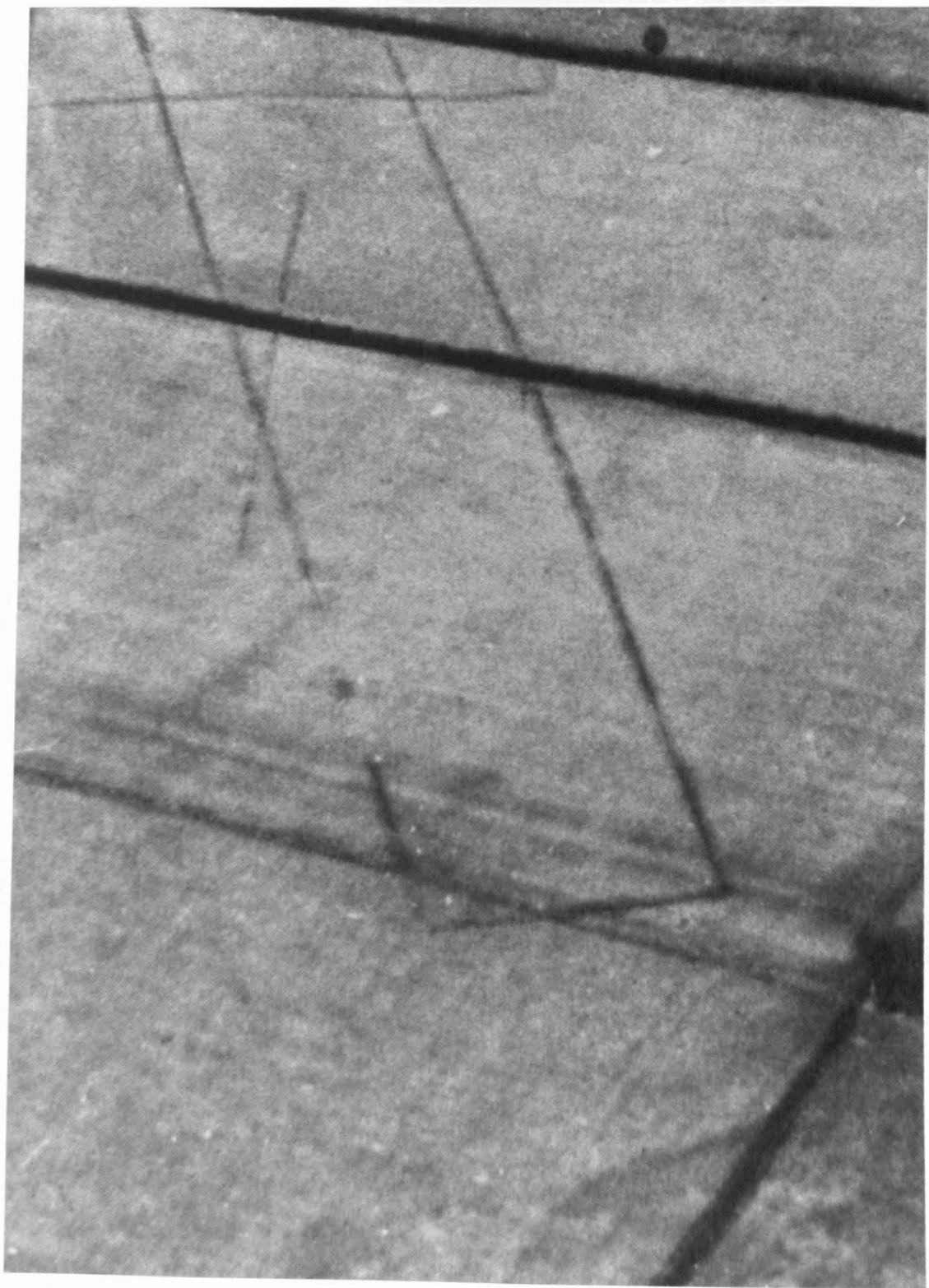
Figure 3.4 Terminal types

A <u>CONVEX</u>		
Ai Rounded		eg Thornborough
Aii Partially flattened		eg Dorchester
B <u>SQUARED</u>		
Bi Precisely squared		eg Springfield
Bii Irregularly squared		eg Rudston A
Biii Possessing one corner set at an obtuse angle		eg Pentridge

In each case variations follow the classic types - Ai and Bi. Perhaps the most difficult type to define is Bii which basically comprises a series of poorly executed terminals of Bi type - terminal ditches irregularly laid out, set at an angle far removed from 90°, or possessing well rounded corners. The Biii variant has the appearance of greater deliberation and as a form is widespread (from Holywood A, Dumfriesshire to Pentridge, Dorset); it also appears in the pit defined series (Inchbare B). It may have resulted from a particular method of ditch layout (there are signs at Thornborough and Rudston C of similar incurving of one side ditch towards



PI 3.1 A convex (type A) cursus terminal - Thornborough



Pl. 3.2 A square (type B) cursus terminal - Benson

convex terminals), but a measure of deliberate "architectural" patterning cannot be excluded. The question of terminal ditch layout will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter.

Those few sites where both terminals have been located provide useful evidence of the consistency of terminal form; should there be any evidence of variation it would seriously question the value of this method of classification. At all completely recorded sites, however, both terminals have proved to be of the same type, with only minor variations as at Amesbury. Septa do not always correspond to terminal form though, a point that perhaps raises doubts over the 'earlier terminal' hypothesis.

It seems justified then to apply a terminal classification to a site when only one end has been located. Table 3.1 sets out the terminal types of Grade I and Grade II sites.

Table 3.1 Terminal classification of sites

	Ai	Aii	Bi	Bii	Biii
MINOR CURSUS	Hollywood B <u>Kinalty</u> Thornborough Rudston C ? Maxey	<u>Winterbourne Stoke</u> Fornham All Saints Dorchester	Cardington Barford Longbridge, Warwick Lechlade Sonning Stratford St. Mary Drayton St. Leonard <u>Benson</u> Sutton Courtenay Springfield Biggleswade Aston Scorton	Hasting Hill <u>Balneaves</u> Rudston D Amesbury Rudston A	Hollywood A Inchbare <u>Maryton</u> Rudston B Pentridge Gussage
MAJOR CURSUS					

It is obvious from table 3.1 that very few sites can be positively classified as possessing convex terminals, and of those that do nearly half are of the semi flattened Aii type. Interestingly convex terminals are by far the most common form in the "long mortuary enclosure" group where precisely squared sites are a rarity (chapter 6).

Numerically the severely squared Bi terminal type dominates both minor and major groupings. With one exception the sites all fall in the Midland/East Anglian region, so the possibility that they represent a regional form rather than a distinct monument type must be considered. For the moment it is sufficient to register the dominance of the group.

The value of terminal classification has been questioned (Hedges & Buckley, 1981, 12) as it has been felt it provides no reliable insight as to date. It is certainly true that distinctions cannot be related to cursus size (table 3.1) and that precision of ditch layout, a particular feature of the Bi terminal type, is also exhibited at the Aii sites of Dorchester and Fornham All Saints. But the consistent occurrence of a range of terminal types amongst those cursuses forming components of complexes seems to demand explanation in either functional or chronological terms.

Terminal form should not be isolated from other morphological features, though. Unless there is a consistent correlation of terminal type with features such as precise ditch layout and accurate monument alignment doubts must indeed arise over the validity of making these distinctions.

ii Ditch layout

As already indicated all sites appear to be defined by ditches of regular and relatively moderate width. Despite this similarity of form (and

presumably purpose) cursus ditches differ markedly in layout: many, such as those at Barford and Springfield, prove to be impressively regular and straight not merely as crop marks but on excavation also; others such as Thornborough have been shown to be markedly irregular. Sites such as Holywood B and Offerton (Hasting Hill) lie between these two extremes.

In fig. 3.5 ditch/pit alignment has been classified as: regular, irregular, markedly irregular. Sites have been placed in two categories if one side ditch differs significantly from the other (eg. Rudston A) or if a distinct change is evident along the length of the monument (eg. Maxey, Scorton).

iii Monument alignment

Although closely related to ditch layout, monument alignment forms a further "architectural" variable against which terminal form can be checked.

It is clear that cursuses were intended in essence as straight monuments: no minor cursus site deviates from a straight alignment and in several cases sinuous or curved sections in major cursuses relate to topographic obstacles that would render accurate alignment difficult or impossible (eg. Gussage, Pentridge, Rudston A).

A slight degree of curvature is apparent at Dorchester and clearly relates to the problem of long distance surveying but the markedly curved and sinuous form of the irregular Thornborough site is of a quite different order. A sharp curve in the course of Rudston D is of elbow like form so perhaps better considered as analogous to sinuous or angular alignment features.

TERMINAL TYPES	DITCH LAYOUT				MONUMENT ALIGNMENT				CAUSEWAYS				SEPTA
* = minor cursus PD = pit defined	MARKEDLY IRREGULAR	IRREGULAR	REGULAR	STRAIGHT	IRREGULAR	CURVED	SINUOUS	ANGULAR	MULTIPLE	TERMINAL	NEAR TERMINAL	LONGITUDINAL DITCH	OPPOSED
<u>Ai</u> Holywood B *		•		•									•
Kinalty (PD) *		•			•								•
Thornborough	•					•	•		•	•	☐	•	
Rudston C		•		•								•?	
<u>Aii</u> Winterbourne Stoke*		•		•									•
Fornham All Sts.			•					•			•?		
Dorchester			•	•		•			•	☐	•	☐	
<u>Bi</u> Cardington E *			•	•									•
Barford *			•	•							•	•	
Longbridge Fm. *			•	•									
Lechlade *			•	•									
Sonning *			•	•						•			
Stratford St Mary *			•	•		•							
Drayton St Leonard*			•	•							•?		
Springfield			•	•								•	
Benson			•	•							•		
S. Courtenay			•	•							•		
Biggleswade			•	•							•		
Aston			•	•							•	•	
Scorton	•	•		•	-	•			•?			•	
<u>Bii</u> Offerton *		•		•	-	•							
Balneaves (PD) *		•		•	-	•							•
Rudston A	•	-	•	•	-	•		•					
Rudston D	•			•	-	•							
Amesbury			•	•									•?
<u>Biii</u> Holywood A (PD) *			•	•							•		
Inchbare A (PD) *		•		•	•								
Maryton *		•		•									•
Rudston B		•		•		•							
Pentridge			•	•		•							•
Gusage		•	•	•			•						

Fig. 3.5 CURSUS DITCH/PIT "ARCHITECTURE" : MORPHOLOGICAL VARIABLES

Sharply angled corners are at present restricted to Fornham All Saints but a comparable feature may have existed at Maxey, until destruction by gravel quarrying (RCHM, 1960, pl.1); variations in the ditch layout of NW and SE arms suggests, rather, the existence of two cursuses there (plate 2:1).

Cursus alignment has been characterised therefore as:

1. Straight (eg. Benson)
2. Irregular (eg. Rudston D)
3. Curved (eg. Thornborough)
4. Sinuous (eg. Rudston A)
5. Angular (eg. Fornham All Saints)

These classifications are independent of ditch form, whether regular or irregular.

iv Causeways

Causeways are a further "architectural" feature that may have a role to play in classification. Their location is at first sight apparently random (cf Dorchester, Atkinson et al 1951; Thornborough, Vatcher 1960) but further scrutiny betrays some regularity, though by no means the precisely formalized pattern that characterises the henge series.

Several cursuses have a sufficient number of breaks in their ditch (four or more in a limited area) to necessitate description as multiple causewayed sites; distinguishing patterns in these sites is extremely difficult. In most cases, however, causeways are more discrete, isolated features and their location can be categorized according to that part of the cursus in which they fall. Four categories are proposed in addition to the all embracing multiple classification:

1. in the terminal ditch
2. offset from the terminal in the lateral ditch
3. along the length of the lateral ditch
4. opposed to each other, in location (2) or (3).

Figure 3.5 sets out the pattern of causeway location beside the "architectural" features previously discussed.

The multiple classification qualifies all other categories at those monuments concerned as it inevitable enhances the chance of causeways falling at "significant" points. It should be emphasised, however, that not all ditch interruptions at multiple causewayed sites are of equal size, or presumably importance. The largest examples in each case (which justify the label causeway) have been emphasised in figure 3.4 by a box.

Causeways cutting the terminal ditch of a cursus are an uncommon feature: that at Dorchester has now been proved by excavation (Chambers, 1983) but at Sonning there is a suspicion that the causeway in part relates to the effect of underlying drift deposits on cropmark production, and at Thornborough the gaps are better characterised as gang causeways.

The most consistent location for causeways, and the one that most nearly approaches a formalised pattern, is strangely asymmetrical - offset from the terminal a short distance along one lateral ditch. No precise interval seems to have been favoured (distances vary from 15m to 80m) nor does it appear to be related to terminal width, but the repetition of causeways in this somewhat unlikely location implies deliberation. There is no evidence for more than one such offset terminal causeway at any site but the frequent failure to locate a second terminal advises caution on this point. At Benson photographs taken by St. Joseph (CUC DZ 071) during airfield construction, which had revealed the full extent of the cursus, demonstrated that here at least there

was no second causeway to balance that at the north. If they were all single causeways, however, no particular pattern can be observed in their orientation: three lie to the south, one to the west, and two each at north and east (if the anomalous Dorchester arrangement is included).

Causeways of this sort are concentrated amongst sites with Bi type terminals but even in this group they were apparently by no means an invariable feature - only 38% of the sample have produced evidence of them. It is tempting to put this down to the fact that in the remaining 62% of cases it has been the blank end of the cursus alone that has been located, but their absence from the fully recorded Springfield and Longbridge (Warwick) sites cannot be denied. A similarly placed causeway (the largest on the site) occurs at Thornborough - an irregular, Ai terminalled cursus - and the pattern can also be picked up in the "long mortuary enclosure" series (cf Charlecote; Feering; Dorchester VIII). Intriguingly it is repeated in the 12th century bc site at Aulnay aux Planches (Brissant and Hatt, 1953). Offset terminal causeways do not therefore appear to have been exclusively linked with a series of morphologically, or presumably chronologically, distinct sites.

Opposed causeways may be conceptually related as in only one case are they centrally placed (Cardington E). At Holywood B clear opposed breaks in the ditch cropmarks (c 10m wide) are placed just over 100m from the eastern terminal and at Pentridge, Atkinson (1955, 8) located breaks of differing size (12m and 3m) opposite each other, c 750m from the NE terminal of the 4,290m long cursus. Stukeley was the first to record opposed breaks in the bank and ditch line of a cursus (Stukeley, 1740) but those observed by him at Amesbury are now questioned as original features (RCHM, 1979a, 14) since they do not appear as cropmarks (NMR SU 1343/1-2). It is likely nonetheless that they were associated with some phase of the use of the cursus as they were obvious to Colt Hoare's more discerning eye and differentiated by him from the breaks

caused by the line of the track to Durrington (Colt Hoare, 1810, 158 and map I). Neither aerial survey nor an examination of early land use has revealed evidence of a track at this point (RCHM, 1979a, map 3). It seems altogether too great a coincidence then that opposed causeways recorded at Amesbury should prove to be unrelated, modern features yet be closely replicated at cursuses subsequently discovered. They may perhaps be best explained as secondary features created by slighting of the bank and back filling of the ditch - a process possibly recorded at Thornborough (Vatcher, 1960, 178) and there significantly considered explicable in terms of a similar attempt to produce opposed causeways.

With or without Amesbury, the number of sites at which opposed causeways have been recorded is low and their correlation with terminal types diverse (figure 3.5). They are also equally distributed between Minor and Major cursus groups.

The final grouping proposed for cursus causeways - "randomly placed along the length of the lateral ditches" - is certainly the least useful. Perceiving patterns in these irregularly placed ditch breaks is extremely difficult and further complicated by the high score that extreme ditch length ensures for the group.

The A1 and A1i groups score more highly than might be predicted given the small nature of the sample but this in part reflects the concentration of excavation on sites of this type, which has revealed causeways largely invisible on aerial photographs (eg. Thornborough: RCHM, 1960, pl.106; Vatcher, 1960, fig. 3).

Gaps occur at Springfield and Barford located approximately in the centre of one side ditch, but at Scorton, Thornborough, Rudston C and Dorchester the causeways appear to be more randomly placed with no discernible pattern. Dorchester is apparently unique in registering the position of earlier monuments with causeways.

It appears from this review of the morphological patterning of cursus ditches that only one series of sites possesses an almost uniform collection of architectural features - those with terminals of Bi type. All except Scorton, which may be of different form at its NW end, are defined by regular ditches, and all except the slightly curved Stratford St. Mary cursus are laid out on straight alignments; offset terminal causeways are also a frequent feature of the group. Morphologically they exhibit the consistent patterning of features necessary for classification as a distinct cursus type. Geographically they are almost exclusively confined to the Midland/East Anglian region (fig. 3.6).

Other groups do not display the same coherence. Irregularity is a marked feature of the Ai group but only Thornborough at present has produced sufficient evidence to warrant a "multiple causeway" designation. The only other site certainly of multiple causewayed type - Dorchester - has a terminal of Aii form. Given the very small size of both the Ai and Aii groups common treatment may be justified but this has the effect of further confusing the range of exhibited features: Dorchester and Fornham unlike the rest of the group have impressively regular and well aligned ditches.

It has been suggested (Atkinson pers. comm) that the SE terminal at Dorchester forms part of an earlier enclosure, which could explain the apparent discrepancy between ditch and terminal type. A similar interpretation might be advanced for the SE terminal of the Fornham All Saints cursus, which some photographs

(SAU DG 28-30) reveal to have been more irregular than the rest of the site; the multiple alignments possibly representing an attempt to unite two earlier features. However, recent excavation of the terminal features at Dorchester (Chambers, 1983) casts doubt on the separate enclosure interpretation there, and to advance it purely for those two sites which fail to respect the predicted pattern represents an unacceptable degree of special pleading.

Whilst then sites with type A terminals are predominantly irregular in ditch plan and monument alignment, and possess in several cases multiple causeways, there is insufficient internal consistency in the patterning of features to justify classification as a distinct cursus type. Inclusion of the Maxey cursus, however, which probably possessed a curved terminal (CUC AGB54), and the excluded Llandegai and Cople sites (placed above in an extended "long mortuary enclosure" grouping) produces a more coherent series. The widespread distribution of sites within such a group (fig. 3.6) and their frequent association with more precisely laid out sites of differing terminal form (cf Holywood, Rudston, Amesbury/Winterbourne Stoke) suggests that they may represent an early cursus type still influenced by "long mortuary enclosure" and bank barrow morphology.

Bii sites comprise a rather heterogeneous grouping unified only by their irregularity: Offerton (Hasting Hill) appears to be a poorly executed copy of a Bi type; Balneaves, probably an extension of a smaller enclosure of Douglasmuir type; Rudston A and D massive examples of major cursuses that lose both alignment and regularity as their course proceeds; and Amesbury a major site that lacks, despite its regularity, the severely squared terminal and precisely parallel ditches of the comparably sized Bi site of Aston. As mentioned earlier, Scorton may be better reclassified as a member of this group.

These sites all lay beyond the Midland/East Anglian centre of the Bi series and are, for the most part, of Major cursus size. Both factors probably played a part in determining the relative irregularity of their layout.

Biii sites are unified by a more precise pattern of terminal layout - one right angled and one out curving corner. The geographical distribution of this feature from Angus to Dorset points either to deliberate design or a common surveying procedure. Either way a further series of shared morphological features might be predicted for the group but they divide equally into those defined by regular, and those by irregular, ditches.

Again, despite their definite terminal pattern, cursuses in this group do not justify treatment as a particular type; Biii, like Bii terminals, seem best treated as variations on the Bi pattern. Emphasis needs to be placed on their location outside the Midland/East Anglian region.

Figure 3.6 sets out the distribution of sites according to the morphological classification of terminals used above, with an additional category (group C) comprising sites of unknown terminal type. Figure 3.7 shows the same sites differentiated by size and classified as Minor or Major cursuses. It emerges from these that sites with Ai/Aii terminals are the most widely spread, encroaching even on the Midland/East Anglian heartland of the Bi series in the form of the major cursus sites of Dorchester, Fornham All Saints and possibly Maxey. Perhaps significantly it is the more flattened Aii form which occurs in this central region, with atypically regular ditches. Figure 3.6 also confirms the almost totally exclusive distribution of Bi and Bii/Biii sites. These two patterns - the overall distribution of the numerically smaller type A group and the clear divisions within the type B group - argues for the validity of terminal distinctions. Classification by alternative features



Fig.3.6 CURSUS DISTRIBUTION: SUBDIVISION BY FORM



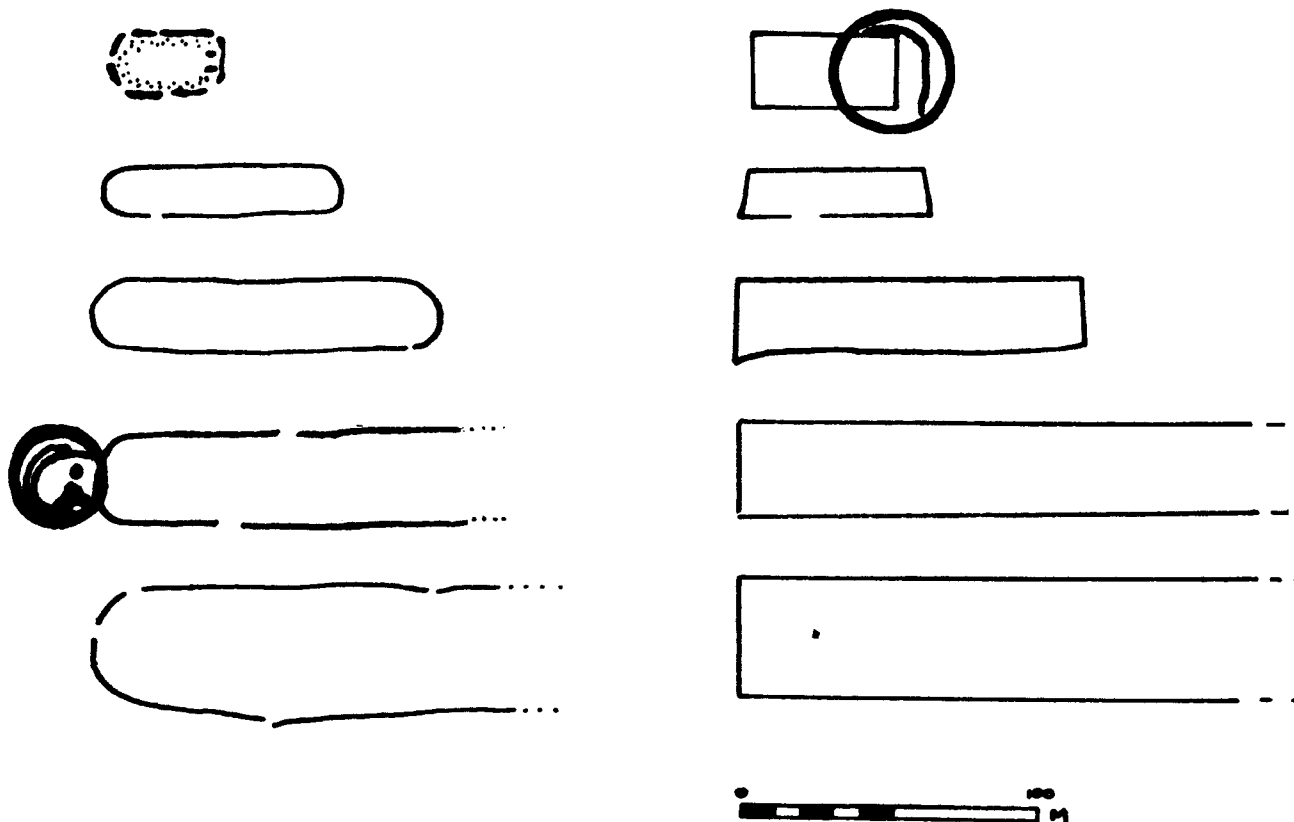
Fig.3.7 CURSUS DISTRIBUTION:
SUBDIVISION BY SIZE

such as ditch layout or causeway position would (fig. 3.5) produce far more heterogeneous groupings. Division by size into Minor and Major classes reveals a fairly even balance within each terminal group (table 3.1), although interestingly the Major cursuses of the Bi series are, with two exceptions (Aston and the questionable Scorton site), noticeably shorter than the norm. Major cursus sites in the Midland/East Anglian region in excess of 1km. in length seem commonly to be of type A (if Maxey is considered as of this type and Sutton Courtenay/Drayton A disassociated from the lower lying cursus B - see gazeteer), and certain areas such as the Avon, Ouse and Stour valleys may have lacked major sites altogether. Although centred in these valleys the appearance of minor cursuses elsewhere suggests more than local validity.

Major and Minor terms will continue to be employed then to register differences of cursus size, and terminal classifications A and Bi to distinguish broad cursus types, although it is accepted that type A represents only a tentative grouping dependent in part on features shared with cognate "long mortuary enclosure" sites. Bii and Biii' classifications appear to be relevant only to discussion of monument layout.

The consistent series of architectural features that characterise the Bi series point to a measure of formalised planning comparable to that first recognised in the henge series by Atkinson (1951, 81-107). It is tempting in this light to view them as a "type II" cursus, but the lack of coherence of the more irregular A/Aii group prevents their assured classification as a "type I" series and the dating evidence as a whole is still too slight to justify such clear, typological distinctions.

Before proceeding further, however, the dangers inherent in the analyses



THE CURSUS CONTINUUM :

A & B SERIES

(A : WILSFORD TO
THORNBOROUGH ;
B : CHARLTON TO
SPRINGFIELD)

already attempted must be admitted: from the establishment of a definition to the subdivision of the series the exercise has been based purely upon considerations of dimension and morphology. The moribund typologies of chambered tombs that fill none too ancient archaeological journals demonstrate the dangers of this approach, which has been followed here for a precisely similar reason - lack of a substantive body of evidence. Whilst classification has been undertaken primarily to discover the extent of recognisable patterning within these simply defined sites, rather than as a basis for fixed typological ordering, it remains nonetheless a "nurgatory exercise", as Piggott characterised attempts to establish chambered tomb typologies, unless the conclusions are evaluated against the slender dating evidence. Only if consistent patterns emerge here can the broad groupings be accepted as valid divisions of the series.

On morphological grounds alone, though, it is clear that cursuses (particularly those of the Bi series) were laid out like henges according to predetermined, formalized plans. Factors of chronology, geography or function may underlay their differences.

CHAPTER IV

EVIDENCE OF DATE

Cursuses have long been renowned for the poverty of their ditches - excavation of substantial lengths of ditch during the 1950's and 1960's at Thornborough, Maxey and Dorchester produced in sum one indeterminate crumb of pottery from the former, (Thomas, 1955) and a leaf arrowhead, an edge polished flint axe and some Ebbsfleet sherds from the latter (Atkinson, 1951, 57). Knowledge of this unrewarding characteristic, as much as the intimidation of sheer size, prevented further large scale cursus excavation for many years. Recent work has been somewhat more fruitful (Dymond, 1966; Hedges & Buckley, 1981; Topping, 1982; Bowden et al, 1983; Chambers, 1983). When combined with the recovered stratigraphic evidence this provides a reasonably secure basis for the dating of the series as a whole and assessing the validity of the proposed morphological groupings.

Ostensibly associated monuments furnish a less reliable indication of date owing to the vagaries of land use and monument construction over two millennia but repeated spatial patterning of specialised sites within the limited orbit of a cursus must be considered deliberate. As such the artefacts from these sites provide a useful indirect approach to the question of cursus date.

A ARTEFACTS FROM CURSUS DITCHES OR IN DIRECT STRATIGRAPHIC ASSOCIATION

I FLINT AND STONE

a) Flint knapping debris and non chronometric tool types

The most frequent finds from cursus ditches are of worked flints and debitage. This has been most clearly detailed at Amesbury where Stone found two small working floors, comprising 550 flakes in all on the ditch floor (1947, 14), and Christie found a similar workshop area at the base of the deeper western

terminal ditch from which 150 flakes were recovered (Christie, 1963). In addition randomly scattered material (some 580 flakes) was spread through the secondary and upper silts of the eight sections cut through the ditch in the terminal area. From this considerable collection of material Stone records only one flake with a scraper edge and some "core scrapers" and Saville (1978, 17) reporting on Christie's finds, ten cores and one scraper.

Worked flint has also been recovered in some quantity from the Gussage, Sutton Courtenay, Rudston A and Scorton cursuses - mostly from the secondary and upper silts. At Sutton Courtenay Leeds found flint working debris along with 14 scrapers, a transverse arrowhead and an area of charcoal stained earth in the "upper layer" of the cursus ditch (Leeds, 1935, 415) and recent work at Gussage has revealed a similar flint scatter in the upper silts there, although in this case apparently linked to a surface scatter of material located by field walking (Bowden et al, 1983). A macehead, arrowheads (unspecified) and a sherd of Fengate ware were found amongst the surface material and sherds of Mortlake and probable Fengate ware stratigraphically associated with the flints in the ditch.

Less discrete scatters of flint debris appeared in the Rudston A and Scorton ditches - nearly one hundred flakes randomly scattered through the ditch fill in the single section cut at the former (Dymond, 1966), and 69 from various areas of the Scorton cursus, although only 9 actually from the ditch itself (Topping, 1982, 16). Finished tools were again characteristically scarce amongst this material: five edge retouched scrapers and broad scraper at Rudston and one transverse arrowhead at Scorton.

Topping has hypothesised from this evidence of flint knapping that it should perhaps be regarded as part of the spectrum of behavioural patterns associated

with such monuments. The varied sources of the material make this unlikely - at Amesbury from the ditch floor and clearly associated with construction; at Rudston deriving from the old land surface and hence scattered through the ditch fill; and at Scorton concentrated almost entirely in the overlying ploughsoil. Flint scatters of similar type in the vicinity of cursuses will be discussed below.

The value of this relatively abundant utilitarian debris for dating purposes is of course very limited. Only the disparately provenanced collection from Amesbury has been systematically analysed. Saville draws attention to a 'flat' core with multidirectional flaking and to an unretouched flake from a multidirectional core, both of which are of post Middle - Late Neolithic type. Eighteen faceted platform flakes also point to a late date (Saville, 1978).

The knapping debris accompanying the fourteen scrapers at Sutton Courtenay has not been preserved but Case's work on the scrapers (1982b) suggests that they had more in common with those from the Cassington Grooved ware pits than the examples from the Abingdon causewayed camp.

b) Arrowheads

These represent the commonest truly chronometric tool types recovered. Unlike the more abundant but largely undiagnostic cores, scrapers and worked flakes, arrowheads appear to have been more susceptible to cultural influences (presumably because they possessed a certain status value) and as such provide valuable indications of date.

i) Leaf arrowheads

Leaf arrowheads were until recently considered to be a type artefact par excellence of the Earlier Neolithic cultures (Piggott, 1954) but Green has cast doubt on this (Green, 1980). He points to the considerable number now

recovered from unimpeachably late contexts and to the range of associated dates - 3240bc Hembury to 1836bc Woodhenge.

Only one leaf arrowhead has to date been found in a cursus ditch - that from the primary silts of the Dorchester cursus near its apparent north eastern extremity (Atkinson et al, 1951, 63). At the time of its discovery it was considered to provide strong confirmatory evidence of the site's early Neolithic date, to set beside the Ebbsfleet sherds that came from the secondary silts and the Abingdon ware found in the "droveway" ditches (site IX) which overlay the cursus. Here though, in addition to Green's general findings, there are internal reasons to doubt the Early Neolithic date of the arrowhead. The classification of Abingdon ware on the site has recently been questioned (Case in Kenward, 1982) and a transverse arrowhead came from site XI that can be demonstrated to antedate the cursus ditch, and hence the leaf arrowhead in question. Discovery of a transverse arrowhead in the cursus ditch at the SE terminal confirms the Late Neolithic date of the site (Chambers, 1983).

ii) Transverse arrowheads

Transverse arrowheads have been found in the cursus ditches at Scorton, Sutton Courtenay, and Dorchester. Although few in number they represent the commonest diagnostic tool type to have been recovered to date. They are also well represented in the ditches and pits of the associated sites at Sutton Courtenay (Leeds, 1934), Rudston (Manby, 1974, 1975), Dorchester (Atkinson et al, 1951), Maxey (Simpson pers. comm) and Llandegai (Houlder, 1968). Perhaps significantly arrowheads of this type account for 80% of the total number recovered from henge ditches (Green, 1980, 109) although this reflects the intensive programme of work on Wessex henges, where in Grooved ware contexts they inevitably dominate, rather than a specific association with ritual architecture.

Green has classified transverse arrowheads as petit tranchet, chisel or oblique types. He points to the appearance of pt/chisel forms in the earliest contexts - $2355 \pm 130\text{bc}$ (BM 756) Broome Heath; $2629 \pm 65\text{bc}$ (BM 757) Barholm - and to the exclusively second millenium horizons of the oblique form, but emphasises the longevity of both traditions - $1460 \pm 131\text{bc}$ (BM 664) and $1324 \pm 51\text{bc}$ (BM 669) Mount Pleasant (Green, 1980, 111-114).

Details are at present lacking regarding the transverse arrowhead from Dorchester but those from the upper silts of the Scorton and Sutton Courtenay ditches can be classified respectively as of chisel and oblique types (fig. 4.1). In the full (and largely unpublished) flaked stone assemblage report on the Scorton material Whickham-Jones points to some unusual features of the chisel arrowhead found there: it lacks retouch except for a very small area of micro flaking along the cutting edge, and this had most unusually been formed on a hinge fracture and may therefore have been quite blunt. Whilst its identification as a petit tranchet derivative remains certain in Whickham Jones' opinion, the possibility that it might have performed functions other than that of an arrowhead was raised.

Dates relevant to pt/chisel arrowheads range from 2601bc at Broome Heath to 1324bc at Mount Pleasant (Green, 1980, tab. V.2). In the search for a probable time span of use this evidence is not particularly helpful; Wessex dates and contexts are generally late (greatest numbers derive from the upper ditch silts at Windmill Hill, from the occupation site on the West Kennet Avenue and from the old land surface under the Arreton Down round barrow) but the relevance of these trends to North Yorkshire is highly questionable. They have, however, been recorded in association with Peterborough ware, Grooved ware and Beakers in the pits and hollows on the Rudston and Carnaby Wold Tops (Manby, 1974, 1975). These features recall both the West Kennet occupation

site and the pits beside the Sutton Courtenay cursus, where Leeds found 3/?4 in a single pit (pit P) along with Grooved ware. In the Dorchester cremation cemeteries (sites I, II, VI) they were similarly associated with elements of a Grooved ware assemblage (bone pins and stone maceheads), although the fabric was not well represented on the site. On balance then it seems safe to assume that chisel arrowheads, although noted in early contexts, were predominantly a final 3rd and early 2nd millenium phenomenon and largely synchronous with the flourish of Grooved ware cultural groups - a point emphasised by the exclusive occurrence of transverse arrowheads (both chisel and oblique) on pure Grooved ware settlements (Green, 1980, tabl.VI).

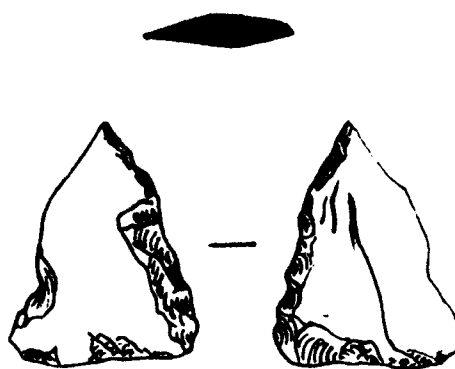
The position of the Scorton chisel arrowhead in the upper levels of the ditch unfortunately prevents it being used for close dating of the site's construction but as the ditch was no more than 45cm deep the process of silting cannot have taken long, even with due allowance for recutting. A date towards the close of the third millenium seems probable.

Leeds recovered a "triangular flake trimmed on two sides" along with fourteen scrapers and flint knapping debris from the upper silts of the Sutton Courtenay ditch (1934, 266). It is an arrowhead of Green's British oblique type E (1980m fig.37): bifacial trimming occurs along one edge but the opposed cutting edge is untouched except for a large unpatinated chip, clearly detached subsequent to the arrowhead's burial (fig. 4.1). It has also been retouched along its base, although this is largely unifacial.

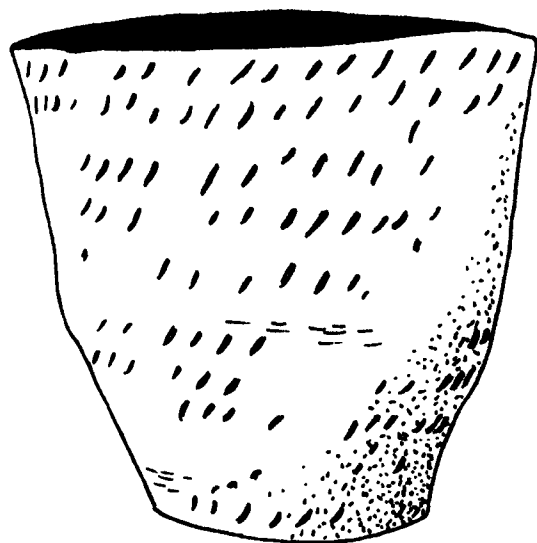
As already stated, oblique arrowheads of this sort appear to have been an exclusively 2nd millenium phenomenon: all important associations are with Grooved ware and Beakers. Available radiocarbon dates range from 1977 \pm 90bc

SUTTON
COURTENAY -
DRAYTON

1 : 1



a) oblique arrowhead

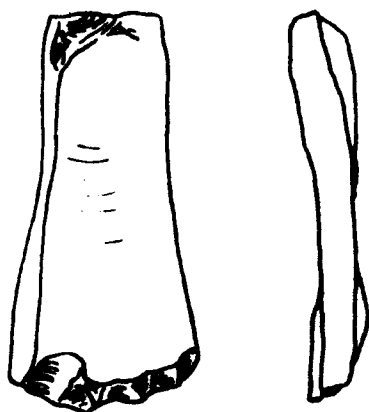


b) Fingernail Rusticated
Beaker

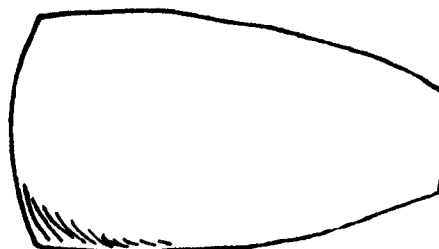
1 : 2

c) End scraper

d) Group VI axe



1 : 1



1 : 2

Fig 4.1 FINDS FROM THE CURSUS DITCH :
A) CERTAIN ; B),C),D) POSSIBLE

(BM 393) at Durrington Walls to 1550 \pm 150bc (BM 75) at Windmill Hill, and Green has drawn attention to a notable correlation with Southern Beakers (1980, 114). Such a mixed Beaker/Grooved ware context suits the Sutton Courtenay oblique arrowhead well; Grooved ware sherds came from three adjacent pits and Beaker burials from others. The position of the arrowhead in the upper levels of the cursus ditch of course reduces its value for dating purposes to that of a terminus antequem. Nonetheless, there is a strong likelihood that it relates quite closely to cursus construction as on analogy with the North Stoke ditches, silting at Sutton Courtenay can be assumed to have reached the tertiary stage within about fifty years (Case, 1982a, 73-4).

Too much emphasis should not of course be placed on these arrowheads which have been given prominence here only because of their chronometric properties. The occurrence of all three in upper ditch silts unfortunately distances them functionally from the initial use of these monuments. They may relate to peripheral and unconnected activity - arrowheads have been found with other flints in "settlement" scatters near the cursuses at Rudston, Gussage, Sutton Courtenay and Charlecote.

Interestingly the earlier transverse form was represented at the more irregular site and the oblique form at a site of precise Bi type.

c) Axes

Only one axe has certainly been recovered from a cursus ditch - that from Dorchester - but they have been found closely associated at Maxey, Sutton Courtenay and Cardington. Details are lacking regarding the Dorchester axe but interim information reveals that it came from the primary silts and was of edge polished flint type (Atkinson, 1951, 57). Whilst it is

unlikely, in view of the lack of attention paid to it, that it was of specialised Duggleby or Seamer type (Manby, 1974), the associations of edge ground axes in general are with the Late Neolithic (cf Manby, 1979, 77 & fig. 10 for Yorkshire where they are concentrated in the same wolds region as the Rudston cursus complex). Significantly Piggott classified the specimens from Duggleby, Seamer and Liffes Low as northern components of his putative Dorchester culture (1954, 356) so it is perhaps not surprising that an example finished by this technique should come from the type site.

The axe from Sutton Courtenay may have derived from the cursus ditch there but Leeds records it simply as a "polished axe of fine green schist" discovered in the remains of a Bronze Age ditch, some "ten yards west of house XX" (1927, 62). This would place it directly in line with a length of excavated ditch that he later recognised as belonging to the cursus, and his working plan at the Ashmolean Museum shows that this was how it was initially plotted. For reasons that are not clear he later removed the ditch from this plan (the indentations of his pencil lines remain) and omitted it completely from all published plans. It is recorded therefore simply as the 'Western Bronze Age ditch' to distinguish it from the 'Eastern Bronze Age ditch' 20m away, from which came two Grooved ware bone points. He may have felt that the workmen has wrongly identified it (but if so only after first publishing its details) or that the profiles and silting patterns of the two ditches contrasted too greatly for them to be considered part of the same system. The final possibility, that he later considered the axe to represent an isolated residual element in a ditch of the Saxon settlement, seems unlikely in view of the provenancing of an unpublished end scraper to this same ditch. Unfortunately, the question cannot be resolved and the place of the axe in the ditch silt is unrecorded, but a group VI axe of this sort would not be out of place in a Grooved ware context (Wainwright and Longworth 1971, 268-306).

SUTTON COURTENAY- DRAYTON A

(BASED ON LEEDS 1927, 1947,
UNPUBLISHED PLANS IN THE
ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM AND
NMR SU 4893/13/3)

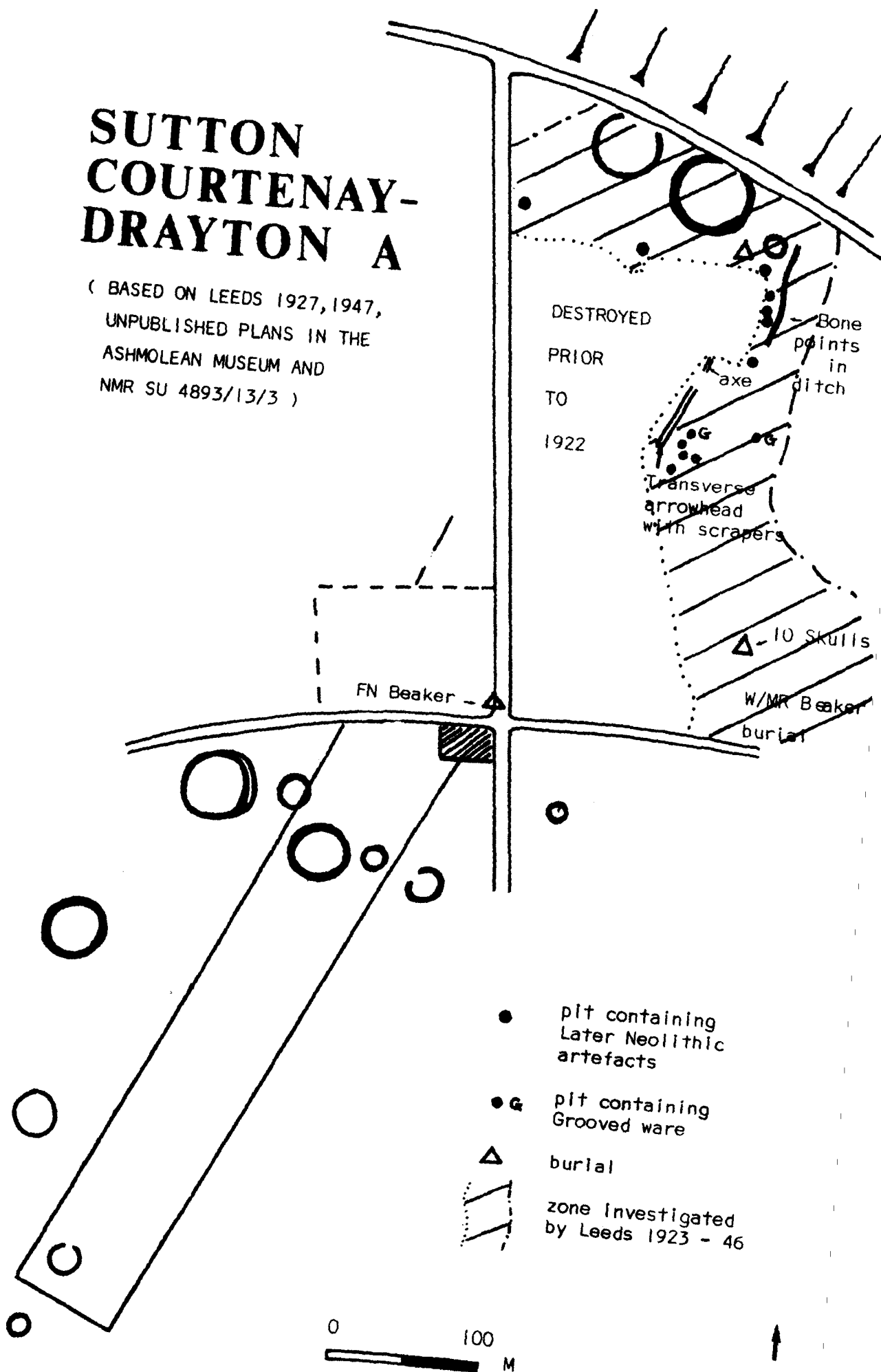


Fig.4.2

This would also suit the oblique arrowhead and scrapers from the acknowledged cursus ditch.

Two further axes have come from cursus sites. That from Maxey was of group VI stone and placed in a pit that just grazed the outer edge of the NE cursus ditch (G. Simpson pers. comm: pit 23). Unfortunately its stratigraphic relationship could not be established but its position implies deliberate association - whether as foundation deposit or later offering. As the pit lay 25m outside the henge ditch the chance that it was associated with this, rather than the cursus, is lessened. The latest certain associations of Group VI axes appear to be with Beakers, and three cushion maceheads of this stone attest to a final phase of production when new types were in demand, but the majority of associations are with Earlier Neolithic sites (Smith, 1979). The example from Maxey points to a date for the cursus before 2000bc.

A fully polished flint axe was found following deep ploughing over the Cardington cursus in 1935 (Beds SM Record 299). It appears to have derived from the vicinity of the Southern terminal but its recorded find spot cannot be regarded as exact. There seems little reason though to doubt its association with the cursus. Such axes were current throughout the Neolithic.

d) Other stone objects

Three further stone items, all deriving from the Amesbury cursus ditch, may be of significance for dating purposes. They comprise a fragment of blue-stone (Coheston Sandstone), a small fragment of sarsen rubber and a well used flint maul (Stone, 1948, 12-15). The value of these uninspiring pieces lies of course in their potential to date the construction of the cursus by extrapolation from the building phases of Stonehenge. This has its dangers - recent work has emphasised that all finds of foreign stone in the Stonehenge area should not be assumed a priori to relate to megalithic construction at

that site (Howard, 1982) and Stone's hypothesis of an earlier bluestone circle near the western end of the cursus may yet prove correct (Stone, 1948, 18).

Only the fragment of rubber came from a securely primary context; the bluestone fragment lay on the chalk natural at the ditch edge, 30cm below the surface of the topsoil, and the large flint maul was thrown out from a wartime trench cut through the cursus ditch within Fargo Plantation. All can probably be related to stone working in the vicinity. The bluestone fragment in particular appears to belong amongst the concentration of pieces recovered with flint tools in the area of Stone's cutting during fieldwalking in 1947 (Stone, 1948, 17). Various stone sources were represented in this scatter so it is unlikely to be the debris simply of implement manufacture. Incorporation of some of the material in the round barrows of the adjacent cursus group provides a terminus ante quem for its deposition - $1788 \pm 90\text{bc}$ (BM 287) from Amesbury 51. This relates closely to dates associated with the use of bluestone at Stonehenge itself ($1728\text{bc} \pm 68$ (BM 1164); $1770\text{bc} \pm 100$ (HAR 2013) from the avenue) but the separation of the stone cluster from the henge may indicate an earlier bluestone structure at this point. A block of spotted dolerite in the Boles Barrow certainly appears to attest the presence of the bluestones in the region prior to 2500bc.

If the sarsen rubber was related to the bluestone and flint scatter its primary context allows a tentative terminus post quem to be proposed. Whilst sarsen occurs in small local outcrops (Howard, 1982, fig. 29) and an early trade in lithic materials was established, the piece in question is more likely to coincide with the first utilization of the stone at Stonehenge - for the Heel stone and its vanished neighbour from pit 97, and for the two portal stones. A date rather later than the construction of the ditch

(2460 ± 60 BM 1583; 2440 ± 60 BM 1617) would be appropriate to judge from the assymetric position of these stones in relation to the henge causeway.

With several qualifications then - most notably that the bluestone fragment may have been carried down to the chalk natural by worm action, and that the piece of sarsen rubber may be totally unrelated to the bluestone scatter - it is possible to suggest that the cursus was constructed between say 2300 and 1800bc. In view of the configuration of neighbouring monuments an early point in this time band is probable. Further excavation in the vicinity of Stone's cutting is needed, however, to accurately establish the stratigraphic relationship of the bluestone scatter to the cursus ditch silts.

II CERAMICS

a) Plain Early Neolithic wares

Bradley has recently found plain Earlier Neolithic bowl sherds, representing at least four different vessels, in and immediately above the primary ditch fill of the Gussage cursus (Bowden et al, 1983). A clear stratigraphic sequence was established in the two sections cut, with Mortlake/Fengate and Beaker sherds of Middle Beaker date occurring in the ^{respective} secondary silts. No further details are at present available but a date for the construction of the Gussage cursus prior to 2500bc seems to be indicated by this evidence.

A small plain body sherd was recovered from the Amesbury cursus ditch (Stone, 1948, 15) but it could not unfortunately be identified with certainty; it may merely represent an undecorated fragment of otherwise decorated ware.

From the western terminal of the Springfield cursus have come plain bowl sherds of Grimston type (Hedges pers. comm). These need not contradict the relatively late date established by finds of Mortlake ware immediately on top of the primary silt at the eastern terminal, as Grimston ware has been

demonstrated to possess a long chronology in Eastern England (Wainwright, 1972). Sherds of this ware have also been recovered within the confines of the Rudston A and Aston cursuses.

b) Decorated Middle Neolithic wares

Abingdon, Ebbsfleet and Mildenhall wares represent the varied regional decorated styles that characterise the Middle Neolithic of the Midland/East Anglian region and all occur in stratigraphically significant positions within, or over, cursus ditches. It may be wrong, however, to assume that they necessarily always antedate Mortlake and Grooved ware fabrics.

Abingdon ware is recorded as coming from the primary silts of the "droveway" (site IX) overlying the ditches of the Dorchester cursus (Atkinson et al 1951, 60). The style can be dated by three secure radiocarbon dates from the Abingdon causewayed enclosure ($2570 \pm 140\text{bc}$:BM 355; $2500 \pm 145\text{bc}$:BM 354; $2760 \pm 135\text{bc}$:BM 352) which therefore appear to provide by extrapolation a terminus ante quem for cursus construction. However, doubts have been expressed over the classification of Abingdon ware at Dorchester (Case in Kenward, 1982) and the context of the sherds in question pose further problems: no Neolithic parallels have yet been established for the "droveway" despite recent intensive local and national programmes of excavation. The possibility must therefore be entertained that they represented material derived from earlier shallow features disturbed during the digging of the "droveway" ditches.

Ebbsfleet ware also occurs at Dorchester. Comparable sherds came from the upper ditch silts of the cursus and from the primary and secondary silts of the triple ditched hengiform (site XI) that antedates it (Atkinson et al, 1951, 62). Dates for Ebbsfleet ware currently range from $2710 \pm 150\text{bc}$ (BM 113)

at the type site and $2580 \pm 150\text{bc}$ (BM 74) from the lower fill of the causewayed camp ditch at Windmill Hill to $1880 \pm 140\text{bc}$ (BM 283) and $1570 \pm 150\text{bc}$ (BM 106) from the (?)mixed fill of mineshaft 7 at Letchworth (quoted in Green, 1980,110). Although these latter dates might be treated with caution, a stratified association of Fengate and Ebbsfleet sherds was recorded at Downton (Rahtz, 1963) which suggests that it may be wrong to assume that the style represents purely a chronologically limited stage in the evolution of Peterborough ware.

Significantly at site XI Dorchester the Ebbsfleet sherds came from ditch III, the latest of the three ditches there, whilst a chisel arrowhead came from ditch I. It can be shown therefore to have been current after the introduction of transverse arrowheads and before the construction of the cursus. It is worth noting that Ebbsfleet sherds of developed style occurred at Site A Barford, which bore a close resemblance to site XI Dorchester, and that a radiocarbon date of 2416 ± 64 (Birm. 7) was obtained for the site.

Mildenhall ware represents the eastern component of the regional styles under discussion. A single sherd, not certainly identifiable, (G. Simpson pers. comm) came from pit circle IIIa that overlay the Maxey cursus ditch and a rim sherd of the same fabric came from the small henge (site 69) located 250m south (Selkirk, 1967). The excavator likened the fabric to that of pottery from Hurst Fen but its recent discovery in abundance at the nearby Etton causewayed enclosure will provide a more immediate basis for comparison (Pryor, 1982). Present dates for Mildenhall ware range from 3145 ± 49 (BM 770) at Eaton Heath (Wainwright, 1973) to 2635 ± 82 (BM 1215) and 2583 ± 112 (BM 1214) at the Orsett causewayed enclosure (Hedges and Buckley, 1978). A claim has also been made to recognise Beaker influence in the decorative scheme of one vessel at Hurst Fen (Clarke, 1969, 266) which

should not perhaps be discounted in view of the strangely mixed assemblage of Middle/Late Neolithic wares in certain of the internal features at Orsett (Hedges and Buckley, 1978, 247) and the occurrence of a very small rim sherd of Grooved ware along with the Mildenhall sherd in the ditch of site 69 at Maxey (G. Simpson: unpublished report). Like the Ebbsfleet ware at Dorchester, the Mildenhall sherds from Maxey may conceivably post date 2500bc, perhaps by a quite wide margin. When radiocarbon dates become available for the Etton enclosure, which the Maxey cursus can be presumed to post date, a clearer idea may be formed.

Unfortunately then of the three Middle Neolithic regional styles that can be related to cursuses, two must for the moment be treated with reserve. The Ebbsfleet identification is certain but from other evidence at Dorchester probably dates to the Late Neolithic.

c) Late Neolithic wares

A small number of sherds of Mortlake ware were recently recovered during excavation of the eastern terminal of the Springfield cursus. The principal restorable bowl derived from a grey lens formed in the upper primary silts of the terminal ditch. It has an expanded inturned rim which carries decoration of the same comparatively restrained fingernail impressions that cover the rest of the surviving body. The neck alone is blank and has a characteristic series of deep, spaced pits (Hedges and Buckley, 1981).

Pottery of this stage of the Peterborough tradition is particularly valuable for dating purposes as in their mature form Mortlake vessels are sometimes associated with Beakers (Smith, 1974, 112), although rarely in securely closed contexts (eg the infilling of the West Kennet chambers - Piggott, 1962; the material from the old land surface under the Arretton Down round barrow where Mortlake and Beaker occurred in the same fabric - Alexander, 1960).

Clarke in fact considered the Mortlake elements of overall decoration and zonal arrangement to have resulted from the impact of Beaker styles on the Ebbsfleet tradition (Clarke, 1969, 267-8). If so an origin for Mortlake ware cannot be placed earlier than the opening of the second millenium and certainly vessels of this style in the Windmill Hill ditches occur only at a high level and never below that of Beakers or Grooved ware (Smith, 1965, 15). At Springfield small fragments of Fengate and Beaker pottery were recovered from internal features but could not be stratigraphically related to the Mortlake ware in the ditch.

