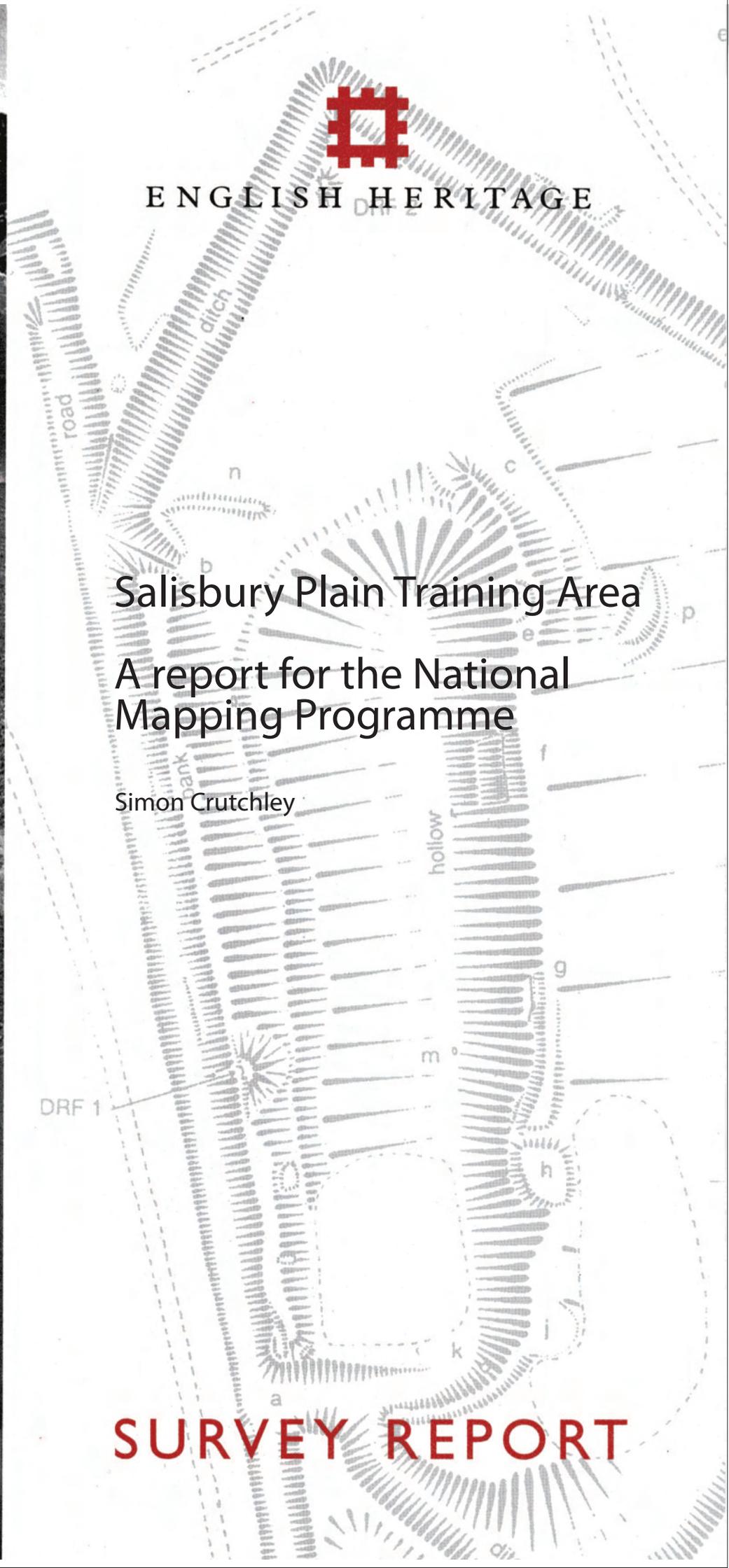


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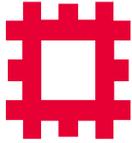
## Salisbury Plain Training Area

A report for the National  
Mapping Programme

Simon Crutchley



**SURVEY REPORT**



# ENGLISH HERITAGE

SALISBURY PLAIN TRAINING AREA  
A report for the National Mapping Programme  
WILTSHIRE AND HAMPSHIRE

Surveyed: December 1994 – August 1995  
Analysis and report by Simon Crutchley

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# **THE SALISBURY PLAIN TRAINING AREA MAPPING PROJECT:**

## **SUMMARY**

The Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) Mapping Project is part of the English Heritage's (formally RCHME's) National Mapping Programme (NMP). According to the Aerial Survey strategy the aim of NMP is to enhance our understanding about past human settlement, by providing primary information and syntheses for all archaeological sites and landscapes (visible on aerial photographs) from the Neolithic period to the twentieth century. In practical terms the purpose of NMP is to map, document and classify, at a common scale and to a common standard, all archaeological sites and landscapes recorded in England on aerial photographs.

The specific purpose of SPTA Mapping Project was to produce a baseline record of all visible archaeological features dating from prehistory until the end of WWII, to enable more detailed survey work on the ground at certain sites and help set those sites in their landscape context.

# INTRODUCTION

## ***Background to the project***

Salisbury Plain is a unique area of chalk grassland, which presents important opportunities for archaeological survey. It is the last surviving large area of unploughed grass downland in southern England, and represents 40% of such land in Europe. There are archaeological sites remaining as extant earthworks when elsewhere they would have been ploughed out long ago, leaving only traces visible on aerial photographs. This state of preservation allows for a much more detailed survey of such sites without recourse to the destructive techniques of excavation.

Following increased use of the Plain in the 1980's the Ministry of Defence (MOD) met with the Department of the Environment (DOE) after reports of damage to archaeological sites on the Plain. In February 1984 an SPTA working party was established as a forum for planning future management of the Plain to allow continued military use, whilst respecting, where possible, the archaeological and environmental sensitivity of the area. The RCHME was invited to assist in the survey of the Plain when the working party designated 12 Archaeological Site Groups (ASG's). A joint meeting in December 1987 between Wiltshire County Council, RCHME and English Heritage led to a proposal for the Commission to survey 100 sq km of SPTA over a period of five years.



Figure 1 - Location map

The proposal included a combination of terrestrial and air survey at scales from 1:2500 upward. This work continued over the next five years (1988 - 1992) and plots at 1:2500 scale were produced from aerial photographs, using the Digicart stereo photogrammetric plotter. The field teams then checked and enhanced these, as well as producing larger scale surveys of individual sites. The air photo interpretation work on the ASG's had shown conclusively that the concept of the ASG had to be modified as the field systems and linear boundaries extend from one ASG to another, leaving very few empty stretches of Plain. It was therefore decided in 1993 that a new approach to survey of SPTA was required; a total survey of the entire area at a scale of 1:10,000, and thus a new NMP project was initiated, (RCHME 1994).