Mortlake ware sherds also came from the fill of the Gussage cursus ditch. Here they occurred, along with a possible base fragment of Fengate ware, in the secondary silts of one ditch section; the comparable secondary silts in the other ditch section produced developed Beaker sherds (Bowden et al, 1983). A possible plain body sherd from a Mortlake bowl was found at the very top of the cursus ditch fill at Barford. Identification is not certain but it appears to be of the same fabric as the characteristically heavy, inturned rim sherds of Mortlake style discovered in a pit 50m distant (S. Ball, pers. comm). In both these cases the Mortlake fabrics provide only a terminus ante quem for construction but given the shallow nature of the Barford ditch (1.0/1.5m wide x 0.3/0.7m deep) and the speed of silting on gravel sub-soils (Case 1982a) the dislocation there may not be great.

Mortlake ware is also well represented on sites of a "ritual" character associated with cursuses.

Fengate ware as already indicated may have been present in the secondary silts of the Gussage cursus ditch, and certainly occurred in the internal features at Springfield. These contexts are of little value for dating purposes but

they appear to provide an indication of continued interest in cursuses into the mature 2nd millenium: a radiocarbon date of $1640 \pm 130\text{bc}$ (BM 284) for Beaker and Fengate pottery found in association in a pit at Letchworth provides a likely date horizon for the inception of the tradition (Smith, 1974, 112) and a later date is provided by the sherds from the upper ditch silts at Windmill Hill ($1540 \pm 150\text{bc}$ BM 75).

Grooved ware although a consistent feature of henges, particularly in Wessex, cannot certainly be related at present to any cursus site. Stone's postulated Grooved ware context for the Amesbury cursus was based on the similarity of the Stonehenge and cursus ditches, Grooved ware sherds having been recovered from the former (Stone, 1948, 18). It is nevertheless a familiar element in associated pits and "occupation" features (see below).

d) Beakers

Beaker sherds have been recovered from the ditches of two (possibly three) cursus sites, and in a further two cases burials associated with Beakers may have derived from cursus ditches.

A small trench cut through the ditch adjacent to the southern terminal of Rudston A produced 24 small Beaker sherds from the lower secondary silt and four larger ones from the primary silt (Dymond, 1966, 92-3). Two of the latter bore comb impressed lozenge patterns, one clearly part of a floating lozenge motif equated by Clarke with the Developed Southern Beaker tradition. He tentatively placed this phase between 1600 and 1500bc but Lanting and Van de Waals (1972, 27, 40, 44) assigned these Beakers to step 6 of their scheme and dated them between 1700 and 1550bc. Radiocarbon dates currently available for Beakers of this style are $1680 \pm 60\text{bc}$ (BM 668) from Mount Pleasant; $1610 \pm 120\text{bc}$ (BM 285) from hearth V in the fill of the ditch at Durrington Walls; and $1550 \pm 150\text{bc}$ (BM 75) from the upper ditch silts at Windmill Hill.

Significantly there is also a recurrent pattern of association with ritual architecture in the form of henges and stone circles (Clarke, 1969, 222-4).

The other two Beaker sherds from the primary silts at Rudston A are less valuable as diagnostic pieces - one, a rim sherd, bears three parallel grooves and the other, four parallel lines of cord impressions. It has been suggested that the latter represents a body sherd of an All-Over-Corded vessel (Topping, 1932, 17) but so little survives that it is better to seek parallels for the decorative tradition in Clarke's Developed Northern series. These Beakers dominate in the Yorkshire Wolds and are of comparable date to Developed Southern Beakers. Significantly N/NR, N2 and N3 Beakers came from the Rudston 62 round barrow that stands adjacent to the southern cursus terminal, and sherds of an S2(W) vessel from the fill of the grave pit there (Pacitto, 1972). The small assemblage of Middle/Late Beaker sherds occurring in the sealed context of the cursus ditch bottom, and apparently contemporary with burials in the adjacent round barrow, points unequivocally to the construction of cursus A at Rudston after 1700bc. It is just possible that the ditch had been thoroughly recut and scoured some considerable interval after its construction but the absence of earlier material on the ditch sides and base, or resilting into the ditch argues against this, as does the evidence revealed by Canon Greenwell during his "thoroughly extensive" investigation of the adjacent terminal bank in the mid 19th century (1877, 233, 253-7). The surviving remains, which he interpreted as two contiguous long mounds, were trenched from end to end as a result of which he discovered six burials, two accompanied by Beakers.

Four of the burials were concentrated under the centre of the raised corner mound at the western end of the terminal bank: a woman 60cm above the old land surface accompanied by a flint knife and an N2 Beaker; a child buried 15cm

above this body; and underneath them a burial of undeterminate sex in a grave pit accompanied by an S2(E) Beaker. At the feet of the latter were the disturbed and relaid bones of a woman, probably the original occupant of the grave pit. About half way along the terminal bank and 1.35m above the old land surface were found a heap of bones comprising a man and a child, and close by the complete burial of a child. All except the burials in the grave pit at the western corner were clearly secondary. but to judge by the vertical arrangement of bodies above this pit, the corner mound had been utilised in much the same way as the shaft grave under Rudston 62 and numerous other Yorkshire round barrows (Peterson, 1972). This may merely result from the adaptive use of an earlier monument for sepulchral purposes but the grave pit with covering wooden beam, presumably to facilitate further reuse, and the correlation of the Beakers accompanying the burials with the style of the sherds in the primary ditch silt, makes it unlikely. With one exception (Rudston 67 which produced Early Beakers - AOC, N/NR, W/MR) all the barrows in the neighbouring Rudston Beacon cemetery produced Developed Beakers of comparable age to those from the cursus bank and ditch (Clarke, 1969, 509).

Greenwell's record of "sherds of plain, dark coloured pottery" (Grimston or Towthorpe - Newbiggin, 1937), ox, pig and a few dog bones, flint debitage and charcoal also deriving from the terminal banks can be discounted for dating purposes (Greenwell, 1877, 256). This material lay "principally at the level of the natural surface" and is consistent with the pattern of Neolithic material found on the protected old land surfaces beneath nearby round barrows. It provides merely a terminus post quem for cursus construction.

Elsewhere Beaker sherds, as yet undesignated, have recently been found in the ditch fill of the Sutton Courtenay/Drayton B cursus at a point where its ditch, upcast and the surrounding Neolithic land surface have been preserved

beneath 0.6m of alluvium (R. Ainslie pers. comm). They have also come from a claimed extension of the Maxey cursus (Pryor, 1982a, 126 & pers. comm) but there are reasons on the latter site to doubt that the ditch in question does represent a further arm of the cursus.

Finally, two Beaker burials seeming to have derived from cursus ditches must be considered - one from Sutton Courtenay and the other from Kempston. Neither can be certainly equated with a cursus but the probability that they do relate to these monuments is high. The first is recorded as a food vessel/Beaker hybrid (Leeds, 1927, 62), discovered with an interment in a pit exposed in the side of a gravel quarry. The quarry in question was on the opposite side of the Milton Road to that where Leeds directed his investigations, the Beaker having been discovered by Prof. F. Stenton. As published by Leeds the pit appears large (1947, fig. 1) but whether due to actual information regarding its size or to his measure of uncertainty regarding its precise location is not clear. Its position, however, coincides almost exactly with the projected line of the eastern cursus ditch (fig. 4.2). When cut obliquely by the quarry face this would produce an apparent pit 5m wide, assuming a constant ditch width of 2.4m (Leeds, 1934a, 266). Its discovery prior to the recognition of the cursus ditch lines from the air, and in a location where its potential extension as a ditch would not be evident, militated against any other interpretation. Lack of reference to another "pit" or ditch at this point supports the interpretation of the "burial pit" as the cursus ditch.

The point would be of minor significance were it not for the presence of the Beaker - a Finger Nail Rusticated vessel as classified by Clarke (corpus no.35). These were often placed as ancillary vessels to European Bell Beakers (Clarke, 1969,78) and the general associations of the site would suit an

Early Beaker date - a burial with European Bell Beaker, Grooved ware pits, and chisel and barbed and tanged arrowheads. Interestingly an FN rusticated vessel accompanied the burial in the Hasting Hill barrow, 500m from the Offerton cursus. The decorative scheme has little chronological application, though (Lanting and Van der Waals 1972, 33.) Domestic vessels of this type were by no means restricted to an Early Beaker horizon (Gibson 1982) and body form would place the Sutton Courtenay example in Lanting and Van der Waals final step 7. Unfortunately then even if the vessel is accepted as deriving from the cursus ditch it provides only the vaguest of earlier second millennium dates, and in the absence of surviving records cannot be shown to have been primary (Bradley pers comm.)

The second burial apparently related to a Beaker came from the filling of a 100 m or so length of ditch at Kempston in Bedfordshire, tentatively identified as forming part of a cursus (Thomas, 1964, 18). This contained a Wessex/Mid Rhine Beaker near one end and at the other a crouched female skeleton. Although the two clearly cannot be related some confusion has arisen over this point (Kublicke, 1949-51, 105). The original report of the find provides no indication of the depth at which they lay in the ditch fill nor of the nature of the ditch ends; truncation by a gravel quarry can be presumed from speculation that the ditch formed one side of an enclosure. In the absence of corroboratory evidence the cursus interpretation may appear rash, but sites of comparable size exist just 5km away at Cardington, and the Kempston locality has produced a notable concentration of late 3rd/early 2nd millennium material (Thomas, 1964). It is worth recalling, however, that the Grooved ware fields at Fengate were of comparable size and, that whilst the separate burials of a fine Beaker and a woman might argue for special status, burials did occur in the ditches of the Fengate Late Bronze Age field system (Pryor, 1980). If in fact a cursus, the W/MR Beaker would be synchronous with the dating evidence recovered at several other sites. In addition rich W/MR burials

were placed under round barrows adjacent to the cursus and henge at Dorchester (Atkinson, 1951) and within the centre of the Aston cursus (Reaney, 1968).

Although few in number the artefacts from cursus ditches, or from stratigraphically related monuments form a fairly homogeneous Later Neolithic collection.

True Early Bronze Age ceramics are absent (collared urns; food vessels) as, with the exception of the plain bowl sherds from Gussage, are Earlier Neolithic forms. There are also reasons, as has been seen, to accept a relatively late context for the Ebbsfleet ware from Dorchester and perhaps for the Mildenhall ware from Maxey.

B. ARTEFACTS FROM FEATURES OR SITES STRATIGRAPHICALLY UNRELATED TO CURSUS DITCHES

In view of the parlous scarcity of dateable material from cursus ditches, that deriving from unstratified contexts within cursuses and from spatially related monuments and features must also be examined. Whilst of course proximity is no indication of contemporaneity, persistent patterns established over a wide range of sites must be counted significant and can be used to support or contest the evidence of date so insubstantially arrived at above.

I ARTEFACTS FROM FEATURES WITHIN CURSUS CONFINES

a) Earlier Neolithic

Grimston ware sherds have been found associated with occupation features within two cursuses. At cursus A Rudston a slight hollow in the surface of the chalk filled with brown soil contained 17 Grimston ware sherds, 1 scraper and a few eroded fragments of ox bone (Manby, 1975). Although this could not be stratigraphically related to the delimiting ditches, the presence of identical material on the old land surface beneath the surviving banks 183m

further south indicates that it was an earlier feature (Greenwell, 1877, 256).

Grimston ware also came from the old land surface preserved beneath the mound of a round barrow at the centre of the Aston cursus (Reaney, 1968). Here in addition to pits and gullies the sherds were associated with a hearth containing carbonized grain which gave a radiocarbon date of $2750 \pm 150\text{bc}$ (BM 271). As again this could not be stratigraphically related to the cursus, and as no bank survived to protect a comparable area of old land surface, it might be taken to date cursus construction were it not for the alignment of the cursus ditch around a ring ditch further to the southwest (pl. 4:2). Although unexcavated the ring ditch can be predicted with a high degree of probability to be of 2nd millenium bc date. The construction of the cursus therefore appears to relate rather to the W/MR Beaker in the central barrow than to the Grimston ware on the underlying old land surface.

b) Late Neolithic

The single dateable item from the centrally placed site IV Dorchester was a transverse arrowhead (Atkinson et. al 1951, 41). This serves to confirm the site's general correlation with the date of the cursus, a conclusion which might anyway have been reached from consideration of its central position and atypical causeway alignment to the S.E, along the cursus (1951, fig. 2). The influence of the cursus upon the site's layout would argue that it represented a later feature, although probably separated by only a short interval from cursus construction. Together with site XI these two hengiforms provide apparent termini post and ante quem for the Dorchester cursus. In view of the extreme paucity of material from its ditches, a date might most effectively be established for the cursus by radio carbon determinations on antler material from these two cemetery sites.

c) Beaker

Beaker sherds (unclassified) along with Fengate style pottery came from features within the Springfield cursus, and Beaker burials from the centre of the Aston cursus and the western end of the Amesbury cursus. The former burial referred to above, comprised a Wessex/Mid Rhine Beaker, a barbed and tanged arrowhead and a flat greenstone wristguard from the area of the presumptive burial under the primary mound, and a Developed Northern Beaker also lacking a surviving burial, under the enlarged secondary mound (Reaney, 1966). Unfortunately the Beaker from Amesbury 57, recorded by Colt Hoare as a "drinking cup", can no longer be traced (Colt Hoare, 1812, barrow 43) but the primary interment below this secondary Beaker burial was accompanied by a pebble of banded flint ground flat at both ends and a three rivetted bronze dagger. As the latter are most commonly associated with Developed Southern Beaker or Wessex I burials (Clarke, 1969, 260) a late date for the lost Beaker seems certain.

The neighbouring barrow, also within the western end of the Amesbury cursus, covered an unaccompanied cremation but a barbed and tanged was found near a child burial in the barrow ditch. A Wessex II date seems probable. In view of the apparent terminus ante quem for the cursus of c 1800bc provided by the bluestone scatter these barrows must be considered late additions.

d) Early Bronze Age

Finally, Food Vessel sherds have come from an apparently secondary position in the round barrow overlying the totally filled cursus ditch at Maxey and from the mound of the enlarged barrow at Aston, where they were associated with a few possible Collared Urn sherds (Pryor, 1982b & pers. comm; Longworth, 1968). A double ring ditch almost centrally placed within the confines of the Dorchester cursus contained a cremation covered by a Collared Urn (Chambers, 1983) and collared urn sherds occurred in the secondary silts of the henge ditch

at Maxey, which cut the fully silted cursus ditch (Pryor, 1982).

II ARTEFACTS FROM ADJACENT FLINT SCATTERS, FEATURES OR MONUMENTS

a) Flint scatters

These occur in the immediate vicinity of a variety of cursuses but provide only the most tenuous of circumstantial evidence. They help to establish a general context for these sites, however.

At Sonning over 200 flint artefacts (mainly flakes but including a discoidal core and some serrated flakes of Late Neolithic type) were found in the field which contained both the cursus and the excavated subsquare enclosure (Anon, 1961), and at Dorchester abundant worked flint was recorded beyond the SE cursus terminal, although it was scarce within the cursus confines (Chambers, 1983). The interior of the Maxey cursus was similarly "clean" although worked flints occurred elsewhere in the vicinity (Pryor, 1982). Scrapers and leaf and barbed and tanged arrowheads have been recovered over a long period from the area immediately adjacent to the Charlecote cursus (Thomas, 1974, 23; OS Record Card SP2656). Similarly Phillips records (1935) flakes, cores and scrapers (several of button variety characteristic of Beaker and Early Bronze Age assemblages) from the vicinity of the ring ditches and "cursus" at Barnack. A discrete concentration of worked flints of comparable type coincided with the bluestone scatter beside the Amesbury cursus (Stone, 1948) and scrapers and worked flints spread beyond the area of the excavated pits at Sutton Courtenay (letter from G. Clark to E.T. Leeds in Sutton Courtenay file at Ashmolean Museum). A flint scatter adjacent to a pond barrow and the cursus near Down Farm Gussage contained various arrowheads and a macehead, whilst the pits 200m distant contained similar flint work, here in association with Grooved ware (Bowden et al, 1983). Finally, worked flints have been recovered over a very long period from the Wold top at Rudston, often associated with pottery from pits and shallow features. These finds,

however, extend well beyond the immediate orbit of the cursus (Manby, 1974; 1975).

In view of the considerable distance over which the latter material stretched it would perhaps be wise to question the reality of the association elsewhere; few areas have been as intensively searched as that at Rudston/Carnaby. One area which has been systematically searched, however, is the Welland valley where David Hall has confirmed a general correlation of flint scatters with cursus sites: in addition to the material found by Phillips in the area of the Barnack "cursus" a further concentration was recorded 400m away and after a hiatus of 3.5km, two further scatters occurred within a similar range of the Maxey cursus (D. Hall, pers. comm). A comparable pattern has been noted viz a viz the Peak District henges (Bradley and Hart, 1983).

There is of course no reason to automatically assume a causal connection between such scatters and cursus sites - at Rudston Grimston ware finds from unprotected subsoil features are concentrated in the region of the round barrow cemetery and the southern terminal of cursus A, one actually lying between the cursus ditches, whilst Grooved ware and Fengate style pottery that is more likely to be contemporary with these monuments is concentrated nearly 2km further east.

b) Ceramics and monuments

Unlike flints, pottery represents a wholly destructable residue of human activity that rarely survives in the plough soil and when it does is unlikely to be recognised by the casual observer. The frequency of finds therefore relates not to programmes of fieldwalking but to the extent of excavation carried out on adjacent sites. This is inevitably uneven. Nevertheless, trends in the concentration of dateable wares in the vicinity of cursuses provide

useful if uncertain, circumstantial evidence to set beside that deriving from the monuments themselves.

i) Earlier Neolithic

Plain Western Neolithic fabrics have only been recovered from the vicinity of two sites: Gussage - in the lower ditch silts of the Thickthorn long barrow, which is significantly aligned on the cursus terminal, and Wor Barrow - and Barford - from the long mortuary enclosure and a central pit on Site A dated $2416 \pm 64\text{bc}$ (Birm. 7). Similar ware could be predicted from the Fornham All Saints causewayed enclosure and the various cursus associated Wessex long barrows, but excavation is awaited.

Decorated Middle Neolithic wares have come from the Etton causewayed camp (Mildenhall ware), sites A and C at Barford (Ebbsfleet ware of developed type), and Dorchester (probable Abingdon ware from sites I, II, IX & XI). At the latter two sites the fabrics were associated with Mortlake ware, although perhaps related to different phases of their respective ditches. A date for their use significantly later than 2500bc seems likely nonetheless.

ii) Later Neolithic

Mortlake ware was the sole Peterborough fabric to come from the oval ditch of site I Dorchester, where it was associated with Grooved ware, and was probably represented also on sites II and VI (Atkinson et al, 1951, 68). In the Warwickshire Avon valley it was found at Barford on sites C and M and in a pit just 50m from the cursus; at Charlecote it came from the secondary silts of the cognate long mortuary enclosure/long barrow (B. Ford pers. comm). It also appeared amongst the predominantly Grooved ware pits at Down Farm, Gussage (Barrett, et al 1981), and in its equivalent Rudston substyle in two pits located some 200m from the terminal of Rudston A (Manby, 1975). A small

undifferentiated Peterborough sherd came from the ditch fill of the sub square enclosure 140m from the Sonning cursus (Slade, 1964).

The closest coincidence of Grooved ware with a cursus occurs at Sutton Courtenay/Drayton A. Sherds of the ware came from pits J, P and T, 9m and 52m respectively from the cursus ditch or its projected alignment (Leeds, 1923, 1934a). Case has recently (1982b, 128-9) suggested that pit N should also be included amongst these three since it contained an axe of ungrouped greenstone, common in such contexts (Evens et al, 1972). Interestingly this pit lay on the projected alignment of the eastern cursus ditch, just beyond its postulated terminus and adjacent to a small (9m) ring ditch of Dorchester like dimensions (Leeds, 1927, fig. 1).

The flint industry from these pits was similar to that from the Grooved ware pits at Cassington but according to Case's analysis dissimilar to that from the other pits at Sutton Courtenay where more slender flakes and blade like cores dominated (1982b, 129, tabs. 35 & 37). The sample size was small, however, and as the scrapers from the undated pits were consistent with a Late Neolithic industry, as a chisel arrowhead came from pit S (close to Grooved ware pit P), and as serrated flakes like those from pits P and T and common amongst Grooved ware assemblages (Wainwright and Longworth, 1971, 268-306) came from pits G, Q, R and S, a Grooved ware horizon might be claimed for all the pits aligned along the outer edge of the cursus ditch (fig. 4.2). Leeds commented that the ditch fell "in line with the circular pits" (1934, 266) and it is certainly the case that he recorded "nothing of importance" east of these pits in later extensions of the gravel quarry, although Saxon houses continued to be located there (1947, 79). The sole discoveries were an isolated pit c. 100m from the cursus containing the disarticulated burials of at least 10 individuals (represented principally by skulls) and an unprovenanced burial accompanied by a European Bell Beaker (1934a).

Unfortunately destruction of the centre of the cursus prior to Leeds' recording prevents corresponding spatial analysis of the patterning of any pits that may have been there, but those few pits located along the northern boundary of the gravel quarry appear mostly to have been of Beaker or later date. The eastern "Bronze Age ditch" which appears to be aligned upon but offset from the cursus ditch, similarly corresponds in alignment with the Grooved ware pits and itself produced two bone points of typical Grooved ware type (Leeds, 1927, 62). It may conceivably represent an offset junction of the eastern side of the Sutton Courtenay/Drayton B cursus with cursus A.

Such pits might simply record the attraction exercised by a preexisting monument (cf. Down Farm, Gussage) but the presence in the cursus ditch of an oblique arrowhead and scrapers that would not be out of place in a Grooved ware assemblage argues against this.

The Dorchester complex as a whole has strong Grooved ware affinities: the non ceramic components of the culture complex are well represented - bone skewer pins, transverse arrowheads, fabricators, a polished macehead and cremation cemeteries - but the fabric itself was only recorded on site I. There one sherd lay in an apparent primary position 1.20m deep in the oval ditch (Atkinson et al, 1951, 110). This site lies 100m from the cursus itself but site II which seems certain to have been of comparable date lies just 8 metres from it. It might in fact be construed to be aligned along with the other complex hengiform (site XI) on the long mortuary enclosure (site VIII) rather than the cursus (cf. the configuration of ring ditch relative to the Charlecote site), and so like site XI to antedate it. Although Grooved ware was not recorded on site II one of the two centrally placed cremations was accompanied by a stone macehead of cushion variety which were an exotic

feature of some Grooved ware assemblages.

A fragment of such a macehead lay in a layer in the top of the latest midden at Skara Brae dated between $2070\text{bc} \pm 110\text{bc}$ (Birn. 434) and $1881 \pm 110\text{bc}$ (Birn. 433). A similar example came from the cremation cemetery at Stonehenge where bone skewer pins were also in evidence. It could not unfortunately be directly related to the use of the Aubrey holes where comparable burials have been dated $1848 \pm 25\text{bc}$ (C602). A rather earlier date for the Dorchester example might be inferred from the presence of ?Abingdon ware in the ditches of site II although it must be admitted that the central cremation with macehead may not have been primary in this ring bank cemetery. A flat base sherd from the adjoining pit (D), which also contained animal bones and charcoal, may be of Fengate ware (Atkinson et al, 1951, 113) with which maceheads have also been associated.

Grooved ware is also known from the general vicinity of cursuses at Gussage (200m - pits at Down Farm: Barrett et al, 1981); Barford (500m - surface find in area of hengiform: Oswald, 1969); Lechlade (pits 800m distant to north and south: Jones, 1976); Dorchester (pits c. 1500m distant: Jones, 1980) and Rudston (1100m to nearest pits on the Rudston and Carnaby Wold Tops: Manby, 1974). It was also found close to the North Stoke bank barrow (Catling, 1959).

These finds register only the presence of Grooved ware using communities in the general orbit of cursuses and may have no direct bearing on their date of construction.

iii) Beakers

An equally strong correlation with Beaker burials is evident. Cemeteries of Beaker barrows existed at the ends of the cursuses at Amesbury (Amesbury 51,

54, 56 and Fargo Plantation hengiform), and Rudston (Rudston 62, 63, 67 and the cursus A terminal bank), and a Beaker barrow was placed towards either end of the Dorchester cursus. Beaker burials have also been located near the Offerton, Scorton, Sutton Courtenay/Drayton A, Pentridge and Gussage cursuses (Manby, 1973; Topping, 1982; Leeds, 1934a; Barrett et al, 1981, fig. 8). Taken with the previously mentioned burials within the Aston cursus, in the terminal bank at Rudston and possible in the ditches of the Sutton Courtenay/Drayton A and Kempston? cursuses, does this indicate more than simple attraction to an area of earlier sanctity?

Good prima facie evidence for cursus construction by Beaker using communities is at present restricted to Rudston though, and there seems no doubt that the genesis of these monuments lies well in advance of the advent of Beakers. The fact that at Gussage/Pentridge and Sutton Courtenay Beaker material was virtually coextensive with 'Macehead Complex' and typical Late Neolithic artefacts argues that it merely represents a veneer. The early date of many of the associated Beakers would also support the hypothesis of a strong element of attraction over new high status burials - European Bell Beakers from Sutton Courtenay and the Thickthorn long barrow, (adjacent to the Gussage terminal); Wessex/Mid Rhine Beakers from Aston, Kempston, Amesbury 51 and Dorchester site XII. The later Beakers from the Rudston and Amesbury cemeteries and adjacent to the southern terminal at Dorchester indicate the longevity of this interest, as more strikingly do the sherds from the primary silt of Rudston A which record either the adoption of native monuments by invaders or exotic pots by natives.

It is notable that the cursuses under discussion are with one exception - Dorchester - of squared terminal type for which later dates are suspected but only closer dating will establish the nature of the "Beaker" contribution.

iv) Early Bronze Age

Finally Early Bronze Age burials are to be found significantly aligned parallel

to the Amesbury cursus - Amesbury 43/48 (all of bell form covering cremations with Wessex grave goods) - and at the end of the Dorchester hengiform cemetery - site VII containing two cremations, an overhanging Rim Urn and a bronze awl (Atkinson, 1951, 58). Early Bronze Age barrows of course abound in the vicinity of all the Wessex cursuses but with the exception of the Amesbury "cursus group" and a corresponding alignment on the northern side of that cursus (Amesbury 60-62, 72) these bear no significant spatial relationship to the adjacent linear monuments. The Amesbury sites provide an obvious terminus ante quem for that site at least, and this almost certainly applies elsewhere.

The artefactual evidence under review here has been circumstantial in the extreme but if nothing else serves to emphasise the Later Neolithic/Beaker context of the cursus as a monument. This holds true even for sites known to have been constructed at an earlier date (eg. Gussage; Barrett et al, 1981, figs. 5, 6 & 8) and is all the more striking when the general absence of distinctive Later Neolithic funerary monuments is taken into account. It would be dangerous to conclude from this though that all cursuses were of Latest Neolithic-Beaker date: the immediate associations of the North Stoke bank barrow are similarly late but confounded by an Earlier Neolithic radiocarbon date.

C. THE STRATIGRAPHIC RELATIONSHIP OF CURSUSES TO OTHER MONUMENTS

In view of the paucity of artefacts from cursus ditches, and uncertainty regarding the relevance of unstratified material and that from associated monuments, the establishment of the stratigraphic relationship of cursuses to other monuments is vital if dating is to be securely based. This has been achieved in five cases and can be inferred from cropmarks or surviving earthworks in several others.

I EARLIER NEOLITHIC MONUMENTS

a) Long barrows

Long barrows are a particular feature of the Wessex cursuses, being incorporated in or spatially related to three of the four sites. In only one case, Pentridge IV, can the stratigraphic relationship of the long barrow to the cursus be established, however. Here the long barrow mound differs in alignment by some 10° (Atkinson, 1955) from the cursus bank which abuts it at either end. This, and the fact that the western side of the Pentridge cursus is aligned upon the long barrow for a distance of 700m from the south, and 2200m from the north, makes the priority of Pentridge IV a certainty.

Present dates for Wessex long barrows range from 3230 - 2517bc.

b) Long mortuary enclosures

Like long barrows, with which they were compared by Atkinson when proposing this class of monument (1951), these sites on occasion provide lateral or transverse foci for cursuses. The relationship is sufficiently close in two cases for it to be stratigraphically assessed.

Site VIII Dorchester, like the Pentridge IV long barrow, differs in alignment by about 7° from the cursus ditch which approaches and crosses it. There was a break in the cursus ditch on the entry causeway to the long mortuary enclosure but at the rear of the site it crossed the still open ditch, cutting the secondary silts which contained Ebbsfleet sherds. In view of the fact that similar sherds derived from the upper silts of the cursus ditch, and that the enclosure ditch remained partially open at the time of cursus construction, the two monuments cannot have been widely separated in time. As already indicated the cursus also post dates site XI, which by extrapolation from Barford might be dated c. 2400bc, and it is possible to demonstrate that at

Dorchester Ebbsfleet ware was current after the introduction of transverse arrowheads. A date of c. 2500bc seems probably for site VIII therefore and corresponds closely with that 2560 ± 103 bc (BM 505) for the Wilsford (Normanton Down) long mortuary enclosure.

A U ditch site of long mortuary enclosure type abuts the southern end of the Barford cursus. Early aerial photographs provided no indication of the separation of cursus and enclosure ditches (Webster & Hobley, 1964, pl. 1a) but later photographs clearly show the cursus ditch to curve around the side of the mortuary enclosure (pl. 4:1). Excavation of the site in 1972 prior to destruction by gravel extraction produced somewhat ambiguous results (M. Card & S. Ball pers. comm) although sections cut at the point of junction appear to show the ditches simply abutting rather than encroaching on each other. The evidence of the aerial photographs is crucial therefore in establishing the priority of the mortuary enclosure.

Plain body sherds of a buff sandy ware came from the several points in the enclosure ditch. Their fabric compares with three sherds of probable Western Neolithic type that were found on Site A (hengiform) and pottery from Warwick (Smith, 1969, 83). Sherds of the same fabric were found together with heavily decorated sherds of probable Mortlake ware in a pit 50m to the west (S. Ball pers. comm).

c) Hengiform cremation cemeteries

Sites of this rather poorly defined group are frequently found in association with cursuses.

Maxey IIa comprised a circle of ten spaced pits of fairly regular form placed beside another site of identical type. It lay across the cursus ditch with one



Pl. 4.1 Barford : cursus and long mortuary enclosure
junction clearly revealed.
Note cursus ditch respecting transversely
placed long mortuary enclosure

of its pits partially cut through the ditch fill (G. Simpson pers. comm).

Site XI at Dorchester, a triple ditched hengiform with internal pit circle, crosses the projected cursus ditch alignment but is unfortunately located on one side of a wide causeway. It is not therefore possible to establish the relationship of the two sites by vertical stratigraphy but their spatial relationship could be considered to provide a measure of "horizontal stratigraphy": the alignment of the cursus ditch on either side of the causeway on which site XI is placed is slightly different (Allen, 460) and the proximity of the cursus ditch to the outer hengiform ditch (0.6m) would have made construction of the latter, more complex monument, extremely difficult if the cursus had already existed on the site. Lack of evidence for upcast from the outer ditch of site XI falling into the butt end of the cursus ditch (Atkinson et al, 1951, 62) corroborates the hengiform's earlier date.

The striking similarity of site XI to site A at Barford permits a measure of cautious extrapolation as both produced Ebbsfleet ware and occurred in combination with a long mortuary enclosure and a cursus. A radiocarbon date of $2416 \pm 64\text{bc}$ (Birm. 7) provided only a terminus ante quem for site A but one not far removed from the period of ditch digging in the opinion of the excavator (Oswald, 1969, 15). The dates compare quite closely with $2580 \pm 150\text{bc}$ (BM 74) for Ebbsfleet ware from Windmill Hill and that of $2530 \pm 145\text{bc}$ (NPL 224) obtained from a simpler cremation circle outside the entrance to henge A at Llandegai. Cursus construction at Dorchester seems certain to post date 2500bc therefore.

The small arc ditch around which the southern side of the Springfield cursus is aligned may be cognate with segmented cremation circles of more nearly

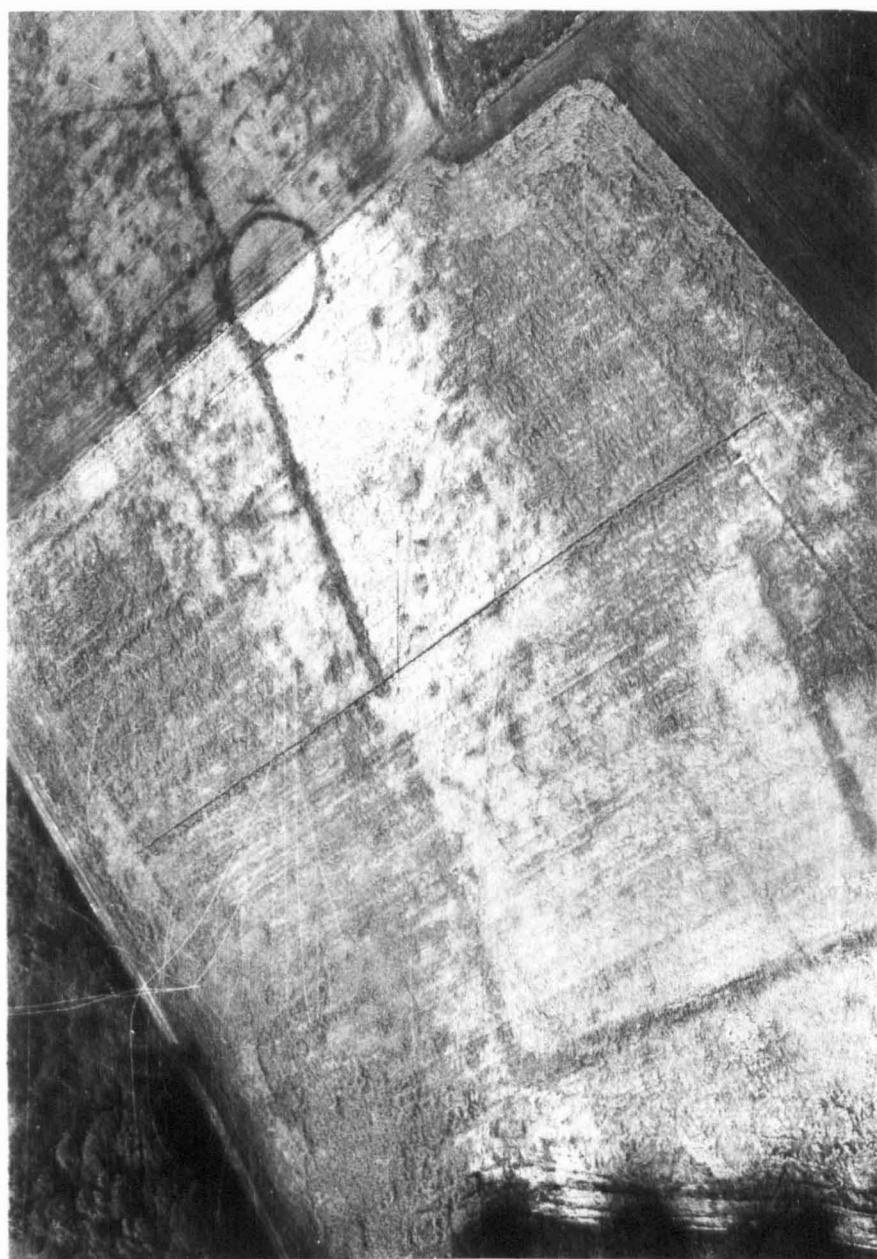
annular type at Dorchester (sites IV - VI) or the arc of pits at Cairnpapple (Piggott, 1948). Excavation scheduled for near future should provide an answer, and a further terminus post quem for cursus construction.

d) Ring ditches

Ring ditches/round barrows represent an ubiquitous component of cursus complexes and given the slight and apparently ephemeral nature of many cursus ditches it should occasion no surprise that 12 cases of obvious encroachment exist. Cursus priority can be assumed from the Later Neolithic dating horizons of these sites but Kinnes' work on Neolithic ring ditches/round barrows and the conflicting stratigraphic evidence advises caution (Kinnes, 1979).

The substantial mound at the centre of the class I henge at Maxey has been shown to have been constructed across the totally filled cursus ditch (Selkirk, 1967; Simpson, pers. comm; Pryor, 1982b) at a date probably during the Early Bronze Age - several sherds of Food Vessel derived from a point near its outer edge but no primary burial was located.

A sizeable (c. 30m dia.), well executed ring ditch lies some 150m from the SW terminal of the Aston cursus and it is clear from aerial photographs that the entire NW lateral ditch of the cursus has been aligned on and then around it (pl. 4:2 & 4:3). This is one of only three unexcavated sites that can certainly provide a terminus post quem for a cursus (the others being the Springfield arc ditch and the Pentridge IV long barrow). In view of the centrally placed W/MR Beaker barrow further to the NE, and the apparently similar enclosure of virtually all the adjacent ring ditches within this cursus, it is almost certain that the site dates to the 2nd millenium. The area lies at the periphery of the E. Yorkshire/Derbyshire distribution



Pl. 4.2 Aston : ring ditch respected by the cursus ditch



Pl. 4.3 Aston : alignment of the western side of the cursus on the incorporated ring ditch (pl. 4.2)
Trapeziform ditch and adjacent ring ditch from which W/MR burial came, in foreground

of Earlier Neolithic round barrows, however, (Kinnes, 1979) so a measure of uncertainty must exist until excavation can establish its date. For the present perhaps the best indication of date is provided by the smaller satellite ring ditch which abutts it - such a configuration lacks an Earlier Neolithic parallel but a Beaker parallel exists just 700m away in Aston 1 and 2 (Reaney, 1968).

e) Henges

Despite frequent references to the contrary henges, as opposed to hengiform cremation cemeteries, are not a commonly associated monument, nor does their stratigraphic relationship indicate contemporaneity when present.

This has been established at two sites: Thornborough and Maxey. The latter initially appeared somewhat indistinct when plotted by St. Joseph (1956, fig. 81) and RCHM (1960, fig. 6), which led Alexander (1968) and Simpson (Selkirk, 1967) to refer to it merely as a very large ring ditch encircling the central round barrow. Recent work by Pryor has established its true nature as a class I henge. Despite a series of early dates for such henges, the presence of collared urn sherds in the secondary silts of the backfilled ditch would point to a comparatively late date (Pryor, 1982).

The imposed henge at Thornborough is the central of three aligned sites belonging in Atkinsons class IIa, for which no radiocarbon dates are at present available. They are characterised by a bank between two concentric ditches and it is unlikely to be coincidental that the Big Rings henge beside the Dorchester cursus is of this same, relatively rare type. Sections cut by Thomas through the henge bank at a point where it covered the cursus ditch established that, like Maxey, the cursus ditch was completely filled and grass grown before the henge bank was constructed above it (Thomas, 1955, fig. 4).

Although no evidence of date was recovered from either cursus or henge, a Beaker date has been established for the comparable "Big Rings" site at Dorchester (Thomas, 1951). Sherds of Middle and Developed Beaker wares were apparently recovered together in occupation debris in the lowest layers of silt (Case, 1977, 82) and one sherd compared closely with the decorative scheme of the W/MR Beaker accompanying the neighbouring burial on site XII.

This admixture of Beaker fabrics recalls that from the secondary ditch silts of site IV Mount Pleasant dated to $1680 \pm 60\text{bc}$ (BM 668) but a date closer to that of the Devils Quoits at nearby Stanton Harcourt ($2060 \pm 120\text{bc}$: HAR 1887) might be entertained if the ditch were frequently scoured out in a similar fashion (Gray, 1974).

f) Cursuses

Finally it is possible to relate one cursus to another stratigraphically at two complex sites: Gussage/Pentridge and Rudston C/D. The junction of the former two sites has not been tested by excavation but the relationship is clear - the Gussage cursus ends in an obvious terminal against which the lateral ditches of the Pentridge cursus abut. The priority of the Gussage site seems indisputable even in the absence of excavation, therefore.

Excavation at Rudston has revealed that the ditches of cursus D are broken at their point of intersection with cursus C (Kinnes pers. comm), thus revealing D to be the later monument, but by an unknown interval. Neither site produced dateable material. The stratigraphic evidence nonetheless establishes the priority of the A1 terminal type over the Bii form of cursus D, on this site at least.

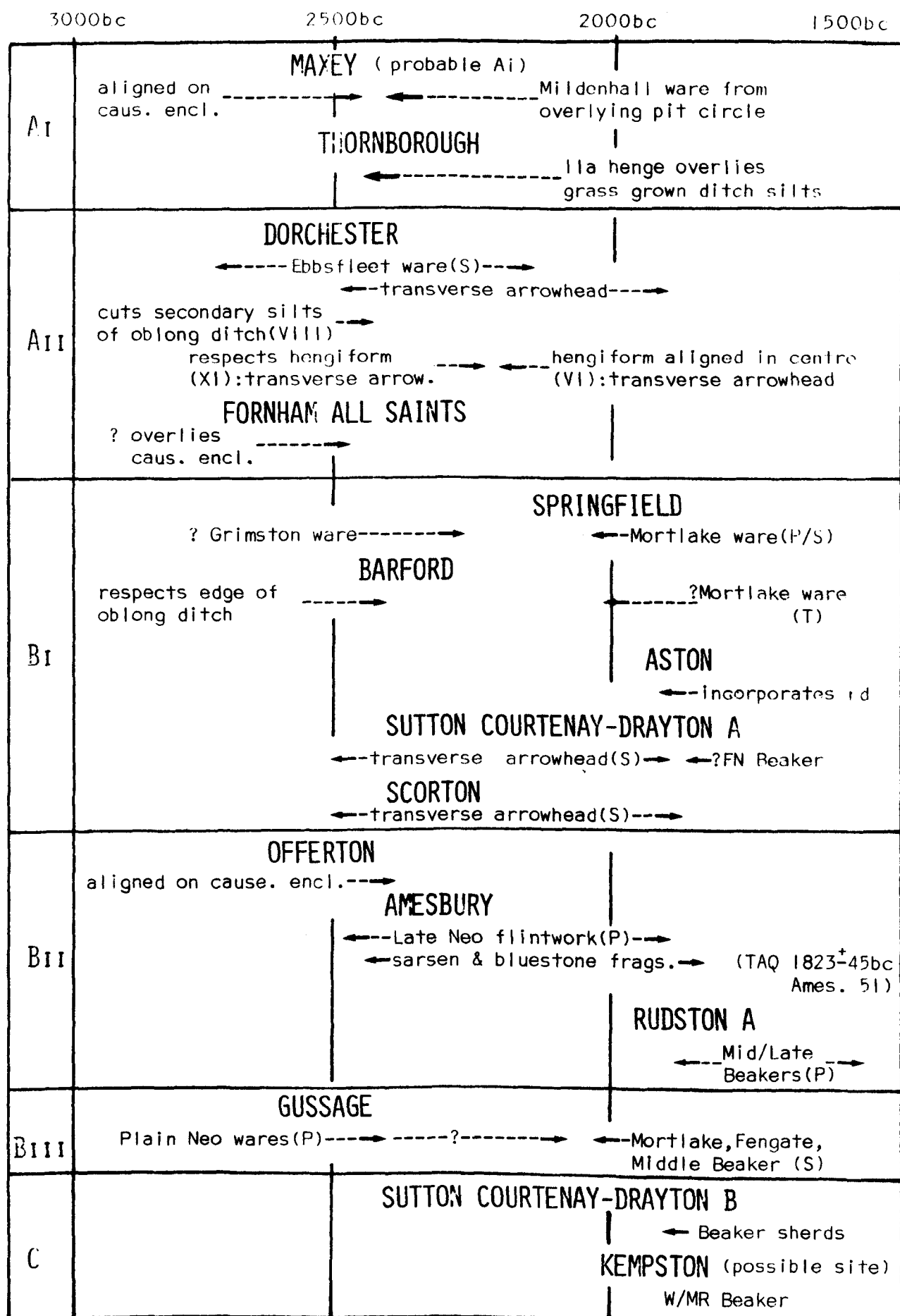
The stratigraphic evidence - vertical and "horizontal" supports then the

slight but consistent evidence of Later Neolithic/Beaker date adduced from associated artefacts. Henges, whenever their siting coincides exactly with that of cursuses, can be shown to post date them (although they certainly coexisted in the Later Neolithic/Early Bronze Age as contemporary forms of ritual monument), and long barrows/long mortuary enclosures to antedate them. Hengiform cremation cemeteries and, to a lesser extent ring ditches, appear to have been contemporary components of cursus complexes, stratigraphically both ante and post dating these linear monuments.

The limited evidence is set out in fig. 4.3. It reveals the apparent isolation of the Gussage (and by implication Pentridge) sites at the earlier end of the timescale and of Rudston A at the later - separated apparently by as many as 1,000 radiocarbon years. In view of their similarities of size, plan and terminal form this is a problem that is difficult to adequately accommodate within the proposed morphological framework. The *prima facie* evidence of the primary ditch silts at each site appears unimpeachable but whereas Developed Beaker wares of the sort present at Rudston do not appear prior to c. 1700bc (1680 \pm 60bc: BM 668. Mt. Pleasant), a date after c. 2500bc is possible for the plain bowl sherds from the Gussage ditch.

The presence of sherds of this type in association with Grooved ware in the primary ditch silts of both the main enclosure and site IV at Mount Pleasant, dated by nine radiocarbon dates to c. 2000bc, raises the possibility of a late survival of this ceramic tradition in Dorset. This seems to be confirmed by a date of 2122 \pm 73bc (BM 644) for the preenclosure settlement, where plain Neolithic bowls alone were represented. Such a date might conceivably apply to the material recovered from the primary silts of the Gussage ditch. It would not be inconsistent with the finding of Middle Beaker sherds in the overlying secondary silts and would make more explicable the concentration

Fig. 4.3 CURSUSES : DATING EVIDENCE



caus. encl. : causewayed enclosure
rd : ring ditch

(P)(S)(T):primary,secondary,tertiary
silts

of Later Neolithic artefacts in the cursus vicinity (Barrett et al, 1981, fig. 6).

Can the evidence support the chronological separation of cursus types A and Bi, as postulated earlier? Broadly fig. 4.3 reveals that it can. The early 2nd millenium date for Springfield, based on sherds of Mortlake ware from the top levels of the primary silt, is supported by the less conclusive evidence from other sites in the Bi series. Only at Barford is there a measure of uncertainty (the cursus there appears to have been laid out whilst the long mortuary enclosure ditch was still open and a possible sherd of Mortlake ware came from the topmost fill of the cursus ditch). The evidence of date for type A sites is less substantive, principally because of the total poverty of the Maxey and Thornborough ditches. Uncertainty over the longevity of the Mildenhall tradition complicates the picture as do the late trends evident at Dorchester, but a date for sites in this group prior to 2,000bc appears certain. The interest paid to causewayed enclosures confirms their early context.

CHAPTER V

ASSOCIATED MONUMENTS

As the number of cursuses to have been excavated is limited, and the amount of dateable material recovered desperately small, an examination of patterns of association may help resolve the question of date. More importantly perhaps they provide an indication of purpose and function not always evident from the sites themselves.

Conclusions based on such evidence are necessarily tenuous, however, since the present palimpsest of apparent Neolithic/Early Bronze age sites may have developed over at least a millenium and have little spatial significance (cf Maxey - round barrows, henge and cursus). The shallow nature of many cursus ditches indeed suggests that they were distinctly ephemeral monuments around the sites of which ring ditches were later coincidentally placed. If this was the case there should be no evidence of clustering or orientation amongst these sites nor of strikingly close association with other sites of special status.

Close association is difficult to gauge: at Amesbury the Cursus Group of bell barrows which were clearly aligned beside the cursus were placed about 100m away, but if Stonehenge itself is considered to relate to the cursus, a distance of nearly 1km must be entertained. To seek purposeful association beyond this point, except in the broadest territorial terms, would be to overstretch credibility and require special pleading, so a radius of 1km from the cursus confines is defined as the 'catchment area' within which purposeful association is to be suspected.

Within such an area eight categories of site of 3rd and earlier 2nd millenium date exist:

1. Ring ditches/Round barrows
2. Hengiform sites (a) pit circles - eg Maxey
(b) contiguous pit circles or irregular triple ditched circles - eg Dorchester
(c) small henge like sites - eg Fargo Plantation
3. Long barrows/long mortuary enclosures
4. Cursuses
5. Causewayed enclosures
6. Henges
7. Stone circles
8. Standing stones

In groups 1 and 3 cropmark and earthwork sites have been commonly grouped due to difficulty in establishing the structural form of plough razed sites and the likelihood that they performed identical functions anyway.

The frequency with which the monuments are to be found within such a 1km orbit is set out in table 5.1. It is clear from this that ring ditch/round barrow sites overwhelmingly dominate with hengiform and long barrow/long mortuary enclosure sites scoring lower but almost equal figures. Henge association is low even if the stone circle figure is included (arising from the Hollywood sites), whilst the figure for standing stones is artificially inflated by the presence of the four Rudston cursus within 1km of the single standing stone there.

1. Ring ditches/Round barrows

Although as a class of monument these are the commonest adjacent associations of cursuses, clustering is not indicated in every case. The total figures for sites falling within a 1km orbit of a cursus are given in table 5.2 from which

Table 5.1

CURSUSES : ASSOCIATED MONUMENTS WITHIN 1KM

	Number of sites	% of total
Ring ditches/round barrows	34	89
Hengiform sites	8/9	21
Long barrows/long mortuary enclosures	11	29
Cursuses	12	31
Causewayed enclosures	3	8
Henges	5	13
Stone circles	2	5
Monolith	6	16

Total sample: 38 sites

it emerges that 31% of cursuses are associated with no more than 3 ring ditches/round barrows, and that a further 6% are associated with no more than 5. In addition many are randomly or distantly placed. Low figures of this sort, which affect more than a third of the sample, cast doubts on the oft stated belief that cursuses acted as foci for ring ditches/round barrows. Yet dense concentrations do undoubtedly exist, not only in Wessex and on the Yorkshire Wolds, but at sites such as Maxey, Dorchester and Aston. Analysis of these sites is needed to discover the factors that may have influenced the variations.

a) Geographical clustering

Before examining the patterns evident within the 1km cursus orbit the relevance of this to the region as a whole needs to be established. Only in this way can the extent of ring ditch/round barrow concentration viz a viz cursuses be accurately measured. As most cursuses are located in river valleys this inevitably involves examination of the entire corridor of the valley floor. Linear valley

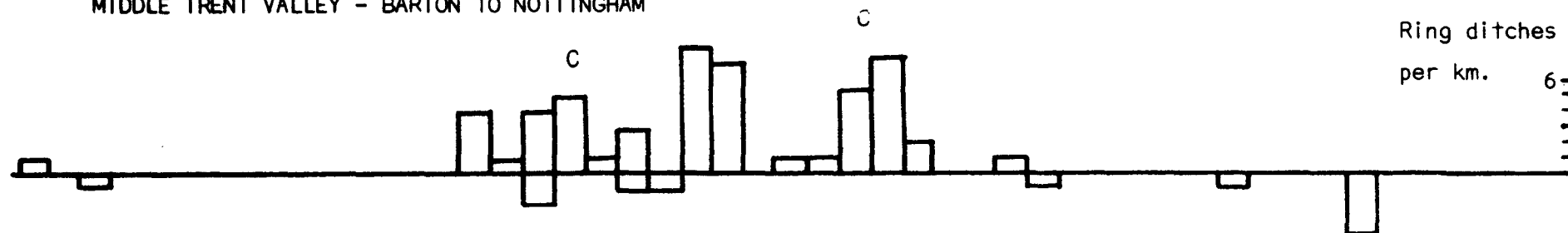
transects have been produced for the purpose covering the main sections of the four principal river valleys - the Trent, Great Ouse, Avon and Thames. (fig. 5.1-5.3) The opposed histograms register the number of ring ditch/round barrows occurring in 1km broad "corridors" set at right angles to the river. Such an arbitrary grid may artificially divide cemeteries or unite dispersed sites but it should by single and multiple peaks indicate areas of clustering. A degree of subjectivity is of course inevitably involved in deciding which small cropmark circles to assign to the sepulchral ring ditch category.

It is obvious from these transects that the correlation of cursuses with ring ditch concentrations is not as strong as often suggested, even in the Trent and Thames Valley where the association is most pronounced. The Aston cemetery in the Trent valley, which is almost entirely contained within the cursus, represents a major discrete concentration but is numerically exceeded by the nearby Swarkestone grouping, and the clustering associated with the Findern cursus appears to be part merely of a general grouping in that area. Major clusters occur in the Thames valley in association with the cursus at Dorchester and the linear ditches at North Stokes but the peaks for the Sutton Courtenay and Lechlade cursus are not particularly notable and that for Benson is negligible; greater concentrations in fact occur within the 1km "corridors" associated with causewayed enclosures and henges. In the Great Ouse valley the Cardington cursus and long mortuary enclosure sites coincide with pronounced clustering but this is of a rather dispersed nature and difficult to associate directly with the cursus. No concentration of ring ditches/round barrows can be claimed near the minor cursus sites of the Avon valley: that at Charlecote is distanced from the cursus by over 1km.

b) Effects of size, form and topography

It is perhaps significant that the two largest concentrations noted above - at Aston and Dorchester - are related to Major cursus sites. Yet the Benson,

MIDDLE TRENT VALLEY - BARTON TO NOTTINGHAM



AVON VALLEY - STRATFORD TO KING'S NEWNHAM



Fig. 5.1 RING DITCH DISTRIBUTION : LONGITUDINAL TRANSECTS OF THE
MIDDLE TRENT AND AVON VALLEYS

C : cursus

THAMES VALLEY - LECHLADE
TO NORTH STOKE

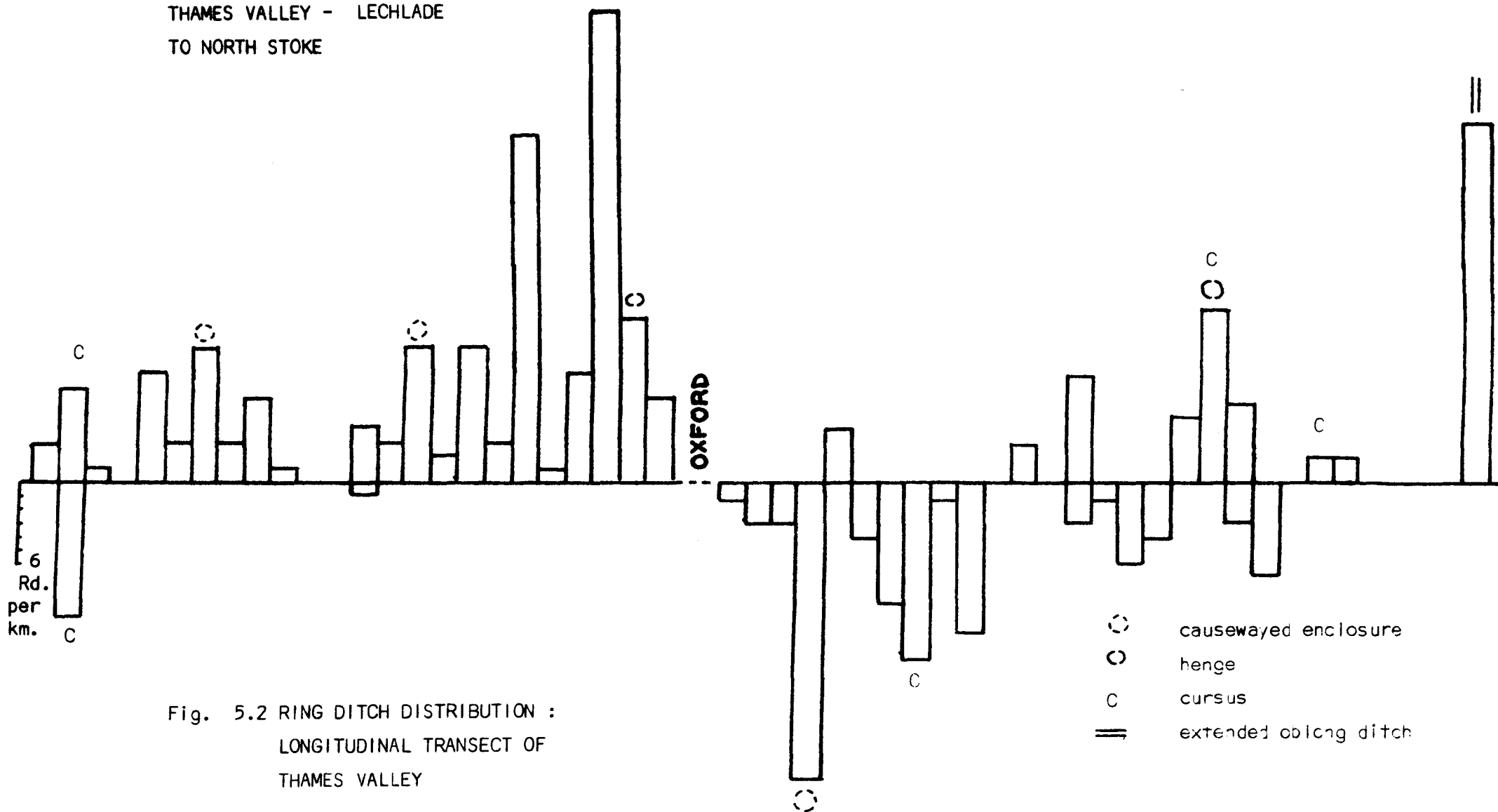


Fig. 5.2 RING DITCH DISTRIBUTION :
LONGITUDINAL TRANSECT OF
THAMES VALLEY

GREAT OUSE VALLEY - HARROLD TO BUCKDEN

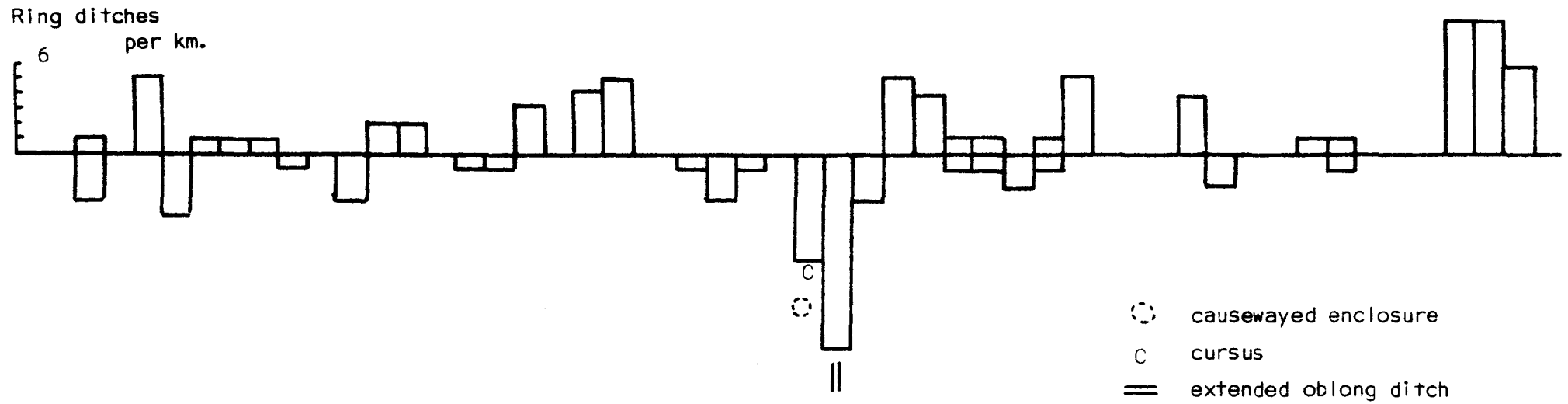


Fig. 5.3 RING DITCH DISTRIBUTION : LONGITUDINAL
TRANSECT OF THE GREAT OUSE VALLEY

Sutton Courtenay/Drayton and Findern cursuses are also of significant proportions but exceeded numerically by the clustering of ring ditches/round barrows around the minor cursus at Cardington (site E) in the Ouse valley. An explanation probably lies in differing patterns of cursus construction in these widely separated river valleys linked to a common tradition of cemetery nucleation. It is difficult, however, to explain variations in the limited degree of ring ditch clustering around comparably sized cursuses such as Sutton Courtenay/Drayton A and Benson in the same river valley.

If an answer to the question of clustering does not lie in cursus size nor is it to be found in architectural form: the major concentrations noted at Aston, Dorchester and Cardington E are associated with cursuses of both Aii and the more formalized Bi types. Despite the larger sample size of Bi sites, and the greater likelihood that they are contemporary with the flourish of ring ditches, they have in fact the lowest average score of all cursus types for ring ditch association.

The answer may in fact have less to do with the nature of the cursus concerned than with its topographic and geological setting. The major ring ditch concentration around the Maxey cursus occurs at a point where the flood plain/first terrace gravels of the Welland broaden out near the fen edge, whereas the much more limited focal effect of the similarly sized Fornham All Saints cursus almost certainly relates to the dispersal of round barrows onto the surrounding permeable Breckland soils (Martin, 1981, fig. 27). A similar range of special types exist at both sites, and significantly in each case are clustered near the cursus terminals, but the focusing effect at Fornham seems to have been reduced by the relative narrowness of the river valley and the availability of the neighbouring uplands. Elsewhere, as at Aston, Dorchester and Cardington E, both cursuses and ring ditch cemeteries were placed on major expanses of the

normally restricted terrace gravels at river or stream confluences. Such locations had obvious potential as regional gathering point.

It is quite possible then that cursuses and cemeteries represent different phases in the use of common tribal land and that their association was not deliberate. If this is the case it should be revealed in the spatial patterning of ring ditches/round barrows in the vicinity of cursuses.

c) Spatial patterning of ring ditches/round barrows

Ring ditch/round barrow clustering viz a viz the principal cursuses has been mapped in figs. 5.5 - 5.8 using grid squares of 250m, constructed by a subdivision of the national grid. Ring ditches falling across a grid line have been placed in the adjacent square containing the nearest site. This method is preferred to isarithmic contouring, since it avoids the distortion caused by links made across empty areas, and to simple direct mapping as it better emphasises areas of greatest concentration. Whilst it distorts the enclosed or flanking relationship of ring ditches/round barrows at sites such as Aston and Amesbury it does nonetheless indicate the strong focal pull of the cursuses there.

These two sites exhibit the clearest evidence of ring ditch/round barrow concentration but minor foci are also obvious around the Springfield, Dorchester, Sutton Courtenay and Stratford St. Mary cursuses. The Maxey site concentrates ring ditches in the otherwise dispersed cemetery spread across the flat expanse of river gravels there, whilst at Fornham, Winterbourne Stoke, Biggleswade, Dorchester and Rudston A - C, the cursus terminals appear to have exercised the primary focusing role. Elsewhere cursuses appear to have been entirely peripheral to such groupings: Lechlade, Charlecote, Sonning, Benson, Cardington.

RING DITCH/ROUND BARROW CONCENTRATIONS

Number of sites lying
within a 250m grid square

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6 or more

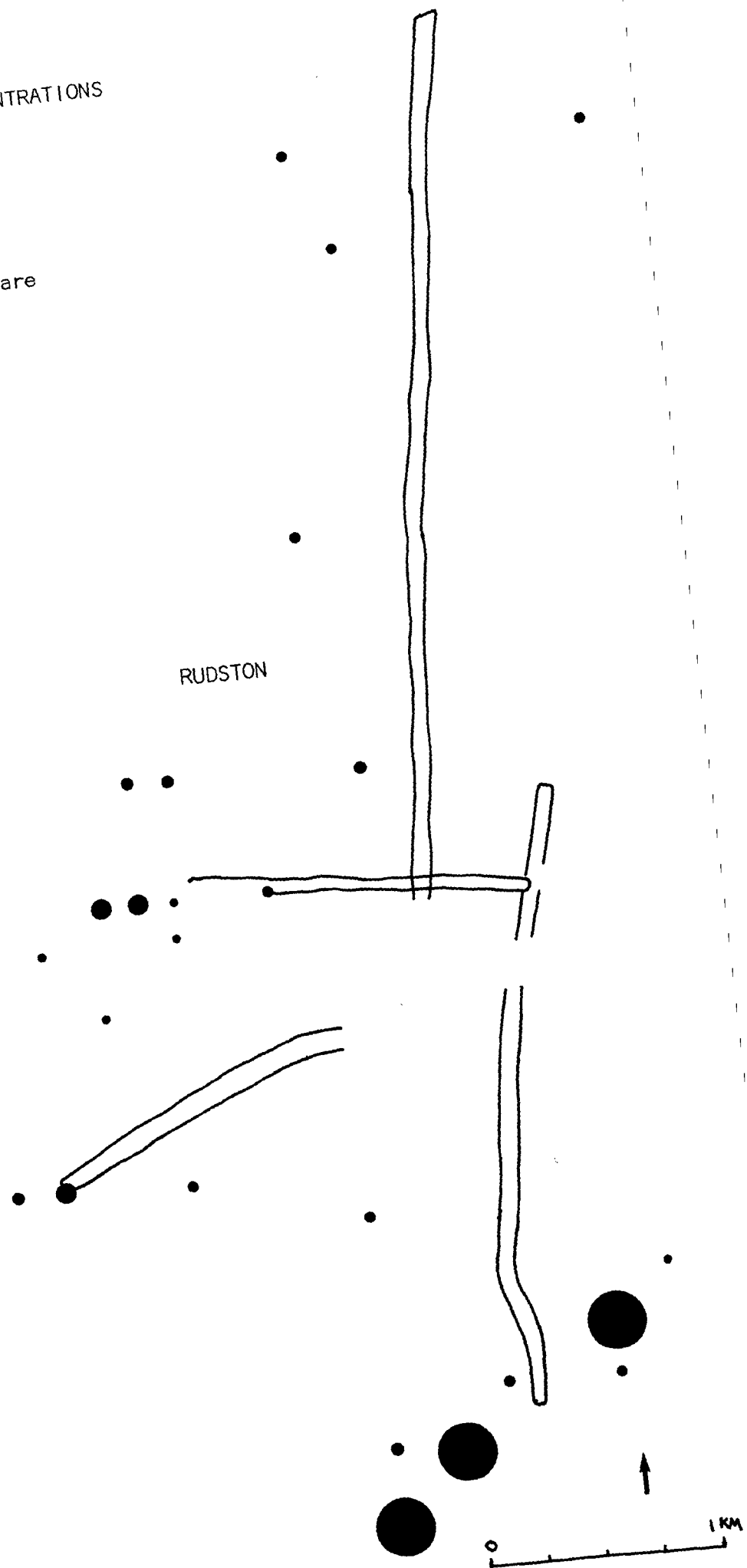


Fig. 5.4

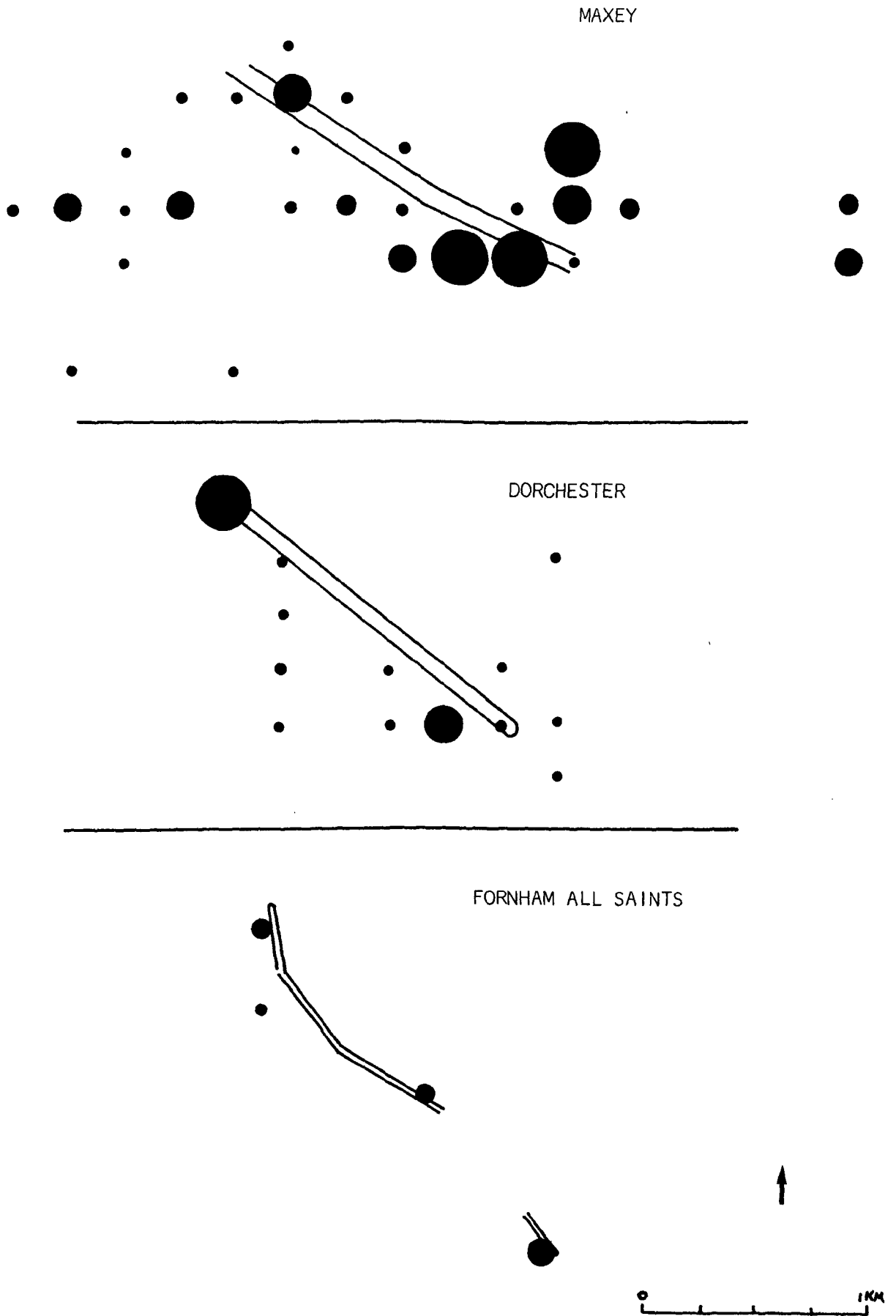


Fig. 5.5

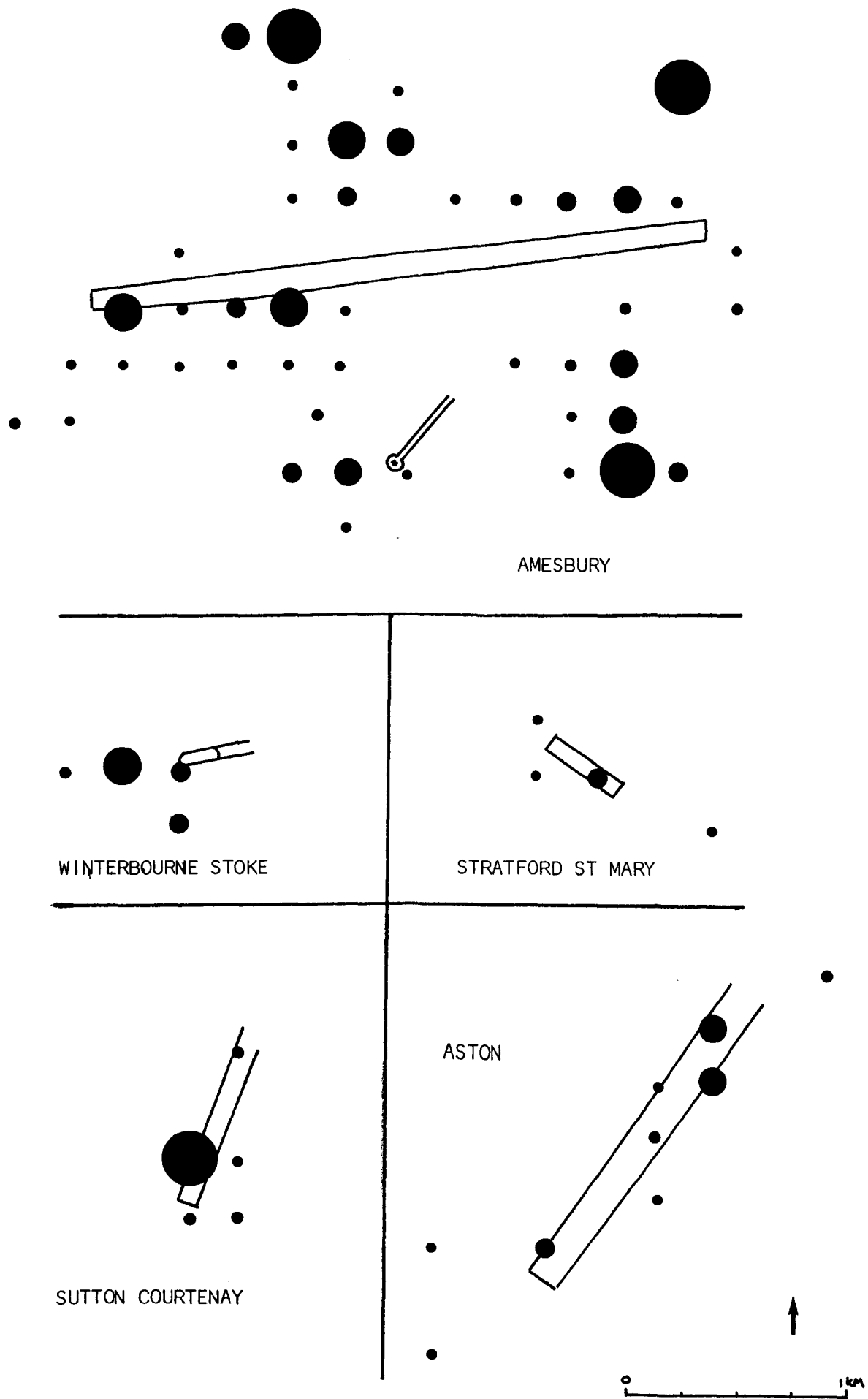


Fig. 5.6

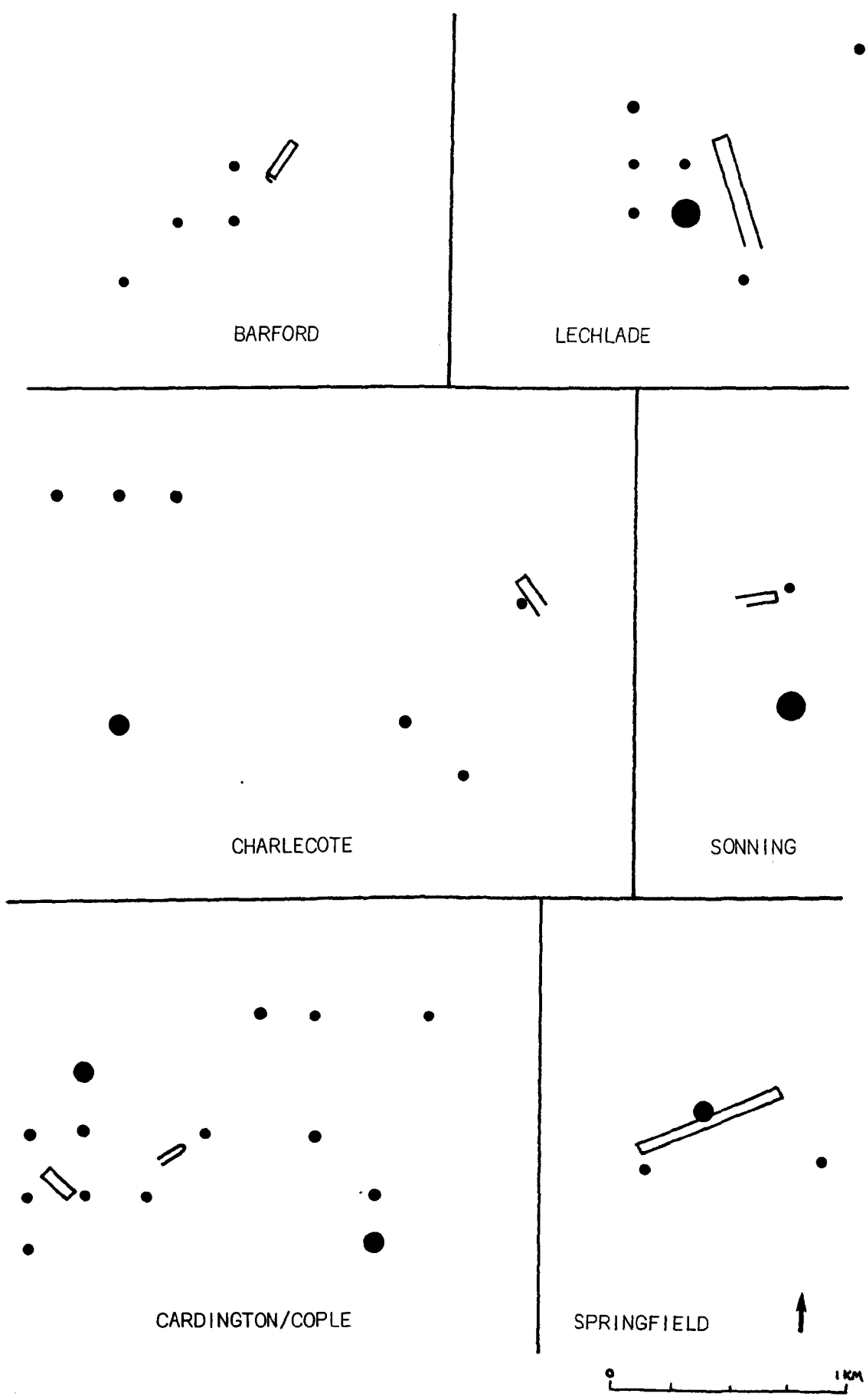


Fig. 5.7

In only about half the cases does a positive correlation seem to exist between ring ditch/round barrows and cursuses; where evident it appears that terminals exercised the greatest attraction. The patternings of clearly associated sites is set out in table 5.2. Here seven headings have been used to classify the varying configurations:

i) axially aligned ii) over terminal ditch iii) in terminal area iv) in central area v) over lateral ditch vi) flanking vii) random.

Sites have only been classified as axially aligned if such alignments begin within 100m of the cursus terminal, and as flanking normally only if they lie within a similar distance of the cursus sides.

i) Axially aligned ring ditches/round barrows

As already noted the terminals of cursuses exercised the strongest attraction over ring ditch/round barrow placement but in only a handful of sites can this clustering be claimed to relate directly to the terminal ditch rather than its general confines, and in yet fewer cases can a measure of axial alignment be claimed. Only at Biggleswade, Winterbourne Stoke and Fornham All Saints is this evident. Even here the Fornham alignment is at an angle to that of the cursus and that at Winterbourne Stoke, irregularly offset.

It would appear from this that cursuses performed a primary function in the development of 2nd millenium cemeteries of a different order to that of long barrows. No examples are at present known of linear cemeteries like those that spring from the Winterbourne Stoke I long barrow and the Broadmayne bank barrow. Scorton, Stratford St. Mary and Sutton Courtenay/Drayton A exemplify the normal patterning of ring ditches in relation to cursus terminals: frequently aligned with one lateral ditch and often paired, but rarely in direct focal alignment with the body of the cursus.

TABLE 5.2

RING DITCH/ROUND BARROW PATTERNING WITHIN 1km OF CURSUSES

SITES
* Denotes minor
cursus.

	IMPINGING				EXTERNAL			TOTALS
	OVER TERMINAL	IN TERMINAL AREA	OVER LATERAL DITCHES	IN CENTRAL AREA	EXTERNAL FLANKING	EXTERNAL AXIAL	EXTERNAL RANDOM	
<u>Ai</u> Thornborough Rudston C		1			2		7 18	7 21 Average 14
<u>Aii</u> W.Stoke * Fornham Dorchester	1	1	3	3	7 9	4(8)	1 5 9	5(9) 14 25 Average 14.6 (16)
<u>Bi</u> Barford * Longbridge * Cardington * Strat. St. Mary * Lechlade * D. St. Leonard * Sonning * Scorton Aston Biggleswade S. Courtenay A Benson Springfield		71	1	1	2 2 1 2	3 2 3 1(73)	3 1 17 2 8 2 2 3 6 1 5 1 4	3 2 17 5 8(9) 3 2 7 13 4 18 2 7 Average 7
<u>Bii</u> Offerton * Balneaves * Rudston A Rudston D Amesbury		2			1 1 19		1 5 40+ 27+ 145	2 5 41 27 166 Average 48
<u>Biii</u> Maryton * Inchbare A * Rudston B Gussage Pentridge				3 2	11 5		2 11 69 62	3 2 11 82 67 Average 33
<u>C (uncertain)</u> Inchbare B * Charlecote * Findern Maxey Buscot B Sutton Courtenay B		71	1 4 2 1	2	2 22 1		2 2 6 41 9 21	2 3 8 70 12 22 Average 19.5

Note: Hollywood A & B and Kinalty have been omitted since to date no ring ditches have been located within 1km of the sites.

Four sites in this category have been excavated and three shown to post date their respective cursuses - Springfield: a ring ditch c.100m beyond the western terminal which produced no certain evidence but was probably of Early Bronze age date (Hedges & Buckley, 1982); Sutton Courtenay/Drayton A: two ring ditches just beyond the postulated northern terminal (Leeds, 1927) which produced in one case sherds of collared urn from a pit near the periphery, and in the other skull fragments and charcoal from the interior; and the Winterbourne Stoke 35 a-c: three small confluent bowl barrows each 15m in diameter producing respectively an inhumation with four large leaf points, a pygmy cup, and an inhumation with a Beaker (Thurman, 1869). Kinnes has recently suggested (1979) that the burial under the first of these small mounds at Winterbourne Stoke should be accorded a pure Neolithic date. The similarity in size of the mounds argues for broad contemporaneity, however.

ii) Imposed over cursus terminal ditch

Unlike long mortuary enclosures and long barrows this configuration has to date been recognised at only one site - Fornham All Saints. The ring ditch in question encircles an arc ditch open in the direction of the cursus. This may be cognate with the arc ditch antedating the cursus at Springfield. Whilst the extent of encroachment is slight it resembles that of the round barrow set just across the end of the Broadmayne bank barrow. As such it may provide an indication of the former structure of this cursus.

iii) In the terminal area

In five or possibly six cases (14-16% of the sample) ring ditches/round barrows are to be found placed in the terminal areas of cursuses. The best known example of this practice is at Amesbury where the ?Late Beaker and Wessex II barrows were separated from the body of the cursus by a cross ditch. This is unusual, however, as at Sutton Courtenay/Drayton A, Dorchester, Rudston C and

Many small ring ditches were placed in off centre positions and in no manner demarcated from the rest of the cursus interior. A more centrally placed ring ditch may have existed within the northern terminal of the Lechlade cursus (Benson and Miles, 1974, Map 2) but the faint cropmarks appear on only one of an extensive series of photographs so must be suspect. In addition an unditched mound of the sort which survived on Criche Down, Dorset (Piggott & Piggott, 1944) may have been placed in a similar position within the terminal of the Thornborough cursus - a small cist containing an unaccompanied crouched inhumation with head pointing towards the end of the cursus was revealed there after the completion of excavation (Vatcher, 1960).

The asymmetric location of these sites is unlikely to result from pure chance - at Dorchester it could be argued to relate to ease of access through the central causeway in the terminal, but elsewhere no such considerations applied. It may also be of significance that the earlier of the two barrows within the western terminal at Amesbury was placed offcentre (Amesbury 56).

In addition to the Amesbury barrows already discussed only one other site has been excavated - that at Dorchester. Here Chambers has recently found evidence for the use of the central mounded area within the penannular ring ditch as a cremation cemetery after the initial stage of ditch silting. This pattern of secondary use for cremations invites comparison with the segmented ditch hengiform (site IV) at the NW end of the cursus (Chambers, 1983; Atkinson et al 1951, 40). Both seem certain to have been contemporary components of the cursus unlike the Amesbury barrows.

iv) In the central area

Ring ditches are found in the interiors of many cursuses but their frequent offcentre positioning or encroachment on the lateral ditches of the monuments

appears to point to only random juxtapositioning. A degree of deliberation does appear to be evident in a number of cases, however. Single ring ditches are placed on or near the axial line of the cursuses at Findern and Drayton St. Leonard, and multiple examples at Dorchester, Sutton Courtenay, Maryton and Aston. In addition the two round barrows placed within the cursus confines on Wyke Down, Gussage seem less explicable as straightforward encroachments on account of the striking avoidance of the cursus by the enormous number of other barrows in this limited area.

Aston and Dorchester call for particular comment. Both possess approximately axially placed ring ditch or hengiform sites and both incorporate one such site placed across the alignment of a lateral ditch - a ring ditch near the SW terminal at Aston and site XI at Dorchester.

As a wooden post circle stood in a comparable axial location at Dorchester (Chambers, 1983) it seems reasonable to assume that the respective sites represent contemporary or near contemporary components of these cursus complexes. One site, a double conjoined ring ditch at Dorchester, has been shown to post date cursus construction by a considerable margin (collared urn cremation) but there is no evidence at present to divorce the other sites from the primary phase of use of these monuments. Differences of hengiform/ring ditch form may relate to distinctions of date (Dorchester pre Beaker; Aston perhaps dated by the central W/MR barrow) or perhaps simply to differences of local mortuary practice. Whatever the case the enclosure of all but two atypical ring ditches at Aston within the cursus confines makes it certain that the pattern here was deliberate, and the cursus built late enough to influence, and perhaps be influenced by, cemetery development.

Elsewhere only isolated ring ditches are found in such axial or central positions

(cf Findern, Maryton) and even these are rare. Cursus interiors seem normally to have been kept clear until encroached upon by the spread of adjacent cemeteries. A pit circle comparable to that at Dorchester may have existed within the Maryton cursus (Maxwell 1983) however and the large ring ditch with smaller satellite at Sutton Courtenay which resembles the combination of Aston I and II (Reaney, 1968) may indicate deliberate siting rather than random encroachment.

v) Over lateral ditches

Whilst only one ring ditch is at present known to impinge on a cursus terminal, it is not uncommon for them to intersect the lateral ditches. Sheer length obviously greatly increases the random chance of this occurring at major cursus sites but the similar location of ring ditches across the shorter side ditches of minor cursuses (cf Charlecote and Fourmerkland) must be deliberate. In addition a significant number of these ring ditches are of very modest size (Charlecote, Aston, Maxey and Fourmerkland) which further reduces the likelihood of chance intersection.

These small sites in fact resemble closely those assymmetrically placed within cursus terminals and are likewise of comparable size to the Dorchester and Maxey hengiform sites. In view of the identical use to which the small ring ditch and sites IV to VI hengiforms were put at Dorchester, it seems unlikely to be coincidental that almost opposite pit circle (site IIIa) intersecting the south western ditch at Maxey there stands a small ring ditch intersecting the north eastern ditch (RCHM 1960, fig. 6). Common date and purpose must be inferred.

The majority of Neolithic round barrows/ring ditches recently discussed by Kinnes (1979) are of comparably modest size, as are many Beaker barrows (cf site

XII Dorchester: Atkinson 1951; Criche! Down: Piggott & Piggott, 1944; various barrows in Cambridgeshire: Taylor, 1981). Since only one such site associated with a cursus has been excavated (that within the Dorchester terminal) it would be premature to draw conclusion but a definite association can be claimed; small ring ditches of this sort are found flanking the Benson, Springfield and Dorchester cursuses, beyond the ditch lines at either terminal at Sutton Courtenay/Drayton A, and in axial alignment within the Aston cursus.

In addition to these small ring ditches larger sites also encroach on cursus ditch lines at Dorchester, Maxey and Sutton Courtenay. Their patterning takes two forms: slight encroachment by one chord of the ring ditch and central, or near central, positioning over the cursus ditch. Single rings at all three sites fall into the first category, which may have resulted from the desire not to disturb the putative cursus banks. In addition three sites at Maxey and one at Dorchester fall into the latter group. The Maxey examples emphasise that what is being witnessed is not purely random encroachment; despite being at the centre of a dense cluster of ring ditches only four lie substantially within the central area of the cursus and three of these are almost exactly bisected by the cursus ditch. The special importance attached to these sites is emphasised by their demarcation by larger outer rings - one the henge ditch.

vi) Flanking ring ditches/round barrows

All ring ditches/round barrows located within 100m of the side ditch of a cursus have been characterised as flanking in fig. 5.2 to avoid subjective selection of evidence. This of course in turn causes some distortion since it artificially isolates individual barrows within dispersed cemeteries such as that on Wyke Down, Gussage. The figures must therefore be treated with reserve.

Isolated ring ditches do appear to have been deliberately sited by the flanks of cursuses at Longbridge Warwick and Benson, however, and small numbers, often widely separated, beside Rudston C, Fornham All Saints, Dorchester, Scorton, Pentridge and Springfield. Only at Amesbury and Maxey can true flanking alignments be claimed, although the irregular line of hengiform sites at Dorchester, extending from site II and ending in the Early Bronze Age ring ditch site VII, may also have been laid out in part to mirror the cursus.

The flanking linear "Cursus Group" at Amesbury is well known but the similarly distanced alignment at Maxey (RCHM, 1969, fig. 6, circles 76-104) ending at a causewayed arc ditch has occasioned no comment; a measure of flanking alignment might also be claimed for the circles 98 and 100 on the northern side of this cursus. That such a pattern can be discerned amongst the plethora of ring ditches here must confirm the survival of the cursus as a recognisable monument long after its ditches had become totally filled and obscured. It is unfortunately impossible to date the ring ditches in question as all bar one were destroyed prior to excavation and that investigated (Powell, 1977) produced no dateable artefact. A date at least comparable with the barrows of Amesbury "Cursus Group" might be predicted, however, from the evidence of barrow 60 laid out across the filled cursus ditch.

vi) Randomly sited ring ditches/round barrows

Sites in this category call for little comment. Their overwhelming numbers at chalkland sites reflect less the direct focussing effect of the cursuses there than their mutual location in extensive cemetery areas; the Amesbury cursus exercised a stronger immediate attraction over round barrows than Stonehenge itself but the number of dispersed barrows in its vicinity do not exceed those in the farther flung Durrington, Wilsford and Rollestone areas. Similarly, on Cranbourne Chase the concentration of round barrows form a linear cemetery zone

mirroring but extending the cursus alignment (Fleming, 1971, fig. 2).

In the river valleys dispersed ring ditches occur in cemeteries beside or around the Maxey, Cardington and Lechlade cursus, their numbers falling off dramatically at distances over 1km. As on the chalklands they appear to have been attendant but not necessarily directly associated mortuary features.

Cursuses then are by no means an invariable feature of ring ditch/round barrow concentrations (cf Dorset Ridgeway; Stanton Harcourt) nor do they even correlate with the largest of these groupings in areas where both appear. Their spatial patterning viz a viz a cursus when the two are found together, however, indicates a degree of local attraction and in some cases direct alignment.

One group - small ring ditches - stand in a closer direct relationship to cursuses than other types; their location within cursus terminals or interiors and neatly placed over lateral ditches has the appearance of early, if not initial, planned intent. Along with the probably cognate hengiform group they appear to have fulfilled a role as ritual/mortuary components of cursus architecture akin to that played by long barrows in Wessex, and by fully developed ring ditches at Aston.

Elsewhere the pattern of nominally flanking or peripherally grouped ring ditches/round barrows appears to argue for the later development of cemetery complexes, largely avoiding the cursus interiors. Those sites fully encroaching on cursus ditches resemble the rarer examples placed over henge ditches (cf Arbor Low; Mount Pleasant - Conquer Barrow) and like them were perhaps of enhanced status or so placed as to benefit from the reflected sanctity of the larger monument. The SE arm of the Maxey cursus exemplifies the distinction between flanking

and encroaching sites: the majority of sites fall into the former category and are aligned at some distance from the cursus, whereas the latter sites are numerically the exception and set apart by their greatly enlarged outer rings.

The concentration of special types (double and triple ditched rings, arc ditches, pit circles) around one cursus extremity (cf Fornham All Saints; Aston; ?Dorchester) is a recurrent pattern and will be dealt with in the next section. It may be related to the tendency towards nucleated cemetery development at the same point.

2. Hengiiform sites

Sites of this type first came to prominence with the publication of volume I of the Dorchester report. Although classified at the time as class I henges on morphological grounds growing uncertainty about their place in the full henge series (principally on the grounds of size) led later reviewers to consider separating them (Wainwright, 1969; Burl, 1969; Catherall, 1976). Ashbee has recently argued for joint classification with interrupted ditch round barrows (Ashbee, 1978) and Kinnes (1979) has treated them as purely mortuary sites along with Neolithic round barrows and ring ditches. Their spatial patterning viz a viz cursuses certainly more closely resembles that of ring ditches than henges and they have been discussed in this context above.

They occur less frequently than the ubiquitous ring ditches but in view of their relative rarity an association with 21% of cursuses must be classed highly significant. This figure is, however, composed largely of untested cropmark sites identified on the basis of their morphological similarity to the excavated sites at Barford and Dorchester and their dissimilarity to adjacent ring ditches (cf Lechlade: CUC AM 29-30 AFV 22; Fornham All Saints: SAU DG 28-30). In one

case - Longbridge, Warwick - the site in question appears as a normal ring ditch on most photographs but some in the Cambridge Collection reveal slight irregular inner ditches.

Sites of this sort are not of course confined to cursus localities: examples exist beside the "long mortuary enclosure" at Overy, Dorchester, beside the linear ditches at North Stoke (pl. 5:1), and beside ring ditches at Hampton Lucy, 1.5km from the Charlecote cursus (Webster & Hobley, 1964, site 65), and at Witchingham, Norfolk (Edwards, 1978, 92-3). In addition circles of unenclosed pits exist 180m from the Longbridge, Warwick cursus (Webster & Hobley, 1964, site 80) and near the linear ditch site at Welshpool (St. Joseph, 1980, 50). A general correlation nonetheless with sites of cursus related type is obvious and significantly in the Upper Thames Valley the distribution of triple ring ditches coincides exactly with the location of cursus/bank barrow sites (Benson & Miles, 1974). Their distribution again generally coincides in the Warwickshire Avon valley and the single such example in Suffolk is at Fornham All Saints (Martin, 1981).

Spatially their association with cursuses is loose, however. Only Dorchester XI and the questionable Drayton St. Leonard and Buscot B sites are actually contained within or over cursus confines. Elsewhere they lie in an apparently random fashion at a distance from the cursus, or in the area of one of the terminals, but never focally aligned with it.

They would appear then to have performed a separate and distinct function. This is most clearly indicated at Aston where all normal ring ditches were incorporated within the cursus confines whilst the hengiform site and accompanying penannular ditch were set apart. A similar association with atypical penannular and arc ditches occurs at Maxey (RCHM, 1960, fig. 6) and Fornham All Saints (St. Joseph,

Pl. 5.1 North Stoke : parch marks
indicating the former
presence of an axial
mound within the
linear ditches (site A)



1964). Such a pattern hints not simply at elaboration of ritual but at a structural distinction. Were these open sites in contrast to mounded ring ditches? The wider cropmarks of the more regular outer rings at many sites (eg. Lechlade; Overy) would indicate not, at least in their final phases. The same could be argued for Dorchester XI and Barford A. At the former site the inner ditches and pits were shallow and backfilled whereas the outer ditch exhibited a normal silting pattern (Atkinson et al, 1951, 61), and at Barford A medieval plough furrows were significantly absent from the centre of the site (Oswald, 1969, 13). Final mounded phases must^{reasonably} be accommodated, therefore.

A link with surviving barrow sites is conceivable then and interestingly Greenwell remarked on the presence of a ring of pits within the mound of Rudston XIII (1877, 245) located near the terminal of cursus A; aerial photographs reveal the former presence of a similar barrow beside the terminal of cursus B (Dymond, 1966; pl. VIII). The presumed complementary function of these sites relative to cursuses (and it appears some long mortuary enclosures and bank barrows) must have related principally to their initial open phases and to have necessitated their exclusion from cursus confines. It is significant that the only case certainly proved to date of inclusion of such a multiditched site within a cursus (site XI Dorchester) took place after the construction of its outer ditch and hence its putative mound.

Causewayed ditch barrows of the sort discussed by Ashbee are set apart by their single ditches although the location of Amesbury 51 and the Fargo Plantation site relative to the Amesbury cursus is interestingly comparable. They correspond most closely to single ditch/pit circuit hengiforms of the type represented by sites IV-VI Dorchester. Sites of this sort have already been likened to small ring ditches on account of their spatial patterning within cursus interiors and over their lateral ditches, and the similarity of site IV and the ring ditch

within the Dorchester terminal is striking (Atkinson et al, 1951, 35-42; Chambers, 1983). In view of the apparent evidence for a mound over the latter can sites IV-VI at the north western extremity be similarly reconstructed?

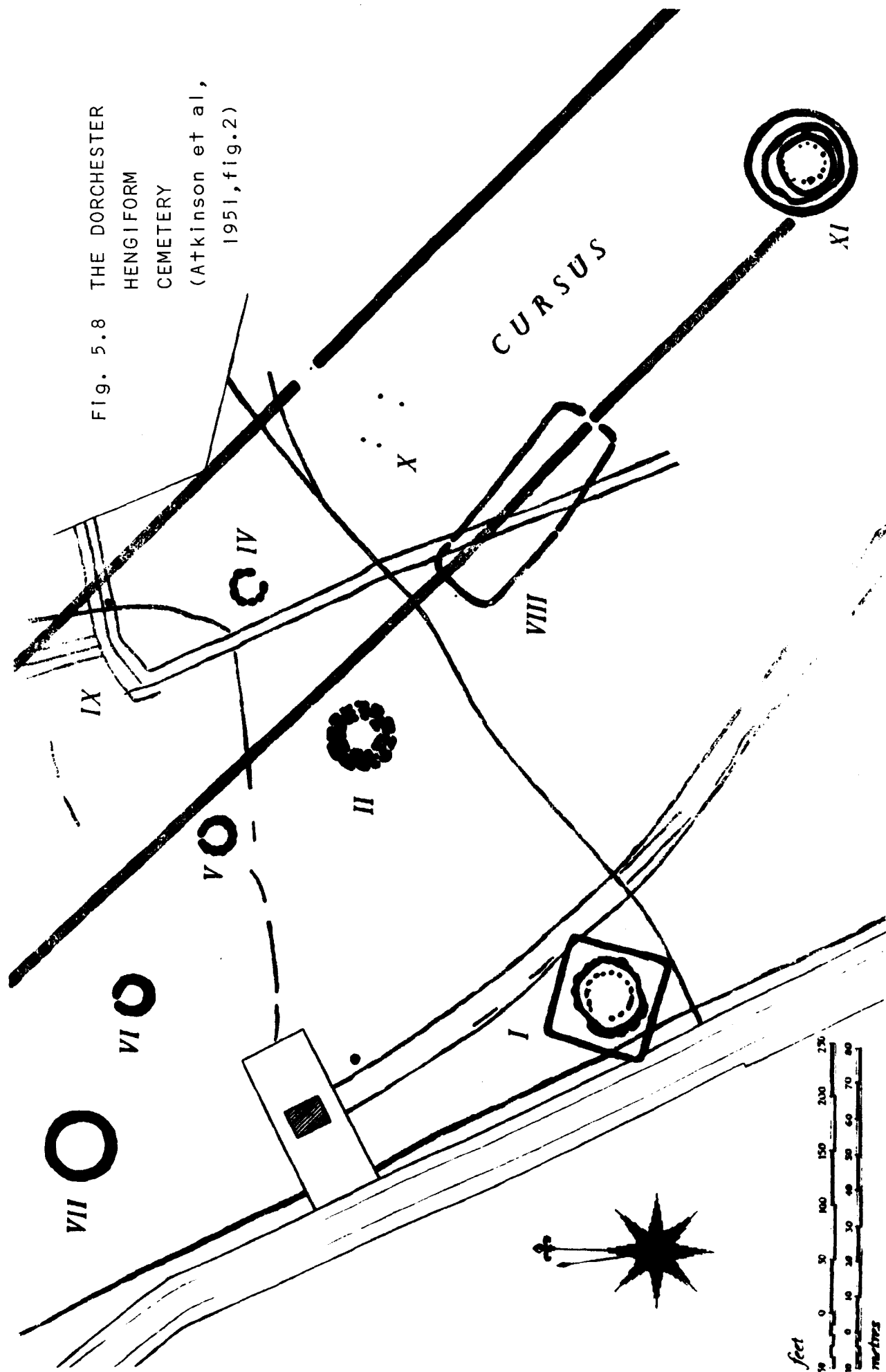
Significantly most of the cremations in their central areas were placed concentrically with their ditches implying that these were still obvious features, yet those placed actually in the ditch silts were confined to the uppermost layers. This resembles both the pattern revealed within the small ring ditch to the south east and the location of secondary cremations in Early Bronze Age barrows. Cremations higher in the conjectured mounds would of course have been removed by ploughing. Low mounds of the sort which survived within penannular ditched sites 2 and 9 on Crichel Down are possible (Piggott & Piggott 1944; 64-6, 71-2).

Sites IV-VI may then represent late elements in the history of the Dorchester hengiform cemetery and be related directly to the cursus, like the small ring ditches to the SE. A common mounded form is possible and perhaps best explains the construction of a bell barrow containing Early Bronze Age cremations in alignment with them; if they simply represented small ring banks it is difficult to explain their influence on this much later barrow.

The cemetery may then have developed in the following manner:

1. Oblong ditch (site VIII)
2. Multiditched hengiform sites II & XI aligned on VIII
3. Site I (Mortlake and Grooved ware) supersedes site XI (Ebbsfleet ware) now mounded
4. Cursus constructed - aligned on XI and VIII
5. Site IV constructed within cursus
6. Sites V and VI constructed to align on both IV and II, VIII and XI
7. Site VII constructed as the final element in the linear cemetery.

Fig. 5.8 THE DORCHESTER
HENGIFORM
CEMETERY
(Atkinson et al,
1951, fig.2)

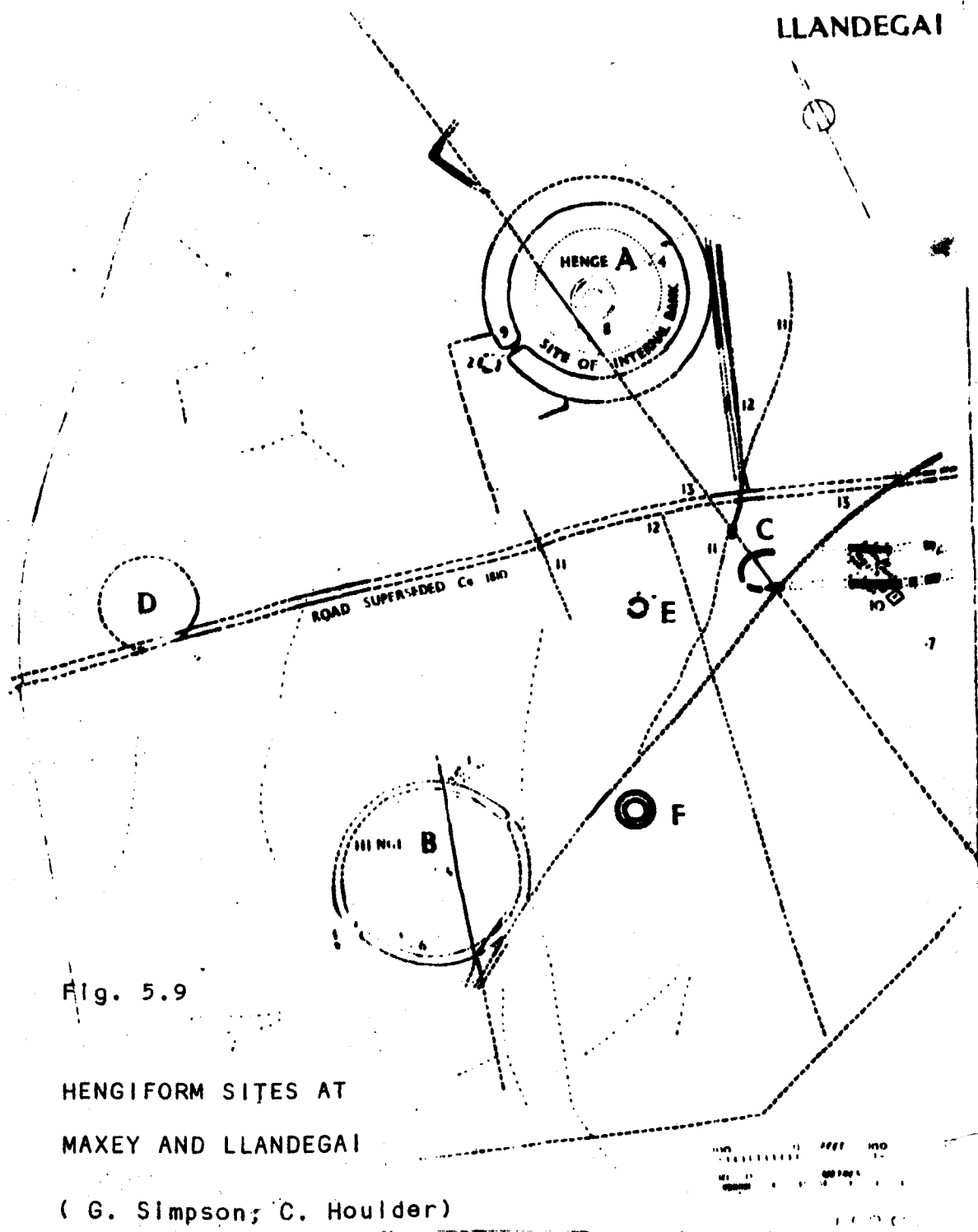
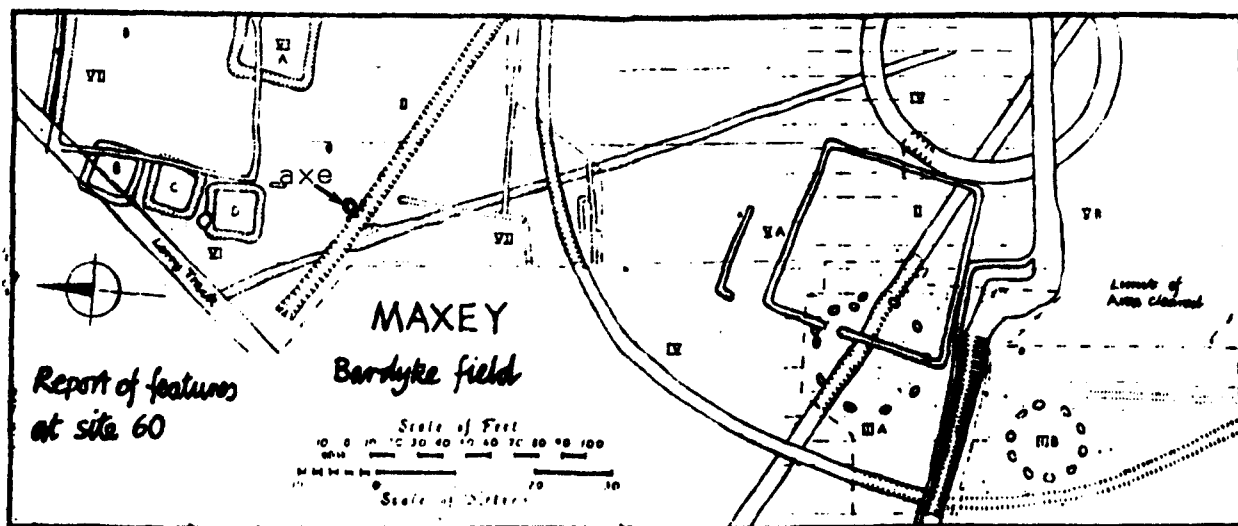


Such a tentative sequence would place an open, multiditched hengiform outside the cursus confines (site I), in the fashion noted at Aston, Fornham, etc, and explain the incorporation of site XI - as a mounded feature like the ring ditch near the Aston terminal. The final delineation of site I by a square ditch owes much to cursus influence and emphasises its late date.

As for the small penannular hengiform sites, they appear to be coeval with small ring ditches and probably represent simply late survivals in this area of a Later Neolithic pattern of monument construction. Unlike the multi-ditched sites these may have been mounded from the outset, or just conceivably post circles like that near the centre of the Dorchester cursus; individual ditch segments perhaps resulting from the digging out of timbers prior to restructuring (NB remains of timbers on site IV Dorchester - Atkinson et al, 1951, 39).

The final type of hengiform site - small continuously ditched monuments clearly emulating henge plans - can be associated with the cursus at Amesbury (Fargo Plantation) and the elongated linear enclosure ("cursus") at Llandegai (site E). A fragment of Fengate ware came from the secondary ditch silts of the former, with a Foodvessel and Developed Beaker together in the central grave. Along with the radiocarbon date of $1510 \pm 65\text{bc}$ (GrN 1685) from a similar hengiform site at City Farm Harborough, this suggests a later date for these sites than those under discussion above.

Whether open cremation cemeteries acting as necessary concomitants to cursuses or early barrows, attracted in much the same way as later ring ditches and round barrows, these hengiform sites cannot be considered merely chance neighbours of the much more massive linear monuments.



3. Long barrows and long mortuary enclosures

These are jointly considered here owing to the striking similarity of their configuration viz a viz cursuses and the difficulty of differentiation on extensively ploughed gravel subsoils (chapter 7).

Although these sites occur in conjunction with a similar proportion of cursuses to hengiform sites the nature of the relationship is more direct. In virtually every case they have been either structurally incorporated or spatially integrated into an apparent overall cursus scheme - extending either transverse or longitudinal alignments.

Two basic configurations occur in the immediate vicinity of cursuses: alignment along the edge of the cursus (incorporated in the bank or ditch), and at right angles to it (inside or outside its confines). No examples exist of the incorporation of randomly sited long barrows; the very small oval mortuary enclosure/barrow placed within the cursus at Maxey, but aligned at an angle to it, appears to have been a late feature related rather to the henge entrance (Pryor, 1982b).

In several cases (Gussage St. Michael III; Pentridge IV and Dorchester VIII) some pains seem to have been taken to integrate long barrows/long mortuary enclosures according to these basic principles. At Dorchester the fact that the cursus ditch is aligned on the long mortuary enclosure but then changes direction as it crosses its interior establishes the focal importance of the site, and in Dorset the desire to incorporate the Pentridge IV long barrow appears to have caused a sinuous realignment of the cursus between its Wyke Down and Bokerley Down terminals. The transverse alignment of the Gussage St. Michael III long barrow across the interior of the cursus there remains for the moment unique, unless the large ovate ditch similarly placed within the Aston cursus is considered cognate (pl. 4:3).

Elsewhere transversely aligned sites are associated with cursus terminals - Barford, Amesbury, Pentridge II a/b, Gussage St. Michael I & II. It is quite possible that Gussage St. Michael III was in fact initially planned as the NE terminal of the Gussage cursus; a late decision to approach from the NE as well as the SW may have led to construction proceeding from Wyke Down also, and resulted in a misalignment of the two sections of cursus.

The Pentridge and Gussage cursuses are also alone in possessing long barrows set beside the monuments but aligned on their terminal banks. Their location at the extremities of this double cursus system, but not at its central junction has led to the suggestion that they postdate its construction (Bradley in Barrett et al, 1981). The late date for the Alfriston long barrow (2360 ± 110 bc HAR91) which in size resembles Gussage St. Michael I encourages the idea but these alignments may give a false impression of being cursus orientated: Gussage St. Michael IV on Gussage Hill is aligned on long barrow III in the centre of the cursus in the same manner as are barrows I and II at the Thickthorn terminal. Pentridge II a/b (possibly initially separate barrows) appears similarly to be pointed towards the Bokerley terminal bank yet realignment of the final 250 metres of the cursus after a straight course of 3,500 metres is only reasonably explicable in terms of its alignment with this double barrow rather than vice versa. The entire cursus system can then be explained in terms of a link between the crest orientated long barrows of the region, incorporating en route the Pentridge IV long barrow. Survival of the SW terminal of the Gussage cursus on Thickthorn Down provides a probable explanation for the pattern - its considerable bulk has the appearance of a further long barrow extending the alignment of Gussage St. Michael I and II (pl 2:5).