The project area covered 675 sq km (Figure 1) and was largely defined by the extent of the land comprising the Salisbury Plain Training Area. This land is under MOD tenure, either freehold or leasehold. The military training area covers 93,101 acres and extends from the Vale of Pewsey in the north to Stonehenge in the south and from Warminster in the west to the Hampshire border at Ludgershall in the east. The Salisbury Plain Training Area Mapping Project includes most of the land thus defined, plus any additional areas falling within the relevant OS 1:10,000 quarter sheets. (The area surveyed does not include the three OS quarter sheets to the north of the central area (SU05NW, SU05NE and SU15NW) even though these do include small areas of SPTA.)

						SU 15 NE	SU 25 NW	
ST 85 SE	ST 95 SW	ST 95 SE	SU 05 SW	SU 05 SE	SU 15 SW	SU 15 SE	SU 25 SW	SU 25 SE
ST 84 NE	ST 94 NW	ST 94 NE	SU 04 NW	SU 04 NE	SU 14 NW	SU 14 NE	SU 24 NW	SU 24 NE
	ST 94 SW	ST 94 SE	SU 04 SW	SU 04 SE	SU 14 SW	SU 14 SE	SU 24 SW	

Figure 2 - Project area

## Objectives

The objective of the National Mapping Programme is to identify and transcribe all probable and possible archaeological features showing as cropmarks or soilmarks and earthworks. This project aimed to record all archaeological monuments seen on aerial photographs, both plough-levelled and upstanding remains, dating from the earliest times to 1945, including industrial and military features. The product is a series of overlays of translucent film for the OS 1:10,000 base maps, and records of the archaeological features thus transcribed have been input into a computerised relational database known as MORPH2 (Edis et al 1989). (The reports generated from the databases, and tailored to the individual needs of the client will be used for a number of purposes from research to development control.) All the material produced by the project including reports, overlays and databases are available for consultation in the National Monuments Record Centre (NMRC).

In an area such as the Plain, with its long history of military activity, there was a greater concentration of military features such as First and Second World War practice trenches, Second World War gun emplacements, searchlight batteries, abandoned airfields, decoy sites, rifle butts and similar structures than is usual for NMP projects. The details of which types of features were recorded and how, are included in the project specification (RCHME 1995).

## Sources

### Aerial photographs

All easily available oblique and vertical photographs for the project area were consulted. The principal source for photographs was the RCHME's NMR Air Photographs (formerly the National Library of Air Photographs) which provided over 12,000 photos. This was supported by the cover held by the county councils flown for census purposes as well as a large number of photographs from the Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs (CUCAP), including certain flights flown for English Nature. No other local sources of photography were consulted.

In the Thames Valley Project (Fenner and Dyer 1994) over 85% of sites were recovered from "good quality photography" and just over 7% from "poor quality photography" for this project the predominant source was "poor quality photography" which generally refers to vertical photographs taken for non-archaeological purposes. Over half (53%) of all sites were recorded from such photography with only 20% from "good" aerial photographs. Also a

surprisingly high, 15%, of sites were known from non-destructive fieldwork, normally field survey, compared with 1.7% in Thames Valley.

## Records

As part of the mapping and interpretation process information from the NMR (including the Excavations Index) as well as the two SMRs was consulted. The Wiltshire SMR not only has the normal county record, organised by quarter sheet, but also has a separate "SPTA database" with over 2,300 separate numbered entries, one for each individual monument and find spot. This was to have been the basis for concordance for the Wiltshire parts of SPTA, but since a number of sheets had a percentage of land outside the SPTA, the decision was made to use the standard SMR number for concordance, except in certain exceptional circumstances. For those quarter sheets which were partially covered by Hampshire the project team were supplied with SMR maps and a print out of the Hampshire SMR data.

Full details of the individual sources consulted are listed in Appendix 1. Sites were cross referenced to both the NMR and SMR throughout the project.

Figure 3 shows how many sites were already recorded in the existing national or local records.

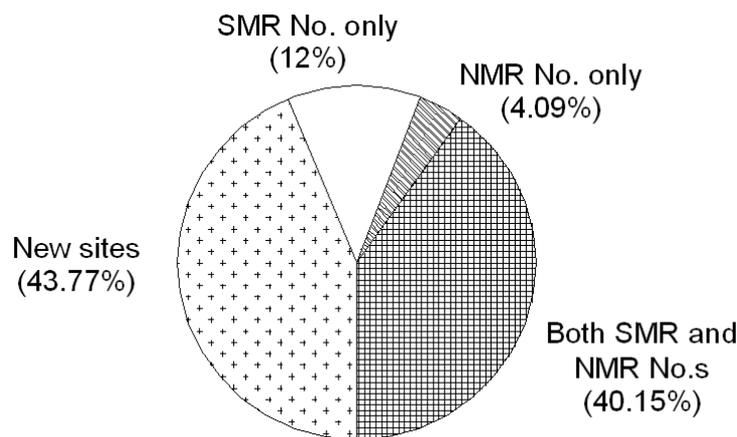


Figure 3 - Percentage of concorded sites

Salisbury Plain has been subject to a number of previous surveys and investigations, yet still a surprisingly high number of sites, 1864 (43.75%), had no previous NMR or SMR number. Even though 420 (22.53%) were Modern in date and were therefore less likely to have been included in previous surveys, 33.93% are new sites; (850 were cropmarks, 878 earthworks, 132 a combination of cropmark and earthwork and four of which included stonework). There were more new sites revealed as cropmarks than as earthworks, which is an indication of the erosion and destruction by ploughing in the last 20 years.

## Methodology

### Mapping methods

For each quarter sheet all available photographs, both vertical and oblique, were examined together and a pencil transcription was produced at a scale of 1:10,000. Where photographs had not been loaned from CUCAP or the county councils this pencil transcription was taken to Cambridge or the relevant SMR to check their photographs. Checking the SMR photographs was particularly important when a feature recorded on the SMR overlay could not be seen on any other photographs. Every site with a relevant SMR

or NMR record was checked to see if the available photographs showed anything. If a photograph was listed but could not be traced the site was accepted but noted as coming from an "unconfirmed overlay". Once all checking was completed a final inked version of each quarter sheet overlay was produced.

The majority of sites were transcribed using manual transcription methods, but were occasionally supported or enhanced by the use of the AERIAL computer-rectification program, developed by the Department of Mathematics at Bradford University (Haigh 1991).

This was particularly true where the archaeological detail was especially complicated or of particular interest for possible later study at a larger scale. The AERIAL program brought a level of accuracy of +5m, whereas manual plotting was accurate in the range +5-20m, though in exceptionally open areas of the Plain, with few or no good control points, the accuracy may only be within 30m.

During the transcription process a series of records were kept for different purposes, including map note sheets (MNS) for each quarter sheet to note problem areas, built up regions etc; and Site Record Forms (SRF's) to record such details as the main photography used for the transcription and any other information which might prove useful when entering the feature on the database.

## **Conventions**

A series of conventions had been developed during the various pilot projects with new ones being added whenever a project found a site type which could not be adequately represented using current conventions. There is now an agreed set of cartographic conventions for NMP which conform to the RCHME 1:10,000 Standard Cartographic Conventions (RCHME Forthcoming). These have enabled the depiction of banks, ditches and other features in a number of ways which make them easily recognisable and hence interpretable from the 1:10,000 transcription overlays. Appendix 2 shows the conventions used for SPTA.

## **Databases**

As well as the transcription overlays a digital record was made using MORPH2. "The MORPH2 classification system is a suite of programs that manage a number of related databases providing a closely structured method of describing archaeological features. ... The database conforms to the dBase3 standard, the programs are run using FOXR (the runtime version of FoxPro), and the indexes are of the FoxPro type" (RCHME 1993).

## ***Archiving and publication details***

The products of this transcription project have been archived at the NMRC in Swindon and will be available for consultation there under the title RCHME: Salisbury Plain Training Area NMP. A detailed list of contents can be found in Appendix 3.

This report is an internal RCHME report but many of the results will be used in the forthcoming RCHME volume on Salisbury Plain (McOmish, et al Forthcoming).

## ***Project details***

### **Project team structure**

The size and composition of the project team was somewhat flexible over the length of the project. The project co-ordinator (and author of this report) who had a largely supervisory and administrative role was Simon Crutchley. The bulk of the transcription and recording work was carried out by Carolyn Dyer and Fiona Small. They were joined firstly by Kate Roberts and a member of staff seconded from the field team (because of his personal knowledge of the Plain), Graham Brown, and later by Katie Gardiner. All these last three were new to air photo interpretation and a percentage of project time, especially for the project co-ordinator was spent on training and close supervision.

### **Timetable**

The transcription phase of the project ran from 15th December 1994 to 15th August 1995 a total of 444.5 worker days, of which 378.5 (85%) were spent mapping and 66 (15%) inputting records to the MORPH2 database. In addition 96 man days were spent by the project co-ordinator from August 1994 to the end of September 1995 on general administration, training and supervision.

### **Funding**

Funding for the project came entirely from within the RCHME.

### ***Scope of the report***

This report is designed for internal RCHME and English Heritage use and is meant as a guide to the methodology and results of the SPTA NMP project. It is not intended as a definitive statement about the archaeological sites and landscapes of the SPTA. It is intended to be a foundation for further research using all suitable forms of investigation such as further aerial reconnaissance as well as fieldwalking, documentary research, geophysical survey and even small-scale excavation. The limitations of aerial survey as a single technique are clearly recognised by the author and it is fully understood that a true understanding of the Plain will only be possible using a combination of all available techniques.

The report should be used in conjunction with the 27 1:10,000 overlay transcriptions for the project area which are held in the NMRC, Swindon. Copies of those transcriptions relating to each county are also held by the appropriate SMRs.

The format of this report follows the guidelines laid down in the NMP Guidelines (RCHME 1994) which divide the analyses between thematic and morphological reports.

The site numbers mentioned throughout are from the SPTA MORPH2 database.

# **BACKGROUND TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES**

## ***Previous work***

### **NMR record**

The records for the area of SPTA within Wiltshire underwent a comprehensive update and revision using the Wiltshire SMR prior to the beginning of the air photo interpretation project, (March 1994 - June 1995).

### **SMR records**

Wiltshire supplied a print out of the SPTA database (with the exception of find spots) together with coloured plots for each quarter sheet. Later in the project the standard SMR quarter sheets were also supplied.

Hampshire supplied copies of the SMR maps for those quarter sheets which were partially covered by Hampshire together with a print out of the basic SMR data per quarter sheet.

### **Aerial photography**

#### ***Archaeological aerial survey***

Aerial survey specifically for archaeology on Salisbury Plain is as early as anywhere in the world. One of the earliest known aerial photographs was taken from a tethered balloon in 1904 and shows Stonehenge with several fallen stones. The earliest recorded archaeological survey flight also took place partly over the Plain in 1924 when OGS Crawford and Alexander Keiller followed up the former's interest in the usefulness of aerial photography for locating archaeological features. Crawford subsequently made many important discoveries, examining photographs taken by the RAF. He was in the process of producing a major work on the archaeology of Salisbury Plain when the Second World War broke out, (see below). As the Plain has become subject to more intensive military use so specialist photography has been limited. After the 1920s there was very little photography; there was limited reconnaissance in the 1950s and 1960s, and since the 1970s Wiltshire county council have been making occasional flights. More intensive reconnaissance began with the designation of the ASG's and the location of the Royal Commission's flying operations at Oxford in 1990 so that it can be covered all year round, when military activity allows. The different uses of the Plain, for a variety of activities, however, still produces an uneven distribution of photography. There is a strong emphasis on the eastern zone which is used for infantry, armoured manoeuvres and small arms firing as opposed to the central and west zones where there is more live firing. This includes not only tanks and heavy artillery, but also low level aircraft with cannons and missiles, which imposes obvious restrictions on access.

The exceptionally dry summers of 1995 and 1996 produced a number of parchmarks in areas of permanent grassland across the Plain which were recorded, but were not incorporated in the NMP project as the films were not processed and made available to the interpreters before the mapping phase of the project was completed.

#### ***Non-archaeological aerial survey***

As a result of its use as a military training area and the presence of several airfields in and around the Plain, the region was flown regularly for training purposes and is therefore crisscrossed by numerous sorties from many dates. Photographs from the earliest flights date from the 1920s and were used by Crawford to compile his record of features on the Plain. These photographs record a number of features still extant as earthworks for which the only evidence now is cropmarks, as a result of army activity such as the building of camps, or increased agricultural encroachment. The RAF were particularly active in the

latter stages of and immediately after WWII, as were the USAAF. The RAF continued to fly the Plain and surrounding areas in the 1950s and 1960s. The Ordnance Survey flew the area from 1963 and their photography up to 1975 was examined. Various commercial survey companies such as Meridian and CUCAP have flown the area since the 1970s either for general county census work or for specific utilities.

All photographs held by the NMR or relevant county councils were examined. Those for Hampshire were checked in the county offices in Winchester, whilst those for Wiltshire were loaned in batches for more detailed analysis.

## **Other archaeological work**

The area of Salisbury Plain has long been subject to the interest of antiquarians and archaeologists because of the concentration of upstanding earthworks, especially long and round barrows. Some of the earliest were Colt Hoare, Thurnham, and Cunnington who carried out numerous excavations over a number of years for various reasons, including Thurnham's special interest in skulls. The quality of their excavation records varies considerably.

There has been little need for large-scale rescue excavations because the Plain has very little urban development. The obvious exceptions are twofold. On the civilian side there has been work carried out on the roads around the Plain and those on the A345 in the Avon valley, particularly at Durrington, which necessitated major works. On the military side one major job was the building of the training village (Fighting In Built Up Areas, or FIBUA) on Copehill Down. As the army is becoming more responsive to environmental issues they have begun building permanent hard tracks across the Plain, which themselves need monitoring.

OGS Crawford used his access to RAF photography and his interest in archaeology to begin to compile and publish a series of maps to be entitled "The Celtic fields of Salisbury Plain". These were to be at a scale of 1:25,000, and were to contain details plotted from aerial photographs and then subsequently field checked on the ground. Finding time amongst his other duties at the OS he worked on these between 1932-38. Unfortunately only one map "Old Sarum" was ever published (Crawford 1934) though the Amesbury map reached proof stage. The rest never progressed beyond his original annotated OS maps, as the outbreak of war in 1939 put a stop to his work. These original maps were not consulted until after the project was complete, but further work is planned on them.