At Barford the transversely aligned long mortuary enclosure appears actually

to have formed the southern terminal of the cursus there but excavation and aerial photographs taken under optimum conditions have revealed a separate terminal ditch running beside it (pl. 4:1). The comparably aligned Amesbury 42 long barrow is distance by 62m from its cursus terminal. Only one further example of this practice can be quoted - that at the southern end of the North Stoke linear ditches (Case, 1982a). Lack of a terminal ditch to separate these from the open ended long mortuary enclosure that closes them at right angles points to the probability of a different structural form. Other evidence supports the contention and argues that the site was of bank barrow type. It serves to link cursus and bank barrow forms and supports the evidence of common association established for hengiform monuments.

Other more distantly placed long barrows/long mortuary enclosures appear to be aligned in common with cursuses, or aimed at their terminals, but the patterning may be partially fortuitous. Nominal common alignments link the short "long mortuary enclosure" and cursus at Springfield (300m apart); the "long mortuary enclosure" and cursus at Charlecote (1.3km apart); and the Winterbourne Stoke 53 long barrow and the Amesbury cursus (1.75km apart but clearly inter-visible). Long mortuary enclosures also have the appearance of being tangentially aligned on the cursus terminals at Sonning and Stratford St. Mary (respectively 200 and 300 metres distant), as does the Pentridge I long barrow on the Bokerley terminal (400m away). An ovate ditch of possible "long mortuary enclosure" type is aligned approximately parallel to the Benson cursus. Whether the Springfield and Benson sites represent long mortuary enclosures or encircling ditch multiple round barrows is, however, open to debate.

The Rudston long barrow and the small cropmark long barrow at Drayton furnish examples of such sites apparently quite unrelated to their neighbouring

cursuses: both lie at distances in excess of 800m and on quite opposed orientations, in the former case to both cursuses B and C.

Close long barrow/long mortuary enclosure association is limited at present to Wessex and the Thames and Avon valleys. Here the pattern of structural incorporation contrasts with the distancing noted at Cardington, Stratford St. Mary, and Springfield. It would be rash to assume from this that the cursuses in these regions are necessarily earlier in date, since both are also linked with hengiform sites. More significant than the implications for date are the indications that these enclosed long barrows provide of cursus function.

With only one exception all are incorporated on the cursus periphery and can therefore have fulfilled no focal ritual function.

4. Cursuses

Other cursuses occur within a 1km radius of twelve sites. They clearly represent intersecting, conjoined or spatially related elements in ritual complexes; even the most distantly separated sites - Amesbury and Winterbourne Stoke - are noticeably on approximate shared alignments.

In only two cases though does one cursus directly extend another - Gussage/Pentridge and Sutton Courtenay/Drayton A and B - and in the latter case the actual junction is to be doubted (see descriptive register). It is significant that the two Dorset sites have identical terminal forms whereas at other complexes contrasting terminals are evident. A measure of chronological distancing may be indicated by this and associated with realignment.

5. Causewayed enclosures

Cropmark causewayed enclosures lie within a 1km radius of only three sites: Fornham All Saints, Maxey and Offerton (Hasting Hill). The relationship appears in each case to be strikingly direct, at least in spatial terms, with cursuses aligned straight toward or across the causewayed enclosures. Although both the Fornham and Offerton enclosures are atypical (the first because of its appended enclosure, the second because of its limited number of causeways) there seems no good reason to doubt their interpretation (Palmer, 1976; Newman, 1976). The Etton enclosure on the other hand has produced abundant evidence of its Neolithic date (Pryor, 1982a).

The configuration of cursus and causewayed enclosure at Fornham All Saints is strikingly similar to that of bank barrow and causewayed camp at Maiden Castle, and direct alignment at the other sites is unlikely to have been fortuitous. On analogy with Maiden Castle a monumental, commemorative purpose might be inferred.

6. Henges

Burl (1969, 9) has pointed to the frequent association of multiple henges with a cursus, citing Maxey, Dorchester, Llandegai, Thornborough and Amesbury as examples. The effect of detaching the smaller Maxey and Dorchester sites under the hengiform label reduces the frequency of the correlation, however, as does the exclusion of the Llandegai site from the cursus category proper. This would seem to strengthen his conclusion of accidental juxtapositioning in areas of intensive activity or particular sanctity.

Three sites stand out from the rest though - Thornborough, Dorchester and Maxey. It is difficult not to accept that the location of these major henges over or immediately adjacent to cursuses was deliberate, despite the distancing indicated by stratigraphic or artefactual evidence. The fully silted cursus

ditches which underlay the Thornborough and Maxey henges may give a false indication of monument abandonment and loss (cf the flanking configuration of ring ditches beside the SE arm of the Maxey cursus). Banks set back from ditches or low axial mounds; turf walls, hedge lines or stake fences; deturfed or gravelled interiors would leave little or no trace in the archaeological record after a millenium or so of cultivation.

The near central location of these henges relative to their respective cursuses is echoed, though more distantly, by Stonehenge and the Maiden's Grave henge at Rudston. In fact no henge placed within the immediate orbit of a cursus lies in axial alignment with it or near one of its terminals; Woodhenge which appears on a map to be aligned with the Amesbury cursus lies in fact 1.3km away and completely out of sight. The relationship differs from that with causewayed enclosures therefore and might be taken to indicate a successive or complementary purpose. Opposed henge causeway and cursus alignments at the two imposed sites - Thornborough and Maxey - makes it most improbable that the earlier linear monuments were adapted to perform an avenue function. Iconclastic slighting is conceivable.

7. Stone circles

Cursuses A and B at Holywood, Dumfries lie respectively 200 and 600m from the Twelve Apostles stone circle, the fifth largest site of its kind in the British Isles and a member of Burl's open circle group (1976, 36, 103). The pattern of shared characteristics linking henges with circles of this type is exemplified by comparison with the features of the Broadlee henge seventeen miles to the east. In the absence of further examples of cursus/stone circle association the spatial patterning here might then be best compared with that noted for henges.

Unlike the common midpoint cursus/henge configuration, the stone circle lies in alignment with cursus B and flanking the terminal of cursus A, separated only by a shallow dry valley. The placing of the tallest circle stones at ENE and WNW finds no echo in the orientation of the cursuses but a possible entrance gap at the SE would run broadly parallel to the alignment of cursus A. The apparent focal significance of this circle, in contrast to henges elsewhere, may indicate an early date not far removed from that of southern causewayed enclosures (cf Stenness 2356 \pm 65bc:SRR 350).

In many respects the complex at Holywood finds closest parallel at Llandegai (although the "cursus" there has been reclassified on dimensional grounds) - both have linear sites with broadly rounded Ai terminals, both have a circle or henge flanking a "cursus" terminal and both lie near the sea at the local interface of highland and lowland zones.

8. Standing stones

Whilst the distant stone at Kinalty cannot be considered significant, the almost equally distant Cuckoo Stone at Amesbury interestingly stands on higher land along the projected axis of the cursus towards Woodhenge. Of a quite different dimensional order are the Heel Stone and Rud Stone. The former lies near the midpoint of the cursus, and may be of similar age, but was foremost a feature of the phase I henge.

The Rudston monolith, however, lies offcentre in a presumed box created by cursuses A-D and was clearly of major importance, even if not focally related to any of the sites. No parallels exist but the position of the Twelve Apostles stone circle beside (or between?) cursuses A and B at Holywood provides perhaps the best analogy. The presence of an apparent length of bank and ditch running around part of the churchyard at Rudston could represent the sole surviving traces of an encircling henge, within which the Rud stone was a central feature (Kinnes pers. comm).

The structural associations of cursuses are emphatically mortuary-long barrows/long mortuary enclosures, hengiform sites and small ring ditches - and the local focussing effect of these linear monuments on ring ditch/round barrow cemetery development further emphasises this purpose. Cursuses were clearly not adjuncts of these sites however: long barrows/long mortuary enclosures were slighted or spatially incorporated at outer margins whilst multiple ditched hengiform sites were almost exclusively set somewhat apart. Small ring ditches and small penannular hengiform sites alone seem to have played a more direct role as components of cursus architecture.

Larger monuments appear to have stood in an ancestral or successive relationship: causewayed enclosures when placed within 1 kilometre of cursuses clearly influenced their alignment, just as in several cases cursuses appear to have determined the location of henges.

Encroachment is evident but far less frequent than might be predicted if random placement of ring ditches within dense cemetery groupings is presumed, and probably relates in most cases to deliberate placing. Since there are no direct indications that cursuses were constructed for processional purposes such encroachments, like long mounds over earlier mortuary structures and round barrows on long barrows or henge banks, may have been intended rather to draw power from earlier sanctified sites.

CHAPTER VI

ELONGATED DITCHES:
CHARACTERISTICS, DEFINITION AND DATING

The earlier subdivision of cursuses into Major and Minor groupings excluded at the outset several claimed cursus sites which, by virtue either of modest length or width, seemed inappropriate as monuments of that type. These relegated cursuses can be placed amongst the many similar cropmark sites of small size that comprise the lower group of the cursus size continuum. These are to be found principally in the river valleys of the Midlands and East Anglia. Only in the Warwickshire Avon valley is there sufficient local similarity for them to have been jointly grouped with minor cursuses; here Webster and Hobley termed them jointly "cursus type enclosures" (1964, 5-7). Elsewhere the size dichotomy is greater or plans more varied so a range of titles have been employed: ovoid enclosures (Edwards, 1976, 263-4); small elongated oval enclosures (Priddy, 1981, 89); rectangular and oval enclosures (Hedges, 1980, 27); long enclosures (Hedges and Buckley, 1981, 15); and most importantly long mortuary enclosures (Atkinson, 1951) - the term used for them until this point.

Scrutiny of published plans and aerial photographs reveals that oval, trapezoidal and rectangular forms exist, linked by shared aspects of ditch morphology, notably apparent care taken with ditch layout, "terminal" plans exactly comparable to those of cursus sites, and a degree of elongation that would render a domestic interpretation implausible. Although it is only with the parallel sided sites that we are strictly concerned here (these alone were used to construct fig. 3.1) common features necessitate initial examination of all sites of this type. To avoid confusion a single term is required that carries no implication of date, structure or function (as does "long mortuary enclosure") nor of geometric shape (as say oval enclosure). The term ELONGATED DITCH will

be used therefore - the term "ditch" being used in the same manner as in ring ditch and "elongated" merely to refer to proportions of 1:2 or more.

A. CHARACTERISTICS

I Excavated cropmark sites

Eight cropmark sites have been excavated, seven of them extensively: Dorchester VIII (Atkinson, 1951), North Stoke (Case, 1982a), Douglassmuir (Kendrick, 1981), Llandegai (Houlder, 1968), Bow Brickhill (Loveday & Petchey, 1982), Charlecote (Ford, 1969), Fengate (Mahany, 1969), Barford (S. Ball and M. Card pers. comm). Their plans are set out in fig. 6.1. Although appearing to represent a rather heterogeneous collection they are of broadly comparable size; Llandegai is an exception but appears simply to represent an enormous linear extension of sites like those at North Stoke and Barford. With one exception they possess the common characteristic of an encircling or U shape ditch. Douglassmuir is atypically defined by close set, almost contiguous pits nearly 1m in diameter which excavation revealed ^{to have} originally held posts 0.6m in diameter and set 0.35m deep. It is also unusual in possessing a septum. This may have been an earlier terminal to judge from constrictions in the lateral post lines at this point and the comparable size of septum and terminal posts (Kendrick, 1981). A two phase enclosure can therefore be envisaged, with each unit of approximately similar size to the Barford enclosure. All sites were clearly of non utilitarian purpose.

The ditches defining seven of the eight sites varied little in size - most were between 1.5 and 2.0m in width, with only the Bow Brickhill ditches being consistently some 3 metres in width. Here and at North Stoke there was evidence that the ditches had been recut. At the former this applied only to three sides of the site and appears to relate to its later inclusion in a larger enclosure (Loveday & Petchey, 1982) but at the latter two phases of recutting

Fig. 6.1 EXCAVATED ELONGATED DITCHES - CROPMARK SITES

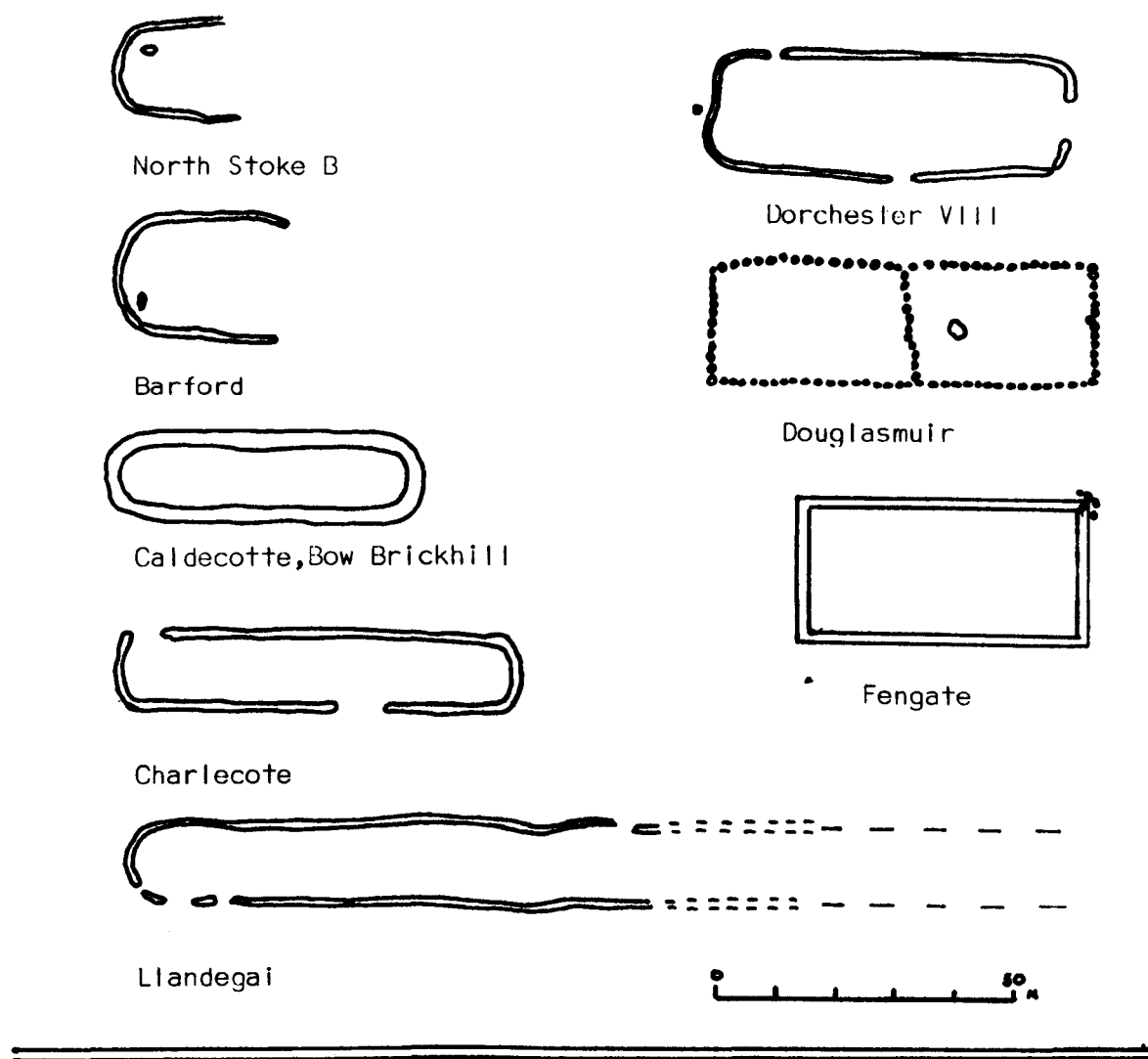
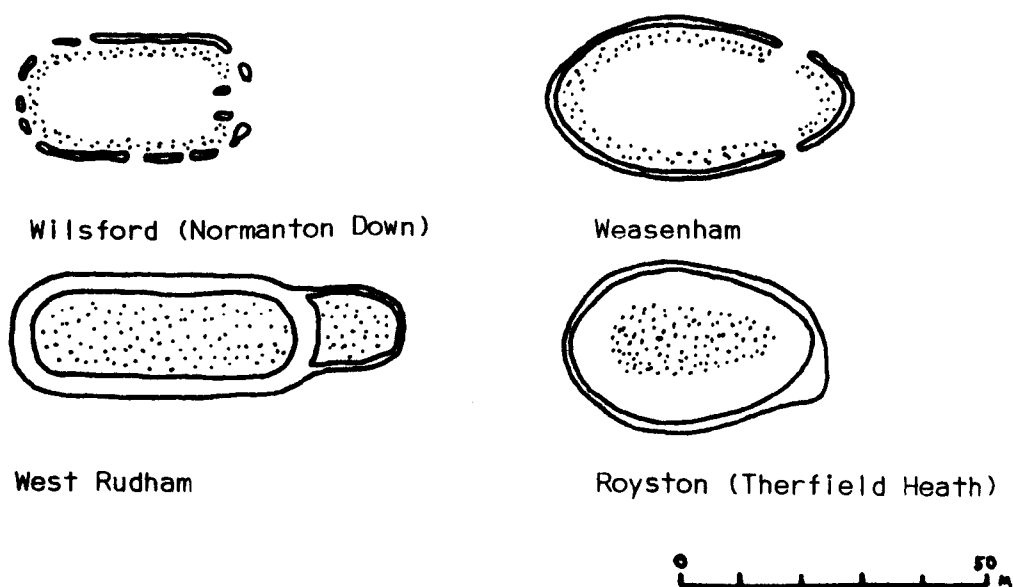


Fig. 6.2 EXCAVATED ELONGATED DITCHES - EARTHWORK SITES



were evident throughout the ditch circuit (Case, 1982a, fig. 37, 66-68). The first phase involved ditch scouring and then infilling with clean material (postulated to have derived from the enclosure bank); the second, minimal re-cutting to redefine the ditch line as a shallow trench. Elsewhere secondary phases of activity were evidenced by large post holes cutting the primary and secondary ditch silts at Charlecote and Fengate: at the former two large posts were set at the butt ends of the ditch on opposite sides of the central causeway and at Fengate three close set posts extended from four external ones towards the ditch centre. The purpose of the latter is obscure.

Ditch sections indicate silting substantially from the interiors of all sites except Bow Brickhill. Dorchester VIII, which was intersected by the cursus ditch, was clearly an open site, and banks rather than mounds can be adduced at North Stoke and Barford (substantial posts needing above ground support were placed 1-2 metres from the inner ditch edges), and at Fengate (no parallels exist for a mound within such a precisely rectangular ditch). At Charlecote though interruptions in the line of medieval plough furrows crossing the site indicated the former presence of a mound (Ford, 1968) and at Llandegai the enclosed area seems too small to have adequately accommodated banks flanking a worthwhile open area.

In plan all the sites under discussion approximate to rectangular form, although this only has geometric precision at Fengate. Terminal forms equate convincingly with those of the cursus series: Fengate is of typical Bi type, Charlecote Bii and Llandegai, North Stoke and Barford of Ai/Aii. The Fengate site in fact finds its closest parallels in the cursus series, being almost certainly cognate with the more extended Barnach site just 15km (9 miles) away. Causeways, comparably placed to those in cursuses, were interestingly present at similar points in the long sides of Dorchester VIII and Charlecote,

but were of markedly different size. The principal causeway at Dorchester lay in the centre of the eastern terminal.

Dateable material came from the ditches of all but two sites: Ebbsfleet ware from the secondary ditch silts at Dorchester; Mortlake sherds from the comparable silts at Charlecote, with Grooved ware in the upper levels; plain buff ware of Western Neolithic type from secondary levels at Barford; a developed Southern Beaker sherd (S2) from the topmost levels of the Fengate ditch; and 1st century BC/AD pottery from the recut phase at Bow Brickhill. In addition three radiocarbon dates are available: $2870 \pm 55\text{bc}$ (no reference given) Douglasmuir; $2722 \pm 49\text{bc}$ (BM 1405) for the linear ditches postdating the North Stoke enclosure; and for wood samples from the unrecut ditch at Bow Brickhill $43 \pm 110\text{ad}$ (HAR 5614). Reasons have already been given for dating site VIII Dorchester to c2500bc and the Southern Beaker sherd overlying the filled ditch at Fengate probably points to a date for its construction of c2000bc. Although neither chronometric artefacts nor dateable organic material derived from the Llandegai ditches the spatial arrangement of the entire complex, for which radiocarbon dates are available, allows a tentative date to be proposed. The position of the linear monument between two henges seems purposeful and suggests that it was either the primary site around which they were placed or a late addition. The latter necessitates acceptance of a date after c1800bc ($1790 \pm 145\text{bc}$: NPL 222 - for cremations deposited just outside the entrance to henge B), whereas the former would place its construction prior to c2500bc ($2530 \pm 145\text{bc}$: NPL 224 for cremated bone and charcoal in a hengiform feature immediately outside the entrance to henge A) and less certainly before c2800bc ($2790 \pm 150\text{bc}$: NPL 220 for a fire trough considered primary to the henge bank). Dates before 2500 or 2800 equate most convincingly with those from the morphologically allied North Stoke and Dorchester sites.

Tenuous though much of it is, the dating evidence points to a common origin of the pit/post defined group and the convex (type A) terminalled form in the Earlier Neolithic, with the precisely rectangular Bi form restricted to the Latest Neolithic. It may be possible to detect an incipient tendency to a flattening of terminals c2500bc (cf Dorchester VIII and Charlecote). This agrees well with the development proposed for sites in the cursus series but a range of earlier third millenium dates for convex and square ended long barrows advises caution regarding dating by shape typology alone. Bow Brickhill dramatically emphasises this (fig. 6.5).

Several additional features link the sites of Earlier Neolithic date, however: single substantial posts stood within three of the enclosures (Barford, North Stoke and Douglasmuir); two are respectively set across the ends of a cursus and a bank barrow (Barford and North Stoke), and another is incorporated in a cursus ditch line (Dorchester); four are adjacent to hengiform sites (North Stoke, Barford, Dorchester, Llandegai) and two have ring ditches or hengiforms aligned on each terminal (Charlecote and Dorchester).

II Earthwork sites

The foregoing review of the evidence obtained by excavation from cropmark elongated ditches indicates the relatively slight nature of the ditches that define the sites and the two alternative structural forms taken - embanked or mounded. With these features in mind it is possible to point to four excavated sites that would, if totally eroded by ploughing, produce cropmarks of elongated ditch type. Significantly two are enclosures - Wilsford (Normanton Down) and Weasenham - and two are long barrows - West Rudham and Royston (fig. 6.1). Their ditch plans can be characterised as oblong and ovate, although the circuits at West Rudham and Royston were not traced in their entirety (Hogg, 1940; Phillips 1935b).

Ditch size varied somewhat: the Royston and Wilsford ditches, and that of the "annex" at West Rudham were only 1.0-1.5m in width but the Weasenham and main West Rudham ditches were wider (2.4 metres at the former and 3 metres at the latter). In depth the long barrow ditches were deeper: 1 metre at West Rudham and 1.5-2.0m at Royston as against 0.3/0.5 at Weasenham and 0.5/1.0 at Wilsford.

Only the Wilsford (Normanton Down) ditch can be characterised as causewayed although two slight causeways were located at West Rudham. Main entrance causeways existed at the centre of the eastern end of the Wilsford enclosure and opposed gaps were recorded in the banks at Weasenham (Puddy: unpublished sketch; Norfolk SM Record 3661).

Despite the fundamental differences of their internal earthwork structure these encircling ditches differed little; the only apparent effect of barrows within two of them was to create a slightly wider ditch at West Rudham and rather deeper one at Royston. Investigation of the barrows at each of these sites provides an explanation for their relatively modest ditch sizes - the mounds were constructed almost entirely of turf (Hogg, 1940, fig. 2; Phillips, 1935b, fig. 3). Material derived from the ditches was utilized purely as capping, a point confirmed by Hogg's calculations at West Rudham (Hogg, 1940, 323).

The only wooden structure discovered during excavation of these sites were two parallel three post settings just within the entrance causeway at Wilsford. This and the square clay floored feature at the centre of the Charlecote site will be returned to during discussion of long mortuary enclosures. An area of fire reddened sand within the mound at West Rudham perhaps represented a platform cremation and two stone cists containing cremated bones and a disarticulated burial on the axial line of the Royston barrow were recorded by Nunn (Phillips, 1935b, 101).

In terms of date the long barrows are unimpeachably Neolithic and, despite the lack of dateable artefacts beyond a single small Peterborough sherd from the Wilsford ditch, a radiocarbon date of $2560 \pm 103\text{bc}$ (BM 505) has been obtained for the enclosure. No finds were made in the sections cut across the Weasenham ditch but a single Beaker coarseware sherd and a burnt clay fragment led the excavator to consider the possibility of a Beaker date for the site (Peterson, 1972, 35).

III Definition

It is possible then from this evidence to provide a working definition of elongated ditch sites against which putative cropmark sites can be tested.

They are characterised by encircling or U shaped ditches of moderate width (1-3 metres) and even, non quarry form, or by pits. They enclose areas not in excess of 30 metres in width but on occasions of enormous length. Not all are necessarily of Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date.

B. CLASSIFICATION

I Plan

Whilst shared morphological features point to the probability of broadly common purpose those sites demanding consideration as elongated ditches are too heterogeneous to represent a single acceptable cropmark type. Subdivision is necessary in order to establish the varied forms represented and to assess their relationship both to the excavated sites just under discussion and to cursuses.

Shape classification - the only obvious approach - must be consistently based on fixed ditch line features, however, if it is to have any value. Confusion has too often arisen over the description of parallel sided sites with convex

"terminals" as oval. Terminal plan appears to have varied through time and may, therefore, have some validity as a dating mechanism but not as a basis for primary classification. This can only be based on ditch shape along the flanks of a site - parallel, bowed or tapering. As a means of primary subdivision this has the advantage of correlating with the classification employed for long barrow (fig. 6.3) (Smith, 1979, xxi). Like these elongated ditches resolve themselves into oval, trapezoidal and rectangular types. Since few are truly geometric in shape the less precise terms ovate, trapeziform and oblong are proposed for use with the purely descriptive term "ditch". This terminology also has the advantage of avoiding confusion with utilitarian "rectilinear enclosures".

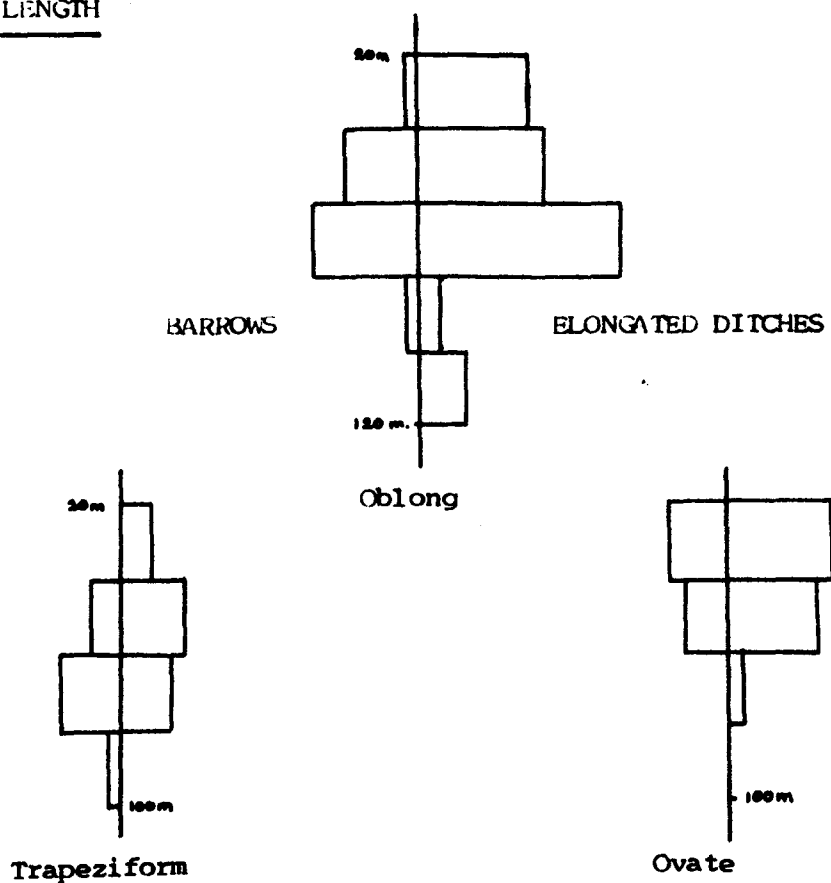
A degree of subjectivity is obviously involved in designation of form - at what point does slight divergence from parallel plan become sufficiently marked to demand reclassification? That these are nonetheless relatively cohesive groups is indicated by figures 6.4 and the 1:2500 plots (figs. XVII - XIV).

Ovate and trapeziform groups tend to cluster at widths of 25-35m, beyond the average range of the oblong group, yet rarely exceed base proportions of 1:2. Oblong ditches on the other hand exhibit a marked tendency to elongation. Total separation of the oblong group is not possible though as a number of short oblong ditches cluster as a small group at or below 50m in length and have proportions not in excess of 1:2. These may well be akin to the less easily differentiated ovate and trapeziform ditches and will be termed "short oblong ditches" to distinguish them from the main series.

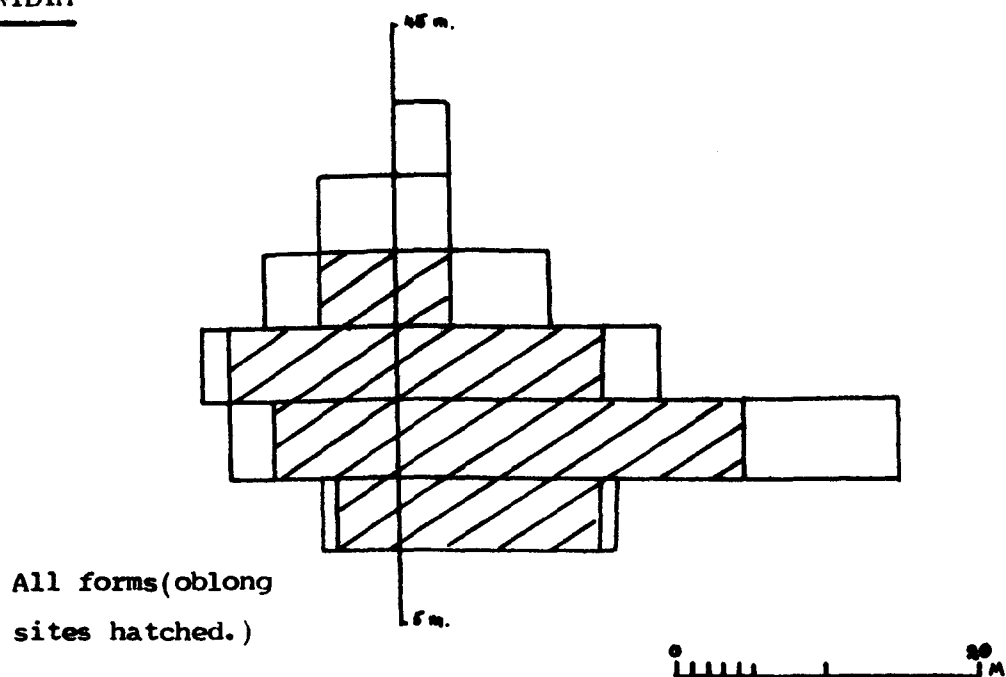
A further subdivision of the oblong group is necessitated by the few sites of extreme proportions that exist at the top of the range. Most pronounced are those with proportions of 1:6 or more and which exceed 130m in length, but

Fig 6.3 ELONGATED DITCHES AND LONG BARROWS : COMPARATIVE
DIMENSIONS FOR OBLONG, TRAPEZIFORM AND OVATE FORMS.
(Long barrows from Hants. survey : Smith 1979)

A) LENGTH



B) WIDTH



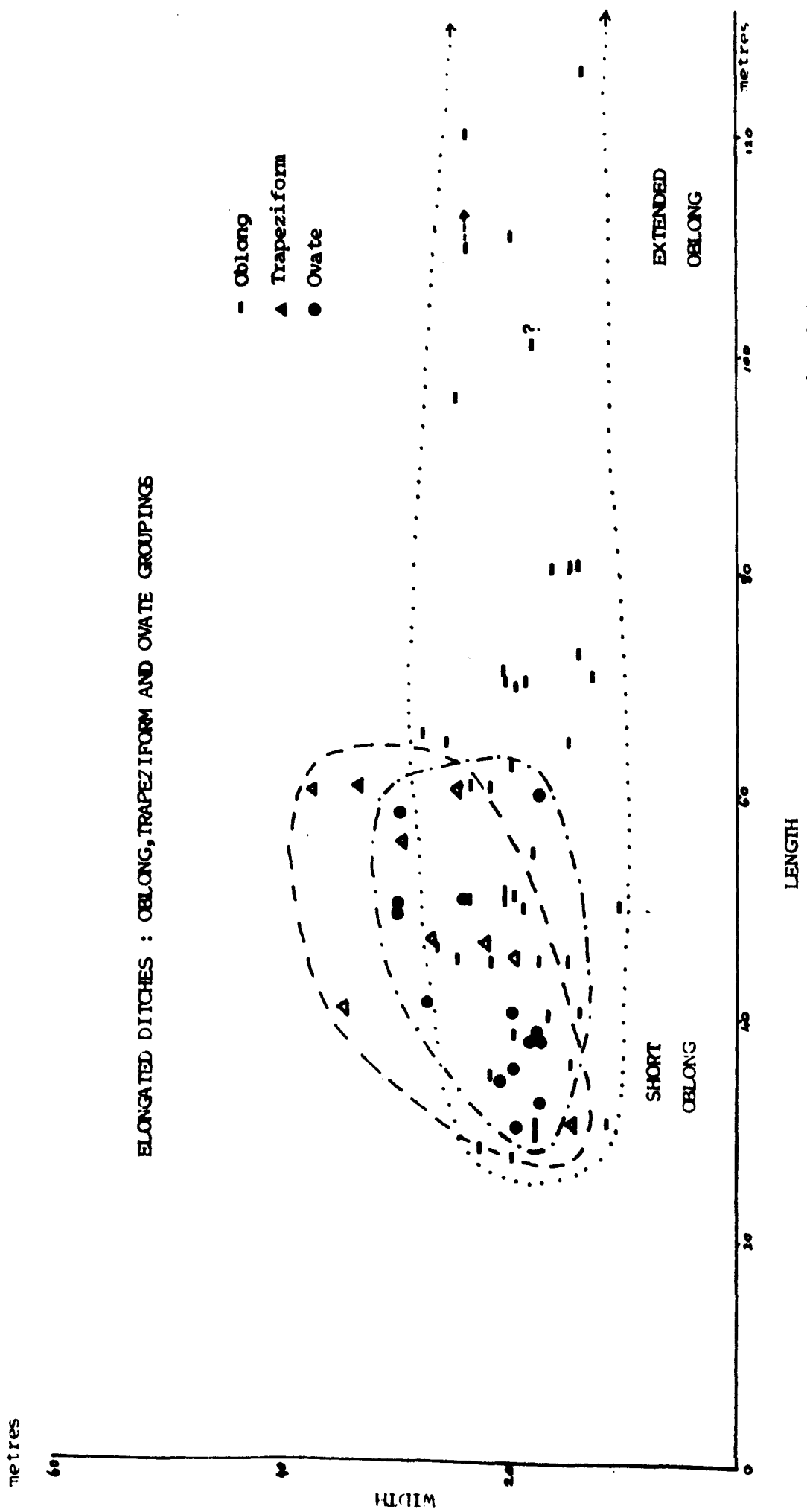


Fig. 6.4

fig. 6.4 points to the additional sites of Barnack (118m) and Stratford St. Mary (110m), that are detached from the principal clustering and are clearly better placed amongst the extended sites. This group includes those sites earlier removed from the minor cursus category (Llandegai and North Stoke) on account of their unusually narrow size. Although often differing greatly in length from the normative range of oblong ditches the sites in question are otherwise indistinguishable: they share the same repertoire of terminal plans and ditch types, and most importantly are of exactly comparable width. It is clear then that they represent simply a linear extension of normal oblong ditch form rather than a miniaturization of the cursus tradition proper. They will therefore be referred to as "extended oblong ditches".











The link of sort that clearly exists between cursuses and oblong ditches makes this group the most potentially fruitful for study.

II Terminal type

"Terminal" may seem an inappropriate term for the ends of a ditch encircling a quite short site but it does have greater validity when applied to more elongated oblong ditches, particularly those of extended type, and there are obvious advantages in using a common terminology for the ends of both elongated ditch and cursus sites; without it comparison and cross referencing becomes extremely cumbersome.

A common classification of terminals has been employed for the same reason: pure convex and squared forms being labelled Ai and Bi with less precise forms carrying Aii and Bii designations. The Biii variant is not represented. An important advantage enjoyed by elongated ditches is the far higher frequency with which both terminals have been located than is the case with cursuses. It is possible therefore to check on the consistency of terminal form by

Fig. 6.5 OBLONG DITCHES AND LONG BARROWS :
MORPHOLOGY AND DATING

		3000bc	2500bc	2000bc	1500bc
OBLONG DITCHES	A	NORTH STOKE B (SOUTHERN ENCLOSURE) TAQ 2722±49 (BM1405) 			
		WILSFORD (NORMANTON DOWN) 2560±103 (BM505) 			
		LLANDEGAI ?  ? (Assumed to antedate henge A)			
	B	DORCHESTER VIII (secondary silts cut by cursus that postdates 2500bc) 			
		DOUGLASMUIR 2870±55 			
		FENGATE (Developed Southern Beaker sherds from upper silts) 			
LONG BARROWS	A	BECKHAMPTON ROAD 2517±90 (506B) 			
		SOUTH STREET 2750±135 (BM 357) 			
	B	KILHAM 2880±125 (BM293) 			
		NUTBANE 2730±150 (BM49) 			

examining both ends of the sites concerned. In only one case is there a noticeable dissimilarity - Witham - elsewhere variations, if evident, are slight and no greater than that revealed at Charlecote where one terminal ditch was more flattened. Terminals can be considered a consistent architectural feature therefore.

The convex terminal forms (Ai/Aii) overwhelmingly dominate, accounting for about 70% of the total sample. In part this is the inevitable consequence of the constants of geometry - it is difficult to accurately lay out a bow side ovate ditch with flattened terminals, although not impossible as the Cavendish site proves. Nonetheless the majority of elongated ditches are of oblong plan where the parallel ditches would lend themselves most readily to squared off terminals of Bi or Bii type, and yet 50% of this group possess clearly bowed terminals of Ai type, and a further 30 or so percent the more flattened Aii form. Whilst terminals of the latter type might equally represent poorly executed attempts at squaring this cannot be claimed for the Ai form.

The dominance of the form may also owe much to the similarity of Bi and Bii oblong ditches to utilitarian Romano British enclosures; that at Fengate was initially interpreted in this manner and those at Cromwell and Charlton would not excite attention were it not for the proximity of ring ditches. This may be a strong repressing factor in the location of isolated sites but insufficient probably to explain the overwhelming predominance of the convex form.

In part this pattern shows regional variations: the convex forms proliferate in East Anglia whereas in the Thames and Avon valleys flattened Aii/Bii forms are more in evidence. The occurrence of both pure types (Ai and Bi) at Cardington warns against too great an emphasis on area trends, however, and suggests rather variations in time for which the slender dating evidence has already been reviewed .

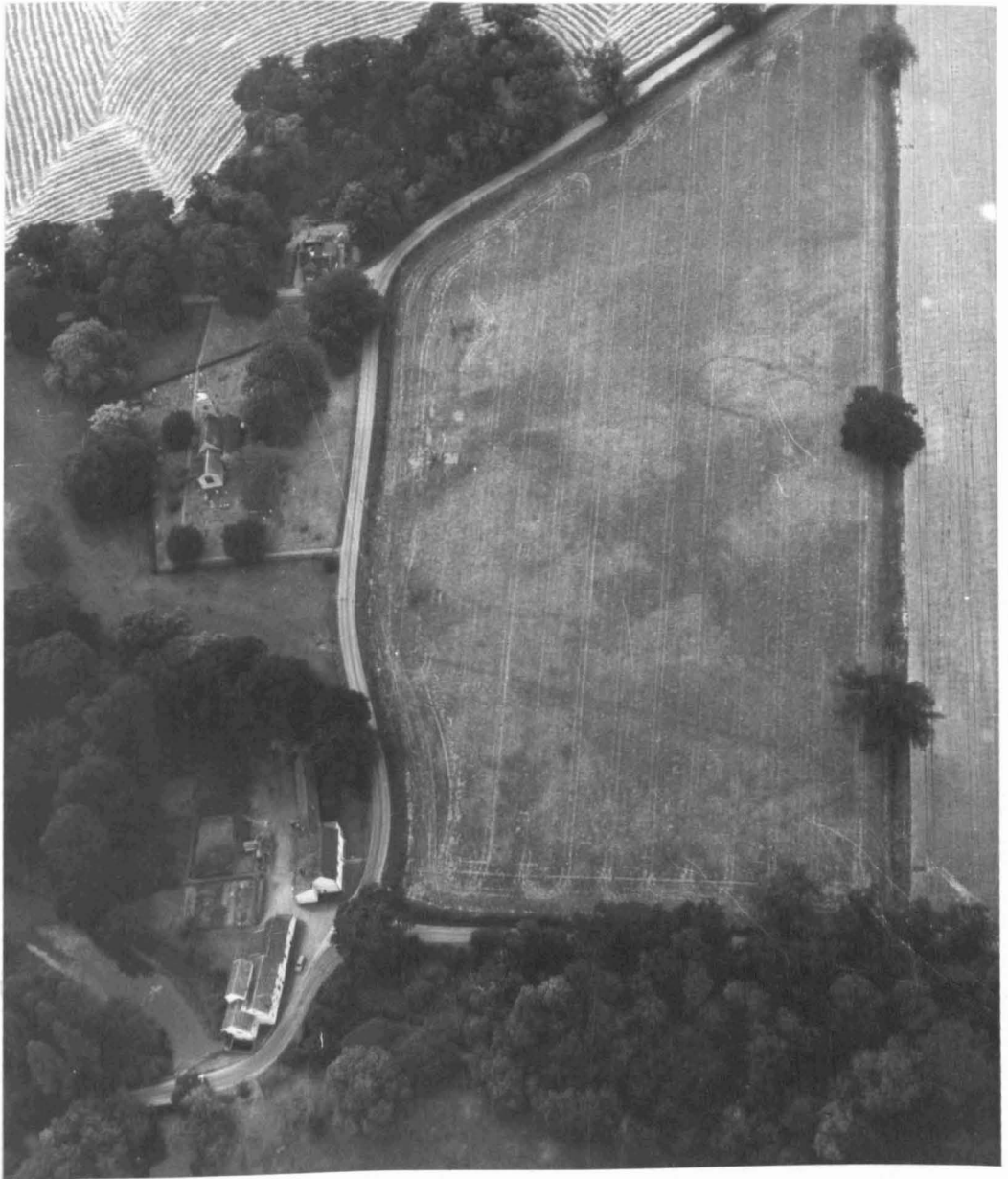
III Ditch types

Whilst ditches of the sites under consideration are all of non quarry type variations in width and regularity are apparent from cropmarks. Irregularity is most marked amongst Ai sites (cf Cardington B and C; North Stoke and Fengate) but not an invariable feature, as the impressively even cropmarks of the Springfield and Feering sites prove despite differences of apparent ditch width of as much as 2 metres. Conversely relatively irregular ditches define some squared terminal sites (eg. Bures St. Mary and Buscot A extended oblong ditches).

The Marlingford trapeziform ditch exemplifies a series of narrow (1-1.5m), evenly ditched sites that are a notable East Anglian feature (pl.6.1). They vary from trapeziform and ovate to short oblong but all possess clearly convex terminals. Resemblance to the Micheldever Wood oval barrow is particularly striking (Fasham, 1975) and at Purley outliers interestingly link this to the East Anglian grouping. They have been claimed as long barrow sites (Edwards, 1978, 92; Lawson, 1982a, 21) but ditch width appears from cropmarks to rarely exceed half that of the West Rudham ditch. Wide irregular quarry ditches appear as cropmarks at only two sites: Pakenham and Eynesbury. In both cases there is evidence of a typical encircling ditch 1.5-2.0 metres wide running between the quarry like extensions. These sites serve to link elongated ditches with more normal long barrow construction techniques.

IV Causeways

Since these are a particular feature of the Wilsford (Normanton Down) and Dorchester long mortuary enclosures they have become accepted as normal components of such sites; designation of the Kettlestone site as a "long mortuary enclosure" appears to have been based largely on this feature. If, however, the grouping of rectangular excavated sites in fig. 6.1 has any



Pl. 6.1 Marlingford : a small trapeziform ditch typifying a series of trapeziform, ovate and short oblong sites in East Anglia probably related to that at Micheldever in Hampshire.

CHARLECOTE NEOLITHIC ENCLOSURE: SITE NO. 71. 1969.

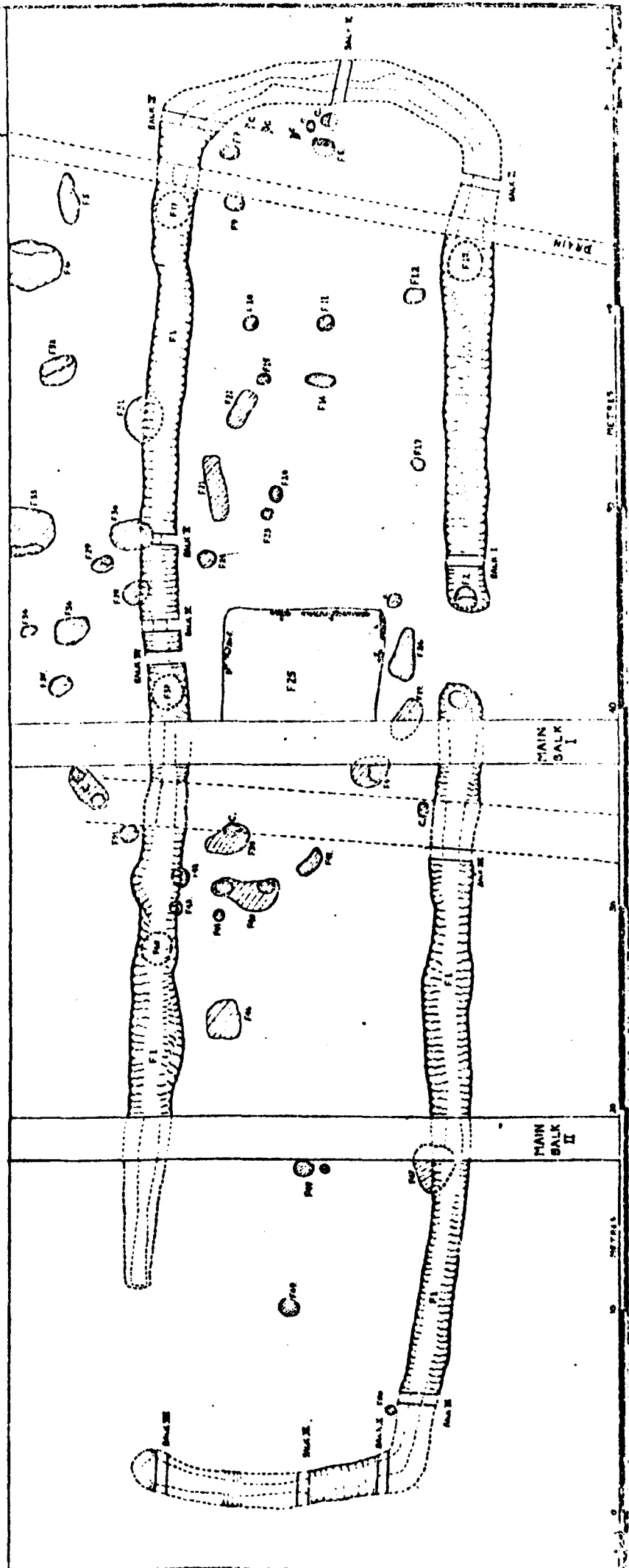


Fig 6.6

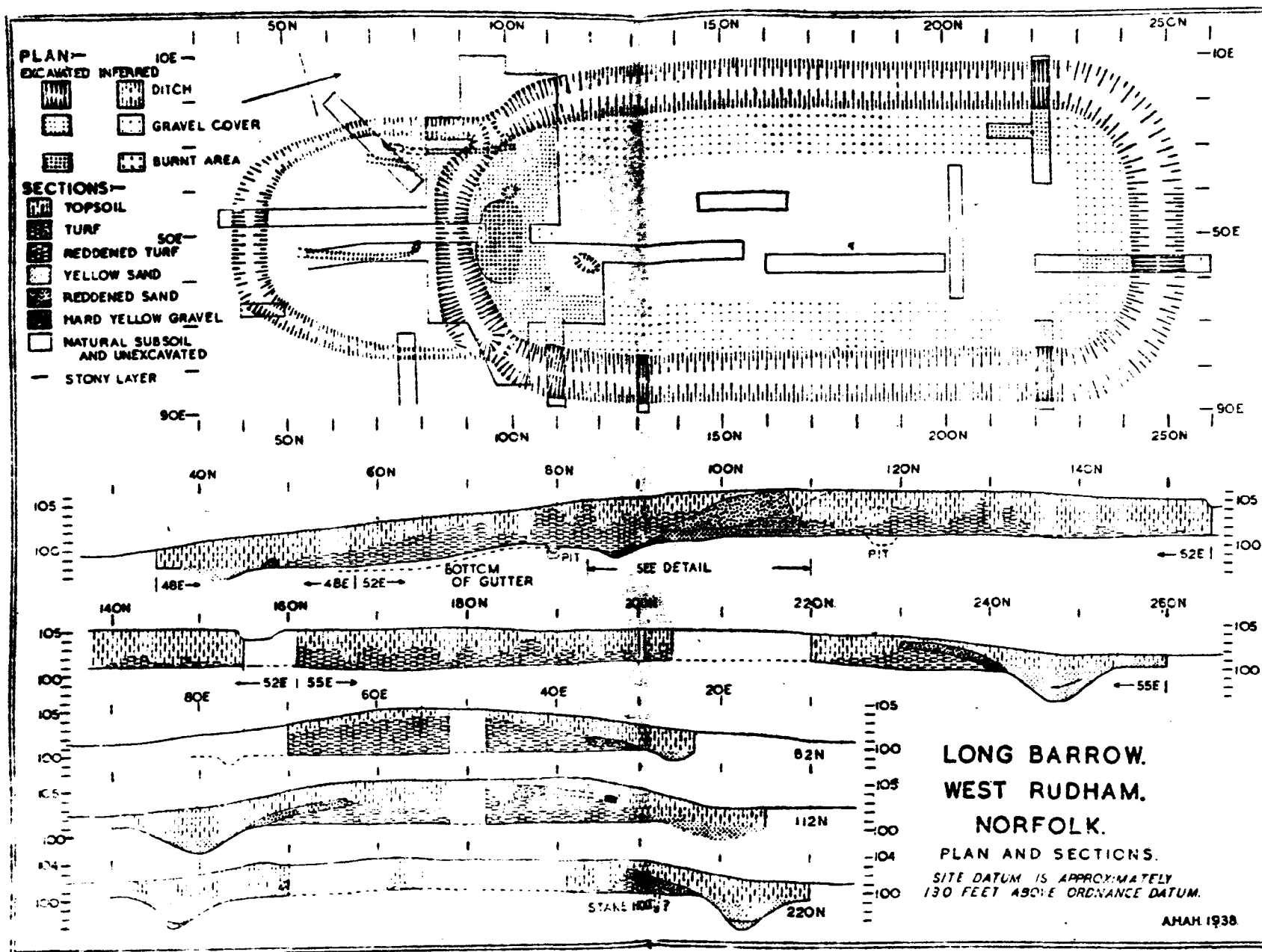
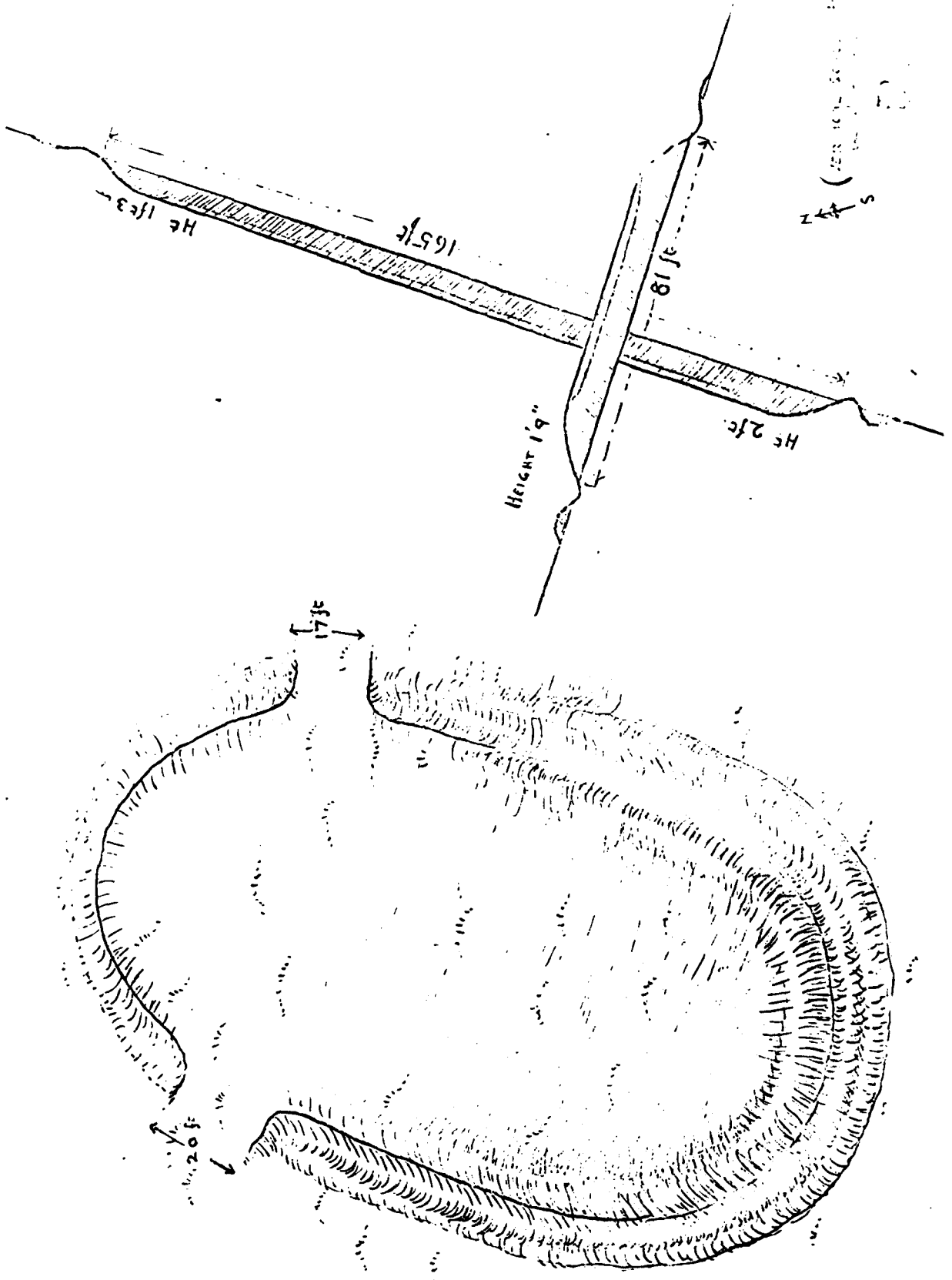


Fig.6.7

3661
EXCAVATION REPORT
FILED UNDER 3660

W-6-A
X-5



WEASENHAM (UNPUBLISHED SURVEY BY PUDDY) NAU 3661

CIVIL ENGINEERING

WEASENHAM LYNDS

Fig.6.8

validity the presence of causeways cannot be counted crucial or even normal. Their patterning when present does, nonetheless, provide a further architectural variable by which these sites can be related to cursuses.