As part of the compilation of the Wiltshire SMR recording archaeological sites on SPTA was initiated in 1979, including the use of aerial photographs. A total of c60 sq km have been mapped by RCHME's Aerial Survey section over a number of years using the Digicart stereo photogrammetric plotter and an area of c44 sq km around Stonehenge has been surveyed as part of a number of projects relating to the replacement of the current Stonehenge visitor facilities and the development of the A303 trunk road. The core tract extending c 2.5km in all directions around Stonehenge was assessed by RCHME and published in 1979, (RCHME 1979). Part of the western project area is also covered by the Danebury Environs Survey, (Palmer 1984).

RCHME's Salisbury Field Office carried out a number of surveys of specific sites and small landscapes within SPTA over a number of years. Several of these areas have been concentrated within the ASGs mapped by Aerial Survey, but others have included the forts at Battlesbury Hill, Scratchbury Hill, and Sidbury Hill, sites at Knook East and West, Robin Hood's Ball, a henge on Everleigh Down, plus various barrow groups, enclosures and other earthworks on Snail Down, Warden's Down, Cheverell Down and Silk Hill. (A full list of surveyed sites can be found in appendix 4.)

Several research projects have been carried out on the Plain in recent years. The Stonehenge Environs Project was initiated in 1981 by the then Wessex Archaeological Committee and over the following six years carried out a programme of surface collection, geophysical prospection and sample excavation on a number of targeted sites. The results of the project were published in 1990, but were not consulted at the mapping phase of the project as it was believed relevant new information would have been included in the NMR upgrade from Wiltshire (see above) and detailed examination was more fitting for the report stage. The Wessex Linear Ditches Project (carried out by Reading University) followed a similar pattern of using various techniques such as surface collection and sample excavation to investigate the relationship of settlement patterns, agriculture and major land boundaries in the eastern part of the Plain, especially the area between the River Bourne and the Nine Mile River. The project concentrated on the fourth to first millennia BC, the late Neolithic to Early Iron Age. The results of this project were not published until mid-1994 and were not readily available at the mapping stage. The Salisbury Plain Project (initiated by Reading University with English Heritage funding as a three year programme building on the results of the Linear Ditches Project, specifically using the environmental background data) concentrated on the Iron Age and later settlement pattern. Again, the strategy combined surface collection, geophysical prospection and sample excavation, though there was also some limited use of air photo interpretation for the area around Coombe Down (carried out by Aerial Survey, RCHME). This project is still at the interim stage of publication and its findings were again not readily accessible at the time of the mapping phase.

## Geology of the SPTA project area

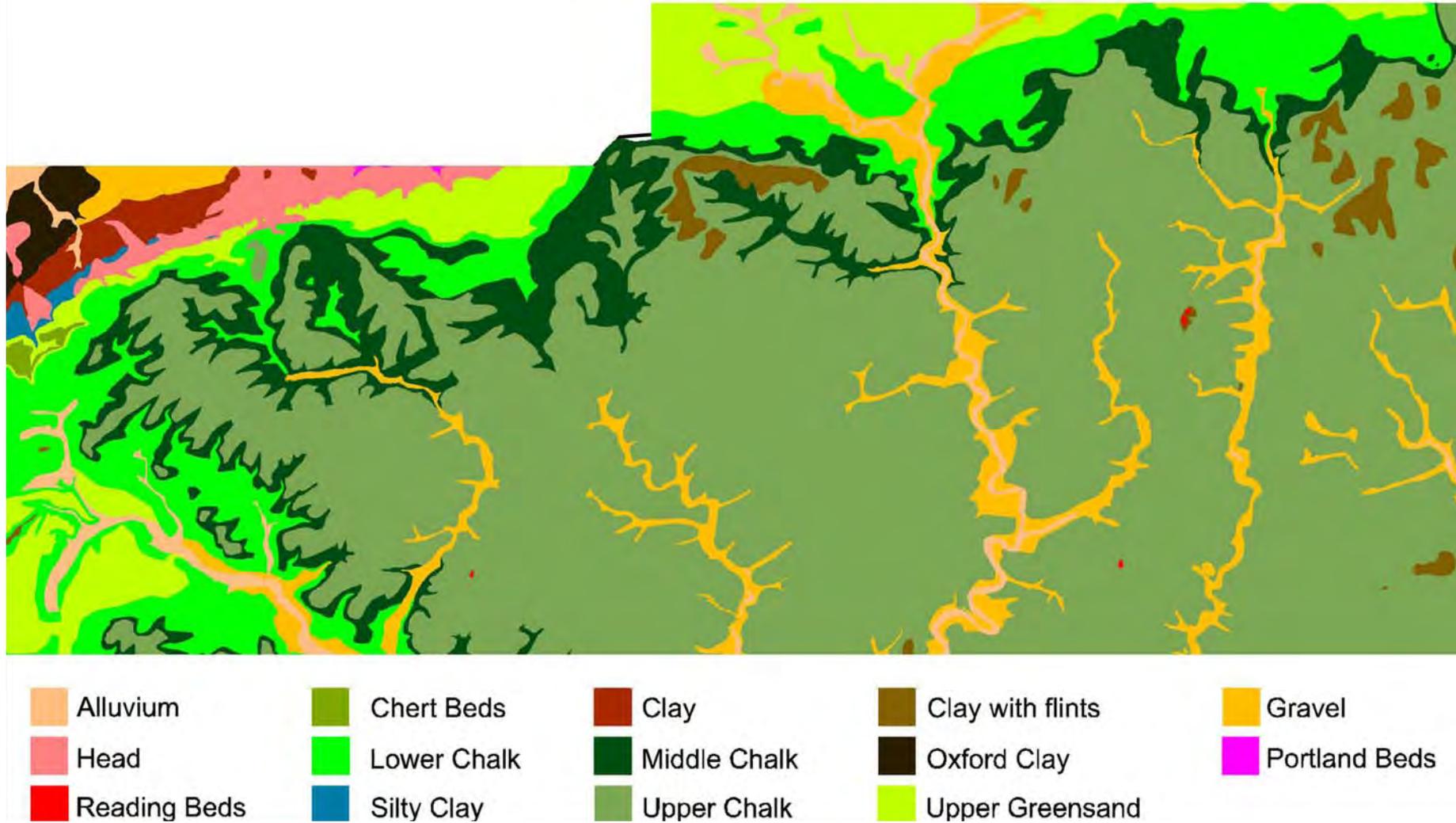


Figure 4 - Geology of SPTA project area

## **Landscape**

### **Geology**

Salisbury Plain is predominantly Upper and Middle Chalk with Eocene Reading beds on the peaks of Sidbury and Beacon Hills, while gravels lie along the river valleys. The main northern and western escarpments are formed by the intersection of Lower Chalk with Upper Greensand. Isolated pockets of clay with flints do occur, as do lengths of valley alluvium. This latter deposit is more commonly associated with an extensive river and dry valley network that dissects the Plain. It is presumed that there was once an extensive drainage network, but this has now been severely reduced.