Three locations seemed favoured: in the centre of the terminal ditch (a noted feature of A1/A11 terminals), at the corner or junction of terminal and lateral ditch lines, and in the centre of the lateral ditch. Opposed causeways have been noted only at Kettlestone. It might reasonably be objected that this embraces the full ditch circuit and suggests deliberation when none was intended. Consistent patterning is evident though. The otherwise dissimilar Cardington A and B sites have identically placed causeways along their side ditches and the "corner" location occurs widely from Nether Exe in Devon to Charlecote in Warwickshire and Rivenhall in Essex. This of course recurs in the cursus series.

CHAPTER VII

ELONGATED DITCH STRUCTURE

Two basic structures have been established for elongated ditches - mounded and embanked. But how might these be differentiated on the basis of cropmarks alone and can other structures be inferred?

A. NON PREHISTORIC CAUSES OF ELONGATED DITCH CROPMARKS

I Modern features

In addition to the familiar but deceptive appearance of many tractor marks, Briscoe's excavation at Lakenheath (1955, 69) revealed the oblong ditch form of a trench dug around a mangol clamp. This was small (2.3m x 7.3m) but parallel sided with A1 terminals! Size would aid differentiation of such sites but it emphasises the need for caution.

Horse exercise marks may be of precisely similar form (J. Pickering, pers. comm) and the Pas Veer system of sewage filtration would leave comparable marks after the removal of the installations (K. Foster, pers. comm). In view of this the location of the Besthorpe site beside a sewage pumping station perhaps makes it suspect.

II Medieval and post medieval earthworks

Pillow mounds provide a further possible explanation of some oblong ditch cropmarks. First noted and described by Crawford (1928, 18-24), the characteristics of these earthworks have been briefly laid down by Taylor (1974, 28): rectangular mounds, normally flat topped and on average 10-20m long by 5-10m in width, completely surrounded by a shallow ditch. In height they rarely exceed 0.5m and are thus rapidly eroded by ploughing. Much longer examples also exist - 100 and 105m at Rockingham where a parallel pair overlay ridge and

furrow 8m wide (Taylor and Brown, 1974). Circular and oval examples have also been noted (Lineham, 1966, fig. 53; Haynes, 1978, 148).

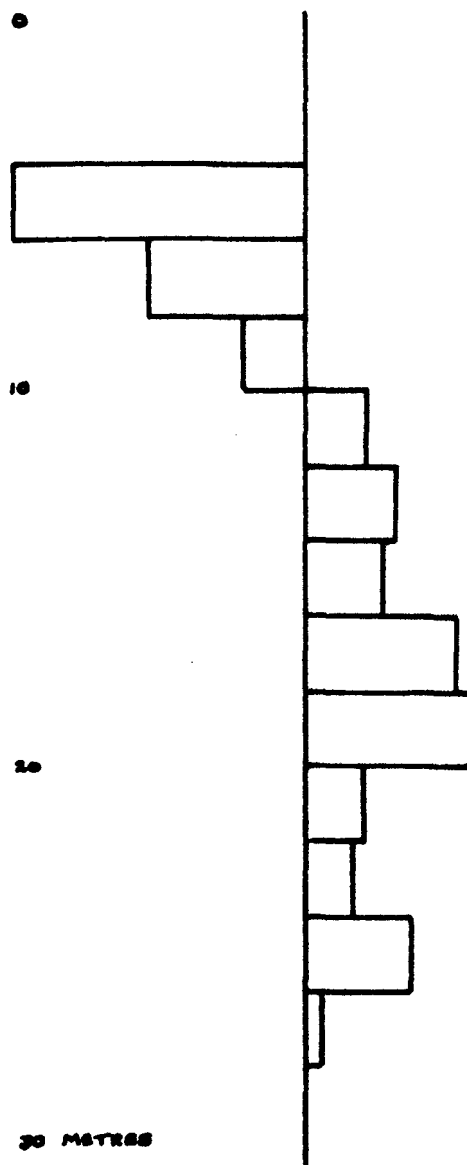
Although not yet certainly associated with medieval coneries (Veale, 1966) these mounds were certainly a feature of the extensive post medieval warrens of Dartmoor where they were known as "buries" and constructed of "piled rocks covered with earth and with deep drainage ditches of all sides" (Haynes, 1970, 148). After destruction by ploughing sites of this type would create deceptively "prehistoric" cropmark, particularly if occurring in combination with circular and oval mounds. How can they be differentiated from cropmarks of genuinely prehistoric elongated ditches?

The massive size of the Dartmoor warrens - Ditsworthy 1,100 acres; Hentor 450 acres - immediately declare these sites for what they are as do the commonly orientated mounds ("to assist drainage and aid netting" - Haynes, 1970, 148) but lone examples and small groups are more difficult to differentiate. In the context of local cropmark morphology (eg. The Plym valley where more than 160 "buries" have been recorded) they may be familiar, and field names provide a further indication of purpose (eg. warren hills; coneries). Siting is also likely to be distinctive - medieval and post medieval warrens were unlikely to be located on the lush meadow lands where elongated ditches are found as this constituted a vital and carefully managed resource of open field agriculture.

A good example of a cropmark of oblong ditch type arising from a ploughed out warren mound is that at Brampton Ash, Northants. Its location in an area of medieval enclosed woodland associated with agrange, and its unusual upland siting on heavy soil, is alone sufficient to distinguish it from the sites under consideration here.

PILLOW MOUNDS

OBELONG DITCHES



TRANSVERSE DIMENSIONS

Perhaps the most immediate and useful means of differentiating between pillow mounds and oblong ditches is, however, simply by size. Although of comparable length to most oblong ditches, pillow mounds are consistently far narrower: an average of 7m amongst the Warren Hills group at Whitwick; 5-9m at Rockingham (Taylor and Brown, 1974); and a normal range of 5-10m suggested by Taylor (1974, 28). Although these measurements record mound rather than encircling ditch dimensions, the latter always lies at the immediate edge of the mound so no real distinction exists. Comparison with the internal transverse measurements of oblong ditches which range from 11m to 28m, with an average of some 23m, points to the polarization of the two groups of monuments either side of a 10m figure.

For the purpose of this survey therefore cropmarks of putative oblong ditches less than 12m in width have been treated with caution, and those of less than 10m excluded unless there are exceptional indications that they are of prehistoric date. It is hoped in this way that contamination of the oblong ditch sample by pillow mounds cropmarks has been avoided.

B. PREHISTORIC INTERPRETATIONS OF ELONGATED DITCH CROPMARKS

In addition to long mortuary enclosure and longbarrow interpretations a further possible explanation exists for elongated ditch cropmarks - that they were multiple enclosed round barrows.

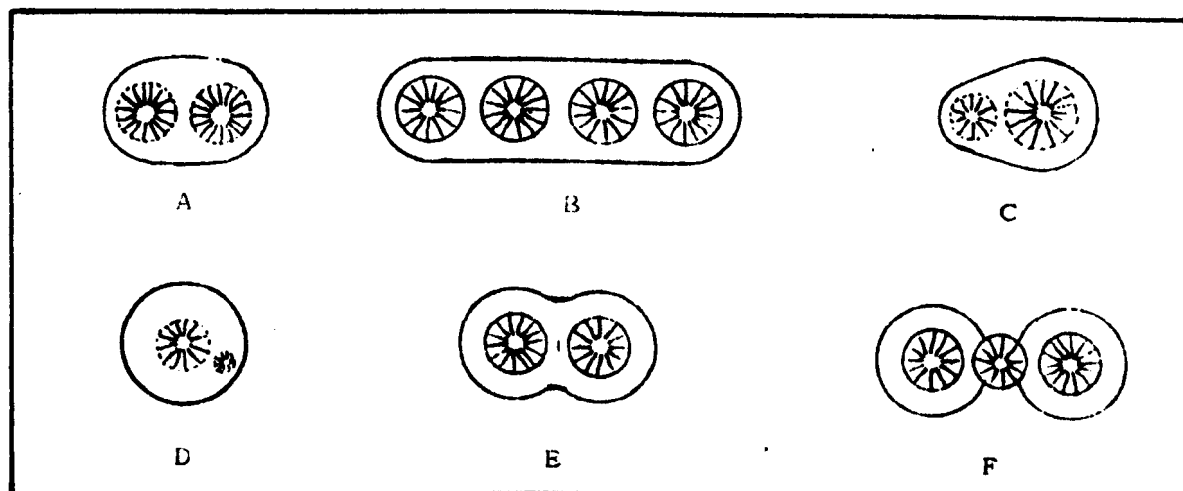
I Multiple enclosed round barrows

Twin or multiple round barrows occur as surviving earthworks in bowl, bell and disc forms but are commonest in the bell and disc range (Grinsell, 1953, 20). Whilst this has obvious implications for dating it is only with variations in pattern of the encircling ditch that we are concerned here owing to the plough razed nature of the sites.

a) Morphology

Figure 7.1 based on Grinsell illustrates the considerable range of recorded multiple barrow forms. (1953, fig. 3)

Figure 7.1



Whilst types D-F are irrelevant to the present discussion, types A-C provide a close fit for ovate, oblong and trapeziform ditch cropmarks - type A being classified as either ovate or oblong according to the degree of curvature of its side ditches. There are reasons to doubt though that this provides an adequate interpretation of all elongated ditches. Morphologically its application must be restricted to those sites with convex ends (Ai/Aii) as to date no encircling round barrow ditch has been recorded with ends of squared or subsquared type (Bi/Bii). Thus nearly 27% of elongated ditch sites are effectively removed from the discussion at the outset despite resembling in all other respects sites with convex terminals.

Establishing the relative frequency of the differing types of enclosure ditch plan amongst surviving Wessex sites is not easy owing to the frequent absence of these morphological details from published barrow lists and the common use of the term "ovate" for short parallel sided sites (Grinsell, 1938; 1957; 1959). This is a pity as the evidence is likely now after several decades of cultivation to be more difficult to establish. It does seem however that

trapeziform and ovate plans dominate, a pattern at odds with that of elongated ditches on the river gravels where the oblong type takes precedence.

The relative rarity of encircled multiples even in Wessex where they appear to be centred - just sixteen in all (Grinsell, 1957, 1959; Ashbee, 1970, app.II) - also deserves comment; elongated ditch sites from southern East Anglia alone exceed this figure. Furthermore in contrast to the Wessex pattern of single occurrences amongst small groups of barrows (cf Durrington 63-65) or as components of larger, linear cemeteries (Amesbury 17; Wilsford 15/16; Lambourne 8/10), elongated ditches of whatever form are frequently sited in isolation from ring ditches or occasionally in combination simply with each other (cf Cardington; Purley). Whilst it is quite possible that differing traditions in the Wessex and Midland/East Anglian regions produced opposed siting patterns, the location of cropmarks of unequivocal multiple enclosed ring ditches in the Wessex manner amongst the cemeteries at Stanton Harcourt, Oxon and Stoke by Nayland, Suffolk (Benson & Miles, 1974, fig. 11; Martin, 1981, fig. 31) argues against this. These two sites can be instantly recognised as enclosed multiple round barrows/ ring ditches by virtue of individual rings in the central space at Stanton Harcourt and the waisted outline of the enclosing ditch at Stoke by Nayland. Such features are not always evident either in Wessex (Wilsford, 15/16) or on the river valley gravels.

In view of the uncertainties that surround a purely morphological analysis of elongated ditches and multiple round barrows a further means of differentiating between them is required.

b) Dimensional variations

Length

Size suggests itself as a less subjective basis upon which to seek to draw

distinctions. As extreme length is a particular feature of the oblong ditch series, this ought similarly to be observable amongst encircled round barrows if the two types of monument are to be considered coeval. Multiple barrows of type B (fig. 7.1) apparently provide evidence of this but Grinsell's classification is based here upon a single recorded quadruple barrow site - Winterborne St. Martin 40 a-d (Grinsell, 1953, pl. IVb). Even here a constriction of the encircling ditch between the slightly misaligned northernmost barrow and the three southern barrows points to the probability that this was originally only a triple barrow site. These are themselves uncommon (Amesbury 91; Winterborne Abbas 24) and do not follow the ideal parallel sided form indicated by types A and B in figure 7.1

The full length of Winterborne St. Martin 40 a-d is 85m but reduced to its three accurately aligned barrows measures only 60m. The other Wessex triple barrow sites are similarly of no great size - Amesbury 91 c60m; Winterborne Abbas c35m. The encircling ditches of the more common twin barrow sites seem not to exceed 58m in length, as far as can be ascertained from existing barrow lists which unfortunately emphasise barrow size rather than overall ditch dimensions. An average figure of 56m or thereabouts is arrived at if the shorter twin "oval" disc sites are excluded from the assessment. These figures contrast markedly with the normal length range of oblong ditch sites but overlap with the short oblong, ovate and trapeziform groups.

c) Width

Wessex multiples are of considerable size; all with the exception of the small Lambourne site exceed 30m in width, with some achieving dimensions of nearly 50m (Collingbourne Ducis 4; Gussage St. Michael 17a). Major sites on the gravels are of similar size (cf. Radley 4/4a; Clanfield; Stanton Harcourt - Benson and Miles, 1974) but a series of smaller encircling ditches also exist with the more limited transverse range of only 15-25m. These constitute the principal

overlap evident in fig. 7.2 but are also accompanied by a group of low "oval" mounds recorded principally in Hampshire (Rockbourne 33.5m x 22m and Little Grove 27m x 20m - Grinsell, 1938, 221, 227, fig. 7; Micheldever R4 32m x 24m - Fasham, 1975; and the more elongated Basingstoke site 52m x 26m - Smith, 1979, xxxiii).

Only one of the latter group have been excavated - that at Micheldever. Prior to excavation this appeared as a low mound with a maximum height of 1.5m, possessing two peaks. Excavation showed it to comprise two small virtually conjoined mounds, 8.5m and 11m in diameter, completely linked after construction by a central flint cairn. Cremations came from all three features, two accompanied by collared urns. A similar Early Bronze Age date can almost certainly be ascribed to the Rockbourne site which impinged on the outer edge of a disc barrow. The three small conjoined mounds near the western end of the Winterbourne Stoke cursus may be cognate with these sites, but lack an encircling ditch.

Several cropmarks sites on the river valley gravels, as already mentioned, are of similar size. They include the short oblong ditch at Drayton (28 x 16m - NMR SU 4893/13/3) within which are traces of two circles, and a site placed 300m SW of the linear ditches at North Stoke (30m x 16m) and containing the marks of probable grave pits in the centre of each half of the site (Case, 1982a, fig. 33). Other multiple round barrow sites at North Stoke measure some 25 metres across and are of similar size to the ovate and trapeziform ditches at Latton, Eynsham and Purley in the same valley (Riley, 1944, 93; Gates, 1975; Leech, 1977, map 3). Along with the distinctive group of East Anglian sites (eg. Lamarsh, Springfield, Bures St. Mary) they probably represent encircling ditch multiples of more modest dimensions than the Wessex forms.

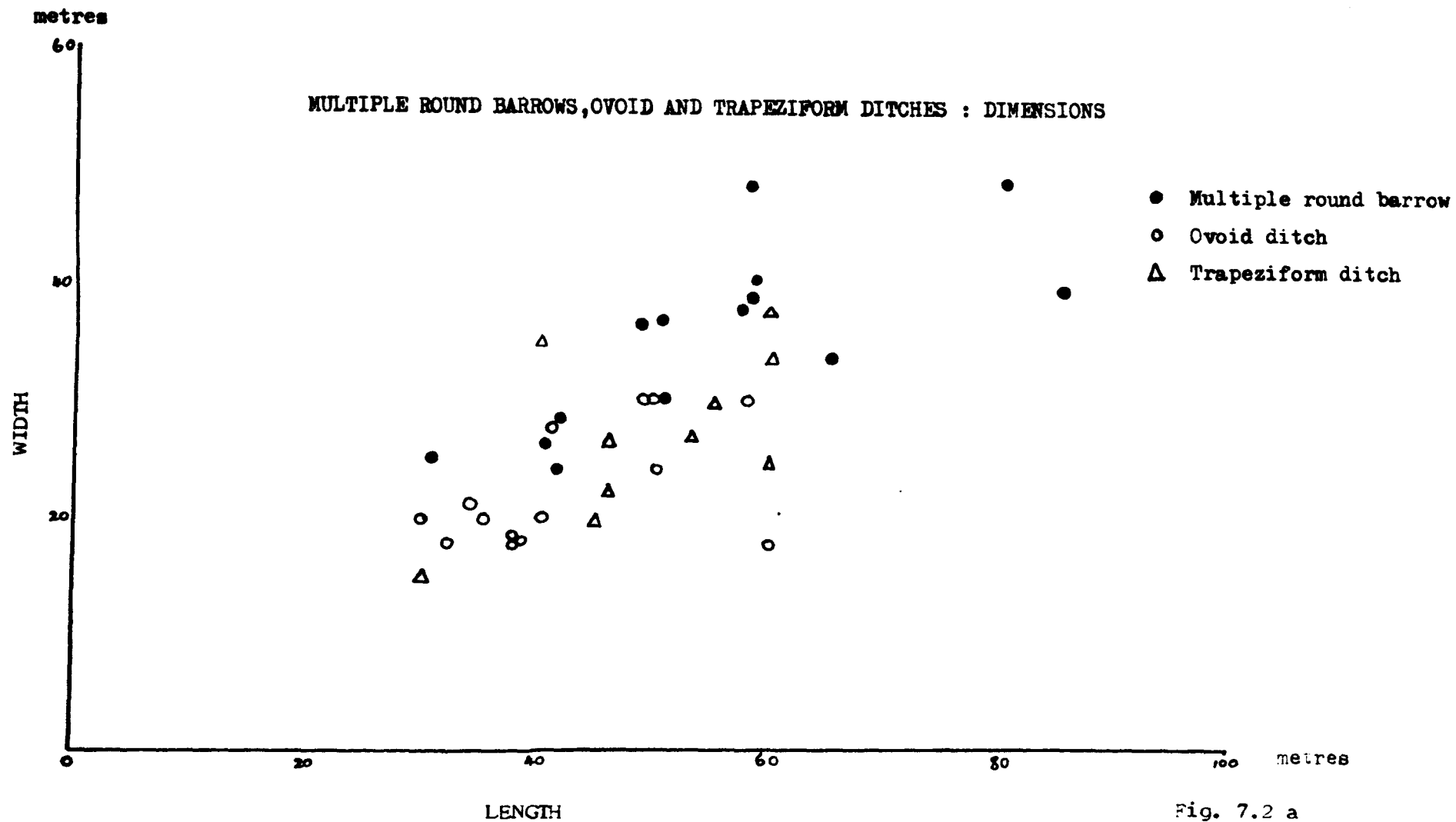


Fig. 7.2 a

metres

MULTIPLE ROUND BARROWS AND OBLONG DITCHES : DIMENSIONS

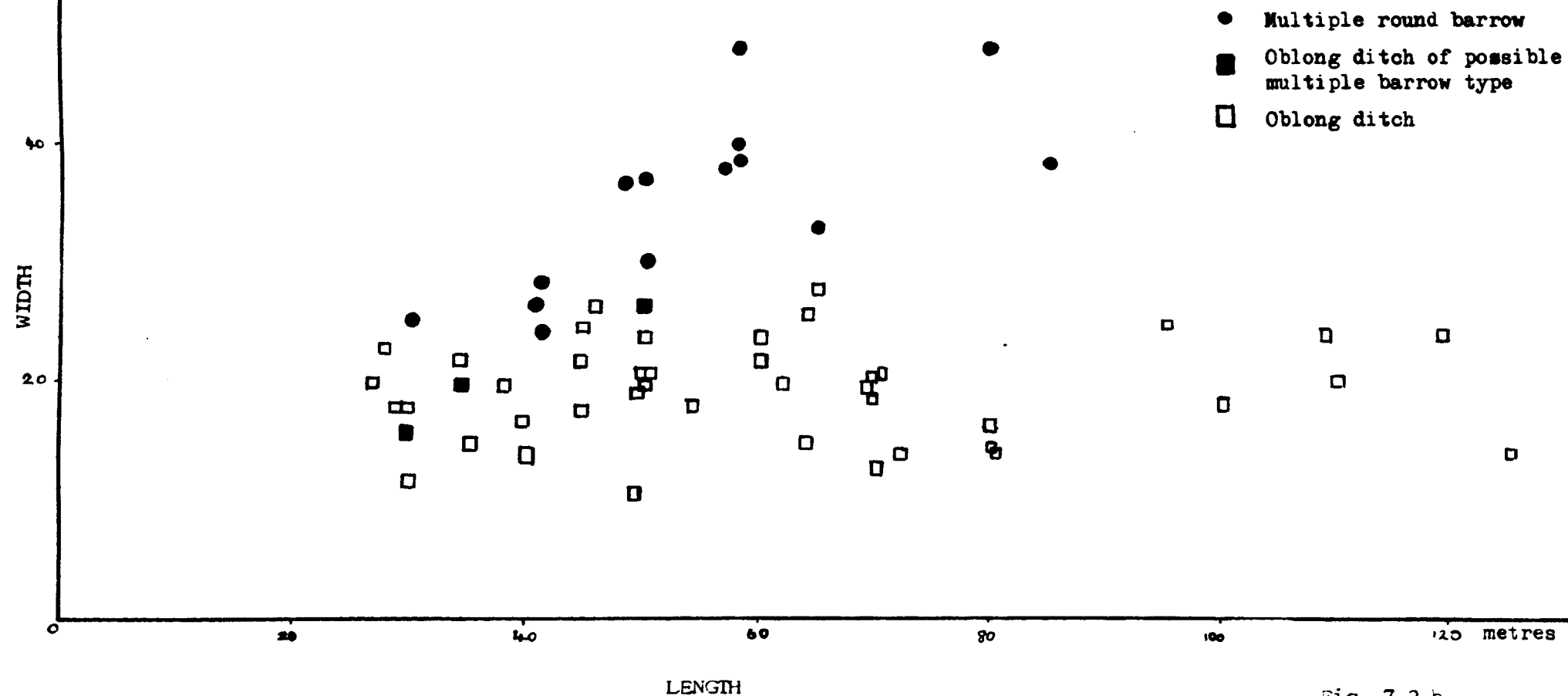


Fig. 7.2 b

A degree of dimensional overlap between elongated ditch sites of presumed Neolithic date and some encircled round barrows does then exist but the effect is limited to sites of short oblong, trapeziform and ovate type.

II Long mortuary enclosures

These will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. Their distinguishing features - ditches of modest size and close resemblance to long barrow form - make them an obvious interpretation of oblong ditch cropmarks at least, and, if a prehistoric date for Weasenham is accepted, perhaps ovate forms as well. Some sites seem too narrow though to have accommodated internal banks, a point proved during excavation at Charlecote where ditch upcast dumped along putative bank lines left a zone only 3 metres wide in the centre of the site (Ford, 1969). External banks provide an alternative answer but are at present unparalleled. Assuming turf construction to have been the norm on light sand and gravel soils, it is equally possible as already seen, that these encircling ditches defined mounds.

III Long barrows

Encircling ditch long barrows are rare. Ashbee for this reason was reluctant to accept the continuous form of the West Rudham and Royston long barrow ditches (1970, 47), citing the partial nature of the excavations. Confirmation of the pattern both to the north in Lincolnshire (Phillips, 1936; D.D.A. Simpson, pers. comm) and, at least in U ditch form, to the south in Kent (Jessup, 1939) provides an acceptable context for these intervening sites though, and to these can now be added the firm evidence of Charlecote. In addition to ditch plan, the small "corner" causeway at Giants' Hills I finds frequent parallel amongst cropmark oblong ditches and further encourages the idea that some at least of these apparent lowland enclosures

represent plough razed long barrows. How are they to be differentiated?

a) Ditch size and putative mound form

Amongst the cropmark sites only those at Pakenham and Eynesbury have produced evidence of ditches of comparable width to that at West Rudham. Deep, narrow ditches are of course possible but excavated profiles currently available argue against this and where they do occur - North Stoke linear ditches (Case, 1982a) - are accompanied by a weathering cone that has the effect of increasing cropmark width. No such cone develops in ditches of shallow V or U profile. The North Stoke ditches were strangely deep and narrow but the same effect on ditches of equivalent depth but normal long barrow "quarry" width would be to produce a very substantial cropmark. None have been recorded. Ditches can be assumed then to have been either wide and shallow or deep and narrow.

It seems therefore that not only do no cropmarks of quarry ditched long barrows (beyond the diminutive Drayton site) exist in the region - reasonable in view of inherent instability of gravel piled to a height in excess of 1 metre - but only two of the gravel capped turf type noted at West Rudham.

Not all mounds of course need have been as wide as that at West Rudham, which totally filled the area between its ditches; wide berms were after all a notable feature at Royston. What width should be entertained? The transverse dimensions of excavated long barrows are grouped remarkably closely between 10m and 14m - the diminutive Waylands Smithy I and Alfriston mounds excepted - and berms are evident in virtually every case (table 7.1). Acceptance of the lower figure as a common transverse size for putative mounds within elongated ditches accords with the maximum size of structure that could be placed within the narrowest sites (eg. Charlecote) and allows a calculation of minimum capping material to be arrived at, albeit tentatively (Appendix III).

Table 7.1

EXCAVATED LONG BARROW WIDTHS

Alfriston	5.5m (based on protected land surface)
W. Smithy I	6.5m
Willerby Wold	7.5/10m
Kilham	8.5/10.7m
East Heslerton	9/12m
Beckhampton Rd.	10.5m
Wor Barrow	10.6m (enclosure)
Holdenhurst	10.6m
Skelmore Head	10.6m
Priddy I	10.9m
Bellshiel Law	10.9m
Julliberrie's Grave	11/14m
Giants' Hills I	11.5/12m (enclosure)
Fussell's Lodge	12.16m
Nutbane	12m (facade) - 23/7.6m (mound)
Maiden Castle	12.5/13m
Thickthorn	13m
South Street	14/15m
West Rudham	14m
Royston	19m
Lambourne)	Limits imprecise
Horslip)	
A.P. Witham)	c16m between ?palisade cropmarks within main oblong ditch lines
Flempton)	

Calculations of this sort are fraught with difficulty: ditch profiles are rarely constant or sufficiently geometric to allow convincing estimates to be made and in several cases excavated ditch profiles are not yet available on which to base calculations. Even more hazardous is the application of the exercise to unexcavated cropmark sites. Results here must be treated with great caution but the consistent U or V profiles of excavated ditches, their width/depth ratios of 2:1 or 3:1, and their close correspondence with preexcavation estimates of ditch size, suggests the exercise has some validity. Whilst ditch depth is unlikely to

be much greater than that established at the excavated sites for the reasons already given, shallower profiles are of course possible. In this case present estimates would exceed actual ditch capacities rather than reduce them and so increase the probability of a correspondence with mound capping requirements.

Three cropmark sites have been selected as representatives of the range of ditch sizes: Pakenham 3 metres+ wide; Stratford St. Mary 2m wide; Marlingford 1.0-1.5m wide.

Even . . . acceptance of the narrowest of conjectural mound sizes and potentially overestimating the ditch capacities of cropmark sites produces uncertain agreement with the West Rudham capped mound model of construction (table 7.2). Estimates of ditch volume at Charlecote, North Stoke (southern enclosure), Llandegai and Pakenham find quite close agreement but at Barford and Dorchester VIII the ditches would have provided only about half of the required capping material, the latter confirming the stratigraphic evidence of open enclosure form. At Marlingford the estimated shortfall appears even greater. As this site resembles a series in East Anglia (Levington, Springfield, Bures St. Mary, Lamarsh) the conclusion may be generalised to these also. A measure of agreement is achieved at Stratford St. Mary but only at the expense of postulating berms some 7 metres wide on either side of the putative mound. Whilst not totally unparalleled it seems rather excessive. A wider mound would destroy the equation.

How strong then is the evidence that some of these oblong ditch sites at least originally delimited barrows? Ditch silts and internal features produce a confusing and contradictory picture.

The ditch fill of the southern enclosure at North Stoke perhaps provides the clearest evidence. It was recut after the tertiary silting stage had been reached and subsequently backfilled with a substantial quantity of gravel which

Table 7.2

	cu.m	m	m	m	cu.m	cu.m
EXCAVATED SITES	DITCH VOLUME	POSTULATED MOUND WIDTH	POSTULATED MOUND HEIGHT	POSTULATED MOUND LENGTH	APPROX VOLUME OF CAPPING	VOLUME REQUIRED FOR 5 METRE GRAVEL MOUND
Charlecote	170-220	10	2	65	163	
North Stoke (S. enclosure)	51	10	2	16	40	
Barford	22	10	2	20	56	
Dorchester VIII	80	10	2	55	130	
Llandegai	?625	10	2	240	600	600
N. Stoke (linear ditches)	670	5	1	225	240	562
CROPMARK SITES						
Pakenham	100-160	10	2		115	
Stratford St. Mary	175-250	10	2	90	225	
Marlingford	20-38	10	2	10	65	

Estimated ditch volume and mound capping requirement.

the excavator considered derived from an internal bank (Case, 1982a, 66-8). Had a turf barrow stood within the enclosure rather than banks, this might be expected to contain a significant admixture of turf. It did not.

The posts both here and at Barford also point to the presence of banks rather than mounds; they required additional support which could not have been provided at a mound edge or on a berm.

Although the presence of a mound at Charlecote was conclusively demonstrated by interruptions in the medieval plough furrows across the centre of the site the truncated base of the mound revealed no evidence that it had been composed of turf. Since the volume of ditch material was itself inadequate to produce a mound more than 1.2m high if spread across the entire central area in the manner suggested by the plough furrow evidence, an additional source must be invoked. A mound of scraped up material capped by gravel from the ditch is a possibility as table 7.2 shows, but the large post holes cutting the ditch silts remain at present unparalleled and suggest an alternative explanation: the ditch may have defined an earlier enclosure with an external bank (as suggested by Christie after initial exploratory excavation - 1965), and the post holes represent simply the larger and more easily discernible elements of a later palisade enclosure akin to that at Kilham. This might then have been infilled with scraped up material.

Clear evidence also exists for a mound of sorts within the North Stoke linear ditches but certainly not constructed of turf. Its presence could be inferred from the problem of accommodating two banks within the narrow interval between the ditches, which would leave only 1 metre clear in the centre of the site (Case, 1982a, 69). Corroboratory evidence that a mound had been constructed instead of banks is available from early aerial photographs taken by Allen

(pl. 5:1) which reveal an axial parch line running between the ditches near their northern end, and by excavation which located a spread of gravel overlying the fully silted enclosure ditch where it abutted the central area of the linear ditches (Case, 1982a, fig. 37). The gravel almost certainly represented the heavily truncated base of the mound that had been responsible for the parching further north. Calculations of ditch volume suggest that a mound constructed of material from this source alone would be some 5 metres wide at the base if unrevetted (Startin, 1982b, 74). This accords well with the absence of directional silting in the ditches and the size and nature of the parch mark - had turf been utilised as a core no such mark could be expected.

A similarly sized mound might be conjectured for the Llandegai site where the ditches were only slightly more widely spaced, but evidence of silting from the interior here (Houlder, 1968) points perhaps to a larger construction. Calculations suggest that it might have been of West Rudham form.

The ragged line of the ditch along the flanks of the Pakenham site, and tentative estimates of its probable ditch volume point conclusively to it having been a long barrow site. Close scrutiny of the photographs of the site (pl. 7:1) reveals two ditch forms to have been present - a well laid out oblong ditch c1.5m wide and with Ai terminals, and a wider ragged ditch along both flanks. Since it is most unlikely that the former postdates the latter it can probably be safely assumed that the quarry like sections of ditch resulted from the widening of the oblong ditch line. Unfortunately this can never be proved since the site was destroyed prior to excavation. A similar site appears to exist at Eynesbury in Cambridgeshire though.

The only explanation for such widening appears to be to provide capping material; a mound built purely of gravel would require at least four times



Pl. 7.1 Pakenham : evidence of two ditch forms
(regular oblong ditch; irregular flanking
quarry like ditches) at an almost
certain former long barrow site

the estimated quantity of ditch material and be recorded as far wider cropmarks. The oblong ditch on this site then seems to be distanced from barrow construction and to have been associated rather with an earlier, open phase. Its similarity in plan and ditch size to a range of East Anglian sites argues that they too were open enclosures.

A similar section of ditch existed at the southern end of the West Rudham mound, either defining an extension of the long barrow precinct in front of the presumed platform cremation area or representing, as conjectured at Pakenham, an untouched section of earlier oblong ditch. Whichever, it casts doubts on the assumption that such slight ditches necessarily defined open areas: a turf mound filled this southern "annexe" and differed only from the main barrow in lacking a covering layer of gravel (Hogg, 1940, fig. 2).

At least one further structural model must then be considered - that of uncapped turf construction within narrow defining ditches. Looking beyond the Midland/East Anglian region slight ditches of this type can be recognised at the Dalladies long barrow in Kincardineshire, although of flanking rather than encircling mode. This was similarly a turf built long barrow but cased in stone not gravel. On the sand/gravel subsoils of central southern England wooden palisading may well have served an identical purpose.

A plough headland afforded chance protection to just such a site at Maxey where (pl.7:2) a small oval palisade ditch contained the truncated base of a turf mound that would normally have been totally removed by plough erosion. But for this chance protection the narrow palisade trench and faint cropmarks would not have been counted acceptable evidence of a former mounded structure. Cropmarks of apparent palisade trenches running parallel to the ditches within the Witham and Flempton oblong ditches might in this light be



Pl 7.2 Maxey : defining palisade trench
and section of truncated turf
mound of small ovate barrow set
within the henge entrance

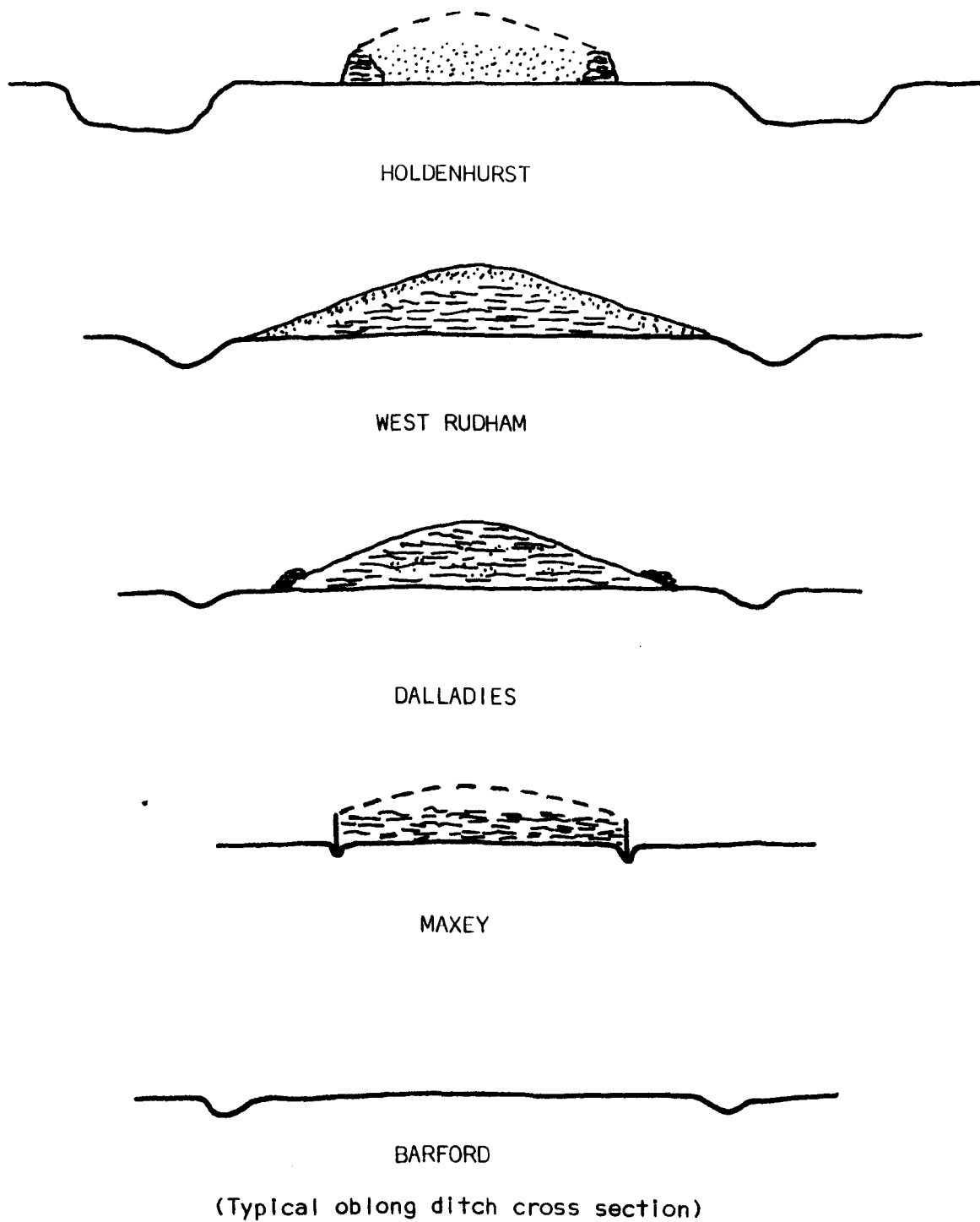


Fig. 7.3 RELATIONSHIP OF DITCH SIZE TO THE VARIOUS LONG MOUND
STRUCTURAL DEVICES EMPLOYED ON SAND/GRAVEL SUBSOILS

similarly interpreted.

In the absence of such evidence elsewhere it is probably pointless to speculate about a material whose presence cannot be proved. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to conclude that all narrow ditched sites should be interpreted as long mortuary enclosures of Dorchester VIII type. To do so leaves unexplained their predominance in the Midland/East Anglian region when elsewhere they are conspicuously rare (Ashbee, 1970, 49). The remarkably even distribution of Earlier Neolithic artefacts, storage pits, "settlement" scatters and causewayed enclosures from the southern chalklands to the Trent valley (Whittle, 1977) makes it highly improbable that long barrows alone remained a largely unknown aspect of the culture. Nor can an explanation be found in the common assertion that their absence results from the difficulty of mound construction on sand/gravel subsoils.

In addition to the considerable surviving height of the West Rudham long barrow (1.5m), observation of the weathering of the experimental earthwork at Wareham indicates a surprising degree of stability for even dump constructed mounds: compression and erosion reduced its total height by 23cm in the first 5 years but thereafter colonization of clumps of grasses and the formation of a hard crust prevented further rapid erosion (Evans & Limbrey, 1974, 183).

A range of structural approaches to the problem of mound building on these subsoils is in fact evident from varying parts of the country:

1. Quarry ditched: Holdenhurst - revetted by turf (Piggott, 1937)

Drayton - ?revetted by palisade (C.U.C. AFT 78)

Addington - revetted by stone (Jessup, 1930, 71)

?Gilling - revetted by stone (Greenwell, 1877, 550-3)

2. Scraped up material: ?Longstones IOW - revetted by stone (Hawkes, 1957)
?Sherrington (Colt Hoare, 1810, 100)
3. Capped turf: West Rudham - capped by sand and gravel (Hogg, 1940)
4. Turf: Dalladies - cased in stone (Piggott, 1972)
Maxey - revetted/embellished by palisade (Pryor, 1982a)
Pitnacree (Neolithic round barrow) - stone revetted (Coles & Simpson, 1965)
West Rudham "southern annex" (Hogg, 1940) - no revetment.

All appear to have been successful to judge from the surprising heights recorded for these mounds.

Table 7.3

RECORDED HEIGHT OF LONG BARROWS CONSTRUCTED ON SAND/GRAVEL SUBSOILS

West Rudham	1.5m
Dalladies	2.5m (max. height at proximal end)
Gilling	2.5-1.5m
Longstones	1.8m
Sherrington	3.0m
Addington	1.0+m

It has been possible to demonstrate the use of structural models 3 and 4 in the Midland/East Anglian region, although certain evidence of 3 is at present restricted amongst cropmark sites to those at Pakenham and Eynesbury. Structural model 1, the norm outside this region, is restricted to the diminutive Drayton long barrow. Model 2 may perhaps explain the Charlecote mound.

Low mounds of the sort surviving at Bryn yr Hen Bobl on Anglesey and apparently originally existing at North Stoke provide a further possible structural form which will be discussed further below (Chapter 9).

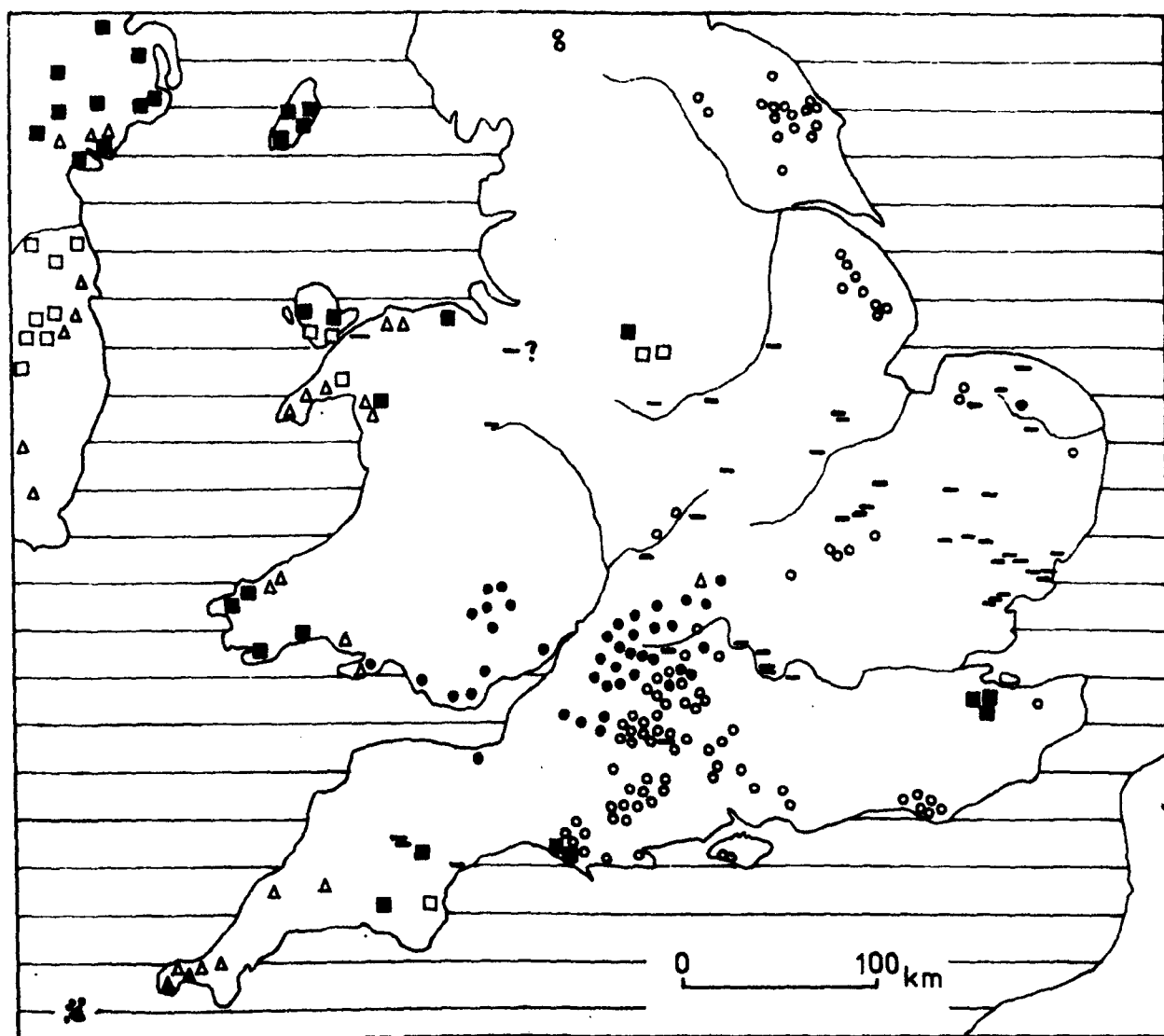
Comparison with 2nd millenium structural practice on such subsoils interestingly reveals heavy dependence on turf: in a sample of 28 surviving round barrows some 25% were constructed purely of turf, 39% substantially of turf with a gravel or sand capping, and a further 21% of mixed turf, sand and gravel. Only 14% contained no significant quantity of turf in their make up. The larger number of such barrows to survive almost certainly reflects the greater number constructed rather than changed patterns of building.

b) Surviving and putative Midland/East Anglian longbarrow sites

Sites demanding consideration have been set out in table 7.4.

Sites in categories 1 and 2 may be taken to represent either chance survivals of a long barrow tradition once current across the entire region or rare examples of more monumental practice in an area where long mortuary enclosures were the norm. That the former is the case is indicated by the coincidence of upstanding long barrows with areas of common grazing in Norfolk (Lawson, 1981a, fig. 22-24) and the same is almost certainly true of the Chilterns. The Pitsford site can be presumed to have escaped the destructive effects of agriculture by virtue of its inclusion in roadside pasture.

The case for considering the distribution of these long barrows on commonland or the chalk ridge to be complemented by that of elongated ditches in the river valleys (fig. 7.4) is compelling. It can be most effectively demonstrated in Bedfordshire. The principal centres of Neolithic activity in the county are at Streatley/Leagrave and Dunstable on the chalk, and Kempston/Cardington on the river gravels (Thomas, 1964). Each contains a tribal centre: causewayed enclosures at Maiden's Bower (Dunstable) and Cardington, and a somewhat atypical "henge" enclosure at Waulud's Bank, Leagrave; and each also contains either long barrows (on the chalk) or



- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| - Elongated
ditches | • Earthen long barrows | ▲ Entrance graves |
| | • Severn-Cotswold | □ Passage graves |
| | ▲ Portal dolmens | ■ Other megalithic
monuments |

Fig.7.4 ELONGATED DITCH DISTRIBUTION SUPERIMPOSED ON
WHITTLE'S MAP OF NEOLITHIC FUNERARY MONUMENTS
IN SOUTHERN BRITAIN (1977, fig.7)

(Note : potential multiple round barrow sites
have been excluded.)

Table 7.4

LONG MOUNDS OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN ENGLAND

	Length	Width
	metres	metres
1. <u>EXCAVATED OR WELL ATTESTED SITES</u>		
Dunstable	36	-
Pegsdon	30	-
Leagrave	30	18
Royston	34	17
West Rudham	58	17
Harpley	30	18
Ditchingham	35	18
Felthorpe	36	13
Aldminster	30	12
2. <u>PROBABLE SITES</u>		
Swaffham Prior	46	12
Streatley	? 91	12
Pitsford	30	11
Houghton Conquest	52	10
3. <u>UNCERTAIN SITES</u>		
Denton	60	26
Lawford	50	-
Woodford I	56	26
Buckworth	109	16
Haddenham	-	-
Luton 28	Destroyed	
Wimbledon (Queen's Butts)	Destroyed	
Marshland St. James	Destroyed	
4. <u>UNLIKELY SITES</u>		
Newbottle	-	-
Daventry	-	-
Sutton	-	-
Brampton Ash	52	8
Shipley Hill	100	27

oblong ditches (on the river gravels). The Houghton Conquest mound lies approximately midway between these chalk and gravel foci but its antiquity seems confirmed both by the adjacent round barrow and nearby farm name - Bury Farm.

If long barrows and oblong ditches in this region hold a common purpose it seems reasonable to infer common form. Ditch plan and monument shape provide the best indication of this. In addition to the excavated West Rudham and Royston sites, ditches appear as cropmarks encircling the Swaffham Prior and Harpley mounds; the large diffuse oval mark at Streatly claimed as a long barrow by Dyer (1959, 14 and pers. comm) probably represents mound material spread beyond a chalk core rather than a ditch. The ditch of the Swaffham Prior mound appears from surface indications and cropmarks to have been of considerably greater size than those under discussion in the river valeys (7.6m: RCHM, 1972, 134), a point nevertheless referable perhaps simply to differing structural techniques employed within a common tradition.

Elsewhere the apparent absence of ditches, even on the chalk, may indicate that, like those of the Royston long barrow, they were slight dimensions. It may equally be a result of omission in field recording which a programme of geophysical survey could rapidly rectify.

As with long barrows elsewhere there is little readily available evidence regarding mound form (Ashbee, 1970, 15). The Aldminster barrow discovered as late as 1953 (Thomas, 1974, 17) may have been of trapezoidal type, as were the Royston and Ditchingham mounds (Phillips, 1935b; Wainwright, 1972). This is not a marked feature of the latter site however and could, as at West Rudham, result from the presence of a smaller appended feature at one end. The mounds at Pitsford and Felthorpe are decidedly

rectangular as were those at Harpley and Swaffham Prior. Mound form may though have had little bearing on the plan of an encircling ditch, as the ovate ditches surrounding the Royston and Swaffham Prior mounds prove.

Mound size, like form, suffers somewhat from incomplete recording but the figures available display a surprising uniformity, particularly in categories A and B (table 7.4). The heterogeneous dimension revealed for sites in categories C and D emphasise their dubious nature as long barrow sites. Comparison with the figures obtained from elongated ditches (fig. 6.4) points to a distinction - mounded sites are considerable shorter. Even with allowance made for substantial berms, both at the sides and ends of putative mounds, a discrepancy remains.

Whilst then long barrow distribution in the region can probably be related to past patterns of land use and appears to complement that of elongated ditches (fig. 7.4), distinctions of size and perhaps plan separate the two groups.

c) Long barrows on the periphery of the Midland/East Anglian region

If elongated ditches are to be considered as potential barrow sites further parallels must be sought. Since there is nothing in the ceramic record to indicate the isolation of communities within the Central and Eastern England it is instructive to examine those barrows sited on the immediate periphery of the region. Two quite definite groups demand attention - those of the Lincolnshire Wolds and those of Kent. The Cotswold/Severn cairns are separated from the main concentration of elongated ditches by a greater geographical margin and by virtue both of their predominantly ovate/trapezoidal plans and cusped forecourts. However, it is worth recalling that the surface quarry of oolitic slabs for these sites has been likened by Piggott to turf cutting for the mound at Dalladies (Piggott, 1971, 41) and

it has been suggested that aspects of their architecture (eg. convex curving walls) derive from patterns of turf construction (Powell, 1969, 11).

Lincolnshire

The long barrows of the Lincolnshire Wolds went unrecorded until catalogued by Phillips in 1933. His excavation of the Giants' Hills I site at Skendleby revealed unexpectedly an encircling ditch with a single slight causeway (Phillips, 1936). The northern side ditch was considerably deeper than that along the southern side and Phillips detected signs of a slight trench running along its outer edge. It is possible that this represents, along with the slighter ditches encircling the terminals (c. 2m wide at the eastern end), a partial survival of an earlier ditch of oblong type. It would seem in fact to bear a close resemblance to the oblong ditch site at Pakenham where cropmarks similarly indicate a larger ditch along one side of the site. The side ditches there appear from aerial photographs to have been narrower than those of Giants' Hills I (4-5m as against 7m) but the overall dimensions of the two sites are comparable. Phillips found no evidence that would enable the terminal ditches to be distinguished from the flanking quarry ditches at Giants' Hills I however; recovery of a jet slider from the secondary silts of the shallow eastern ditch pointing to a late rather than early date. The hypothesis of a pre-mound oblong ditch cannot be sustained therefore. Nor it seems does it provide an explanation of the identical ditch pattern at the neighbouring Giants' Hills II long barrow (D.D.A. Simpson pers. comm), despite an apparent separation of ditch and mound dates there ($3140 \pm 80\text{bc}$: HAR 1869; $2750 \pm 80\text{bc}$: HAR 1850).

It is probable, nonetheless, that these Lincolnshire long barrows record a mixing of northern and southern traditions: their crescentic facades (not evident as cropmarks within elongated ditches) registering the influence of

Yorkshire barrow architecture and their encircling ditches betraying an origin amongst the oblong ditches of East Anglia. The latter certainly seem to have been the earlier feature to judge from the remodelling of the very early Giants' Hills II barrow to take a crescentic facade. The unusual paired distribution pattern of Lincolnshire long barrows also finds closest parallel immediately to the south in East Anglian long barrow and oblong ditch sites (West Rudham and Harpley; Roughton A and B). Whilst most Lincolnshire mounds are of greater size than those which survive in the Midland/East Anglian region (Phillips, 1933), they accord well with the dimensions of oblong ditches and are of predominantly rectangular plan. Parallel excavation of one of the series of elongated ditch sites, almost certainly representing ploughed out long barrows, recently located on the Lincolnshire Wolds (P. Eveson, pers. comm; Marsac et. al, 1982) and Roughton A might establish the degree of overlap.

For the moment if the hypothesis of mixed influences in Lincolnshire is accepted the early dates for Giants' Hills II provide a terminus ante quem at the opening of the third millenium for southern oblong ditches, whilst these dates and those from Giants' Hills I ($2460 \pm 150\text{bc}$: BM 191; $2370 \pm 150\text{bc}$: BM 192) bracket the influence of northern crescentic facades in the area.

Kent

The Kentish long barrows separated by the Thames estuary from the concentration of oblong ditches in Essex provide further comparative evidence. Whilst separate traditions may well have prevailed across this divide, the unusual river valley location of the Kent long barrows finds an immediate parallel amongst elongated ditches in East Anglia, whilst being at variance with the distribution of sites on the South Downs (Drewett, 1975). Furthermore the major clustering of sites in a restricted area of the Medway is echoed by

groupings of sites at Lawford/Stratford St. Mary and Bures/Lamarsh in Essex. Two distinct groupings exist: those by the Medway in the Aylesford area and those within the watershed of the Stour (Chilham, Boughton Aluph and Elmstead - Jessup, 1937; 1939; Anon, 1970).

Opinions over the vexed problem of the Medway megaliths have fluctuated between rather reluctant acceptance of a continental origin for the group amongst the North European dolmen and langdysser (Daniels, 1937, 188-90; Piggott, 1954, 269) to strained attempts to link them to the Cotswold/Severn series via an interpretation of the Kits Coty megaliths as either the remains of a dummy portal or a terminal chamber (Crawford, 1925, 69; Jessup, 1970, 111). To the latter arguments can now be added the recent attempt to demonstrate from the minimal degree of tapering exhibited by the collapsed peristalith stones of the Coldrum and Addington sites that the Medway mounds were of trapezoidal rather than rectangular plan, and hence comparable to sites such as Waylands Smithy II and Belas Knap (Philp, 1981). There seems no reason to doubt though that they were substantially rectangular, as significantly are the majority of elongated ditch sites in Essex.

Only one Kentish long barrow has been extensively excavated - Julieberries Grave located beside the River Stour at Chilham (Jessup, 1937; 1939) - and significantly it proved to possess a ditch which encircled the mound, at least at the undestroyed southern end. It varied in width from 4 - 7m along the flanks of the site, but measured only 2.5 - 3.0 across where it rounded the end of the site. The mound survived to a height of 1.6m and measured 44m x 14.6/13m; turf formed a considerable component of its makeup. It was of rectangular plan for most of its length, tapering only at the southern end where ploughing may have been responsible for an alteration of its shape. No mortuary structure was revealed.

In addition to the long barrow itself several aerial photographs in the Cambridge University collection (BM 59-61) show faint traces of what may be an oblong ditch/long mortuary enclosure on a similar alignment near its southern end. In plan and size (c . 15m x 50m) this corresponds closely both to the normal range of oblong ditches and to Julieberries Grave itself, but its identification is no means certain. Early illustrations of the barrow (Stukeley, 1776) provide no indication of an enclosure or mound beside it and Ronald Jessup (pers. comm) reports the presence of sheds, chicken runs and horse exercise areas at this point during the 1930's that may account for the marks.

The mounds associated with the Medway megaliths appear to have been of rectangular form: a low platform remains within the apparently square orthostatic revetment at Coldrum despite the depredations of a local farmer (Jessup, 1930, 78), and a more substantial mound, spread but still surviving to a height of about a metre, within and immediately beyond the sixteen surviving revetment stones of the oblong site at Addington. Stukeley recorded the truncated base of the Kits Coty mound as similarly rectangular (1776, pl.XXXIII) and recent fieldwork has supported the observation (Philp, 1981: Addington 60 x 11/14m; Kits Coty 70 x 11/15m). Depressions along the sides of the Addington mound may indicate the position of the ditches but at Kits Coty there is evidence only of a single large ditch along one side of the mound (Jessup, 1970, 98-9; Philp, 1981, 84-7). In the absence of excavation this cannot be taken to certainly exclude the presence of encircling ditches which are likely to be of a slight nature.

The simple box chambers and peristaliths of the Medway tombs strongly suggest translation into stone of the wooden components of earthen long barrows and a link with the oblong ditch sites of Essex is attractive; the short and extended sites there (eg. Ashen and Rivenhall) correspond well with the square

and rectangular Medway sites, exemplified by Coldrum and Addington. Until however more is known of both the interior features of Essex oblong ditches and of the ditch form of the Medway mounds little further can be said.

Many of the peculiarities of long barrow architecture evident amongst sites on the periphery of the Midland/East Anglian region - encircling ditches in Lincolnshire; rectangular mounds atypically clustered and sited in river valleys in Kent; apparent skeumorphs of turf construction in the Cotswolds - are made more explicable if linked to a series of destroyed turf built mounds in central England. The balance of probability is that these are represented by elongated ditches.

d) Encircling and U ditch long barrows beyond the immediate periphery of the Midland/East Anglian region

Encircling or U ditch long barrows are not of course restricted to the areas just under discussion. Could sites elsewhere, other than putative Midland/East Anglian long barrows, have influenced the Lincolnshire and Kentish barrows?

Such sites are concentrated on Crabourne Chase but are also to be found further to the north and south in Wessex (table 7.5).

An original claim made for the Lambourne long barrow (Grinsell, 1936) can be discounted. At only Holdenhurst, Handley I (Wor Barrow) and Gussage St. Michael I (Thickthorn Down) have the ditches been tested by excavation, elsewhere the encircling or U shaped ditch claim rests on field observation or aerial reconnaissance (Crawford and Keiller, 1923; Grinsell, 1959, 9, 77-8; Smith, 1979, 58-60; RCHM, 1970, 25-6; Corcoran, 1969, 29).

Table 7.5

U OR ENCIRCLING DITCHED LONG BARROWS IN WESSEX

PARISH AND NUMBER	LENGTH	DITCH PLAN U 0
Gussage St. Michael I	46.6m	•
Gussage St. Michael II	30m	•
Gussage St. Michael IV	52m	•
Handley I (Wor Barrow)	46m	•
Whitsbury	55m	•
Whitsbury	30m	•
Holdenhurst	91m	•
Cerne Abbas	30m	•
Corfe I	35m	•
Westwood	36m	•

There is no indication at any of these sites that the ditches differed significantly from the dimensions of normal quarry ditches and existing plans point to a predominance of horseshoe/ovate forms rather than open ended rectangles and trapezoids. Only at Corfe Castle I and Handley I do ditches appear to totally encircle mounds: at the former site this takes the form of a series of quarry pits and at the latter, small causewayed sections of ditch close the open end of the main U ditch.

The small size of these Wessex sites and their geographical distance from both the Kentish and Lincs. long barrows, and the elongated ditch sites of the Midland/East Anglian area, makes it unlikely that a connection exists between them. Neither can an ancestral or even conceptual link be postulated between these sites and the Wessex cursuses. Unlike the steady gradation in size evident from oblong ditch to cursus on the river gravels of central England, the U ditch barrows near the Gussage and Pentridge cursuses are of very modest size.

e) Configuration of ring ditches/round barrows around long barrows and elongated ditches

A final means by which the postulated identity of long barrows and elongated ditches can be tested is through a comparison of the configuration of adjacent round barrows and ring ditches.

The apparent influence of long barrows on round barrow siting has often been commented on (Grinsell, 1953) but rarely systematically documented (Smith, 1979). Certain examples are obvious: the linear cemeteries extending from Winterbourne Stoke I and the Broadmayne bank barrow; imposed round barrows at Beckhampton Road, and Broadmayne. Other patterns are more subtle - round barrows within the orbit of a long barrow terminal but out of strict alignment with it, as at Ditchingham, Handley I (Wor Barrow) and South Wonston (north). It remains undeniably true though as Hoare noted in the 18th century (1812, 21) that the majority of long barrows stand in isolation: only 18% of the long barrows documented by Smith in Hampshire have round barrows sited within 100m of them and reduction of this distance to a more immediate and significant 50m reduces the figure to 15%. Nevertheless in only one of the six cases represented by this figure could the association have resulted fortuitously from the expansion of a neighbouring round barrow cemetery; elsewhere round barrow association with widely dispersed long barrows is clearly deliberate.

In an attempt to ascertain the nature and frequency of spatial patterning it is possible to expand the sample to include the Dorset sites carefully documented by the Royal Commission for Historical Monuments (1970, 1971, 1972). The Cranbourne Chase and Ridgeway groupings (based on Ashbee's figures) and the Hampshire Upland group (based on Smith's figures minus those falling within the Hampshire section of Cranbourne Chase) provide a total sample of 91 sites. The two former areas provide, by virtue of their confinement within limited

linear zones, patterns more directly comparable to those created along the gravel corridors of the river valleys, yet even in these similar areas differences are apparent (table 7.6).

Table 7.6

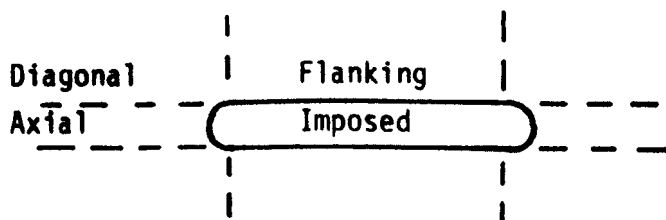
Round barrows/ring ditches lying within 50 and 100 metres of long barrow/elongated ditch sites

<u>Sample</u>	<u>Sample size</u>	<u>Rd/rbs 50m</u>	<u>Rd/rbs 100m</u>
Long barrows: Hants	31	22%	29%
C Chase	36	17%	28%
Dorset Ridgeway	24	46%	62%
E ditches: Mid/E.Anglia	55	40%	50%

The inflation of the Dorset Ridgeway figures relates to the high incidence of cemetery development in the vicinity of long barrows there, a pattern that corresponds with that of the Midland/East Anglian river valleys where a third of the associations relate to cemetery groupings.

In an effort to avoid contamination of the elongated ditch sample by possible multiple round barrow sites, short ovate, oblong and trapeziform ditches of this sort have been omitted (eg. Latton, North Stoke, Eynsham). The sites considered are almost exclusively of oblong ditch type therefore.

Four basic position or zones around long barrow/elongated ditches suggest themselves:



Assessing trend without weighting the figures too strongly for long barrows with multiple associations depends upon acceptance of only the nearest round barrow/ring ditch for counting purposes. Diagonal and axial classifications

are perhaps unnecessarily precise in definition and might be better amalgamated, yet it is the linear cemeteries such as Winterbourne Stoke and Broadmayne that most clearly demonstrate the axial influence of long mounds - the object of this analysis.

Figures are set out in table 7.7.

Table 7.7

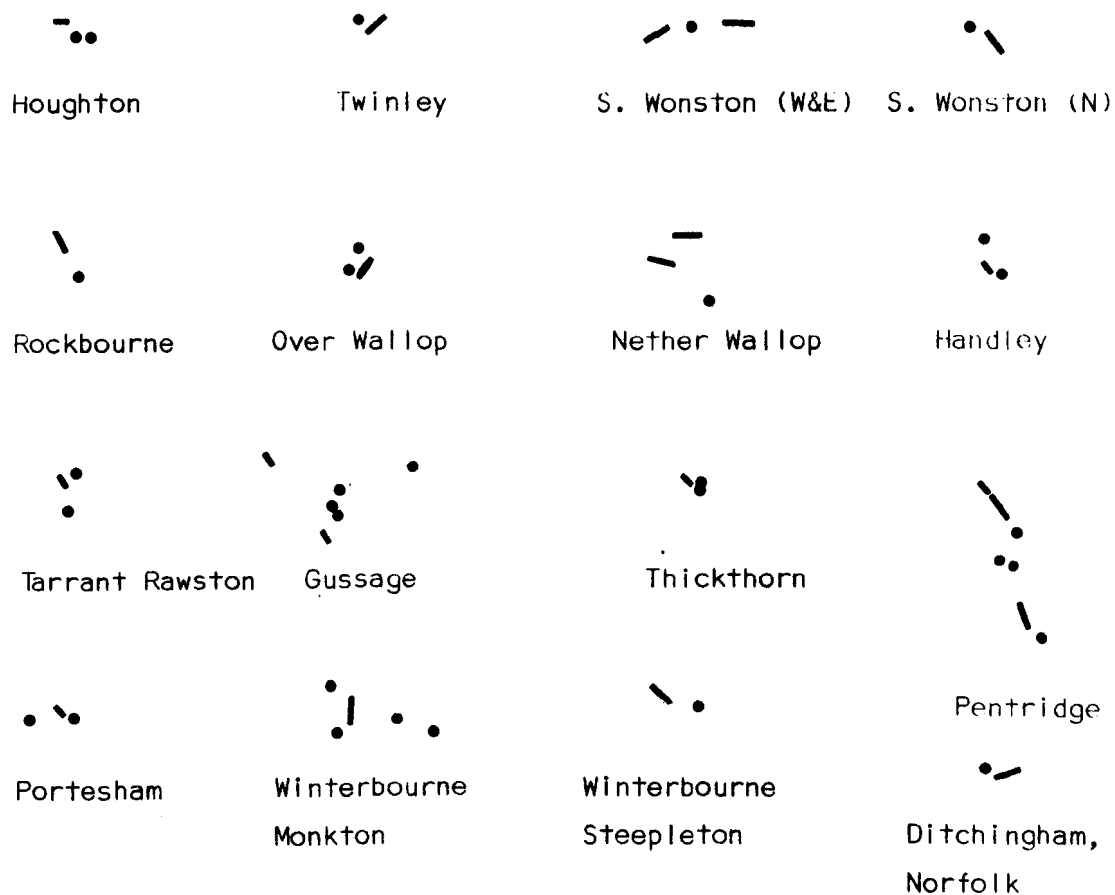
Round barrow/ring ditch configurations in the immediate vicinity of long barrows/elongated ditches

	AXIAL	DIAGONAL	FLANKING	IMPOSED	
Long barrows	34	49	16	1	%
Elongated ditches	18	41	27	14	%

A significantly higher proportion of long barrows possess round barrows in axial alignment (34% against 18%); and paradoxically the only elongated ditch site that appears to have generated a linear cemetery in Wessex manner is the open site of Dorchester VIII. Higher figures for imposed sites in the elongated ditch group (14% as against 1%) would again support the contention of open rather than mounded form. Strikingly similar figures for diagonally sited round barrows/ring ditches are indicative of common purpose, if not structure, nonetheless. This pattern is taken up around both isolated long barrows and elongated ditches (cf Wor Barrow, Blandford, Winterbourne Monkton, Hell Stone/Feering, Nether Exe, North Tawton, Cardington C) and so cannot be ascribed to chance patterning within cemetery complexes.

Given important differences in the instances of axial and imposed placing it may be better to consider the cropmark sites to have either possessed very low mounds or to have been open long mortuary enclosures.

LONG BARROW - ROUND BARROW CONFIGURATIONS : ISOLATED SITES
(HANTS AND DORSET)



ELONGATED DITCH - RING DITCH CONFIGURATIONS : ISOLATED SITES

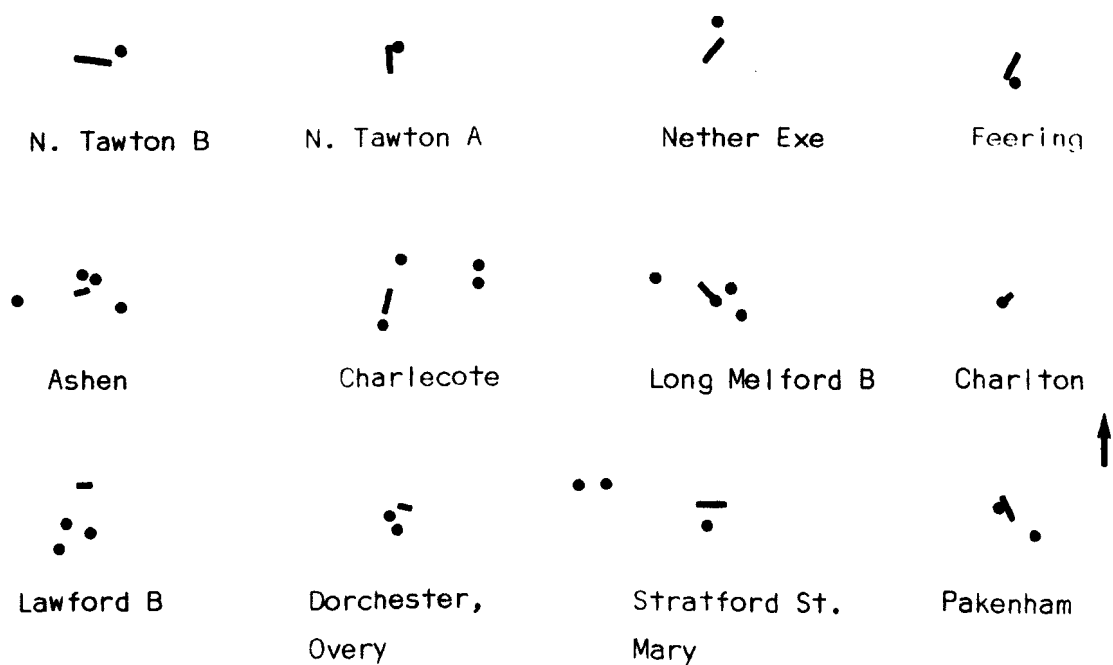
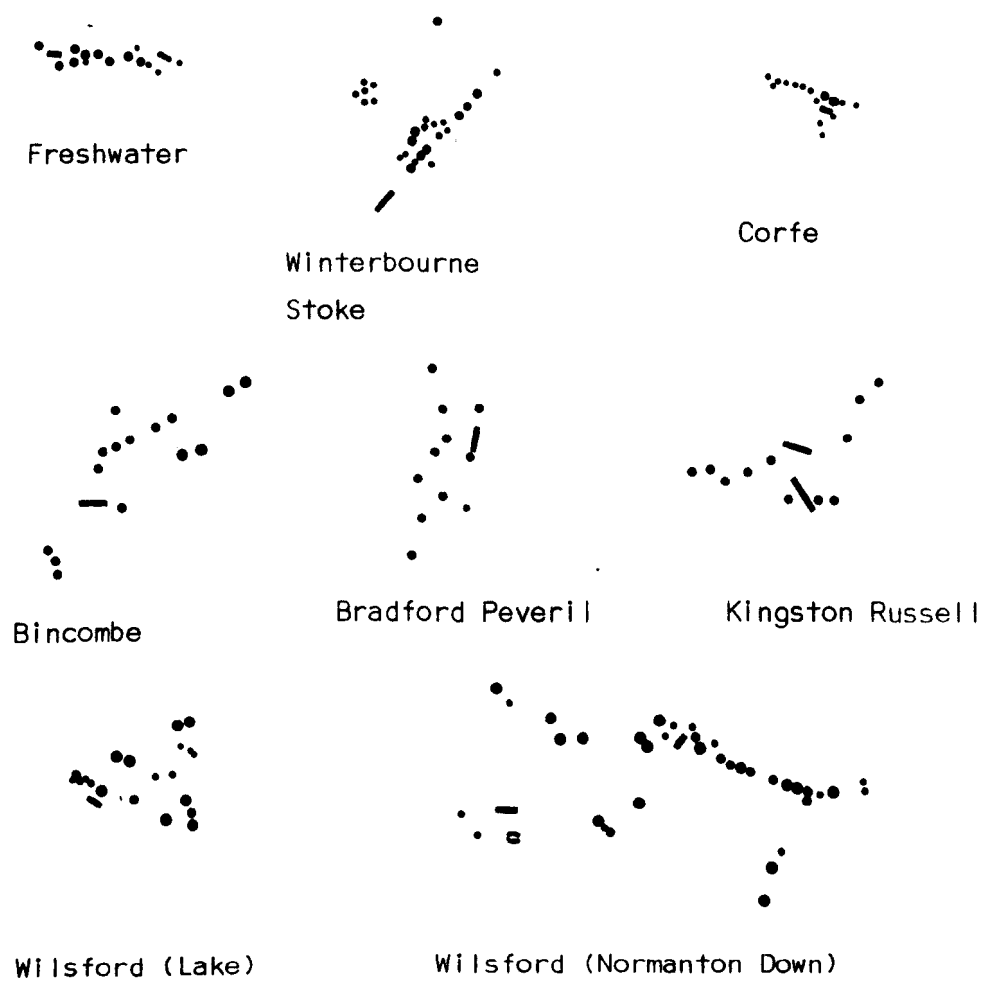


Fig. 7.5

LONG BARROW - ROUND BARROW CONFIGURATIONS : CEMETERY GROUPINGS



ELONGATED DITCH - RING DITCH CONFIGURATIONS : CEMETERY GROUPINGS

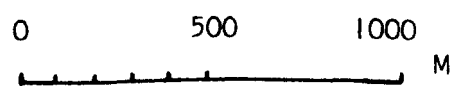
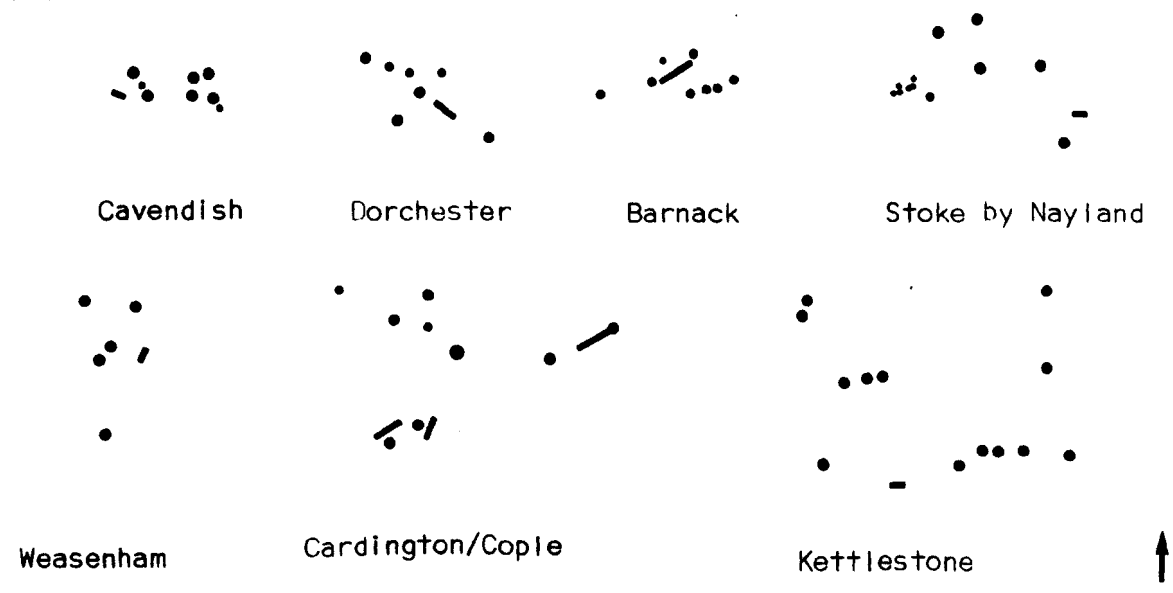


Fig. 7.6

f) Other associated monuments

Monuments other than ring ditches lying within 1km radius of elongated ditches provide a final hint of form and purpose.

Table 7.8

Monuments other than ring ditches within 1km radius of elongated ditches

Causewayed enclosures	Henges	Cursuses
Roughton	Dorchester Llandegai	Dorchester Barford Stratford St. Mary Sonning Cardington B & C Cople Springfield Benson ?Buscot

Cursuses are revealed as overwhelmingly the commonest associated monument. This, and the location of the ?two Roughton sites beside a causewayed enclosure, recalls the familiar patterning of Wessex long barrows. The association with henges can be counted as coincidental at Dorchester (relating to the cursus rather than oblong ditch) and at Llandegai may result from the early development of henges in the west. Here they may have performed a role akin to causewayed enclosures.

Summary

Whilst other interpretations are possible for ovate, trapezoid and short oblong ditches (particularly those with convex terminals) it seems from the common pattern of associations and general dimensions that oblong ditches and long barrows can be regarded as largely synonymous. This need not indicate

identical structures. The evidence here is conflicting. Although the relatively high incidence of imposed ring ditches and lack of general agreement with the West Rudham structural model argues for open status, parallels exist for the definition of turf built barrows by slight ditches and interpretation of these cropmark sites in any other terms is rendered difficult by their capacity to fill wide gulfs in the present distribution of southern long barrows. From their apparent role as prototypes of the larger cursus monuments it could be reasoned that they must similarly have been open sites, were it not for the axial mound within the massive Scorton cursus. This may have been unique only in its survival. Levelling of all sites in the pivotal areas of Central and Eastern England prevents structural conclusions being drawn here about oblong ditch/cursus ancestry like those made elsewhere regarding henges and early stone circles (Burl, 1976, 24-9). Instead farther flung and better preserved examples of bank barrows and long mortuary enclosures must be examined. These two classes of monument clearly stand at the base of the cursus series and hence also provide alternative models of oblong ditch structure.

CHAPTER VIII

LONG MORTUARY ENCLOSURES AND CURSUS ORIGINS

What were long mortuary enclosures and why in view of their apparent ancestral relationship to massive cursus monuments are they so rare except as cropmark sites? Their frequent incorporation under later long barrows has seemed to provide an answer - "they appear to associated or to be complementary to long barrows" (Atkinson 1951); and "long mortuary enclosures were the first stages of long barrows and later were abandoned for some reason" (Ashbee 1970, 49). Yet odd cases of abandonment can hardly explain the generation of monuments as dominatingly open and final as cursuses. Examination of the features of free standing and long barrow enclosures is needed to clarify the picture.

A. FREE STANDING ENCLOSURES

i Excavated sites

These have already been discussed at length so need not detain us here (chapter 6; figs 6.1 & 6.2). Three are linked by the presence of substantial posts in their interiors (Douglasmuir, Barford, North Stoke - in the latter two cases given additional support by banks) and a clay floored and turf walled mortuary structure akin to that protected by the mound at Charlecote might be inferred for the plough eroded Dorchester site where a single human mandible survived (Atkinson 1950). The opposed post lines just within the entrance of the Wilsford (Normanton Down) enclosure have also recently been interpreted as a mortuary structure of Saxo Thuringian type (Piggott 1973, 316) although they seem to be set rather far apart for the purpose - 5 metres.

There are difficulties however in the earlier freestanding porch interpretation advanced by the excavator: if/^{both} the enclosure to back the porch, and barrow construction (represented by one deeper ditch segment adjacent to the entrance) were, as suggested, aborted for some reason it would seem that both were proceeding simultaneously. This removes the normal raison d'être of a

prolonged open phase for such enclosures. Photographs in the Cambridge University Collection reveal a more mundane purpose for the posts (CUC NJ 74-6). Soil marks of the last vestiges of the banks terminate in line with them confirming a primary role as revetment devices, horizontal timbering revealed below ground level almost certainly extending to full bank height. Difficulties faced when advancing the porch interpretation because of the lack of accurate opposition of posts are resolved if this function is accepted, as is the absence of an enclosure palisade - the banks were clearly the only intended structural element. It is not necessary to infer aborted construction therefore.

The deepening of one ditch segment can also be explained in terms other than long barrow construction - part of the adjacent post bedding trench had been dug out and refilled, presumably during replacement of a collapsed post. Deepening and widening of the nearest section of ditch seems logical to make up material which had poured from behind the revetment during the operation. It is difficult anyway to explain ditch deepening for barrow construction at the proximal end of the site unless the extremely rare Wor barrow plan was envisaged.

Excavation then points to the probability of very limited internal features (single posts or superficial mortuary structures) and definition simply by a bank. Later covering mounds are possible, however (eg Charlecote).

ii Earthwork sites

With these features in mind is it possible to locate potential surviving earthworks? Despite the apparent longevity of the tradition there are remarkably few claimants.

An oblong embanked enclosure with convex ends at Freshwater has recently been proposed (Smith 1979, XXXV) and sites resembling Dorchester VIII and Fengate have been recorded at Hinton Waldrist in Berkshire (82m x 18m :

Huntingford 1936); Leaze in Cornwall (50m x 20m : Allcroft 1908); and Paul's Cray in Kent (36m x 18m : Parsons 1961). The latter has been dated to the Bronze Age on the basis of abundant, unstratified flint work recovered from its vicinity but this is open to doubt. Part of an elongated site of possibly similar form is illustrated in the report of the excavation of the barrow at Playden, Sussex (Cheney 1935) but in the absence of a full plan no certain conclusions can be drawn.

Many other rectilinear sites have been recorded which need not concern us here (Crawford & Keller 1928; Cotton 1961; Bradley 1970; Jobey 1970) but it is worth recording the deceptively similar form of some of these late utilitarian sites and long mortuary enclosures (eg Jobey 1970 type 1b).

Four oval embanked enclosures comparable to the excavated but undated Weasenham site have been recognized in NE Yorkshire (Hayes 1967). One is attached to the Neolithic round cairn on Great Ayton Moor and two others lie within the orbit of cairn cemeteries (Moorholme High Moor and Danby Low Moor) in the same manner as Weasenham. They may be cognate with the enclosure placed within the Aston cursus (pl. 4.3) but are separated by their ditch plans from those of the main series.

These putative earthwork sites all owe their survival to siting on high moorland, chalk downland, or wooded hilltops. They are widely dispersed however, well away from the concentration of lower lying cropmark sites, and represent an unacceptably small sample for a tradition that apparently persisted for at least a millenium (North Stoke - Fengate). In particular the absence of recorded sites of this type in early surveys of the Wessex chalk seems strange (Colt Hoare 1810; 1819; Smith 1885). Burl has recently drawn attention to the sites of Old Chapel and Huish Hill on the Marlborough Downs (1979) as possible mortuary enclosures. The former recorded by Stukeley in 1723 (1743, 47) and the subject of extensive field notes and drawings (Gough Maps 231: 10a, 11b; 222; 273) comprised a long barrow with

collapsed chamber incorporated in the side of a large square enclosure 61m x 68m delineated by a ditch, bank and close set up right stones. Colt Hoare and later Smith failed to relocate the site perhaps because of "successive operations of the plough" as Colt Hoare suggested or perhaps because Stukeley had in fact been describing the Glory Ann earthworks; such a mundane enclosure might in his fertile imagination have been transformed into the "Archdruid's seat upon Temple Down called Old Chapel." Whatever the case the site's recorded dimensions set it apart from the long mortuary enclosure sites under discussion here and its relationship to a long barrow is imperfectly paralleled only by Great Ayton Moor.

Although now wrecked and scattered the stones of the Huish Hill site recorded by Stukeley as: "a very long oblong work, like a long barrow made of stones pitch'd in the ground, no tumulus" make it a stronger contender. Smith's plan and description (1885, 177-8) however indicated an oblong setting with convex ends 80m x 69m - again wider than sites here accepted as long mortuary enclosures and far shorter than the smallest minor cursus. This may merely mean that dimensional limits have been too tightly drawn but for the moment this intriguing site must be set aside.

Aerial photography has deepened and extended early earthwork surveys and recorded large numbers of enclosures of the same basic dimensions and plan as that at Fengate, both in Wessex (RCHM 1970, 1971, 1972) and Eastern Yorkshire (T Manby & D Riley pers comm), but the balance of probability is that most are of Romano British or Medieval date. Only further excavation will establish the frequency with which such sites can be predicted to be of Neolithic date.

III Miscellaneous claimed mortuary enclosures

In addition to the sites just discussed various others have been claimed as mortuary enclosures.

Foremost amongst these is the square enclosure on Windmill Hill (Smith 1965, 33), likened to the square fenced enclosure under the Nutbanc long barrow. Cropmarks of a similar, but apparently causewayed, square enclosure at Bishops Tackbrook have also received this designation (Webster & Hobley 1964 Site 87, pl. 18); identification seems to have been encouraged by the presence of the site amongst a small group of ring ditches. Such sites are, however, a common feature in some river valleys (cf Thames valley: Black Bourton SU 286033; Bampton SU 315025; Stanton Harcourt SU 406047; Port Meadow SU 493084) and survive in Wessex as earthworks. Whilst analogies with Barford C and the Sonning sub rectangular enclosure might be sought, Iron Age parallels are closer and more numerous - eg Barford E (Oswald 1969, 42-5); Farmoor (Selkirk 1978); Claydon Pike (Miles and Palmer 1983). The Windmill Hill enclosure itself could in fact be of this date.

The considerably more precise enclosure surrounding Dorchester I appears to represent a unique non circular definition of a hengiform site. Comparable sites are rare and late: three surviving earthwork sites at Winterbourne Steepleton (RCHM 1970, 468-72), the low mound of one appearing to overlies a Celtic field boundary, and a square enclosure at Baldock containing Belgic burials and cremations (Selkirk 1983).

Further claimed mortuary enclosure or analogous ritual sites include a double ditched cropmark beside the Barrows Hills Group at Radley (St Joseph 1965) and the D shaped enclosure in the Culliford Tree linear cemetery running from the Broadmayne bank barrow (RCHM 1970, 458 & 504). The latter is probably of Neolithic or Early Bronze date to judge by the apparent encroachment on it of the Whitcombe 14 barrow but neither it, nor the former site, are of typical long mortuary enclosure plan.

A final claimed site requires only brief comment. One of the low mounds south of the Five Knolls barrow cemetery on Dunstable Downs has been referred to as a possible long mortuary enclosure (Thomas 1964, 25). It is almost

certainly a pillow mound.

Only those sites of long barrow dimensions then have been accepted as possible long mortuary enclosures. Other sites may have a claim to be considered as mortuary/ritual enclosures distinct from the oblong ditch - cursus tradition but even their inclusion fails to disguise a parlous absence of open enclosure sites away from the Midland/East Anglian river systems. Were they then centred almost entirely in this region or were they elsewhere covered by long barrows?

B. LONG MORTUARY ENCLOSURES AND LONG BARROWS

The transverse spacing of the side ditches of oblong ditches and proven long mortuary enclosures corresponds remarkably closely with that of long barrow quarry ditches (fig. 8.1) - a point confirmed by Pitt Rivers' excavation of Wor Barrow. Such early ditches would inevitably have been destroyed or severely truncated by the quarrying of mound material therefore, except around the proximal and distal ends of a site. There traces should survive unless the succeeding barrow ditch were of rare encircling plan.

Aerial photographs show precisely that at Pakenham and Eynesbury, and at Wor Barrow a section of early ditch at the proximal end of the site survived due to misalignment of the later ditch. Elsewhere the evidence is lacking. Even recourse to U ditch long mortuary enclosure plans of Barford and North Stoke type fails to resolve the problem, since linking ditch lines are equally absent at the distal ends of flanking quarry ditches. Why should this be when the Wor Barrow, Pakenham and Eynesbury evidence appears so conclusive? Timber palisade enclosures have long appeared to provide an answer.

i The Wor Barrow Question

The rectangular palisade enclosure with "porched" entranceway at Wor Barrow had sides placed 4.5 metres inside the mound edges (Pitt Rivers 1898, p1249)

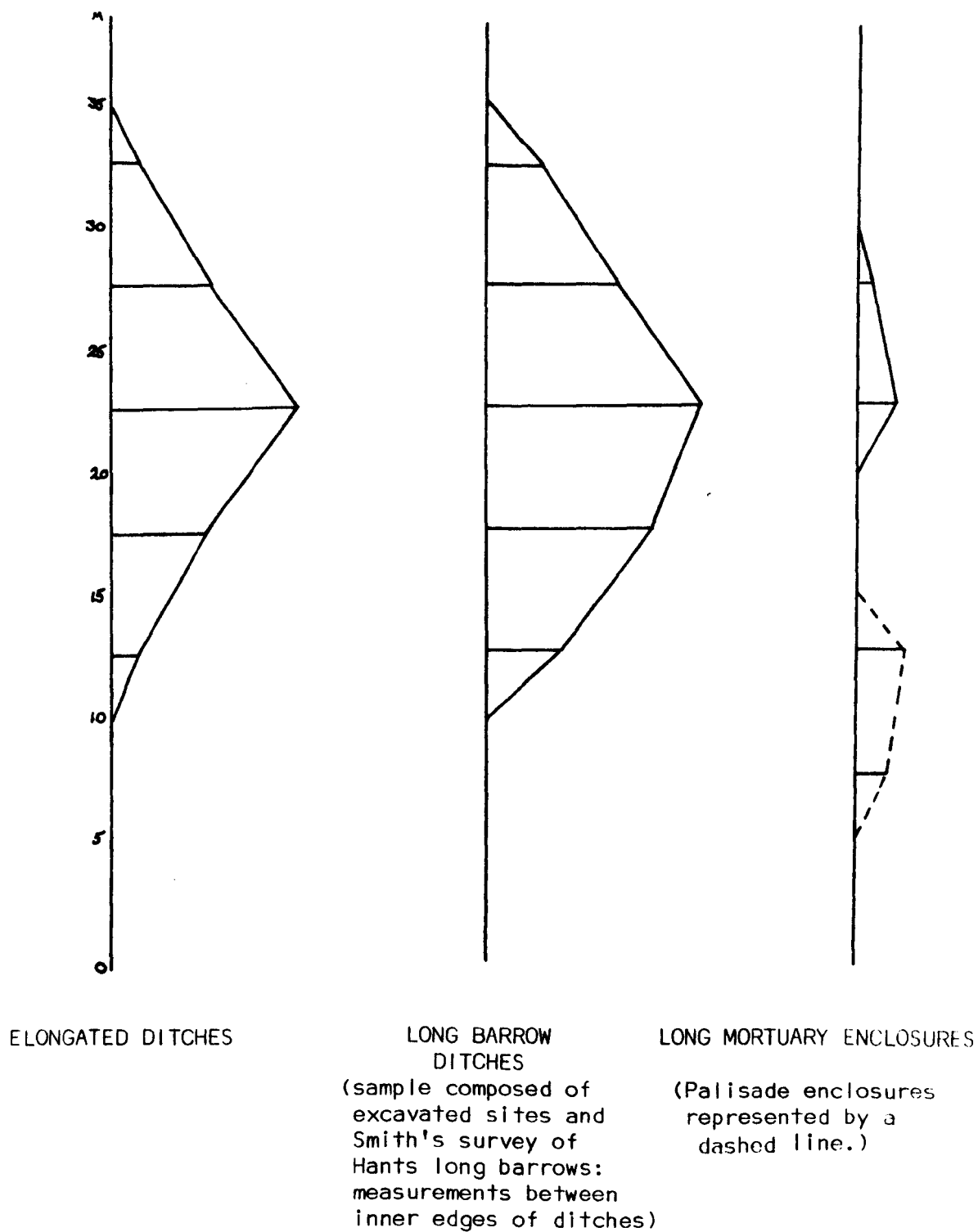
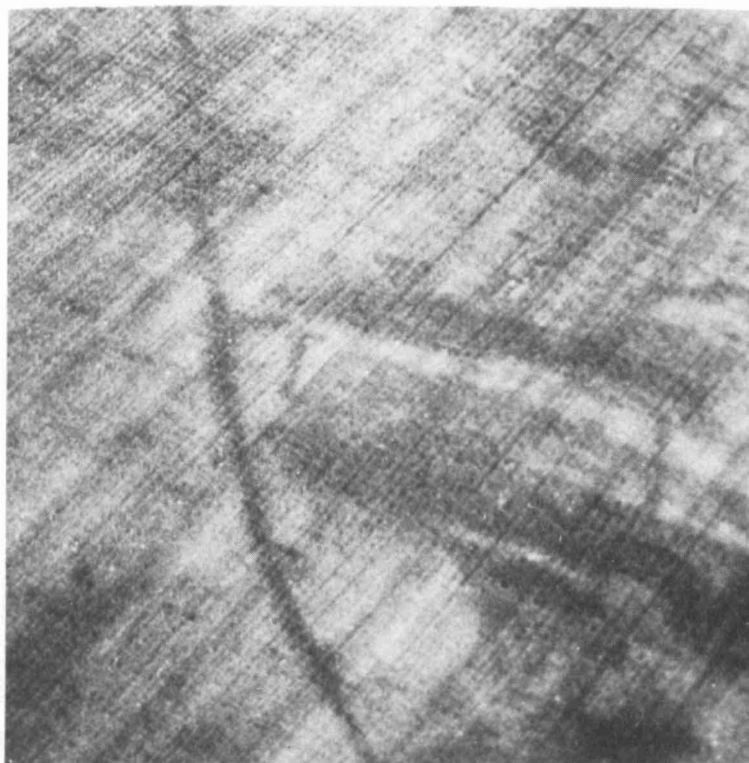


Fig.8.1 COMPARATIVE TRANSVERSE DIMENSIONS OF ELONGATED DITCHES, LONG BARROW DITCHES AND LONG MORTUARY ENCLOSURES.

It could have performed no worthwhile revetment purpose therefore yet the distance across the enclosure - 10 metres - precluded it having been roofed in the manner suggested by Pitt Rivers. Its interpretation as an early open structure standing within the long mortuary enclosure ditches had much to recommend it (Piggott 1954, 54). Although the very small area of the interior taken up by the mortuary "house" and interments begged the question of purpose, this seemed to be resolved by the weathered and disarticulated nature of the bones: the palisade enclosure defined an open mortuary area in which bodies were laid out to decompose. Such enclosures could then be seen as the counterparts amongst earthen long barrows of the accessible chambers of stone built tombs, and the covering mounds as the equivalent of final forecourt blocking. The Wor Barrow palisade enclosure seemed to provide evidence of internal structures lacking at the open and eroded Dorchester and Wilsford sites, and aided the recognition of such initial open phases at other barrows where early ditches of Wor Barrow type were missing. Such enclosing palisade lines came to be regarded as synonymous with long mortuary enclosures. Thus at Willerby Wold, Fussell's Lodge, and Giant's Hills 1 ditched, palisaded and posted structures all received this designation. Ashbee, however, questioned this interpretation of the Fussell's Lodge evidence where the size of the palisade posts and their coincidence with the mound edge argued for a simpler explanation as revetment. Scrutiny of excavated sections across other sites reveals a similar pattern (eg Willerby Wold, where the ditch almost certainly held a palisade although only one post left a clear trace at the base of the ditch; Giants Hills 1; Kilham). Aerial photographs of the Churn long barrow (Richards 1978) and the Drayton long barrow (pl. 8.1) reveal bedding trenches similarly placed within flanking ditches and at assumed mound limits. Only the Wor Barrow enclosure lay well within its mound, but even it conformed to normal mound dimensions (fig 8.1, 8.2)

Should an open enclosure interpretation for such features be based on a single atypical site? In addition to doubts that might be expressed about the capacity of weathered freestanding timbers to later retain mound



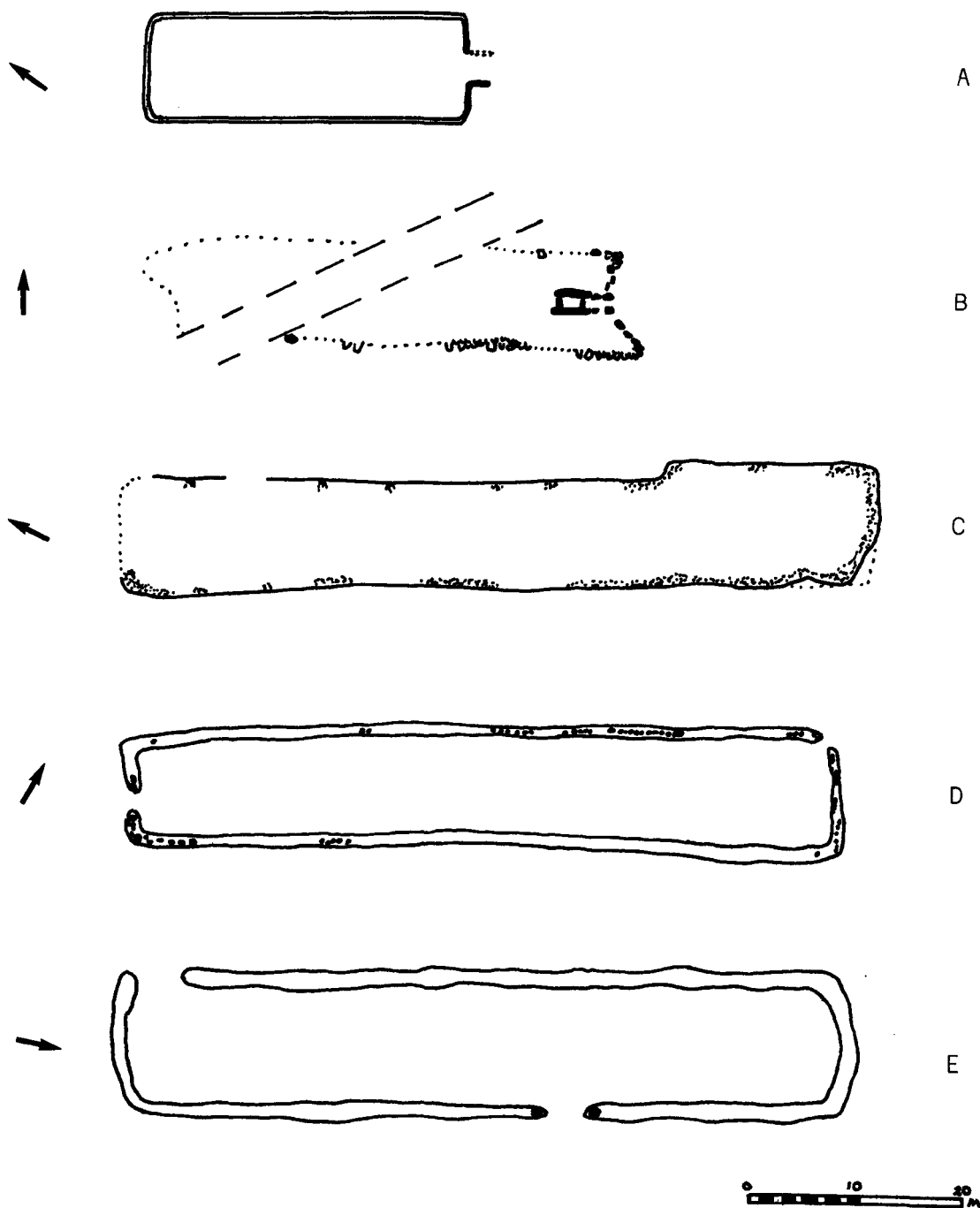
Pls. 8.1 & 8.2 : Drayton and Churn long barrows of typical flanking quarry ditch plan with internal palisade enclosures. The Drayton site lies on a gravel terrace adjacent to the Sutton Courtenay/Drayton cursus; the Churn barrow on the chalk downs on the periphery of the Thames valley. (Compare with pl.7.1)

material, their similarity in plan to turf and boulder revetments elsewhere makes a functional distinction difficult to concede. This is exemplified by the closely comparable plans of the Wor Barrow enclosure and the turf revetment of the Holdenhurst long barrow. The latter could not have stood independently for long in the opinion of the excavator and in addition possessed projecting areas of turf intended to tie mound and revetment together during construction (Piggott 1937a, 6-7). Acceptance of the Wor Barrow enclosure as a freestanding monument necessitates then endorsement of fundamentally different purposes for virtually identical structures separated by only 24 km (15 miles).

Farther afield in the stoney country of the Pennines and Cheviots boulders were used to outline enclosures and long mounds that resemble in all other respects the palisade enclosed long barrows of Yorkshire (cf Bradley Moor and Bellsheil Law) and the same interchangeability of stone and wood is evident in the south (cf Fussell's Lodge and Wayland's Smithy II). Despite obviously owing much to wooden prototypes (eg post and panel patterning) such stone mound edging is not accorded long mortuary enclosure status because of its instability. Plans, however, speak for themselves (fig 8.2).

Although palisade enclosures are distinguished by their structural independence does this reflect any more than the means of erecting close set posts? No additional structural devices would be required to retain mound edges when posts the size of those at Kilham and Fussell's Lodge were employed. By definition such enclosures must certainly have been constructed prior to the mound but whether the interval should be measured in hours and days or years and decades is open to conjecture.

When slighter posts or stakefences were employed additional structural devices were required: at Willerby Wold the diagonally stacked chalk slabs filling the tops of the enclosure ditch may in part represent additional revetment and at Beckhampton Road the use of simple stake fences (and perhaps



A Wor Barrow C Holdenhurst E Charlecote
 B Cairnholy I D Kilham

Fig. 8.2 MOUND DEFINITION : VARIATIONS ON
 A THEME.

planking) to edge the mound necessitated both their being tied into the mound with lines of stake fencing and the employment of an external revetment bank. This latter feature survived to a width of 1.5-2m and a height of 0.57m along the southern side of the barrow (Smith 1979, 241, fig 18). Where most completely preserved the revetment was composed of coombe rock overlain by chalk gravel and capped by a single layer of turves. Collapsed barrow material had spread across it.

The similarity of this low revetment bank to the backing of the Wor Barrow enclosure as revealed in one of Pitt Rivers' photographs of his excavation is obvious (Piggott 1954, 56, pl. 11b). It allows a different interpretation to be placed upon the upper turf line there, which it had previously been assumed formed naturally over a considerable period prior to mound construction.

Doubts might also be expressed over the postulated function of this bank as additional support for the freestanding pallsade (Atkinson: Vatcher 1961): such a bank seems unlikely to have been required outside the enclosure. In the absence of a mound exerting force from within, the only pressure to which such an enclosure would be subjected was external - wind pressure. Startin has sought to explain the Y configuration of posts within the Linear Pottery culture houses in just such terms (1978) and at Wor Barrow wind pressure might similarly have been expected to result rather in the provision of an internal bank.

The pallsade enclosure conforms then to patterns of revetment construction and the evidence of Pitt Rivers' photograph (Piggott 1954, pl. 11b) reveals that it had in fact functioned in this way - the post pipe apparent in this indicates that the post had broken just above the level at which the revetment bank ceased to afford support, as had the stake shown in fig 18 of the Beckhampton Road long barrow report (Smith 1979). The extent of barrow spread beyond the enclosure posts though cannot be explained purely

in terms of mound collapse - Ashbee's hypothesis of a mound originally retained by enclosure timbers 6 metres high seems most improbable since the photographed post pipe has a diameter of no more than 0.3m.

An answer is perhaps to be found in the nature of the long mortuary enclosure ditches. Although likened to those of Dorchester VIII and Wilsford (Normanton Down) they can be seen both in Pitt Rivers' section across the site and in his photograph of the NW ditch under excavation (1894, 65 & fig 2) to have been small only in comparison with the massive quarry ditches. That section of early ditch running along the inner edge of the NW quarry ditch appears to have been some 2.4m deep below the projected line of the old land surface and, assuming the maintenance of an even profile, originally some 2 metres or so wide at the surface. A similar width is recorded on Pitt Rivers' plan for the surviving segment of ditch at the proximal end of the barrow (1.7m - 2.4m) but no indication of depth here is given.

Whilst then of not dissimilar width to the long mortuary enclosure ditches at North Stoke, Barford or Charlecote they appear to have been twice as deep and substantially more square sectioned. The volume of material removed from them would be considerably greater therefore and well in excess of that required to construct the palisade enclosure revetment bank. Two possibilities suggest themselves - that the material was dumped beside the ditch to form an enclosure bank like that at Wilsford, within which the later long barrow was laid out, or that a low mound was produced within the palisade enclosure. Neither is totally satisfactory since the banks of the Wilsford enclosure were constructed from ditches less than half the size and the calculated volume of material from the Wor Barrow ditches (some 450 cubic metres) would produce a ridge mound 2 metres high but meeting the palisade lines only at its outermost angles. The lack of an apparent turf line running through Pitt Rivers' mound pyramids (Ashbee 1970, pl1) seems to preclude explanation in terms of interrupted mound construction but the time taken for vegetational colonization of the Overton Down experimental earthwork perhaps provides an

adequate period for such inactivity.

Whatever the explanation for this enigmatic site it seems unlikely on several counts that the palisade enclosure represented a freestanding element: It is morphologically almost identical to long barrow revetment palisades and structures elsewhere; the revetment bank would appear to have been placed on the wrong side to resist wind pressure (the only force likely to operate on an open enclosure), and the early ditches are considerably larger than those of other long mortuary enclosures. The apparent porch way can be paralleled by the post settings at Fussell's Lodge, Wayland's Smithy and Gwernvale and need not, as the later site makes clear, be associated with access.

ii Other palisade enclosures

Since then there are reasons to question the freestanding enclosure interpretation of the Wor Barrow palisade can any of the other enclosures be considered to have existed as freestanding monuments? Four approaches to the problem suggest themselves:

- a) An assessment of the ability of the posts defining an enclosure to stand independently of the mound;
- b) Evidence of post replacement - inevitable in an open enclosure subjected to the pressure of infilling after a prolonged freestanding phase;
- c) Indications, where burning of the wooden structures was evident, that freshly dug mound material had been heaped over burning timbers;
- d) Evidence for the use of the open enclosure prior to mound construction - presumably for exposure purposes.

a Structural stability as a freestanding enclosure

There is no doubting the ability of the Fussell's Lodge, Kilham, Wor Barrow and Nutbane posts to stand independently (all were set to depths of a metre

or more in the ground) but at Willerby Wold the enclosure ditch (which can be clearly seen in well preserved section to be of palisade trench type) was shallower - 0.3/0.6m. This perhaps explains the additional use of stacked slabs at the site, as an extra revetment device for the mound. It would follow from this that enclosure palisade and mound on this site were constructed simultaneously.

The side posts of the Giants Hills I enclosure, 0.2m in diameter and placed 1.5m apart, were set "not very far into the old land surface" according to the excavator (Phillips 1936, 49). One illustration (1936, pl XV fig 1) shows the pipe of a side post descending just 0.3m below the buried turf line and ascending 0.4m upwards into the eroded mound side. Phillips was of the opinion that they had a maximum height of 2.4m assuming that they were embedded in the side of the mound but that they could "not have remained in place long." Piggett (1954, 109) shared the opinion that they were less likely to have constituted a freestanding enclosure than to have been an adjunct of the mound but following the Willerby Wold excavation a pre mound enclosure interpretation has been favoured (Manby 1963, 195; Longworth 1965, 22; Manby 1970, 8). It is difficult, however, to accept the stability of such shallowly set posts. Nor at this depth can they alone be considered adequate bracing members for horizontally laid timbering as Ashbee suggests (1970, 38). Provision of an external revetment bank as at Beckhampton Road, where the stakes were similarly set only some 0.3m into the ground, would resolve the problem. There are some indications in photographs of the excavation that this may have existed.

It seems unlikely then that the Willerby Wold or Giant's Hills I enclosures were ever freestanding and, as already seen, the external bank casts doubt on the Wor Barrow enclosure also.

b) Post decay and replacement

Post replacement has been noted at two certain open enclosure sites -

Douglasmuir (along the sides of the timber enclosure; Kendrick 1980) and Wilsford (at the entranceway; Vatcher 1961) - but amongst long barrow palisade enclosures it is rare.

At Nutbane there were several replaced posts in the holes comprising elements of the forecourt enclosure but it seems possible that these were broken off during extensive remodelling rather than as a result of decay. This forecourt building which was undeniably a freestanding structure is nevertheless of a different order to the large rectangular palisade enclosures under discussion. It will be returned to later during discussion of burnt features.

The little published material on the East Heslerton long barrow excavation points similarly to remodelling rather than structural repair: the short intersecting lengths of palisade bedding trench located on directly opposed sides of the barrow may indicate simple repair but the possibility of such collapse occurring at the same point on either side of the enclosure seems slight; an overlapped section created during mound extension seems more credible. Whatever the case the two phases of palisade trench construction were clearly associated with separate periods of quarry ditch construction and hence with mounds set within them.

This very limited evidence contrasts with that of mortuary houses/structures where post replacement or rebuilding is relatively commonplace: at Dalladies and Orton Longueville the mortuary structures were reconstructed presumably due to decay (Piggott 1972; O'Neil 1981), whilst at Lochill, Pitnacree, Doey's Cairn Dunloy, and Wayland's Smithy 1 wooden structures were replaced by stone - at the latter site one of the post holes of the integral "porch" setting was overlain by a slab of the covering cairn (Masters 1973; Coles and Simpson 1965; Evans 1938; Atkinson 1965). In addition the burials spread across filled holes at Fussell's Lodge and Nutbane are only explicable if related to the decay of earlier structural elements (Ashbee 1958; Morgan 1959).

The durability and independence of these mortuary structures is confirmed by the variety of mounds within which they were incorporated, the range of positions that they occupied when covered by long barrows, and their individual focussing devices: porch or post settings at Fussell's Lodge, Wayland Smithy I, Nutbane phase I, and Orton Longueville; facades at Lochill, Callis Wold and perhaps at Willerby Wold where the facade appears to have stood independently and to have been burnt down along with the integral mortuary structure.

If similar longevity is to be claimed for the palisade enclosures within which some of these structures were situated, comparable evidence of refurbishment or remodelling ought to be evident. It is not. Instead there are indications that mortuary structures were often enclosed by a palisade enclosure only at a late stage. At Kilham the south side of the enclosure curves around the turf walls of the mortuary area and at Willerby Wold the northern ditch of the enclosure stops short of the chalk blocks backing the facade to which the mortuary structure appears to have been directly related. Elsewhere their central placing removes the possibility of establishing a stratigraphic relationship but if analogy with Callis Wold, Dalladies, Wayland's Smithy I and Lochill is acceptable earlier dates can be inferred for these small burial structures.

Conversely the evidence from the much debated Fussell's Lodge long barrow argues for the priority of the enclosure. In view of the lengthy debate already generated by this site (Ashbee 1966; Simpson 1968) it would be unwise to dwell overlong on it but it is of pivotal importance both to discussion of mortuary structure/enclosure relationship and to the question of when formalized patterns of mound construction began to appear (Corcoran 1969, 76).

Whilst the evidence that the proximal pit of the mortuary structure (pit C) cut the butt ends of the palisade enclosure trench appears irrefutable, scrutiny of published photographs indicates a distinction between the fill

of pit A (distal) and pit C (proximal) that may be significant. The former possessed only a core of flints (1966, pl. VIIb) denoting the position of the post whereas the latter (1966, pl. VIIa) was entirely filled with flint nodules despite being some 1.5m in width. It is in fact referred to as a "continuing and integral part of the cairn covering the burials" (Ashbee 1966, 6). As the flints of this covering cairn along with burned chalk, sarsen and carbonized wood all apparently entered the cavity left by the decayed post the same process might be expected to have drawn the material into the immediately adjacent post holes of the palisade enclosure and the porch setting since they were similarly covered. Yet the excavator states (1966, 12): "Flints extended.....over the enclosure entrance filling the entrance post socket (pit C) and covering the end of the bedding trench on either side and one of the four post sockets." (my underlinings) This is difficult to explain if the post in pit C actually filled the entire pit since its massive size would ensure that it was the last element to fully rot away and so the least likely to receive fresh cairn material collapsing from behind the palisade. If alternatively it was of smaller size and packed around in the pit why was not a core of material alone produced as in pit A?