### **Geomorphology**

The land covered by the SPTA survey comprises a region of largely arable-free chalk downland. The Plain has a clear cut boundary on the north and west sides as a result of the steep escarpments that overlook the Vale of Pewsey and the country beyond Warminster. Along the northern edge it drops from a height of 225m around Bratton to around 60m at Westbury, from 210m at the Chirton Maggot down to 110m in Chirton and from 230m on Fyfield Down to 110m at Southcott. To the south it drops away into the Wylie Valley, but only beyond the bounds of SPTA. There is a gradual slope across the Plain toward the south. Periglacial activity has created a complex topography of deeply incised valleys and extensive areas of undulating land, with the former mainly to the north and west, the latter to the south and east.

The area of the Plain is roughly divided into two blocks by the river Avon. The western block is roughly twice the size of the eastern block, and is itself divided by the Till valley which runs up from Winterbourne Stoke to Tilshead.

The area is drained by just two rivers, the River Avon, which rises in the Pewsey Vale and flows south through Upavon towards Salisbury, and the River Bourne which flows south-west from Collingbourne Ducis to confluence with the River Avon at Salisbury. In addition three winterbournes, the Till, Nine Mile River, and Imber Brook, flow intermittently after periods of heavy rain. As well as these rivers which actually drain the Plain, the Wylie flows around the south western edge of the Plain before joining with the Avon. To the north a number of streams originate in the spring line at the foot of the scarp.

### **Soils**

Within the SPTA project area there is a mixture of soils. The majority of the Plain itself comprises well drained Calcareous Rendzinas with a number of Brown Earths around the edges and Alluvial Gleys in the major river valleys. Off the Plain there is a greater predominance of Brown Earths and even some poorly drained Stagnogleys in the north-west.

### **Land use**

#### ***Historic land use***

In 1897 a War Office Committee was set up to purchase land for use as permanent military training ranges. Prior to this date training had been very much an ad hoc affair, but following the experiences of the First Boer War, in 1881, it was realised that a more structured regime was required. Between 1897 and 1902 the Committee purchased some 43,000 acres of Salisbury Plain, mainly in the eastern area. There were further purchases in 1919 following WWI and by 1937 SPTA occupied nearly the area it does today. In the early years the Plain was used mainly for infantry practice and horse drawn field guns. (On certain Crawford photographs the turning circles of the guns are clearly visible within the field banks). As the

army became more mechanised the use of the Plain has expanded to include ranges, field firing and dry-training areas of various kinds, together with airfields, headquarters, training schools and other static establishments.

### ***Current land use***

This use for military training means that throughout the project area there is relatively little arable land, even outside the bounds of SPTA; pasture is the predominant land use, including both improved and unimproved grassland. This makes the area a unique island in the midst of the general arable cultivation of central southern England, and has provided protection for archaeological landscapes which are very sensitive to agricultural practices, especially ploughing. Settlement within the project area varies from the larger towns of Warminster and Amesbury, through the numerous smaller villages ringing the Plain, to the individual farmsteads dotted around those areas of the Plain not under heavy military use. The military settlement pattern largely echoes that of the civilians, in range if not in position. The main barrack areas at Tidworth, Larkhill and Bulford camps are the size of small towns whilst smaller observation areas or ranges are equivalent to the individual farm.

The actual military use of the Plain varies between the different areas, which obviously has differing effects not only on the preservation of the archaeological sites, but also on its accessibility.

#### **i) SPTA East**

The land east of the Avon is the main dry training area (i.e. manoeuvres without firing) for units based at Perham, Tidworth and Bulford as well as various visiting forces. There are also a number of small arms ranges, which impose restrictions on access when live firing takes place.

#### **ii) SPTA Central (Larkhill and Westbury)**

This is the main area for heavy arms firing practice, specifically the two impact areas and as such access to much of the area is permanently restricted.

#### **iii) SPTA West**

This is used largely by the School of Infantry for both range and dry training, as well as for manoeuvres for tanks and armoured personnel carriers.

Apart from military use a large area of the Plain has been turned over to agriculture over the years, which has caused greater damage to the archaeological sites than all the military activities put together. There are also small areas of plantation spread over the Plain. These are used for cover and other training purposes and can have an extremely detrimental effect on the archaeological sites if located without regard to it. In recent years, however, a greater degree of co-operation and liaison has led to their siting in such a way as to be distinctly beneficial to the preservation of archaeological sites.

## **The distribution of archaeological earthworks and cropmarks**

Of the 4261 sites recorded in the MORPH2 database 1812 (42.53%) were cropmarks, 2048 (48.06%) were earthworks, and 396 (9.29%) a combination of cropmark and earthwork. In addition there were two stonework sites and a further three were a combination of earthworks with extant stonework. Four of the five sites including stonework were twentieth century in date, and consisted of three pillboxes and a military camp. The fifth site is Neolithic, the circle at Stonehenge.

# Salisbury Plain Training Area

## Distribution of sites of different forms

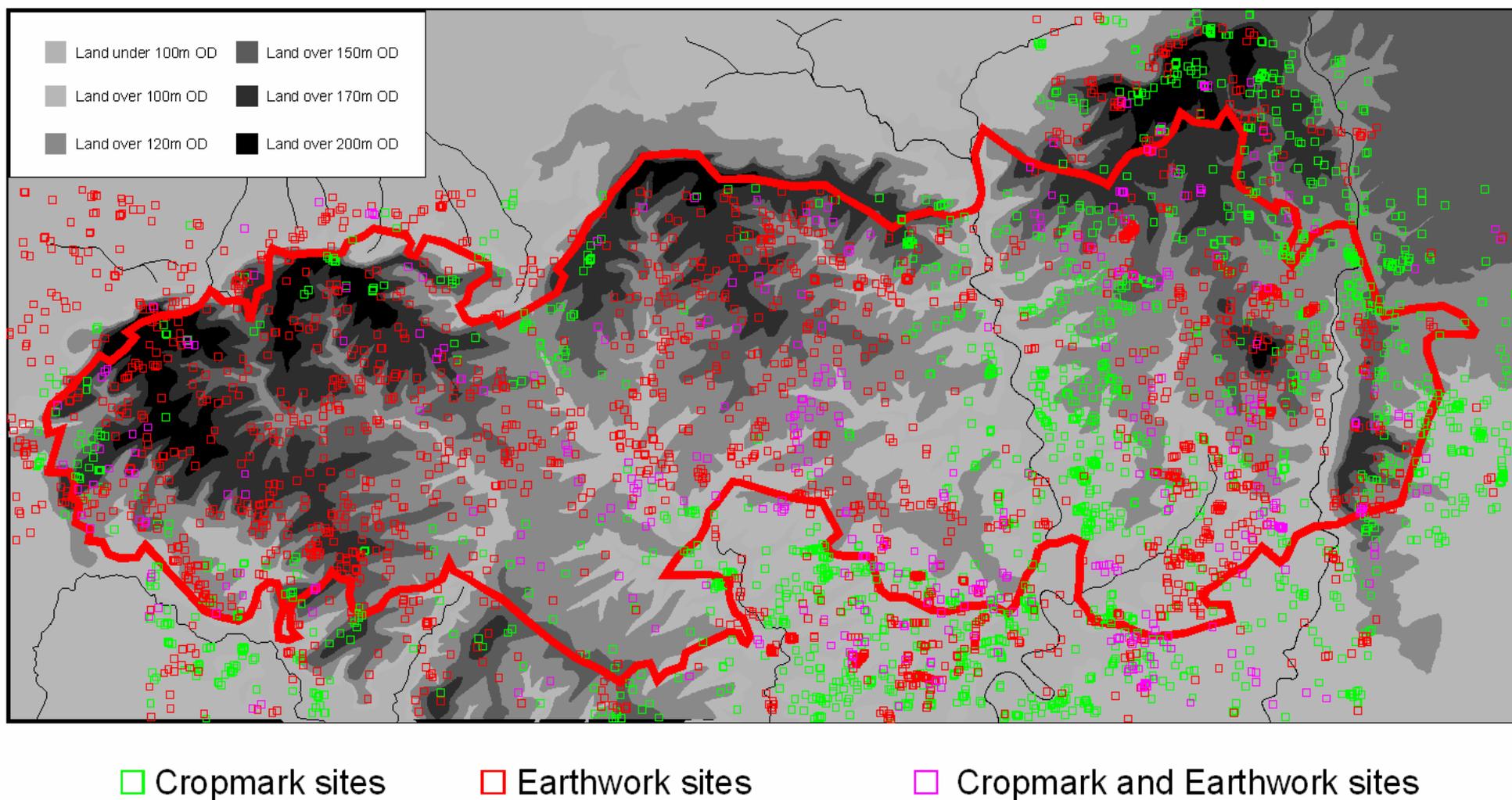


Figure 5 - Distribution of cropmarks v earthworks

The distributions of cropmarks and earthworks are largely mutually exclusive. The cropmarks tend to be restricted to the edges of the valleys, especially along the Avon and the Bourne rivers and around the fringes of the Plain. There is a clear concentration around the Stonehenge area, on Normanton and Wilsford Downs, outside the SPTA where the arable is at its most intense. The earthworks in contrast are largely concentrated in the centre of the Plain where the military activity is at its highest. There are earthwork sites again in the area around Stonehenge, but these are the isolated barrow groups, often to be found amidst areas of arable cultivation.



Figure 6 - Normanton Down barrows © NMR Crown Copyright (NMR 15041/6)

Figure 5 shows the distribution of cropmarks and earthworks. It is interesting to note that the distribution of cropmark sites reflects the distribution of specialist aerial photographs, which shows clear concentrations around Stonehenge and up the Avon, whilst generally avoiding the central Plain.

Within the separate periods the breakdown between different forms is interesting. For the Neolithic period the vast majority of sites (38), are earthworks, with seven cropmark sites, four combination cropmark and earthwork sites and one stonework site, Stonehenge. In the Bronze Age there is a roughly 50-50 split with 591 cropmark sites, 511 earthwork sites and 83 are a combination of cropmarks and earthworks. In the Iron Age again the division is evenly split with 27 cropmark sites, 28 earthwork sites and five sites a combination of cropmarks and earthworks. In the Roman period there is a very sharp split with 72 earthwork sites, and only 11 cropmark sites and nine sites a combination of cropmarks and earthworks. The sites interpreted as being generally "Unknown Prehistoric" in date tend toward cropmark sites with 319 sites, and only 143 earthwork sites and 73 combination cropmark and earthwork sites.

In the post-Roman and later periods evidence for sites is derived almost exclusively from extant earthworks. The Late Medieval sites are mainly earthwork (105), with only five cropmark sites and three sites a combination of cropmarks and earthworks. Of the 440 twentieth century sites 315 are earthwork sites, 53 cropmark sites, 68 a combination of cropmarks and earthworks with a further four consisting of extant stone in some degree. There are only 22 Post Medieval sites and of these 17 are earthwork, four cropmarks and one combination cropmarks and earthworks. There is only one Early Medieval site, and its date is uncertain (see below). Those sites simply dated as Unknown Medieval (i.e. somewhere in the Medieval period) are mainly extant earthworks (311) out of 377, and only

45 cropmark sites and 21 sites a combination of cropmarks and earthworks.

Of those sites for which their date is "Unknown" 748 are cropmark sites, 508 earthwork sites, and 130 are a combination of cropmarks and earthworks.

### ***Features recorded as destroyed***

Excluding modern military features, many of which were temporarily set up during WWII and later dismantled leaving little trace less than 1% of sites were recorded as being no longer in existence. The vast majority of those sites recorded as destroyed were fields of ridge and furrow with their associated field banks off the Plain around Westbury, where increased housing has encroached on former farmland, and at Erlestoke, where they were destroyed by the prison and a golf course. Two groups of former barrows were destroyed under buildings at the Larkhill barracks and another group at Tidworth. Another barrow and enclosures lie under Boscombe Down airfield and a patch of water meadow was destroyed by the A303. Elsewhere on the Plain there are certain sites which have been recorded as destroyed although there may still be sub-soil traces of the features even though there is no surface evidence.

### ***Limitations of the record***

The most obvious limitation of the NMP record is that it is based solely on aerial photographs. If a feature was not visible on an aerial photograph then it was not plotted; this means that there will be known features such as those recorded by ground survey, which will not appear on the transcriptions or in the record.

The MORPH2 database was designed to allow the compilation of a record for features from different parts of the country, so there were bound to be certain areas where discrepancies and inconsistencies would arise. This is particularly true in the non-morphological parts of the database, especially locational data, where biases can be detected. In a lowland context on generally level ground a site might well be recorded as being on a slope because there was a greater degree of slope than the surrounding area; whereas a site on a comparatively steeper slope might be recorded as flat if it lies in an upland area and compared to the surroundings the location is exceptionally level. The decision on what was flat was also effected by the unfortunate discrepancy between certain OS base maps used. Some recorded contours at 5m intervals whereas others gave only 30m spacings (the equivalent of 100' contours). This unfortunately led to certain maps having a greater than average concentration of "flat" sites.

### **Unknown Prehistoric and Unknown Medieval**

At many points in the text the dates Unknown Prehistoric and Unknown Medieval have been used; both are based on the restriction within MORPH2 which allows only one period allocation per site and as such they have two very specific meanings, which must be understood in the context of the report.

(i) Unknown Prehistoric includes sites of uncertain date which are thought to be Roman or earlier, and Unknown Medieval includes those of uncertain date which are thought to be Early Medieval or later.

(ii) Alternatively the two terms are used when a site is known to be multi-period. As noted above MORPH2 cannot allocate more than one period per site, hence the need for the general dates. For example a field system which has certain aspects relating to Iron Age activity, and others relating to Roman activity will be dated Unknown Prehistoric. Indeed the

fact that the term Romano-British is not an accepted term within the NMR thesaurus means that the majority of sites dated Unknown Prehistoric are associated with either Iron Age or Roman features, or both. If a site could not be clearly dated to any period, or its use is thought to span the prehistoric and historic periods then it has been recorded as Unknown.