The only reasonable explanation appears to be that the post in pit C was dug out. It is probable that such slighting would occur after the construction of the palisade enclosure trench defining the barrow, and probably after the palisade posts had been set in place. The butt ends of the enclosure ditch may have been dug away in the process and the cairn material thrown over the mortuary structure immediately afterwards. This would explain the surprising spread of flints some 2.5m in front of pit C despite a maximum apparent height for the cairn of only about 1 metre. If this were the case the site might be better equated with the pattern established elsewhere - mortuary structure preceding palisade enclosure - and the date of $3230 \pm 150\text{bc}$ (BM 134) related to the destroyed remains of the mortuary structure that had

collapsed into pit C rather than to the construction of the palisade enclosure itself.

c) Burning of palisade enclosures

The practice of burning the wooden external features of long barrows, prevalent in Yorkshire but also represented in the south at Nutbane, provides an opportunity to examine structural progress at the time of destruction. At Willerby Wold the facade and enclosure were considered to have been burnt down prior to mound construction and the same argument has been advanced for Kilham and Nutbane. If so the existence of these wooden structures as freestanding independent monuments is irrefutable.

The definitive report on Kilham suggests instead that part of the main western section of mound had been set within the enclosure before the timbers were fired although Whittle (1977, 50) points to lack of a sufficient depth of mound material to support this view. Nevertheless sections of ditches and truncated mound base indicated that none of the very numerous burnt timbers had collapsed inwards and that evidence of burning was restricted to two areas: the post pipes and packing material of the palisade trenches, and the top of the primary silt of the main quarry ditches (Manby 1976, 127 & figs 8 & 9). The single post extending through the base of mound material (post hole 4) belonged to an extension of the square setting of a presumptively earlier phase. It was set just 76cm away from the burnt palisade enclosure posts yet significantly was unburnt (Manby 1976, 125 & figs 7 & 9). Had the enclosure been burnt prior to infilling it is difficult to see how it could have escaped the conflagration. The presence of charcoal above the primary silts of the quarry ditches confirms that burning indeed took place after mound construction.

Similar evidence came from the quarry ditches of the East Heslerton long barrow. The charcoal here was interpreted by the excavator as the collapsed

remains of the first phase palisade (Vatcher 1965) and by definition the barrow must have already been set within it before burning took place.

On the other hand burning may have preceded the construction of the mound at Willerby Wold (Manby 1963, 177). Burnt soil, chalk and charcoal filled the upper levels of the facade trench but appears not to have affected the overlying mound material. Nevertheless reference is made to a burning piece of timber having been "thrown into the mortuary enclosure ditch" fusing the chalk slabs stacked on top of it, and to a scatter of charcoal amongst the lower fill of ditch throughout its course (Manby 1963, 183). As this seems certain to have been a palisade trench and the obliquely stacked slabs an additional revetment device, the evidence seems to point to burning and subsequent mound slippage. Individual unburnt posts such as that at the western end of the enclosure can be paralleled at Kilham.

In the south at Nutbane the evidence for firing of the structures as the mound was constructed is undeniable - the square area filled with discoloured burnt chalk was immediately visible to the excavators as soon as the top soil was removed (Morgan 1959, 24). This precisely contained area of burning however delineated only the forecourt around which the primary mound had already been thrown up - its fill comprised coarse chalk from the ditch bottom which contrasted with the finer chalk of the primary mound on either side of it (Morgan 1959, fig 4.A-B; fig 5 M-N). As such it appears to represent an area left open at the front of the mortuary structure/area akin to that at Kilham, where it was similarly the last area to be infilled. That the timbers at the side of the Nutbane forecourt structure fulfilled a structural role is confirmed by their coincidence with vertical faces of burnt and unburnt chalk.

There is then little here to indicate the burning of freestanding enclosures prior to their structural use for revetment. The evidence in fact

corresponds with that from burnt mortuary structures/crematoria where firing similarly seems to have taken place after the mound had been hooped up. This need not of course contradict the assertion that they initially stood as independent structures.

d) Use of open enclosures for the exposure of corpses

A final consideration must be the evidence that such open enclosures performed a recognizable function. They are vastly in excess of the space utilized for burial and the location of many mortuary structures at one extremity argues against them having functioned simply as a temenos. The favoured explanation has been that they delineated the area within which bodies were exposed prior to deposition in the mortuary structure, but what evidence is there for this?

The absence of the smaller bones of hands and feet, and of knee caps and lower jaws has frequently been remarked upon (Piggott 1962; Atkinson 1965, 130) whether bodies were in a state of partial or complete disarticulation and this loss has been inferred to have resulted at the place of exposure. Whilst such material could not normally be expected to survive within heavily eroded cropmark sites (although a human mandible was recorded from Dorchester VIII - Atkinson 1951), on the old land surfaces beneath palisade enclosure long barrows on the chalklands conditions of protection and chemical balance are ideal for their recovery. No such evidence has been recovered.

Six sites possessing palisade enclosures or posted structures have been excavated, four of them totally, yet they displayed no discernible difference in the distribution of human skeletal material to dump constructed or stone revetted long barrows (tab 8.1). Only at Kilham were two small weathered bone fragments recovered from the body of the enclosure, in the top fill of pit 6 probably associated with the square setting of posts assumed to antedate the palisade enclosure (Manby 1976, 125). There were in addition two

crouched burials in a pit about 5 metres from the end of the enclosure but as Greenwell records a superimposed round barrow at this point, from which he recovered a food vessel, it seems certain that they relate to it rather than the long barrow.

Had these sites actually functioned as exposure areas it is difficult to see how all small bones of the type mentioned above could have been cleared from the old land surface, particularly as this was invariably grass grown at the time of mound construction. Conditions like those apparently existing within the Hambledon Hill causewayed enclosure might be predicted (Mercer 1980) yet the quantity of skeletal material recovered within the body of these long enclosures is in fact vastly exceeded by that deriving from simple habitation sites (Kinnes 1979).

The proximity of exposure area to mortuary structure might also be expected to have resulted in a higher proportion of burials yet there is nothing to distinguish the numbers at Giants' Hills I (8) and Wor Barrow (6) from those of Wayland's Smithy I (9/10) and Callis Wold (11); only the Fussell's Lodge figures are exceptional (55). Nor is it possible to point to an increased number of long barrows in the vicinity of a freestanding long mortuary enclosure as might be postulated if they are regarded as central repositories: the distribution of long barrows in the western area of Salisbury Plain that apparently lacks a freestanding long mortuary enclosure differs little from that in the east, and the untested site at Freshwater on the Isle of Wight stands in total isolation. The long mortuary enclosures at Dorchester, North Stoke, Wilsford, Barford and (if the site is accepted as a member of the class) Weasenham appear rather to be associated with round barrows/ring ditches or hengiform sites where disarticulated skeletal material is rarely found.

The case for accepting prolonged open phases for long barrow palisade enclosures then is weak. Acceptance instead of a role in mound revetment

Table 8.1 The distribution of human skeletal material within long barrows.

MOUND TYPE	Burial area or covering material	Facade or proximal end	Under body of mound or within enclosure	Primary ditch silts
<u>Palisade enclosure</u>				
Nutbane	•			
Kilham	•		•?	
Willerby Wold	•	•		
Giants Hills I	•			
Fussell's Lodge	•			
Wor Barrow	•			
<u>Stone revetted or dump constructed</u>				
Giants Hills II	•			
Wayland's Smithy I	•			
Dalladies	•			
Lambourne	•			•
Alfriston	•			

or definition has the virtue of removing the one obstacle (the long mortuary enclosure) to the total equation of Neolithic lithic and non lithic mortuary traditions, but of course returns us to the problem of access to earthen barrows.

Distinct breaks in the Kilham quarry ditches have, however, revealed one possible answer - that the proximal area containing the burial structure was left open. This is also evident at Nutbane where the open forecourt was directly linked and aligned with the burial area making communication between the two probable at least for a period. Similarly at East Heslerton the later construction of the final eastern section of mound may have been

related to location of a burial area there. A distinct break in the mound material above the Glants Hills I burial structure indicates the possibility of continued open access to even centrally placed structures, an idea encouraged by the survival there of a strange line of stones extending towards the mound edge. Elsewhere low primary mounds may have sufficed (cf Mid Gleniron, Dyffryn Ardudwy, Wayland's Smithy I) until the decision to construct the final covering monument.

Whilst then it is tempting to see in a tradition of open, freestanding palisade enclosures the germ of the cursus concept, particularly as their plans conform so markedly (cf South Street, Feering; Thornborough/Kilham; Longbridge, Warwick; Benson), the evidence does not support this. They appear to register instead an increasing formalization of mound plan which may bear a more subtle relationship to cursus origins.

C. THE LONG MORTUARY ENCLOSURE PROBLEM

The distinction drawn between ditched enclosures, corresponding in overall site dimensions to long barrow quarry ditches, and palisade enclosures leaves unresolved the problem of the limited distribution of the former posed at the outset. If tight morphological and dimensional criteria are imposed based on the evidence of excavated sites, ditched enclosures can be shown to be concentrated almost wholly in the Midland/East Anglian region, whether as sites in their own right or as earlier features of long barrows. Why is this?

Some were certainly open enclosures (Dorchester VIII; North Stoke; and probably Barford) but such form was not structurally inevitable. As already demonstrated the evidence for successful mound construction in this region and on such sub soils is good (chapter 7) and parallels available for the definition of turf barrows by similarly slight ditches (Dalladies; the West Rudham "annex"). Dalladies perhaps provides the key: its ditches were of long mortuary enclosure dimensions, although of flanking rather than

enclosing form, and were clearly an early feature since they had been truncated by turf cutting for the mound. In defining the area of the barrow, and more precisely the location of its would be quarry ditches, they performed the same apparent function as the encircling ditch of a long mortuary enclosure. Is it wrong then to accord encircling ditch sites special status? They might simply reflect the ditch form dominant in Central England. There, given the practice of turf mound construction, such early ditches would have remained undisturbed like those of Dalladies, unless deepened and widened to provide barrow capping. Elsewhere of course total destruction of comparable ditches of flanking type would be ensured. Vestiges might be sought on the edges of the quarry ditches (cf Wor Barrow) and in rare cases like Kilham, changes in site dimension reveal them. The early ditches there were of long mortuary enclosure/oblong ditch size (1-2m wide x 1m deep), characteristically sterile and significantly had enjoyed a long existence prior to mound construction (Manby 1976, 117-9). Close alignment of early and late ditches at Wor Barrow confirms that the configuration of the former determined quite precisely that of the latter, however atypical the plan might be within a region.

Useful as this hypothesis is in explaining the apparently limited distribution of ditched long mortuary enclosures it rests almost entirely upon destroyed evidence. How then can its validity be tested? Since no monumental tradition was geographically exclusive (cf the scattering of U ditch barrows in Wessex), if correct examples of slight flanking ditches should exist in the Midland/East Anglian region. Just such a site is to be found at Sandy in Bedfordshire beside a small cemetery of ring ditches, its opposed ditches with marginally inturned ends defining an area the size of the Wilsford long mortuary enclosure. Cropmarks of wider ditches of apparently similar plan exist at Dedham and Mount Bures (fig 8.3) and others undoubtedly await identification. Excavation is needed to certainly establish the nature of these sites but if correctly identified they

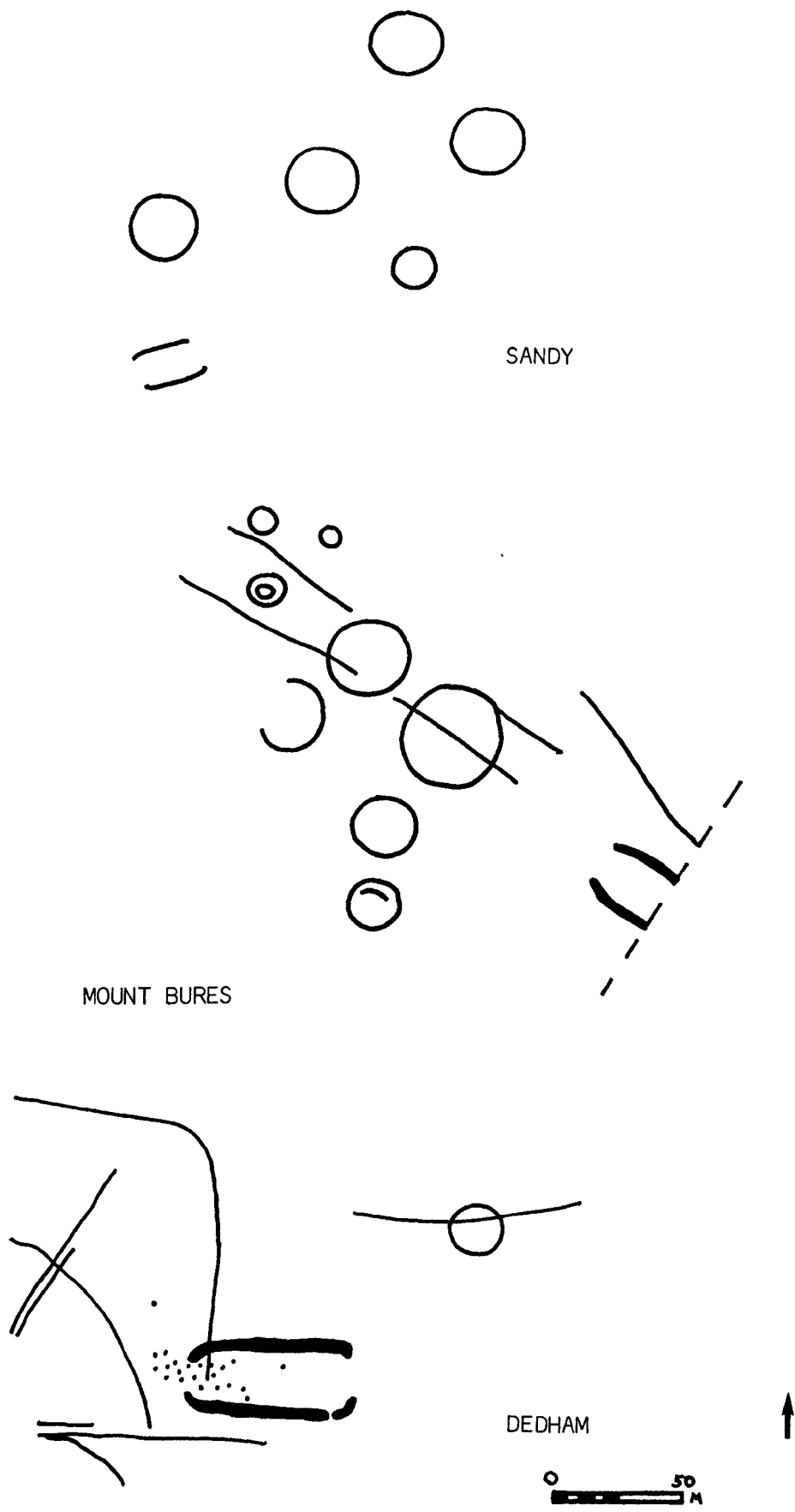


Fig. 8.3 BRACKETING DITCH CROPMARKS

apparently confirm a common purpose for all early ditches of whatever plan.

What was that purpose? Like cursus ditches theirs are characterized by virtual sterility and apparent abandonment (cf Dorchester VIII and North Stoke/Kilham/Thornborough). Restructuring after a period was also a common feature - either as long barrows (eg Pakenham, Wor Barrow, Kilham, Dalladies) or as components of larger monuments (Dorchester VIII as part of a cursus; North Stoke as the terminal of a bank barrow). The fact that ragged long barrow quarry ditches display so clearly the character of their enclosed mounds (cf Alfriston, Fussell's Lodge, South Street) is probably the result of close adherence by diggers to such early ditch lines, as illustrated by the cropmarks at Pakenham (pl. 7.1). In addition to determining mound shape in areas where encircling ditch plans were favoured, terminal form must have been established at this stage as well. These early ditches must then have reflected or originated the increased precision and formalization of barrow architecture evident by the second quarter of the 3rd millennium. Sites such as Cardington B, Rivenhall, and Lawford B may detail this progression, which elsewhere has been destroyed.

A mere setting out function seems unlikely, however, given the apparent development of cursuses from them as enduring open monuments, the considerable care taken with their layout, and the established longevity of several excavated examples. It is possible to speculate from their almost sterile, and in some cases grass grown, ditches that they were laid out on the sites of exhausted clearings to register an ancestral presence when communities moved on; final monuments being constructed only on their eventual return to the regenerated area. As such they must either have possessed banks or nominal axial mounds. In addition they may have performed a temenos function for rarely visited mortuary structures.

Whatever their exact purpose an explanation must be sought for the almost certain development of cursuses from them in Eastern and Central England.

Since no similar development occurred in areas where postulated early ditches were of flanking type it can be assumed that a larger proportion of encircling ditch sites remained as open monuments. Figures of course can never be established owing to plough erosion and the probability of pure turf barrow construction but the reasons for such a situation should be discernible.

The answer lies almost certainly in the heavy demands of turf building: an estimated 1,162 cubic metres were employed at West Rudham and at Dalladies 1, 470 cubic metres (Hogg 1940; Piggott 1972). If a compression factor of some 36% is accepted for turf after the evidence of the Overton Down experimental earthwork, the turfs at West Rudham (0.075-0.1m thick) and Dalladies (0.15m thick) can be estimated as originally some 0.1 - 0.13 and 0.20m in size. As such the former represent the product of 1.5 acres of land and the latter perhaps as much as 2.3 acres. For mounds in excess of 50m the demands would have been massive: over 9 acres for a mound of West Rudham bulk and North Stoke bank barrow length.

Added to this the labour must have been considerable cutting the turfs (probably with stone axes and scapula shovels as suggested by Piggott 1972) and then transporting them. Comparison with the limited turf cutting undertaken over the projected ditch line of the Overton Down earthwork is of limited value since transportation was scarcely a measurable factor there. Carrying turfs of a metre in length (as recorded at West Rudham) from the extremities of a stripped area of some 2 acres would be awkward and time consuming. Turfs half this size and weighing about 30kg were utilized in the reconstruction of the Lunt Roman fort where they could be carried by one man but this cannot have been the case with the West Rudham turfs. By comparison the surface stripping of oolithic limestone, likened by Piggott to turf cutting, would be simple - slabs could be prized up easily with antler picks and axes and carried in baskets.

Turf barrows would then have made extensive rather than the normal intensive demands on land and necessitated the mobilization of presumably sizeable work forces. This alone probably ensured that many elongated ditches possessed extended open phases and that certain of them were never superseded by a monumental barrow. Once established as a form in their own right details of plan may have been further formalized, hence the development of the squared (Bi) plan unparalleled at present by long barrow ditches.

A further factor influencing the development of such open sites may have been the concentration of discernible attention during the Middle and Later Neolithic on long barrow ditches. As the only ritually available feature these would naturally gain prominence and might come to symbolize the whole monument to later non mound building communities.

Whilst apparently no different in origin to similar sites of flanking mode only the encircling ditch sites of Central and Eastern England appear to have emerged as a monumental form sui generis; the posted sites of Lowland Scotland lack any clear antecedents and are perhaps at present better regarded as an adaption of southern practice. Belief that long mortuary enclosure origins lie in central England is supported by the quite widely spaced dates of the broadly comparable sites of North Stoke (considerable before 2722bc) and Wilsford (2560bc). The latter represents a rare occurrence of an independent long mortuary enclosure outside their heartland - a reflection less perhaps of their late development and limited dynamic than of their potential to massive expansion without excessive labour. As cursuses they occur far more widely. The stimulus to gigantism was undoubtedly provided by that other aberration of normal mound building practice - the bank barrow.

CHAPTER IX

BANK BARROWS AND CURSUS ORIGINS

Whilst evidence has been recovered of axial mounds within only two cursus or cursus related sites - Scorton and North Stoke - a connection with bank barrows is self evident, and exemplified by the striking similarity in plan of the enormously long Winterborne St Martin mound (Maiden Castle) and the Fornham All Saints cursus (fig. 9.1). When bank barrows appeared to be exclusively centred in Dorset this was difficult to accommodate but recently farther flung mounds at St Cuthbert Out, Wells (Pen Hill), Bentham (Crickley Hill), and Lowther have been placed in this category (Grinsell 1979, 9) and others could be advanced - Long Low (Wetton), Great Ayton Moor, and Bryn yr Men Bobl, Anglesey. All share the characteristics set down by Wheeler: length greater than normal, sides parallel, mound of uniform height, and ditches not returning around the ends (1943, 24). If the latter criterion is set aside, for reasons given earlier (chapter 7) as a geographically variable aspect of long barrow plan, then the extended oblong ditches of Central and Eastern England also demand consideration, as the case of the North Stoke linear ditches proves. The resulting distribution pattern significantly overlaps with that of cursuses (fig. 9.2).

How secure though is bank barrow classification? Mound size in the sample varies considerably (0.6m - 2.0m in height / 5m - 15m in width), and length, the principal governing feature, differs less significantly from that of sites at the head of the normal long barrow range than from the Winterborne St Martin mound. In view of the tendency to extreme elongation revealed by one or two sites in any regional grouping of long barrows (Ashbee 1970, 21), and often for such barrows to be of parallel sided plan and uniform height (Grinsell 1958, 24), it seems possible that the distinction is one of degree rather than kind. "Extended" long barrows (eg East Heslerton) will also be examined therefore. Table 9.1 sets out the two groupings: bank barrows falling between 545 and 180 metres and "extended" long barrows achieving

lengths in the order of 100 metres.

Table 9.1 BANK BARROWS, "EXTENDED" LONG BARROWS? AND EXTENDED OBLONG
DITCHES : DIMENSIONS

BANK BARROWS	LENGTH (M)	WIDTH (M)
Winterborne St Martin	545	13
Lowther	274 (claimed) 90 (measured)	15
St Cuthbert Out, Wells (Pen Hill)	228	7
Long Low, Wetton	201	14
Long Bredy	197	19
Broadmayne	182	16
"EXTENDED" LONG BARROWS		
Pentridge 2a/2b	149	20
East Heslerton	125	9
Tilshead Old Ditch	120	?
Bellisheil Law	110	10
Pimperne	106	?
East Kennet	105	?
Kingston Russell I	105	12
West Kennet	104	15/20
Pentridge I	102	?
Bryn yr Hen Bobl	100	11/12
Martin II (Knap Barrow)	100	?
Crickley Hill	100	2½
Chettle I	97	?
Tarrant Hinton II	96	?
Great Ayton Moor	91	8
EXTENDED OBLONG DITCHES		
Welshpool	370+	15
Llandegai	240+ 820+ (claimed)	14
North Stoke	200	11
Bures St Mary	140+	25
Buscot A	135+	18
Cople	130	15

Before proceeding reservations must be expressed regarding three sites, however: St Cuthbert Out, Wells (Pen Hill), Crickley Hill, and Lowther. The

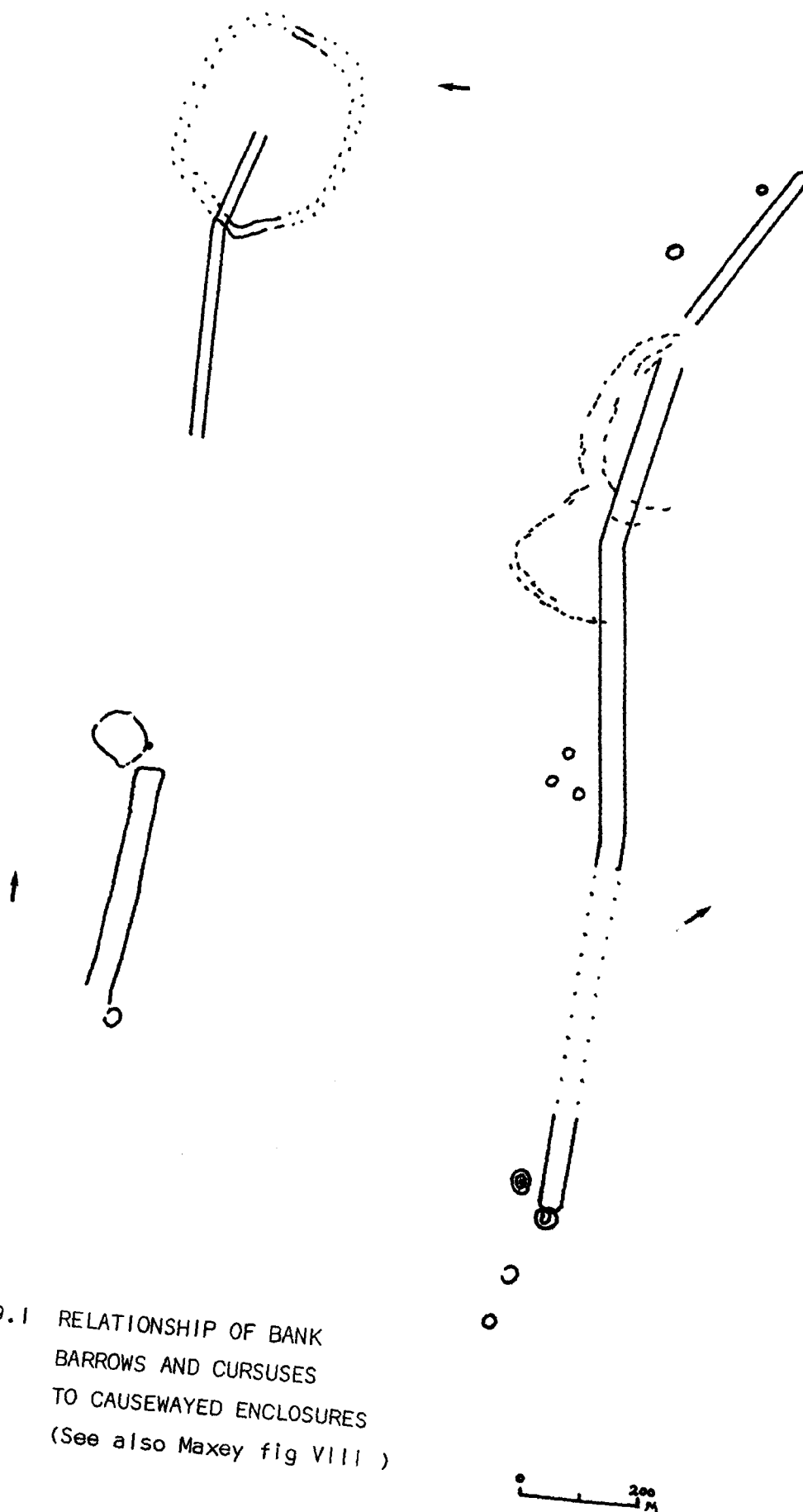


Fig. 9.1 RELATIONSHIP OF BANK
BARROWS AND CURSUSES
TO CAUSEWAYED ENCLOSURES
(See also Maxey fig VIII)



Fig. 9.2 DISTRIBUTION MAP OF
BANK BARROWS AND
EXTENDED OBLONG
DITCHES

- Bank barrows
- Low banks/terraces
- Extended oblong ditches
- Cursuses of related type

first differs so markedly in bulk from the immediately adjacent Cuthbert Out long barrow (0.6m in height as against 1.6m) that Tratman ignored it completely in his early survey of barrows in the area (1938) possibly regarding it as a product of lead mining like other earthworks in the vicinity. Its alignment down the slope of Pen Hill is also atypical. The Crickley site is even narrower and strangely for a barrow sited in a hollow on an otherwise dramatic hill top. Its survival in this the only sheltered locality within the interior of an intensively occupied Iron Age hill fort is also remarkable, particularly as the vastly more substantial and less favourably placed Winterborne St Martin mound was levelled in similar circumstances. Pillow mounds of such dimensions have been recorded (Brown and Taylor 1974). Unlike these sites the Lowther mound is of normal size, although considerably shorter than many of the claims made for it (Manby, 1970, 5; Grinsell 1979, 9). Irrespective of the question of length, its precise alignment alongside an 18th century road from Lowther Castle and its exact coincidence with the length of a cutting points to it being of comparatively recent origin.

Represented amongst the sites under consideration are not merely independent barrows of Dorset type but round barrows that have been restructured (eg Great Ayton Moor) and linear mounds apparently linking earlier features (eg North Stoke, Long Low). Mound size also varies considerably, from monumental proportions in Dorset to symbolic "terraces" at Bryn yr Hen Bobl and Great Ayton Moor.

A. EXCAVATION : STRUCTURE AND DATE

i Independent barrows

Foremost amongst such sites is of course the Winterborne St Martin bank barrow. Although completely levelled at its western end and reduced to 0.2m at the eastern extremity, its profile was revealed by Wheeler (1943, 87) preserved beneath the rampart of the earliest hill fort. Simple dump construction was indicated, the mound having a ridged profile 1.7m in height

and 13 metres wide at the base. No additional structural elements were revealed, the widely and rather irregularly placed post holes at the eastern end scarcely meriting the term facade.

The dismembered skeleton in an apparently primary position at the eastern end of the mound has produced a radio carbon date of 656 ± 80 AD (RM 458) confirming the evidence of cuts in the bones that could only have been made by a metal axe (Bothwell 1971). Nearby crouched inhumations of two children accompanied by a miniature Windmill Hill vessel were found in a pit. They might represent the primary interment but might equally relate to the use of the causewayed enclosure.

The date, if not the purpose, of the monument is secure. Where sealed by the Iron Age rampart the long mound was revealed overlying the almost completely filled causewayed camp ditch (Wheeler 1943, pl. V). A turf line reported as a "natural weathering soil formed under a cover of woody vegetation" separated the two and ran out beyond across adjacent occupation surfaces. This makes it unlikely that the camp ditches were backfilled along the projected line of the long mound. Prolonged abandonment of the camp is indicated, with the "turf line" elsewhere on the ditch circuit being masked by an upper layer of rich occupation debris. Bank barrow construction reawakened interest in the older site.

The truncation of the camp ditch silts before the advent of Peterborough ware where sealed by the long mound, and the occurrence purely of Hembury ware in the rapid silts and overlying hearth layer of its own ditches points to date of construction prior to c2500 bc. Since though the hearth layer probably represents a deliberate deposit like that recently discovered by Mercer in the causewayed camp and long barrow ditches on Hambledon Hill (1980) its value for dating purposes may be reduced. The material may have derived from cultural debris within the camp. Added to this residual material would certainly have entered the ditch during its rapid silting

stage and the finding of Hembury ware along with Peterborough fabrics immediately below Southern Beaker sherds in the camp ditch (Wheeler 1943 pl. xxiii) points to its long currency on the site. This can be paralleled at the nearby "henge" enclosure of Mount Pleasant (Wainwright 1979). Significantly Wheeler speaks (1943, 23) of the appearance of Peterborough ware in the long mound ditches "...at a very short interval after construction." A date much before 2500 bc seems unlikely therefore.

A distinct break in the alignment of the mound approximately a third of the way along its course gives the appearance of sequential construction. This receives no support, however, from the apparently continuous and evenly curved ditch lines. It relates rather to an attempt to retain the natural ridge line. Similar indications of two phase construction are to be found in the Long Bredy and Pentridge 2a/b mounds but whereas alignment change and gap coincides at the latter, as would be expected, they are separated at the former. It seems that the three major Dorset Ridgeway sites were of one build therefore (that on Cranbourne Chase may have been extended in imitation). As such they might be explained as status monuments of the dominant families/clans within the region or, as at Winterborne St Martin, distinct tribal sites.

In view of the above average lengths of many Dorset long barrows though too much should not perhaps be made of the bank barrows there. They may have arisen as much from local practice as considerations of special status or function. The extended (remodelled) East Heslerton mound similarly appears exceptional within its region but its close resemblance to the equally long Bellsheil Law site, which echoes a series of apparently composite Scottish long cairns, might suggest that it is in fact simply a southern outlier of this group.

ii Banks extending from round or heel shaped cairn

Many of the Scottish long cairns (Henshall 1972, 296-7) may represent

restructured round or heel shaped cairns, as the excavation of Tullach an t'Sionnach demonstrated. This 61 metre long mound deserves attention here because of its striking similarity to the longer Bryn yr Hen Bobl and Great Ayton Moor sites (Corcoran 1967; Hemp 1936; Hayes 1967). In each case low mounds run from substantial chambered cairns and are of comparable dimensions: 0.6m in height and 10m in width at Tullach an t'Sionnach; 0.9m in height and 12m in overall width (6m between the drystone walling lines) at Bryn yr Hen Bobl; and 0.6m in height and 7-8m in overall width (6m between upright kerb slabs) at Great Ayton Moor. Each was composed of roughly pitched stones and earth although of somewhat more compact construction near their chambered cairns. A rough line of walling or upright slabs marked the division of bank and cairn in each case but they were not simply abutting structures. The banks swelled out to encase and apparently seal the earlier monuments, to which continued access would have only been possible from above. Hemp interpreted the bank ("terrace") at Bryn yr Hen Bobl as the earlier feature since it was incorporated within the outer wall circuit of the round cairn. But his partial excavation revealed that this ran from the forecourt blocking walls and in addition he remarks on the similarity of cairn (outer wall?) and "terrace" construction (1936, 261). The likelihood is therefore that the two are linked somewhat obscurely as elements in the restructuring of the earlier monument.

A sealing and remodelling function for such banks makes more explicable the apparent lack of structures within them. No finds were made within that at Tullach an t'Sionnach but Corcoran proposed a date at the beginning of the local Early Bronze Age, using the plain Neolithic pottery from the chambered cairn as a terminus post quem and a secondary cremation outside the enclosing wall as a terminus ante quem. The presence of a Beaker in the upper levels of the heel shaped cairn was tentatively associated with the work (Corcoran 1967).

At Great Ayton Moor two serrated edge flakes were found along with ten small

abraded body sherds of undecorated pottery. This was of a thin, well fired, buff brown ware with smooth exterior akin to Beaker fabric, but also in the excavators' opinion not unlike some of the Earlier Neolithic wares of Eastern Yorkshire. Despite this uncertainty the assured Earlier Neolithic date of the chambered cairn provides a terminus post quem for the bank which seals it, and the secondary cremations with pygmy cup and collared urns set in the bank/cairn casing and the two ring cairns attached to it, provide a terminus ante quem. The environmental evidence also distances the long mound from the cairn so a late Neolithic date for construction seems feasible.

Unlike these two sites abundant material was recovered from the "terrace" at Bryn yr Hen Bobl. Unfortunately though it was very poorly provenanced in the report so it is now impossible to determine whether the prime chronometric pieces derived from the tomb chamber, the old land surface under the "terrace" or from the "terrace" itself. A number of sherds of plain ware with developed out-turned rims were, however, recorded as coming from below the "terrace" and these can be paralleled by the pottery from the Earlier Neolithic house site at Llandegai (Lynch 1970, 68) which has been dated to $3290 \pm 150\text{bc}$ (NPL 223). These provide a terminus post quem for the bank. The decorated wares were more abundant, and as the majority of finds were claimed to have derived from a prolific area beneath the SW corner of the "terrace", can probably be assumed also to ante date construction. Decoration in a variety of techniques - whipped and twisted cord impressions, diagonal and vertical stab marks and finger nail impressions - point to a link with the Peterborough tradition, principally the Mortlake style. Rim forms are atypical, however (Lynch 1969, 165, 172, fig. 58). Use of Peterborough decoration on pots of unusual shape away from the main centres of distribution is not without parallel (Piggott 1954, 310) and has led Manby to propose a separate Rudston style for the East Yorkshire material (Manby 1975).

The presence of charcoal, dark earth and animal bones indicates that these

finds relate to a settlement site overlain and protected by the "terrace", and a quantity of flakes, and axe polishing stone, and several utilized fragments of Graig Llwyd stone point to the association of its occupants with axe production. Significantly the four complete or near complete axes recovered were of local Anglesey dolerite. Such activity explains the presence of Southern English ceramic styles on the site.

Continued interest in the mound at a comparatively late date is attested by the cremation in a small inverted collared urn placed on the axial line 1.25 metres from the southern terminal wall, and three cremations placed in a pit nearby. A cremation in a miniature collared urn was similarly placed at the end of the North Stoke bank barrow, and in view of the separation of dates there (2722bc and 1424bc) it would be unwise to stress the relationship here. The Mortlake allied fabrics, if directly associated with the "terrace", point to a date for construction of c2000bc.

To these strikingly similar highland zone sites, each probably constructed during the Later Neolithic and certainly prior to the advent of Early Bronze Age ceramics, might be added a range of unexcavated Northern long cairns (eg Na Tri Shean, Cnoc Freiceadlin) and low mounds apparently aligned on round cairns (eg Iron Howe, Snilesworth; Bumper Moor, Hawnby - Hayes 1967, 33; Easton - Medwin Water - RCAHM 1978, 52). The slight bank running from the Ditchingham long barrow (Wainwright 1972, 4) may also be cognate as, in its original form, might the narrow body of the East Heslerton mound. Outside the highland zone sites of this sort would not survive unless afforded an unusual degree of protection either by incorporation in common land or by early emparking, and in the absence of ditches would leave no cropmark trace. Case's findings at North Stoke attest the presence of such a bank within at least one extended oblong ditch site.

III Banks linking two monuments

These represent an extension of the previously discussed group. At North

Stoke a bank appears to have lain between the linear ditches which linked a long mortuary enclosure and a pair of arc ditches (Case 1982a), and just such a bank survives at Long Low linking two round cairns (Carrington 1865). In both cases the arrangement would seem to have arisen because a monument was added to the extremity of a bank which in turn had been added to an earlier site.

The priority of the long mortuary enclosure at North Stoke (southern enclosure) could not be stratigraphically demonstrated but seems certain by virtue of the complex of recuts that characterize its ditches and not those of the otherwise comparably silted linear ditches (Case 1982a, figs 36, 37). Evidence for an axial bank stretching the 200 metres to the bracketing arc ditches has already been discussed and can be summarized as: insufficient interval space for two banks and a worthwhile open area, parch marks along the axis of the northern part of the site (pl. 51) and gravel spread across the filled northern long mortuary enclosure ditch only where it abuts the central area of the linear ditches. Startin's calculations point to a bank of Bryn yr Hen Bobl or Great Ayton Moor type (Startin 1982b). The bracketing ditches corroborate this reconstruction. Although not forming segments of a perfect circle they are best explained as the surviving traces of a ring ditch superimposed on a mound (cf the interrupted ditch line of the round placed over the end of the Beckhampton Road long barrow : Ashbee et al 1979, figs. 11 & 14).

North Stoke then, long regarded as atypical as a cursus, conforms neatly to the pattern of bank barrow construction away from the Dorset area; the backfilled layer (2b) of the long mortuary enclosure ditch may even record characteristic capping of the earlier monument, rather than the slighting of its bank. No finds of significance were made in its strangely deep, narrow ditches but an antler fragment produced a radiocarbon date for construction of $2722 \pm 49\text{bc}$ (BM 1405).

At Long Low in the Peak District the same pattern of construction seems to be evidenced. The bank here is of a more substantial nature than those previously under discussion (c1.8m for most of its length) but its extreme length (200m) and flat topped profile has led Piggott to posit a connection with the Hen Bobl "terrace" (1954, 269). In the absence of modern investigation the site can only be tentatively interpreted from field observation and Carrington's work in the 19th century. The former reveals the mound to be approximately parallel sided (20m across) for most of its length but dwindling in height and width towards the southern end whilst expanding at the northern, adjacent to the large terminal cairn. It bears an obvious similarity therefore to Great Ayton Moor and the other sites just under discussion.

Excavations carried out by Carrington (1865) seem to confirm this. He found the scattered bones of thirteen individuals on a pavement of stones edged by boulders under the northern cairn. Neither capping stone nor passage way were evident. Three leaf arrowheads accompanied the burials as they did burials on pavements under round barrows at Callis Wold (275) (Coombs 1976), Towthorpe (18), Aldro (48), Wold Newton and Heddon Howe. The northern cairn at Long Low appears then to be a representative of an Earlier Neolithic tradition at present limited to Derbyshire and the Yorkshire Wolds and dated at Callis Wold to $2983 \pm 64\text{bc}$ (BM 1170) and $2853 \pm 71\text{bc}$ (BM 1167). Later monumental enlargement of that mound, apparently in common with others in East Yorkshire, probably corresponds to the addition of a long mound to the Derbyshire - a local variation on the theme of gigantism.

The long mound at Long Low was of different construction to the northern cairn. Carrington found consistent evidence in his cuttings of an axial wall against which the mound stones had been haphazardly pitched. This wall terminated in a cross wall under the southern cairn, from which point a wall of different construction obliquely continued its line. It seems reasonable to assume that the transverse wall represents the original termination of

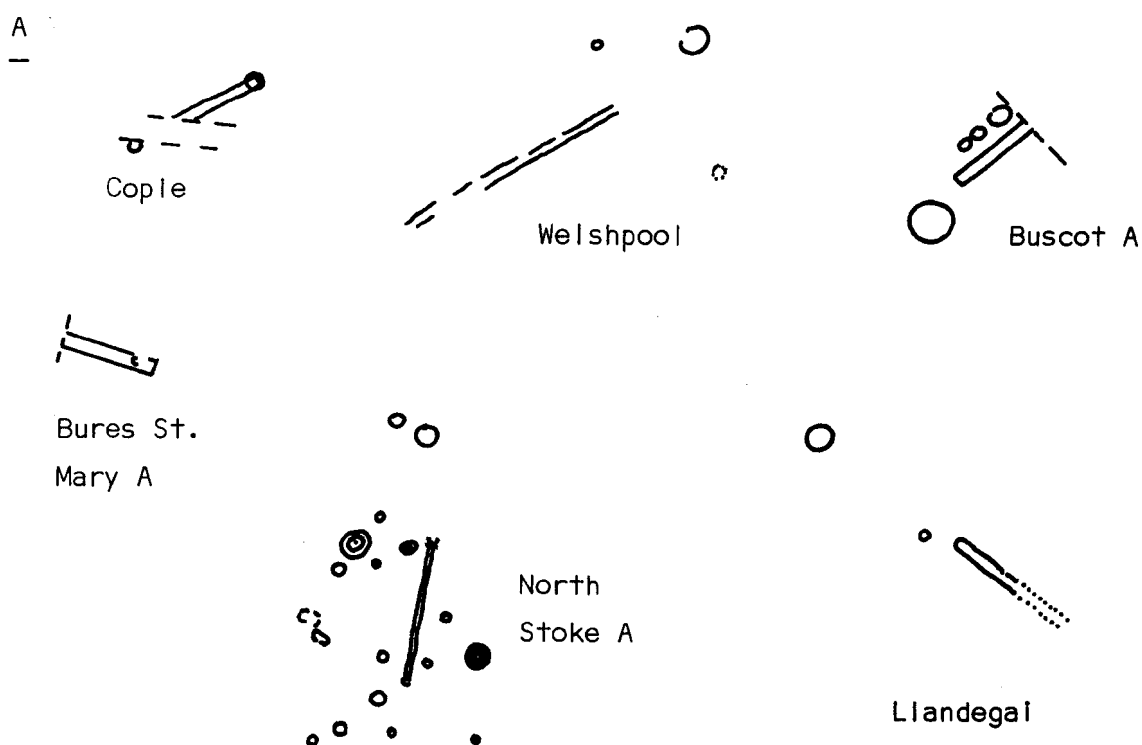
of the mound and that the oblique line represents a later attempt to continue it, perhaps when the southern cairn was added. Three interments are shown on Carrington's plan within the long mound but reference to them is somewhat confused with the account of the northern cairn (1865, 28). One however seems to have resulted from in situ cremation and a further cremation was placed at the junction of the cross wall and its oblique axial extension under the southern cairn. The latter may represent a secondary interment to judge by Carrington's reference to the vertical dispersal of bone fragments through the wall stones.

Both field observation and early investigation then point to a distinction between the large northern cairn, which is of certain Earlier Neolithic date, and the bank and southern cairn, which to judge by the unaccompanied cremations are probably of Later Neolithic date.

B. THE CROPMARK EVIDENCE

The closest parallel for Long Low lies in a cropmark site at Cople in Bedfordshire. Here a ring ditch symmetrically intersects the northern terminal of an extended oblong ditch and another lies near its southern terminal, the precise relationship being obscured by a former railway track. To judge by the continuous nature of the northern ring ditch across the interior of the extended oblong ditch it, like the northern cairn at Long Low, was the earlier feature. Unless, that is, the site is reconstructed as an elongated open enclosure but the problem of spacing observed at North Stoke and Llandegai then presents itself.

These three sites furnish the strongest evidence that the extended oblong ditch group were in fact mounded. To them can be added Buscot A where the close flanking and axial arrangement of ring ditches immediately recalls that of round barrows around the Broadmayne bank barrow and appears to exclude the possibility of an external bank (fig. 9.3). Such ring ditch patterning is of course no certain indication of a focal mound, as



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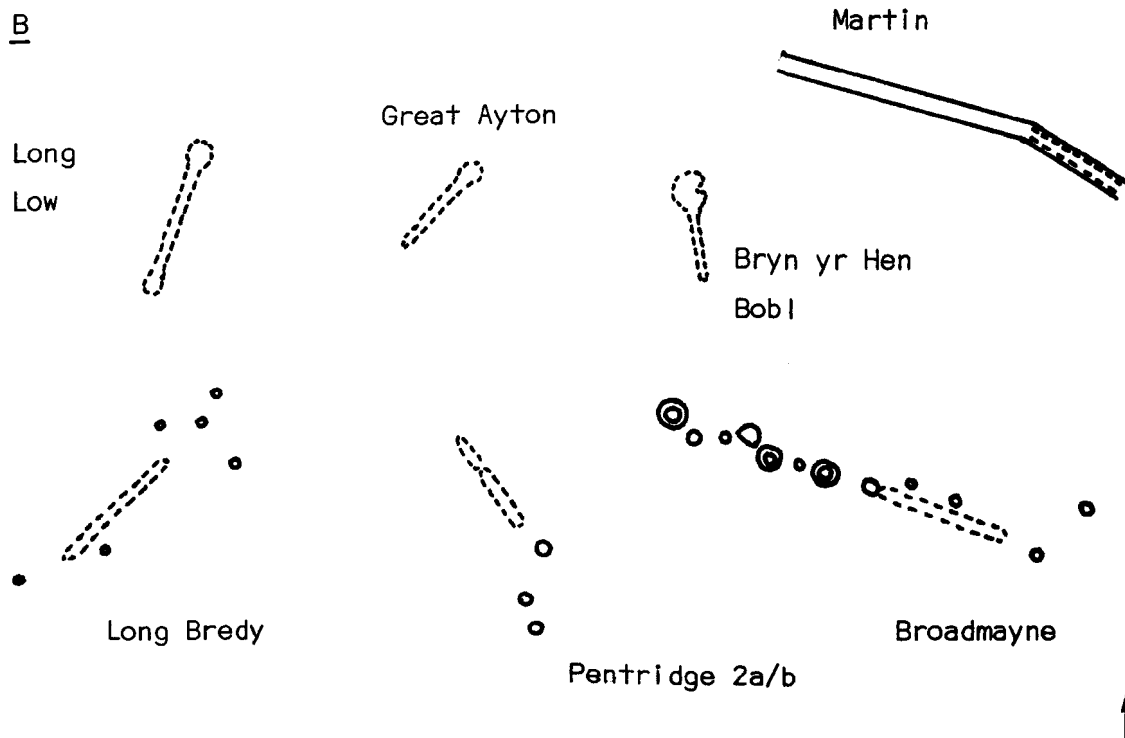


Fig. 9.3 EXTENDED OBLONG DITCHES (A) AND BANK BARROWS(B) :
COMPARATIVE PLANS

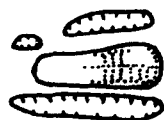
Dorchester VIII proves but a contrast is observable with that around the more demonstrably open pit defined sites: small ring ditches overlie pit lines on the flanks of the Fourmerkland and King's Bromley sites. Together with the notable adherence of the group to long barrow width parameters this provides strong circumstantial evidence that extended oblong ditches can in fact be equated with bank barrows.

Two structural forms can be envisaged: mounds purely of turf or nominal axial banks composed largely of material from the ditches. The slight nature of the latter and their inevitable association with sizeable berms provides perhaps the best explanation for universal destruction, accords with the evidence from North Stoke and the other sites discussed above, and furnishes a mechanism for cursus development. It is noticeable that extended oblong ditches are all of irregular A1/A11 or B11 type. As monument size increased mound and ditch may have become further divorced, the former reduced to purely symbolic form, the latter (drawing from influences at work on long mortuary enclosures) the subject of increasingly refined layout. The Scorton cursus records just this. Its irregular axial mound which survived to a height of only 0.3 metres was to judge from parch marks, originally no more than 8/9 metres in width (pl. 9.1) and must therefore have been flanked by berms in excess of 10 metres wide (Topping 1982). Here, the ultimate bank barrow over 2,000 metres in length formed a structural entity with a major cursus but was separated from it both physically and in plan.

It is of course possible that this site represents no more than a unique example of restructuring, hence the recut ditches of the site. Nevertheless if a similar mound is postulated to have lain within the Fornham All Saints ditches its close resemblance in plan to the Winterborne St Martin bank barrow becomes more explicable, and other cursuses might be conjectured to represent formalized, expanded versions of earlier mounded oblong ditches (cf Charlecote and Longbridge, Warwick). Answers will only be obtained, if at all, from the investigation of protected areas within such sites (eg



Pl. 9.1 Scorton : parch marks of an axial mound.



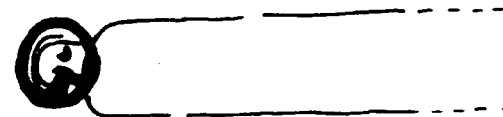
BECKHAMPTON
ROAD



WEST RUDHAM



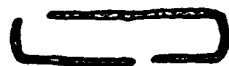
STRATFORD ST MARY



FORNHAM ALL SAINTS



HOLDENHURST



CHARLECOTE



BARNACK



Longbridge, Warwick



THE LONG BARROW - CURSUS EQUATION

Fig. 9.4

below the hedge bank/headland which crosses the Longbridge cursus).

It can be concluded from present evidence then that bank barrows were a relatively late phenomenon, although the two principal structural forms appear to have been present from the outset (North Stoke and Winterborne St Martin). Like cursuses they frequently incorporated or realigned existing monuments but unlike them this was usually at the expense of their parallel sided plan. The evidence from North Stoke and Scorton establishes that a link with cursuses does exist, thus explaining the identical relationship to long mortuary enclosures at Barford and North Stoke, but the vital structural evidence has been destroyed that would enable the steps from extended oblong ditch to cursus to be detailed. Low axial banks or perhaps even post settings (eg Springfield) may have given symbolic substance within cursuses to former mounds.

Since mound rather than mortuary aspects of Earlier Neolithic practice were exaggerated by bank barrow construction it is perhaps not surprising that the sites should lack apparent burial structures. It would be wrong though to dismiss them as mere "monsters of degeneracy" (Newbiggin's exasperated description of the enormous cairn at Bellsheil Law) as only in this form or as conceptually related cursuses, do long mound sites attain recognizable "tribal" status: their direct relationship to causewayed enclosures when in close proximity standing in contrast to the dispersed patterning of earlier long barrows. They in fact give ultimate expression to a tradition of massive empty, or near empty, mound construction that was probably always in essence commemorative rather than funerary. Thus when combined with long mortuary enclosure architecture they laid both the social and structural foundations for cursus development.

CHAPTER X

AVENUES - AN ALLIED TRADITION?

An identity of purpose has been claimed for cursuses and stone avenues since at least 1906 when Lockyer published "Stonehenge and other British Stone Monuments Astronomically considered". Basing his argument on coincidences of orientation, he likened the Amesbury cursus to the Merrivale rows on Dartmoor: "...like them (it was) used as a processional road, a via sacra, to watch the rising of the Pleiades" (1906, 154).

Stone (1948) reasserted the argument after finding apparent indications of a bluestone circle near the western end of the Amesbury cursus and during the 1960's the terms were considered synonymous (Thomas 1960, 13, 53). They are still often linked as manifestations of a common linear tradition (Clark 1977, 138).

Such an assumption seems reasonable in view of the apparent absence of cursuses from the highland zone and is given support by Burl's work on henges and early stone circles which has demonstrated the essential unity of these two traditions (Burl 1976). Along the interface of highland and lowland zones similar dimensions and shared architectural features declare henges and stone circles as lithic and non lithic versions of the same basic form of monument, and this pattern ought also to be discernible amongst at least some avenues and cursuses if a similar unity is to be claimed.

Before assessing the evidence for this the characteristics of avenues must be established.

A. CHARACTERISTICS

Unlike cursuses avenues are almost exclusively ancillary features of other monuments: long barrows/cairns; round barrows/cairns; henges/stone circles. Free standing avenues as such are rare, at least in stone, and may in many cases relate simply to robbed out cairns. Independent pit (?post) avenues appear from aerial survey to be commoner but present a problem of interpretation - how should they be differentiated from double pit alignments of utilitarian purpose?

It is evident from scrutiny of both stone avenues and those post avenues of unequivocally ritual purpose that the component stones or posts are spaced out and normally opposed to each other in pairs. As this feature does not occur in double pit alignments of more mundane purpose (eg those extending from, and almost certainly continuing, a line of double ditches at Barford - pl. 4.1) it provides a ready basis for assessing ritual or prosaic purpose. Only sites that satisfy this simple criterion or appear for other reasons to be of certain ceremonial type have been accepted here for discussion. Conjunctions of alignments forming fortuitous avenues have been excluded (eg Beaghmore circles A and B - May 1953).

A common classification is adopted as stone, post and ditched avenues appear to have differed only in the materials from which they were constructed, but a distinction has been drawn between avenues such as that before the Kilham long barrow and settings of posts/stones such as those before Wayland's Smithy I and Fussell's Lodge. Settings are defined as extending no more than about 6 metres. Four categories then will be used to classify avenues and settings: long barrow/cairn; round barrow/cairn; henge/stone circle; freestanding. (app.IV.)

i Longbarrow/cairn avenues and settings

Avenues appear to have found substance only in a posted form before long barrows although the splayed post settings before the mortuary structures at Wayland's Smithy I (Atkinson 1965) and Fussell's Lodge (Ashbee 1966) are probably no more than the wooden counterparts of portal stones defining the sides of megalithic cusped forecourts (eg Bryn yr Hen Bobl: Hemp 1936). Only two full avenues are known, both from Yorkshire. Detailed information regarding that at Kemp Howe is lacking (Browster 1968) but reference to its origin at the facade terminals indicates that it differed somewhat from the Kilham example (Manby 1976) that was only 6.7m wide and a feature of the mortuary structure rather than later palisade enclosure. Longitudinal spacing of posts in each case was comparable although the traced length of the Kemp Howe avenue was apparently twice that recorded at Kilham (40m as against 18m).