Although a number of sites have been dated Unknown Prehistoric at the mapping phase this report has attempted to note them in the specific period sections, e.g. Bronze Age or Iron Age.

# UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE OF THE SALISBURY PLAIN TRAINING AREA -AN AERIAL PERSPECTIVE

## *The aerial perspective*

The nature of aerial photographic interpretation is such that it will only ever be possible to give a broad interpretation in terms of function and period to a large number of sites. There follows an attempt to examine the archaeology of SPTA, dealing with it largely in terms of its chronology. Within each major period there has been an examination, concentrating on the major monuments, but also trying to set them within a broader framework. The work proceeds from the consideration of those features included in any given period at the initial mapping stage and then draws on the later analysis to propose other possible candidates.

In addition to those areas which could be securely dated there is an additional section dealing briefly with the large number of sites extending over a long period of use.

## **Neolithic Sites**

### **General comments**

There were only 50 sites dated to the Neolithic period at the initial interpretative stage of the project, representing just over 1% (1.13%) of all sites recorded. The majority of sites dating to the Neolithic, such as the long barrows and henges were previously well known, since most are still extant as major earthworks. It was not therefore expected that there was much likelihood of adding to the known record. In fact morphological analysis and comparison with other known sites found another seven potential long barrows/mortuary enclosures, two of which are very promising candidates and re-evaluation of the site of Scratchbury Hillfort added another causewayed enclosure. This was nearly a 20% increase in the record for the Neolithic. The specific sites are discussed in detail in the relevant sections below.

### **Barrows and mortuary enclosures**

The long barrows of Salisbury Plain are one of the most well known monument classes in the project area. They have been subject to various methods of investigation for over 100 years, and some were first noted by the earliest antiquarians (Hoare 1810; Thurnam 1868). 19 (48.72%) have been subject to large-scale excavation, with a further nine (23.08%) subject to small-scale excavation. These percentages are well above the average for the Plain as a whole where only 3.22% have been subject to large-scale excavation and 6.64% subject to small-scale excavation.

This survey is primarily based on the air photographic evidence, and since the majority of information concerning the long barrows of the Plain comes from other sources it is not considered that this is the proper place for further detailed discussion of such a well known subject. The only aspect on which there seems good reason to comment is the few potential sites for new long barrows.

At the initial stage of mapping only one new site was confidently interpreted as a long barrow, a site on Figheldean Down appearing as a pair of linear ditches (SP 501.11.1), but morphological comparison of several other possible sites, provisionally dated as Prehistoric or undated, revealed other potential candidates.

Eight long barrows were recorded as enclosures and the majority have dimensions of between 30m - 40m in length and 15m - 25m in breadth. A search for features sharing the same dimensions produced 20 candidates, visual checking of which revealed six possible sites including four provisionally dated to the Bronze Age and recorded as barrows. All of these are dated purely on the grounds of the presence of other Bronze Age barrows in the

vicinity, but there are plenty of examples of Bronze Age barrow cemeteries situated around existing Long Barrows, such as Winterbourne Stoke, Normanton Down, or Milston Firs. The photography from late 1995 (after the completion of mapping) clearly suggests that at least one of these "Bronze Age" sites (501.22.10) could be re-classified as a long barrow. This site was originally recorded from poor quality photographs as a causewayed ring ditch within a barrow cemetery, but the more recent photographs suggest that it is not causewayed, but consists of two broad linear ditches with possible terminal pits, suggestive of a short long barrow, such as Battery Hill, Idmiston (SU 20483480) or Kitt's Grave (SU 03412113).

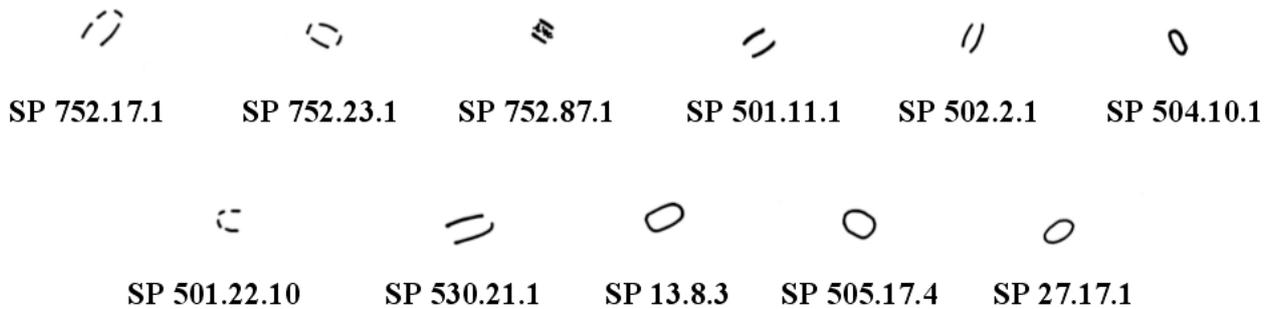


Figure 7 - Comparative plots of known (top) and potential (bottom) long barrows and mortuary enclosures.

The majority of the other possible features appear as oval enclosures with parallel sides rather than as single lines and so they might be better interpreted as either long barrows or mortuary enclosures, (Fenner and Dyer 1994). The features north of Fyfield (SP 505.17.4), west of Oatlands Hill (SP 27.17.1) and on Milston Down (SP 13.8.3) are all oval with slightly straight sides, and fit the dimensions and are therefore worthy of further investigation. It must be remembered however that this is also true of other known Bronze Age twin barrows.

There are a further two sites worthy of mention. One is that south of Pewsey (SP 509.6.2), which although it is very much more rounded than the other sites with no clear straight sides, the dimensions are within the accepted limits at 35m x 25m, and it appears to have a central linear pit. A Neolithic axe was found within 20m of the site in 1940, which might suggest that this site has an early origin.

The other is the site SP 27.17.1, noted above, recorded as a Bronze Age barrow on Oatlands Hill. This site is recorded as having dimensions of 39m x 21m, which, given the restrictions on accuracy of working at 1:10,000 scale, is exactly the same as those for an extant earthwork long barrow (SP 752.76.1) south-east of the Winterbourne Stoke cross-roads group, which measures 40m x 20m. The Bronze Age site is dated purely from its morphology and proximity to other presumed round barrows. It is interesting to note that a length of linear ditch (SP 27.18.1) clearly post-dates this feature, which it curves around, appears to be part of the system of linear boundary features to the south and west of Stonehenge associated with "the Kite". Unfortunately it also post-dates what appears to be a typical round barrow (SP 27.16.1).



Figure 8 - Oatlands Hill barrows© NMR Crown Copyright (NMR 4586/01)

Apart from the features appearing as sub-oval enclosures, there is another potential long barrow recorded as a pair of short parallel linear ditches, one of which has a slight return south of Norton Bavant (SP 530.21.1). This is very similar to the known long barrows SP 502.2.1, SP 752.87.1 as well as SP 501.11.1 which has been recorded as a newly discovered long barrow.