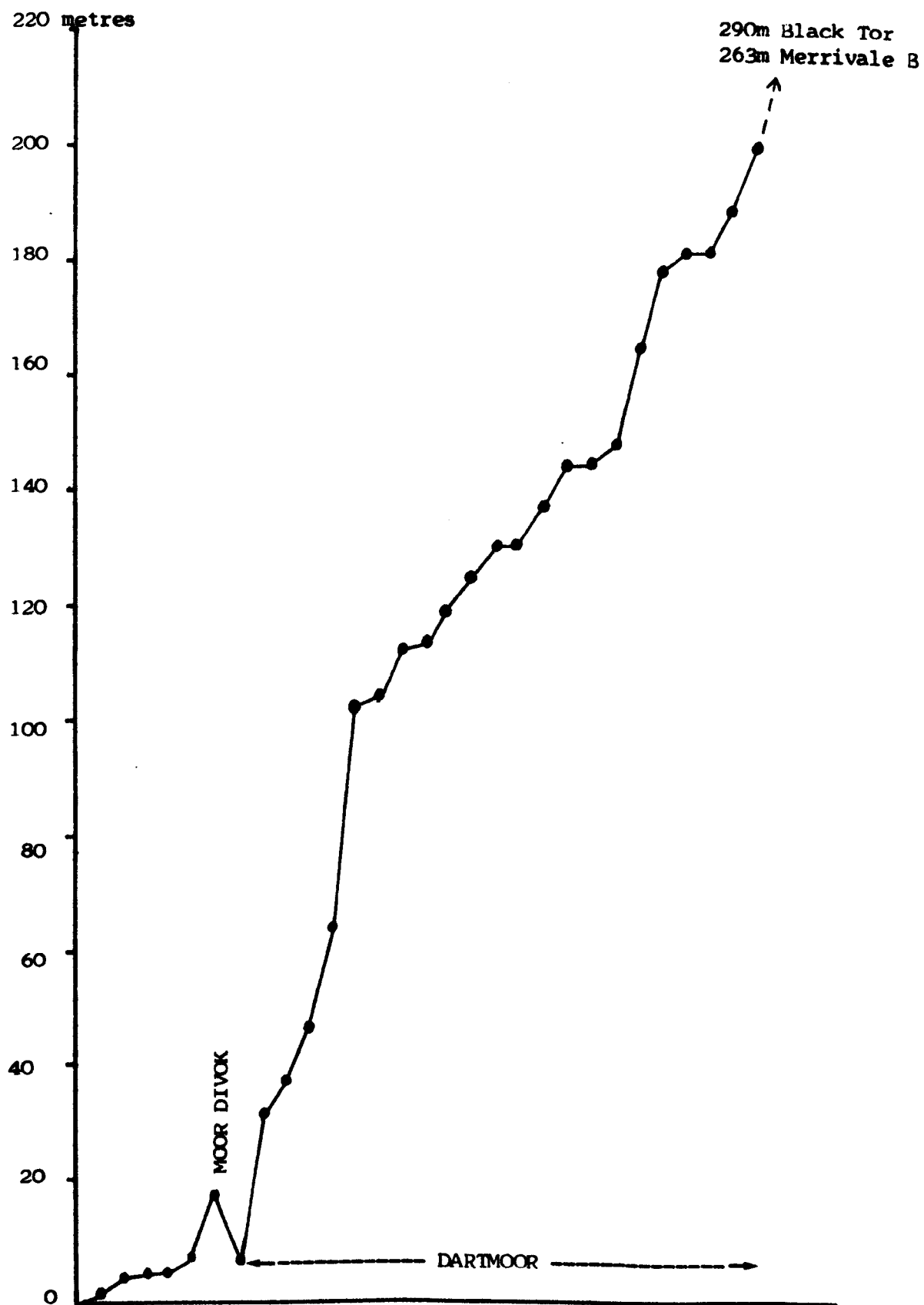
ii Round barrow/cairn avenues and settings

Double stone rows that must by definition be considered as avenues cluster so densely on Dartmoor that it is difficult to give equal weight to their distribution elsewhere. Their appearance in timber as well at sites as far flung as Barford, Basingstoke and Zeijen, however, points to this having been a widespread tradition developed and exaggerated by the moorland communities of Dartmoor and then preserved by retreat in the face of climatic collapse.

The use of the term "avenue" is probably inappropriate for the Dartmoor sites which form a coherent group with single and multiple sites (Worth 1946, 1947; Grinsell 1978; Emmett 1979). They are also extremely narrow but this is a feature of most avenues: Barford (1 - 1.75m); Six Wells 267 (1.8m); Poole I (0.5m - 2.0m); Zeijen (1.0m - 1.5m).

What principally distinguishes Dartmoor double rows is their length -

Fig. 10.1 ROUND BARROW / CAIRN AVENUES :
LENGTH VARIATION



virtually all reasonably complete examples exceed 100m and several extend towards 200m. Single and multiple rows there are of equal length. By contrast most other double post rows associated with round barrows and ring ditches are no more than settings (fig. 10.1), normally defined by irregular stake holes and in all cases for which published evidence is available, except Zeljen, of splayed rather than strictly parallel form.

The tentative suggestion that the Dartmoor rows might be dated from the proximity of Beaker finds to the Chagford and Fernworthy sites (Fox 1964, 64) to the early 2nd millenium now seems disproved by radiocarbon dates of $1480 \pm 80 \text{bc}$ HAR 2213; $1450 \pm 90 \text{bc}$ HAR 2285; $1400 \pm 70 \text{bc}$ HAR 2221 (Wainwright et al 1979, 10-32) from typical cairns on Shaugh Moor and the indications that most, if not all, rows post date such focal monuments (Smith in Balaam et al 1982, 254-5).

The earlier date of $1810 \pm 90 \text{bc}$ (NPL69) from one of the posts of the Bleasdale setting is at variance with the grave goods from the barrow - two collared urns and a pygmy cup - and may relate to the age of the tree forming the substantial post or a considerable period of pre mound use. A bone belt hook of Wessex type from the Basingstoke bell barrow (R Mackay 1964) and the bell barrow form of Poole I (Case 1952) however argues for a date towards the middle of the 2nd millenium for such sites, in common with the Dartmoor evidence.

III Henge/Stone circle avenues

Recent work at Stonehenge has provided indications that the avenue there may originally have possessed standing stones in addition to the Heel Stone (Pitts 1982) and has thus reduced the gap between this unique site and the more familiar stone and post examples. It nonetheless remains along with the highly eccentric Milfield avenue the sole ditched manifestation of the tradition. Stone and post sites are the norm.

Table 10.1 DIMENSIONS OF LATER NEOLITHIC/EARLY BRONZE AGE SQUARE SETTINGS OF RITUAL TYPE

TYPE	SIZE	DATE
<u>Four post settings</u>		
Stenness	1.5m	1730 ± 270bc (SRR 592)
Dorchester XIV	3.0m	TAQ : Middle Beaker sherds from henge ditch
Durrington Walls - Northern Circle	5.1m	1955 ± 110bc (NPL 240)
Durrington Walls - phase I S. Circle	5.5m	TAQ : 2000 ± 90bc (BM 396)
<u>Square stone settings</u>		
Balbirnie	3.0m	Grooved ware associated with circle stones
Stenness	2.0m	2238bc ± 70bc (SRR 351)
<u>Coves</u>		
Stanton Drew	c3.0m	---
Cairnpapple	c3.0m	Associated with cremation pits c 2000bc
Mount Pleasant	6.0m	1680 ± 60bc (BM 668)
Avebury	?3.0x6.0m	Grooved ware beneath henge bank

Table 10.2 DATING EVIDENCE FOR AVENUES AND ENTRANCE SETTINGS

LONG BARROW	Wayland's Smithy I	TAQ 2820 ± 130bc (I 1468)
	Fussell's Lodge	3230 ± 150bc (BM 134)
	Kilham	?TAQ 2880 ± 125bc (BM 293)
ROUND BARROW	Bleasdale	1810 ± 90bc (NPL 69)
	Basingstoke	Wessex style bone belt hook
HENGE/STONE CIRCLE	Durrington: N. circle	1955 ± 110bc (NPL 240)
	Stonehenge	1770 ± 70bc (HAR 2013)
		1728 ± 68bc (BM 1164)
		1070 ± 180bc (BM 1079)
		800 ± 100bc (I 3216)
	Kenet	N. c2000-1800bc - Grooved ware
		E. Bell Beaker
		S. ?1600bc - B/W Beaker from Sanctuary III/IV
	Milfield	?TPQ 1950 ± 110bc (HAR 3071)
	Lacra D	Milfield South - henge
	Broomend of Crichtie	Collared urn
HENGE RELATED	Meldon Bridge	Collared urn
		2330 ± 80bc (HAR 796) Perimeter
		2150 ± 130bc (HAR 797) fence posts
FREESTANDING	Milfield	1820 ± 50bc (BM 1652)
		1790 ± 50bc (BM 1650)
		1655 ± 80bc (BM 1653)
	Yelland	? Barbed and tanged arrowheads

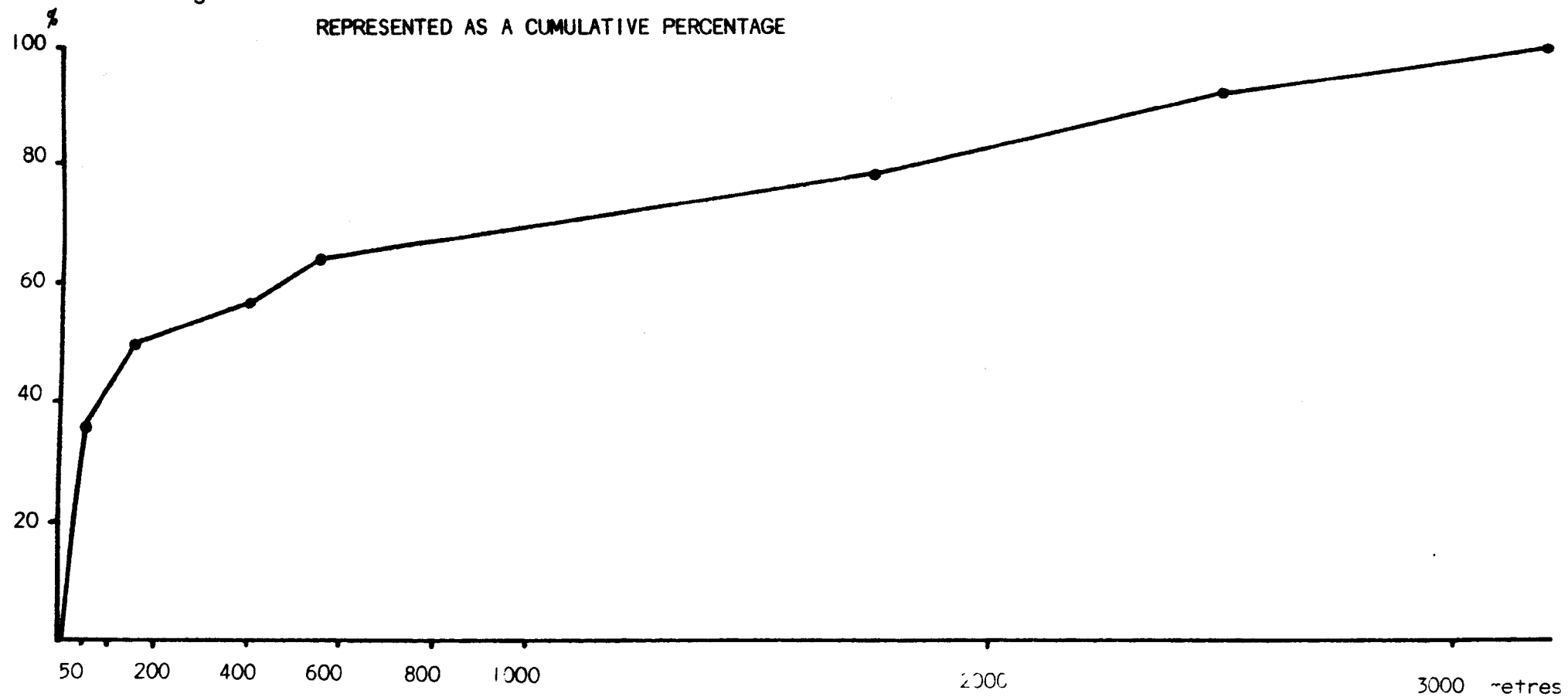
In each case these led to freestanding stone circles, post circles or palisades - all that is except the Durrington Walls avenue. The Northern Circle there has been interpreted as a roofed building (Wainwright 1971) but the massive size of the central quartet of posts, interpreted as supporting a lantern structure, raises doubts. A comparable setting at the centre of the similarly sized Little Woodbury house, itself unparalleled in Iron Age contexts (Guilbert 1981), was smaller and composed of slighter posts. It might be more economical therefore to consider the circle and central quartet as separate free standing components. The latter finds closest parallel amongst the coves and square settings recently reviewed by Ritchie (1974). Explanation in these terms would remove the structural difficulties of the roofed interpretation (awkward beam lengths from round to square structure) and place the avenue firmly back in the pattern established elsewhere. (tab.10.1)

Treated as a whole henge/stone circle avenues break into two groups: shorter sites up to about 50 metres in length and those of 100 metres or more (fig. 10.2). The shorter sites are significantly narrower than the more extended examples but all, with the exception of the greatly elongated sites of Shap, Kennet, Beckhampton, Stonehenge and Milfield, follow straight courses.

Since shorter sites represent little more than extension of an entrance setting tradition they have little relevance to the search for cursus parallels. The rather longer site at Callanish (Burl 1976, 153) appears to have been an eccentric local development from a single alignment of the type running from the other cardinal points of the circle there, whilst the putative site at Broomend of Crichton must, if genuinely an avenue, have been uncharacteristically splayed (Ritchie 1920).

Unlike these the Stonehenge avenue bears an obvious resemblance to the

Fig. 10.2 HENGÉ - CIRCLE AVENUES : LENGTH VARIATION
REPRESENTED AS A CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE



nearby cursus in both layout and length (Atkinson 1960, 151) but recent work has shown that rather than representing a unitary feature it was constructed in two phases: an initial straight section of some 500 metres from the henge entrance at dates between $1770 \pm bc$ (HAR 2013) and $1728 \pm bc$ (BM 1164); and the much longer, irregular course to the River Avon dated to $1070 \pm 180 bc$ (BM 1079) and $800 bc \pm 100 bc$ (L - 3216). The former most closely resembles the cursus but aerial photographs reveal the far greater regularity of the avenue ditches (eg RCHM 1979 pls. 7 & 23); those of the cursus as Stone pointed out (194) correspond more closely to the henge ditch both in profile and as an earthwork feature. The absence of evidence of avenue layout in this section by the common cursus method of "master" and "offset" ditches also serves to distinguish it.

The final, irregular section of the Stonehenge avenue finds an echo in the layout of cursuses such as Rudston D but is probably best paralleled by the eccentric Milfield avenue. The extremely shallow ditches of this site (0.2 - 0.3m deep x 1m or so wide: Harding 1981) were laid out with cavalier disregard for precision. Its purpose is obscure; it uniquely passes through both entrances of a class II henge but skirts a henge and segmented circle to north and south. A date of $1950 \pm 110 bc$ (HAR 3071) obtained from charcoal at the base of a large pit within the Milfield South henge, around which the avenue curves, probably provides a terminus post quem for its construction. Its marked irregularity and disregard for the apparent orthodoxies of formal henge approach suggests though a considerably later date. Perhaps it records a late mixing of avenue/cursus traditions (many cursuses in the north are similarly aligned N - S) or possibly, as at Stonehenge, it represents a late attempt to link earlier ceremonial sites to the new focus of ritual interest - water.

As ditched sites the Stonehenge and Milfield avenues must be considered most closely analogous to cursuses yet provide poor parallels; their clearly ancillary purpose viz a viz henges and their open ended form set them apart.

The three substantial stone avenues of Shap, Kennet, and Beckhampton might however represent lithic versions of the post/pit settings recorded at various cursus sites. Unfortunately secure details are only available for the Kennet site; the Beckhampton and Shap avenues depend almost entirely on the recorded fieldwork of early antiquaries.

Stukeley is the best source for both but his recorded observations, as already indicated, must be treated with some reserve. He faithfully recorded the features of the Kennet avenue but became so preoccupied with the supposed symmetric plan of the Avebury complex that he sought, and found, a cove along the line of the Kennet avenue to balance that at Beckhampton (Ms Eng Misc b65; Gough Maps 231: drawn as "The Cove of Kennet Avenue 24 May 1724" but later published as "Continuation of Kennet Avenue 24 May 1724" Stukeley 1743 Tab XIX). It is to his credit that he finally accepted that the evidence could not sustain his hypothesis which seems to have arisen almost entirely from notions of symmetric elegance.

Such notions may also have led him to postulate an end to the Beckhampton avenue "a little south of a square enclosure just up on the Bristol Road" (Gough Maps 231, 36b, 15b; Ms Eng Misc b65, 109) as this point and the termination of the Kennet avenue at the sanctuary were equidistant from Silbury Hill, would provide a unique vista of Silbury and the sanctuary, and place the Longstones cove at the centre of the avenue. To date the avenue has only been securely traced to SU 088690 (Vatcher 1968), some 900 metres short of Stukeley proposed termination.

His observations at Shap followed his fieldwork at Avebury (Stukeley 1776, 42-3) so may have been coloured by ideas conceived there. Nonetheless he records it "seems to be closed at one end which is on an eminence and near a long flattish barrow with stone work on it" (1776, 42) - a situation which he had not encountered at Avebury and so was unlikely to be

predisposed to find. His interpretation of the site as an avenue in addition appears to be supported by other early sources - a painting dated 1775 by Lady Lowther - and Clare's recent fieldwork points to two avenues, one of substantial stones terminating near the barrow, and a smaller one beyond.

These three sites are of comparable length to many cursuses and correspond to the presumed overall width of certain cursus post settings (fig. 10.5). Whilst all appear to run directly from henges or stone circles this might be doubted, at least as their initial purpose.

The connection of the Shap avenue with the Kemp Howe circle at its higher, southern end is unproven: a distance of some 500m separates the principal stones of the avenue from the circle itself (four isolated stones in between cannot certainly be linked to the alignment) and in width the two seem uncharacteristically close (circle 24m diameter; avenue 21m wide - after Stukeley). A final tapered section as on the Kennet avenue is of course possible, or is the 'circle' a convex terminal? (Clare 1978, 9.)

At Avebury excavation by Keller at the northern end of the Kennet avenue unexpectedly revealed that the missing stones 5a/b to 12a/b had not followed a straight course to the henge entrance but lay on a tangential alignment and were only finally joined to the four stones of the entrance setting by an anomalous double bend (Smith 1965, 208). Since this is far more acute than other alignment changes along the course of the avenue it is tempting to regard it as a feeble attempt to link a simple henge entrance setting (stones 1 - 4) to an independent avenue of Cenig Duon type.

Lack of either buried stones or signs of burning pits for these missing stones might indicate that they were in fact subsequently removed and re-erected in a straight alignment as Stukeley indicated (Smith 1965, 209),

but against this must be set the packing material used in stone hole 9b - blocks of middle and lower chalk which must have derived from the henge ditch. The fresh sherd of Grooved ware from stone hole 15b forming part of this final alignment also links it to henge construction since comparable sherds lay on the old land surface under the bank (Smith 1961, 224). Neither could have remained exposed for long so simultaneous construction must be presumed. Remodelling of initially separate components of the ritual complex not long after construction - first by an awkward double bend and then by re-erection - is conceivable nonetheless.

The southern section of the avenue linking with the sanctuary on Overton Hill certainly appears to have been later in construction. Whilst the northern section is dated to about 1850bc by a European Bell Beaker from a grave at the foot of stone 29a and by an Early Northern Beaker accompanying a burial in stone hole 25b (Smith 1965, 246), the southern section is best dated to about 1600bc by a Barbed Wire Beaker. This accompanied a burial thought to be contemporary with the final concentric stone circle phase of the Sanctuary. To judge from the distinct radial alignment of the circle stones at the junction with the avenue both were constructed as part of a single plan.

Both at northern and southern ends then doubts arise over the Kennet avenue's initial construction purely as an entrance feature. Intriguingly the incorporation of the longstones cove in one side of the Beckhampton avenue also finds closer parallel in cursus architectural patterns.

iv Freestanding avenues

These exist at present only in pit (?post) and stone forms but would admittedly be difficult to distinguish as purely ditched features from isolated sections of trackway, Roman road, or even bank barrows (cf North Stoke). As a group they vary enormously - from the little post avenue at

Milfield to the massive alignments at Carnac - and as such represent the least satisfactory of the proposed avenue classifications. Added to this must be the problem of accurate identification; several probably appear today as discrete sites simply because of their partial destruction or as a result of the removal of their focal monument, whilst others may conceivably represent utilitarian features of quite different date and purpose.

Uncertainty exists particularly over the place of the Moor Divok, Swarkestone, and Easington High Moor sites. The Moor Divok avenues (Taylor 1886) are probably no more than a largely destroyed cairn avenue (RCHM 1936), or the scattered and overgrown remnants of a complex of rows of Beaghmore type imaginatively interpreted as linking sections of avenue in the 19th century. Chance preservation of two approximately parallel stake lines below the Swarkeston 4 round barrow led to the suggestion that these represented an avenue (Greenfield 1960), but after the evidence of Trelystan (Britnell 1982) and Zjein (Glasbergen 1954) they might be better interpreted as a part of a fence line, redefined and finally removed prior to barrow construction.

At Easington High Moor double lines of substantial pits survive as major depressions 2.5/3.0m in diameter and occur in three distinct sections 230m/100m/35m in length (pl. 10.1 & 10.2). The alignment of the former group parallel to a line of barrows has encouraged the idea of 3rd/2nd millenium bc ritual purpose but Spratt (1982, 183) emphasizing the exceptional size of the pits here has pointed to the resemblance of this site to sections of pit alignment elsewhere in NE Yorkshire, some likewise discontinuous, that appear to have acted as boundary systems.

Despite these reservations the avenues at Milfield, Merrivale, and Cerrig Duon confirm the existence of a tradition of independent, freestanding monuments, and to these can be added the Yelland avenue on the tidal flats



Pl. 10.1 Easington High Moor : the western section of double pit alignment
with adjacent barrows



PI. 10.2 Easington High Moor : view of the
complete complex from the east

of the River Taw near Fremington in Devon (Rogers 1932), the scattered remnants of a small avenue near the cliff edge at Hwlfair Ceirw, Caernarvon (RCHM 1956, 117), and the cropmark alignments at Thornborough and perhaps South Muskham (St Joseph 1977).

Most are narrow and many quite short so they would have little relevance to the search for cursus parallels. What they do demonstrate is the essential unity of the 'avenue' tradition in highland or lowland contexts. The Milfield and Yelland sites exemplify this: the former measures some 2.2m across, is some 50m long, and is dated by BM 1650 and BM 1652 to 1790 ± 50 bc and 1820 ± 50 bc; the latter measures 34m x 2m and barbed and tanged arrowheads, transverse arrowheads, fabricators and serrated flakes were found on the preserved old land surface adjacent to it. They differ only in the materials of which they were constructed.

Nor is it possible to draw a distinction on Dartmoor between cairn avenues and apparently independent avenues/double rows at complexes such as Shovel Down (pl. 10.3); the Merrivale sites are exceptional only by virtue of their near parallel layout and centrally incorporated cairn.

That at Cerrig Duon is rather wider (5m) and lacks any nearby cairn avenues (Grimes, 1936). It appears to represent a quite separate ritual feature at a small ceremonial centre containing an open stone circle and a sizeable standing stone (Maen Mawr.) If projected the avenue's alignment would miss the circle by some 8/10 metres, a fact that establishes its independence. Nonetheless it is too small (40m x 5m) for serious consideration as a highland zone cursus.

Even the vastly larger but unexcavated cropmark avenue at Thornborough (350m x 10/12m ; St Joseph 1977) appears to relate dimensionally only to sites of extended oblong ditch type: post settings within cursuses appear never to be set back more than 5m from the ditch edge so the overall width

Pl. 10.3 Shovel Down :
a typical Dartmoor
double row



of a cursus possessing such a setting would not exceed 20-22 metres.

Although of unproven date its proximity to the Thornborough (south) henge and its termination on a line with the henge entrances immediately recalls the positioning of henge and post avenue at Milfield (Harding 1982, fig 11). Its rather broken plan results from subsoil factors inhibiting cropmark production but the pair of distinct pits lying beyond the end of the avenue proper, and the five larger and slightly misaligned pairs in the centre of the alignment, points to the possibility of segmentation (St Joseph 1977, pl. 1A). This is interestingly reminiscent of the Easington High Moor double pit alignments. (fig. XXIX)

Cropmarks of an apparent avenue at South Muskham appear to have much in common with the Thornborough and Easington sites: a detached, narrower ten pit group to the south is followed by the main length of avenue and finally by two outliers (St Joseph 1977, pl. 1c). Overall dimensions here are closer to those of a minor cursus than at the sites so far discussed (220m x 20m) and an adjacent ring ditch encourages belief in its prehistoric date. Interestingly the pits at this site are far more closely spaced than those at Thornborough and in large measure recall the patterning of pits defining the sides of many Scottish cursuses. A further site of this sort in the Trent valley occurs at King's Bromley. It is composed in the same way of almost contiguous pits, of comparable width (16/25m), and similarly associated with ring ditches. It however possesses a clearly convex terminal and resembles most markedly the Fourmerkland oblong ditch

Finally, mention must be made of the massive and eccentric Breton alignments. Although in no sense avenues, the multiple rows of Le Menec and Kermario by virtue of their enormous dimensions provide possible parallels for the major cursuses of Britain. Furthermore the incorporation of a Manio cairn within the Kermario alignment recalls the pattern of cursus orientation upon long barrows. (fig. XXX)

The configuration is different, however. Whereas English long barrows and oblong ditches are either set transversely or buried within the cursus bank, Manio I is aligned along the centre of the Kermario rows, four lines of which pass directly over it (Piggott 1937b, 444, fig 2). The semicircles or ellipses (cromlechs) of close set stones placed out of relation to the central axis of the Le Menec, and probably once Kermario, rows are also a distinctive Breton feature, occurring again in massive D shaped form at the western end of the shorter Kerlescan rows. These settings seem neither to correspond to British cursus terminals, nor to the much smaller oblong ditches or long barrows aligned across them. Most importantly the multiplication of rows has a s yet no cursus parallel: post alignments appear to have been a feature of very few sites and in all cases the recorded evidence points to single alignments on either side mirroring the ditch line.

Contact and influence seem chronologically possible (Giot 1960, 122-3) but direct translation into stone of the features of the Dorset cursuses or others further afield cannot be claimed.

B. COMMON OR SEPARATE TRADITION?

Can avenues and cursuses then be regarded as at least in part, manifestations of a common tradition? Radiocarbon determinations and dates based upon associated artefacts indicate not. Rather than being contemporaneous, avenues bracket the flourish of cursus construction. Third millennium bc long barrow avenues/settings might of course be postulated as the progenitors of both series, standing as they do firmly in the Earlier Neolithic, but in fact provide poor prototypes.

With only two exceptions (Kilham and apparently Kemp Howe) they are little more than entrance settings for mortuary structures that can be paralleled in the highland zone by the portal and forecourt settings of simple stone chambers. The Kilham avenue differs from these in being of virtually

identical size to the monument which it approaches. It is probably best explained (at least until the publication of further details of the Kemp Howe avenue) as a peculiarity of the phase II monument enshrined in the finished barrow (Manby 1976; Kinnes 1981). It is certainly atypical of later cursus practice where long barrow incorporation reveals a marked disinterest in the ritual features at their proximal ends.

Other categories of avenue appear from the limited evidence set out in table 10.2 to be second millennium phenomena. Except for the anomalous Bleasdale date, henge/circle avenues have considerable chronological priority but are of such disparate forms that allowance has to be made for development from earlier, simpler prototypes. Cursuses are unsuitable for the role since by the close of the 3rd millennium they were already established as massive, fully developed monuments. Better candidates are the small entrance settings evident in incipient form at Balfarg (Selkirk 1982, 24), and Stonehenge (Slaughter stone and its vanished companion: Atkinson 1960), and in more developed form originally at Mayburgh (Clarke 1936, 43) and Avebury (?stone pairs 1-4 at the southern entrance: Smith 1965, 208/9).

Such settings might with progressive elaboration of ritual and the exaggerating tendency of gigantism, evident in all ritual architecture whether prehistoric or historic, be extended and expanded to become major features in their own right. Appearance amongst round barrows/cairns and small stone circles almost certainly results from later copying of henge architecture, and freestanding avenues could be argued to represent a further phase of architectural specialization. The early date for the Milfield post avenue (1820⁺ 50bc) seems to belie this however, and forces reconsideration of a cursus connection.

The open ended nature of freestanding avenues and their comparatively

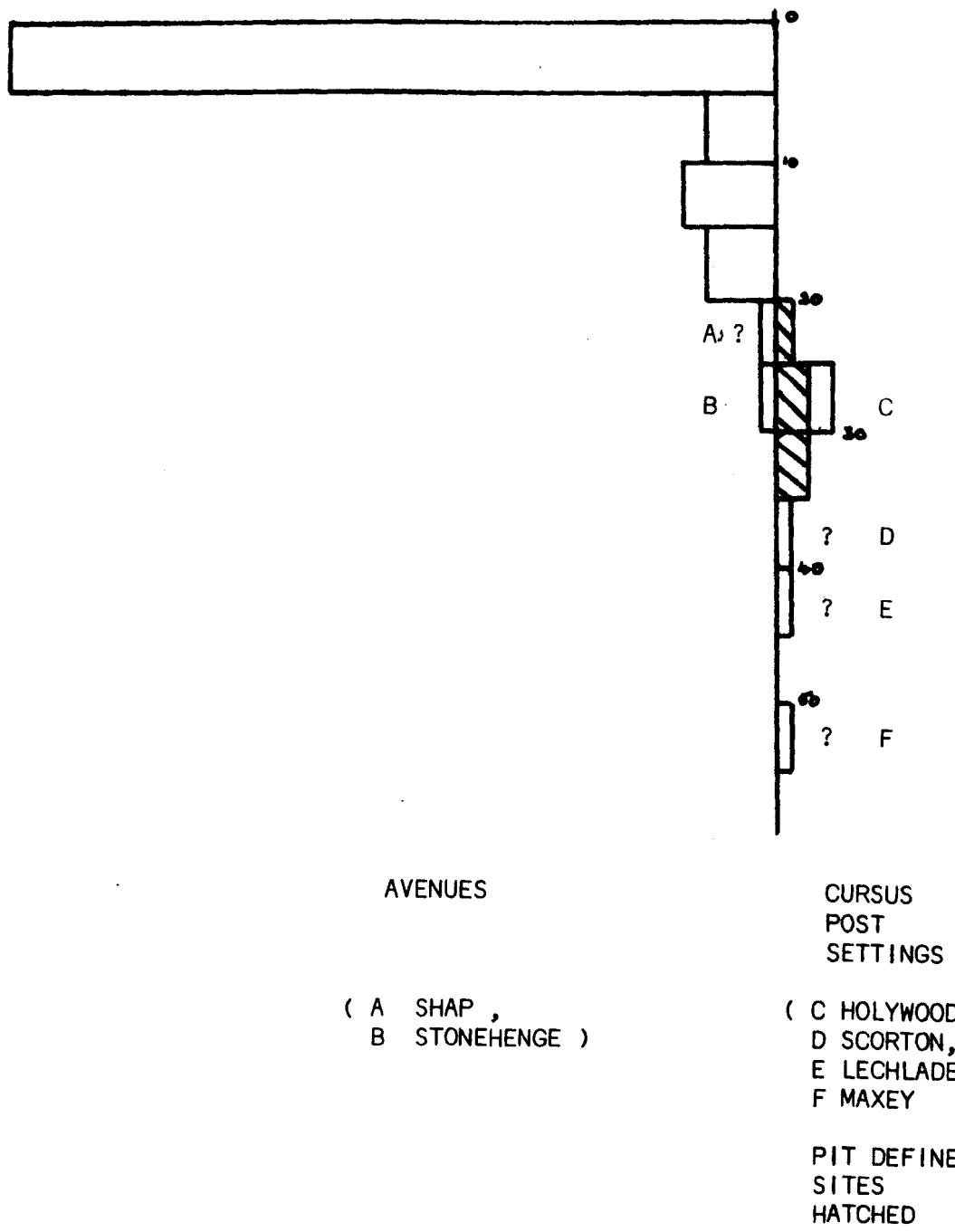
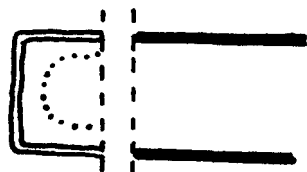


Fig. 10.3 AVENUES AND CURSUS POST SETTINGS :
TRANSVERSE DIMENSIONS

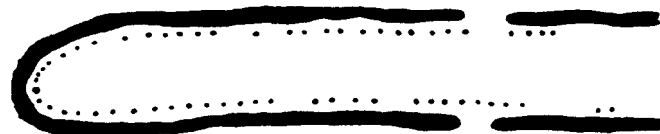
narrow plans remain obstinate difficulties, as does the almost total absence of observed cropmark pits within cursus interiors. There is little evidence of that measure of architectural overlap which characterises stone circle/henge ancestry: avenues possessing closed terminals (eg Merrivale) are far too narrow to be counted as stone versions of cursuses, their components invariably more widely spaced, and often of considerably greater size (post holes 1 metre in diameter at Milfield and Meldon Bridge and cropmarks 1.5 - 3.0m in diameter at Thornborough, as against 0.25 - 0.5m at Maxey, Lechlade, and Springfield; only a ramp extends the Scorton example to 1.0 x 0.6m). There is also little real overlap between the presumed transverse dimensions of cursus post settings and avenues (fig 10.5).

Hints of common architecture are in fact limited to a single site - Hollywood B - where uniquely cropmark pits have been located. The width of this setting is comparable to that estimated for another north western site - the wrecked Shap avenue - which may likewise have stopped short of a stone circle and was possibly closed by a barrow. Both sites lie on natural routes to the group VI axe factories in an area where circle/henge interchangeability is most marked, so have a claim to be considered as parallel lithic and non lithic complexes. Nevertheless differences in length are very considerable and there are no real indications that the stone monument ever possessed that most fundamental of cursus attributes - a closed terminal.

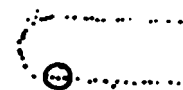
Farther afield the two massive avenues at Avebury bear a certain resemblance in plan to the Rudston cursus complex (fig XXVIII) and this is heightened if the speculation is entertained that the former were originally independent ritual components, and that the length of ditch bordering churchyard and monolith at Rudston represent the remains of a henge. Notable clusterings of Northern Beakers in Eastern Yorkshire and Northern Wessex (Clarke 1969, 168 & 171-2) and the apparent northern antecedents of



Springfield



Hollywood B



Fourmerkland



Thornborough



Kennet - excavated northern section
(after Smith)

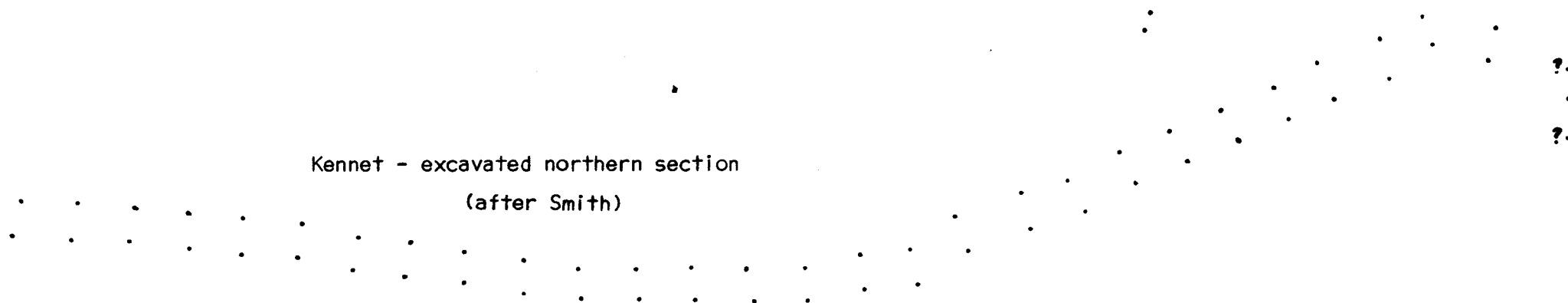


Fig. 10.4 CURSUS POST SETTINGS AND MAJOR AVENUES : COMPARATIVE PLANS.



Fig. 10.5 DISTRIBUTION MAP OF
THE PRINCIPAL AVENUES
IN MAINLAND BRITAIN
(SHORT SETTINGS
OMITTED)

- Long barrows
- Freestanding (pits/posts)
- ▬ Freestanding (stone)
- Round barrow
- Ring ditch
- Henge/circle (stone)
- Henge/circle (wood)
- ⊙ Henge/circle (ditched)

Silbury Hill lend support to the idea of such long distance contact.

Cursus/avenue identity cannot be claimed from conjectured changes in the plans of just three extreme sites however. Closest dimensional agreement is to be found rather between avenues and the little investigated sites of the extended oblong ditch group (cf Thornborough pit avenue and the North Stoke linear ditches). Here in addition a measure of common patterning relative to henges can be observed (cf Llandegai, Milfield, and Thornborough). Such an origin would seem to present no chronological difficulties and the strange palisade like trenches defining the North Stoke site hint at common form. Nevertheless the ditches at Llandegai were of shallow profile and there were no indications of post holes on the site. Nor has evidence been recovered of mounds within pit avenues.

Further work on these sites and cursuses of Strathmore type, where again dimensional overlap is obvious, may provide answers. Certainly there are indications at Kinalty of more widely spaced components of almost avenue character extending from the contiguous pits of the southern enclosure, and the setting within cursus B Holywood might represent a symbolic rendering of the architecture of the nearby Fourmerkland site (fig 10.4). For the present though the Strathmore sites along with the Scorton mound probably provide the best indication of potential cursus form in the highland zone: enclosures defined by contiguous stones or boulder banks, or low linear mounds of bank barrow type. Examination of the immediate environment of long cairns or round cairn cemeteries may prove productive of such sites and the so called field walls running from the extremities of the Midhowe cairn are suggestive of the nature of the evidence.

CHAPTER XI

THE EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

Cursuses and oblong ditches have thus far been viewed as purely insular phenomena. In view of their oft commented on absence from the continental scene (Piggott¹⁹⁶⁵/Agache 1978) this seems inevitable. It must be recalled though that aerial photographic coverage has only become intensive in recent years (Joussaume & Marsac 1973; Madsen 1979; Agache 1978) and still remains limited in extent. Results have been striking - causewayed enclosures and earthen long barrows have been revealed both in Denmark and in the Somme and Vendee regions of France. In the latter region the putative barrows take the form of oblong ditches exactly comparable with the British examples, and the barrows and 'langdysser' of Denmark are of not dissimilar shape. The possibility therefore arises that the strong easterly distribution of British sites reflects their place amongst a common North European tradition.

In addition the appearance of similarly sized oblong enclosures of Urnfield and La Tene date at points as distant as Libernice, Czechoslovakia and Aulnay aux Planches, Champagne (Rybova & Soudsky 1962; Brissant & Hatt 1953) presents the possibility of a late, widespread tradition to which Britain now appears to be linked (Loveday & Petchey 1983). (fig XXV)

Although cursuses remain at least for the present unparalleled on the continent, the recent discovery of a posted site of henge type (Behrens 1981) advises caution.

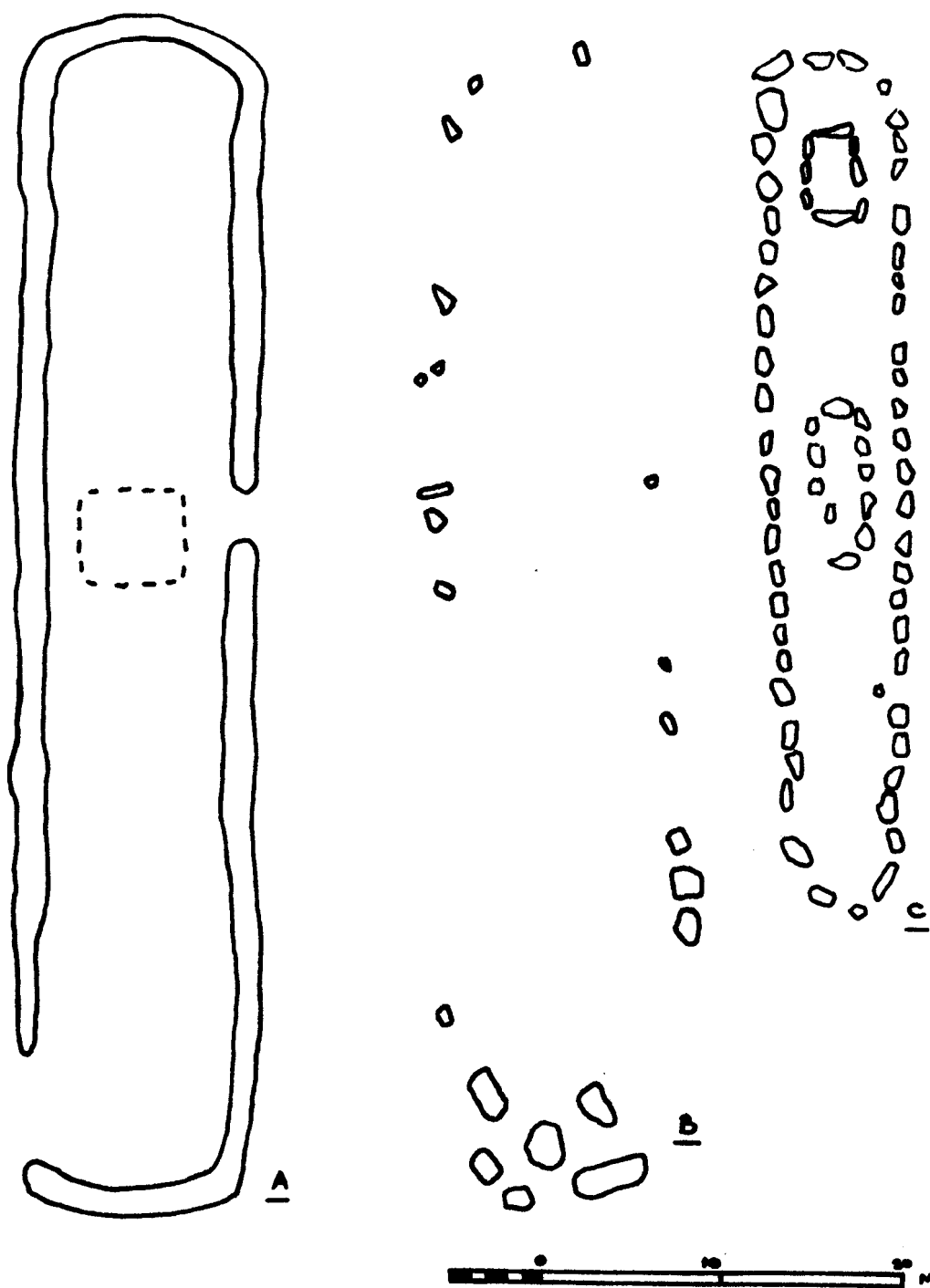
A. NEOLITHIC FUNERARY MONUMENTS OF LONG MOUND OR ENCLOSURE TYPE

i North European long mounds

The search for the continental origins of the British long barrow tradition has been complicated by two factors: the absence of a collective burial tradition amongst suspected North European prototypes and the lack of distinctive British trapezoidal mounds there. A measure of collectivity is provided by the presence of more than one cist in some North German barrows or by the clustering of sites as barrow cemeteries (eg Sarnawo, Poland) but it is necessary to look to the most distant group in Kujavia to find close parallels for British mortuary practice, and here the distinctive triangular barrows are at variance with patterns of British mound construction (Piggott 1955).

When instead parallels are sought for the features of the rectangular mounds and oblong ditches of the East Anglian/Midland region and its peripheries agreement is far closer. The stone and wooden burial structures within Danish long barrows (Madsen 1979) recall the centrally placed mortuary structures at Giants Hills I and II, Charlecote, and probably Royston; failure to locate burials at West Rudham and Juliberries Grave might be also put down to their central placing. Like Addington and the oblong ditches, North European sites also differ little whether earthen mounds or stone built "langdysser". The latter appear to have been constructed in imitation of wooden palisades - flatter stone faces being placed outwards and spaces filled with dry stone walling - and the same is probably true of Addington. (Fig. 11.1)

Mounds on both sides of the North Sea appear to have been low affairs. In Denmark even well preserved sites such as the Rude long barrow range from only 0.7m - 1.0m in height (Madsen 1979, 311) and the kerb contained mounds of "langdysser" appear to have been little larger (Glob 1971). The surviving spread mound at Addington was probably of similar size and



- A) Charlecote
- B) Addington
- C) Emmen D43, Drenthe

Fig. 11.1 NORTH EUROPEAN AND SOUTHERN ENGLISH
RECTANGULAR MOUNDS

those at Charlecote and North Stoke were certainly never large. At Bryn yr Hen Bobl the distant but cognate terrace bears a striking resemblance to the so called Baerker long houses composed of infilled bays of "aeolian" sandy deposit 0.5m thick.

Finally there is an obvious common tendency to extreme elongation.

Lindeskor-Sydvest at 168m is the longest recorded North European site (Jazdzewski 1973, 67) but several approach lengths of 100m (Sprockhoff 1966), a pattern repeated amongst British oblong ditches.

Parallels, of course, are not exact. Continental mounds frequently possess more than one burial structure but with rarely more than a single articulated inhumation in each; mounds range in width from only 6-9m and have not as yet revealed indications of encircling ditches; and sites are frequently clustered in cemetery groupings. The Lawford/Stratford St Mary, and more so, the Cardington/Cople groupings are perhaps not dissimilar but elsewhere British sites are dispersed and of considerably greater transverse size.

Further excavation may clarify the relationship which if not exact is certainly closer than that established for trapezoidal mounds. The Scandinavian thin butted axe from the substantially rectangular Juliberrie's Grave long barrow in Kent provides confirmation of contact and axes of related type have been noted in the Thames estuary region (Jessup 1939, 268). Dates of 2960 ± 10bc (K3124) and 2860 ± 70bc (K3125) from Rude barrow and 2722 ± 49bc (BM1405) from the North Stoke bank barrow permit their being linked as members of a hypothetical common North Sea tradition, initially at least independent of ovoid and trapezoid mounds. Should this be the case the bank barrow tendency may ultimately prove to derive from continental progenitors, with transformation to cursus form representing a purely British development.

ii "Longs Tumulus" of West Central France

A series of cropmarks of encircling oblong ditch type have recently been located lying on either side of the Autize valley in the Marais Poitevin region of West Central France (Marsac et al 1982). In both size and ditch plan they are exactly comparable to English examples: all appear to possess convex terminals and most are under 60m in length although there are examples 160m and 250m long (Aiffres and Brutain). Because of their dimensional similarity to surviving Neolithic mounds in the region (La Tomb de la Demoiselle at Thou 100/120m x 9m and Les Molindreaux 80m x 10/15m - Burnez 1976, 59; Joussaume 1980) and their complimentary distribution, they are considered to be of Neolithic date.

In addition to this circumstantial evidence of date and form there are clear indications that many, if not all, originally encircled mounds. A trial section through the ditch of the largest site at Xanton-Chassenou revealed it to be cut 1.3m deep into limestone and to be 4.8m wide at the top. Its silting pattern suggested an internal mound and subsequent observation during winter revealed the rubble of the truncated mound as a white trace across the whole internal area. Unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered during the excavation and the surviving long mounds of the region appear not to have possessed encircling ditches. The probability that all the sites were mounded and of Neolithic date is high, however, in the absence of convincing local alternatives. They appear in fact to belong amongst the general spread of long mounds in West Central France from Vienne in the East to Gironde in the south.

The relevance of this distant group to the English sites is difficult to assess. Like oblong ditches they include a few sites of unusually extended dimensions but unlike them exhibit a tendency to cluster in groups - most marked at Xanton Chassenon where four sites lie within 250m of each other. They are also defined by more massive ditches.

Those of the excavated site, though, seem from aerial photographs to have been the widest of the series. A ring ditch (?) overlying the terminal of the Mouzeuil-Saint-Martin site, in the manner of Cople, seems to point to a less massive mound, here at least, since its ditch is continuous across the centre of the oblong site.

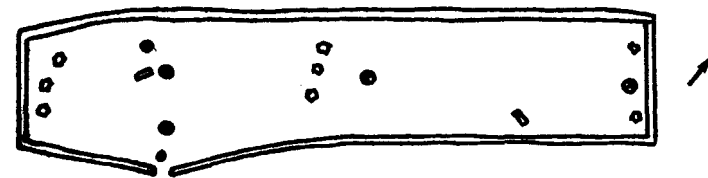
Future observation in France and elsewhere in Western Europe can be expected to extend the range of these cropmarks - examples have recently been located at Brutelles (Somme) and Barbuise Court-avent (Seine et Marne) (Agache 1978; Jalmaïn 1970) and further coverage particularly on the periphery of areas of surviving long mounds will undoubtedly provide more. It may prove difficult though to distinguish them from rectangular sites of 1st millennium bc date.

B. 1st MILLENIUM bc RECTANGULAR SITES

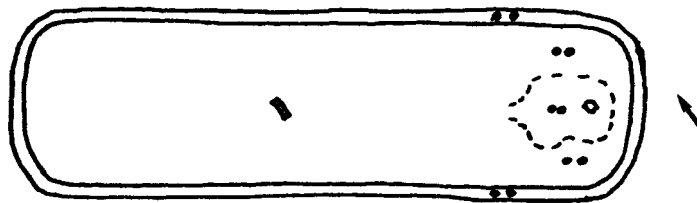
In addition to the well known "sanctuary" enclosures at Aulnay aux Planches, Champagne and Libenice, Bohemia, attention has been drawn to a series of smaller rectangular/ovate sites associated with Urnfield cemeteries. Verwers (1966) has divided them into two types: long ditches of Riethoven type (average sizing 15.5m x 5.5m) and long ditches of Gölric type (average 42m x 3.8m). Both appear to have been primarily of Hallstatt B date (870 ± 50bc : G r N4919 Gölric 3) but extend into phases C/D. Whereas most of the Riethoven group possessed an interment of cremated bone on their long axis, those of Gölric type did not and were apparently empty. An agricultural function has been proposed for them (cf Glasbergen 1954, barrow 22A) but in view of their apparent contemporaneity with circular funerary monuments this has been tentatively proposed as of a ritual nature (Verwers 1966, 56).

Whatever the case the sites are clearly too small for serious consideration as parallels for British oblong ditches but may well be cognate and do provide a context for the more striking rectangular enclosure of Urnfield

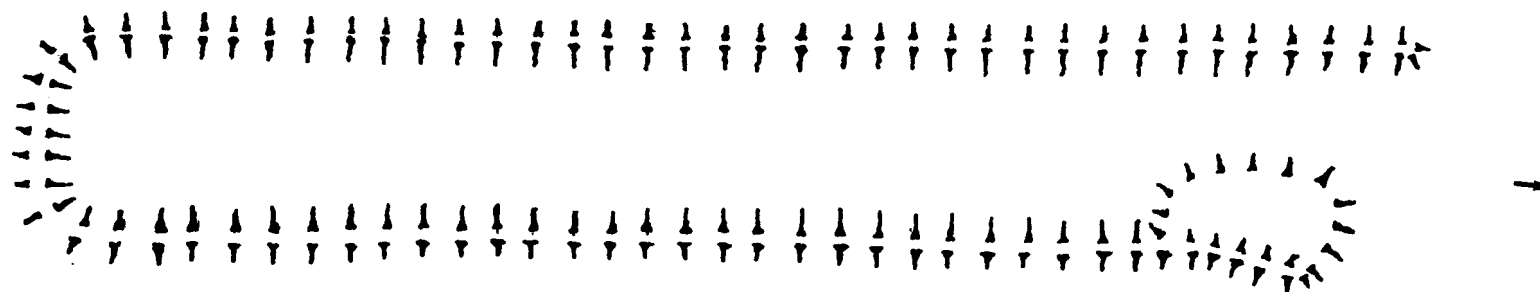
Fig. 11.2 FIRST MILLENIUM BC OBLONG DITCH SITES



A)



B)



C)



D)

- cremation
- ▭ inhumation
- stone socket
- posthole

- A) Aulnay aux Planches
- B) Libenice
- C) Tara
- D) Caldecotte, Bow Brickhill

date at Aulnay aux Planches. Despite the chronological and geographical gulf separating it from sites across the channel this site bears a striking resemblance to them: defined by a continuous ditch 1.5m wide with pronouncedly right angled corners and a causeway set back from the terminal (Brissant & Hatt 1953). The ditch profile was such as to suggest that it may once have held a palisade (Piggott 1974, 57) but the excavators found evidence of a bank. Settings of stones were placed just within each terminal and apparently across the centre of the enclosure. A single post also stood just within the entrance way. Immediately opposite was a large post hole containing an ox skull, probably originally set on the post there (fig.11.2)

In addition to these structural features were two burials (one possibly a sacrificed infant) and three cremations - not necessarily all original. The primary interment in the excavators' opinion was placed in the centre of the enclosure on the long axis. It comprised a cremation with an urn and ancillary vessels of Hallstatt A/B date. These were of comparable age to the earliest vessels accompanying cremations in the immediately adjoining cemetery group B. From this evidence and that of the sherds recovered from the ditch the enclosure has been dated to the 11th/10th century bc. Like the smaller Dutch rectilinear enclosures its associations and interior features indicate a mortuary purpose.

A comparably sized (92m x 23m as against 90m x 15m) but less precisely delineated site at Libenice in Central Bohemia was certainly of similar purpose. It contained a single inhumation centrally placed, like the principal interment at Aulnay. This was of an aged female accompanied by bronze fibulae, bracelets, leg rings and amber beads of 3rd century bc date. No other finds were made in the enclosure except at the eastern end where a series of pits had been dug into a sunken area some 10m x 5m. In this was placed a standing stone 2m high and in front of that were two post holes, beside which were found two bronze necklets. The latter

were interpreted as adornments for the posts probably carved as human figures. In the pits were animal and human bones and Hallstatt pottery dating to the late 4th century B.C. Two pairs of post flanked this "sanctuary" area and a further two pairs were placed in the ditch on either side.

A ritual, if not emphatically mortuary, purpose can be ascribed to this site, as to Aulnay. Until recently these two greatly distanced sites stood in isolation but an example has now been revealed in England - Bow Brickhill at Milton Keynes (Loveday and Petchey 1983).

This site is somewhat smaller than the two just described (48m x 9m) but like Libenice defined by a continuous ditch with bowed out terminals and was similarly placed in the vicinity of the flood plain. Lack of an entrance causeway similarly seems to preclude a utilitarian purpose as do its strange dimensions and the presence of a truncated inhumation in a shallow external pit (?cut through the plough eroded bank.) A semi-circular curving gully in the northern half of the enclosure may be contemporary. In the second phase the oblong enclosure appears to have been linked to a larger, possibly square enclosure, for which purpose the phase 1 ditch was recut on three sides. Wood samples from the undisturbed phase 1 ditch section produced a determination of 43 ± 110 a.d. (HAR 5614).

The unexcavated long enclosure on the Hill of Tara in Ireland ("The Banqueting Hall 228m x 27m) might be judged to be of similar date in view of the 1st-3rd century A.D. imports of Roman pottery found within the adjacent Rath of the Synods. Its dimensions closely resemble a Neolithic extend oblong ditch however, and the dates of 2130 \pm 160 bc (D42) and 1930 \pm 150 (D44) for the Mound of the Hostages passage grave also on the hill, make this a possibility.

These Celtic sites were clearly of ritual purpose and can reasonably be equated with the Gallo/Brittonic term for a shrine or sanctuary - Nemeton. Although only strictly referring to a sacred wood or grove, or rather a clearing in it, the Latin gloss for the term (sacellum) points to a defined enclosure (Ross 1974, 85; Piggott 1974, 54).

The continental evidence might then suggest the adoption there of a uniquely British class of monument by the opening of the 1st millennium bc, and its return to Britain a millennium later perhaps in the wake of the disturbances caused by Caesar's campaigns. Unfortunately insufficient sites have been excavated to allow such a hypothesis to be confidently advanced and the discovery of oblong ditch sites in the Marais Poitevin makes a continental origin for Aulnay and Libenice at least conceivable.

Whether Caldecotte-Bow Brickhill is regarded as the product of a reflux movement or the final representative of a continuous native tradition is perhaps less important though than the doubt which it casts on the assumption implicit thus far that the untested cropmark sites of Britain are of Neolithic date. In fact their striking concentration in southern East Anglia, where none have yet been excavated, and general containment within central and eastern England might suggest the opposite. Were they ritual monuments of the Catuvellauni?

There are reasons to doubt such an explanation of the densely clustered Suffolk and Essex sites: many are associated with ring ditches and all lie well within the size parameters of the series unlike Caldecotte, the only native Iron Age model, which is small and isolated. More importantly intensive aerial reconnaissance of the region over many years has failed to blur a marked distinction in their distribution - concentrated in the

Stour, Blackwater and Chelmer valleys where cropmarks of Neolithic/ Bronze Age monuments are centred but absent completely from the intervening Colne valley where Camulodunum lies. Such a pattern is difficult to explain if these are to be regarded as potential Belgic sites. It is probably safe therefore to regard the excavated sample as as reasonably representative (chpt. 6, 1) and hence some 90% of sites as Neolithic in date.