## Henges

There are five sites recorded as henges. Four of the five have been subject to extensive excavation. Much has been written about the henge component of Stonehenge (RCHME 1979; Richards 1990), Woodhenge (Cunnington 1929; Piggott 1940) and Durrington Walls (Wainwright 1967; Wainwright and Longworth 1971), and even the small henge at Coneybury has been carefully examined (Harding and Lee 1987 287-288; RCHME 1979 13; Richards 1990 123-158). The one site which has not yet been subject of excavation is that at Weatherfield (SP.520.21.1). This has however been carefully surveyed. Of the five sites recorded as henges within the project area three range between 45m - 60m in diameter whilst Stonehenge is 110m in diameter and Durrington Walls measures a massive 420m x 350m. The examination of circular and sub-circular enclosures of uncertain date (See below) revealed no obvious candidates as henges.

Although certain sites have been depicted with external banks this is often due to other factors, and no new sites can be said to have clear evidence for a bank outside their ditch.

## Causewayed enclosures

The causewayed enclosure at Robin Hood's Ball (SP 763.7.1) was the only known example of such a feature on the Plain. However, since the conclusion of the mapping phase of the project further photography and field investigation has suggested that the feature (SP 528.39.1) within the hillfort at Scratchbury recorded as an Iron Age enclosure is more likely to be a Neolithic causewayed enclosure. It was originally proposed as being of Neolithic

date by Curwen (Curwen 1930,38), but it was later dated to the Iron Age following an excavation carried out by Grimes (Annable 1958,17); it is thought that he did not excavate fully to the primary fill. Detailed survey by the field survey teams of RCHME suggest that the feature clearly has causeways and low winter photography shows that the enclosure continues beyond what was previously seen as its eastern edge to form a sub-circular rather than D-shaped feature. (Since the project was completed the RCHME undertook a national survey of causewayed enclosures (Barber et al Forthcoming).

The only other instance of an apparently causewayed feature on the Plain was that recorded as a causewayed ring-ditch on Ablington Down (SP 501.22.10). As a result of information on photographs taken since the end of the project this is now seen as a potential "mortuary feature" and is discussed in more detail above.

## **Cursus monuments**

The Greater and Lesser Cursus at Stonehenge are the only examples of cursus monuments within the study area and the Stonehenge Avenue is the only avenue. All of these have been subject to numerous and sometimes large-scale investigation over a number of years and there is nothing from this survey that can be added to the discussion (Christie 1963; RCHME 1979; Richards 1990).

## **Pit alignments**

There are two sets of pit alignments running south-west from the barrow group on Normanton Down. To the west (SP 756.70.1) there is a main stretch c300m long with a perpendicular stretch c200m long. 325m further east is a second alignment (SP 752.70.2), which consists of a single row c325m long. Given the infrequency of pit alignments on the Wessex chalks these may be related to the line of post holes excavated in the Stonehenge car park (Vatcher 1973).

Figure 9 shows the distribution of Neolithic sites. The two obvious features are the cluster of sites at Stonehenge, and the apparent siting of the long barrows on the break of slope. The small numbers of the other sites make any really meaningful analysis impossible.

# Salisbury Plain Training Area

## Distribution of Neolithic sites

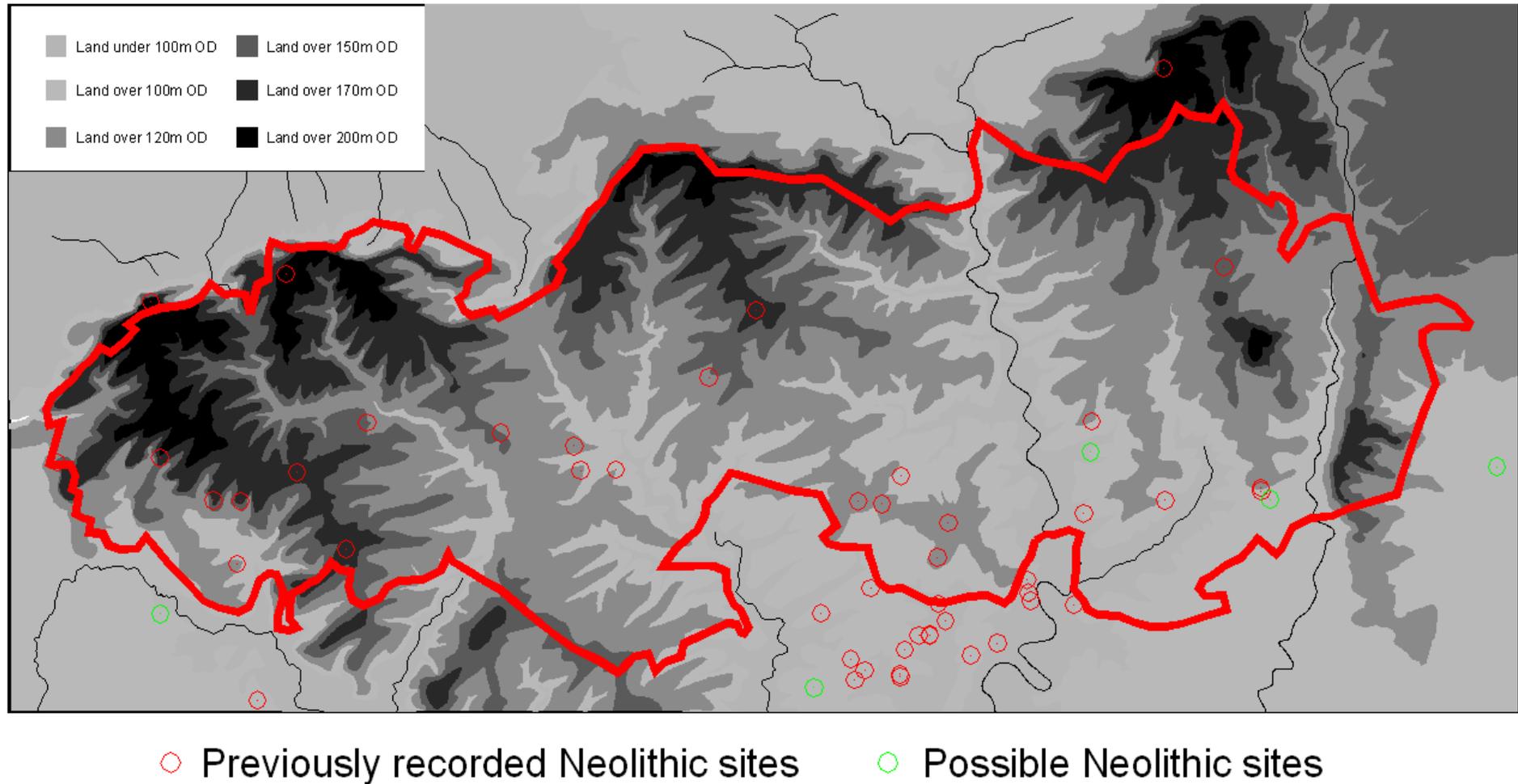


Figure 9 - Distribution of Neolithic sites

## Bronze Age sites

### General comments

An interesting statistic is that of the total of 4261 sites, 1186 (27.84%) are dated to the Bronze Age, a much higher percentage than any other specifically dated sites and second only to those which are totally undated. The reason for this is that the vast majority of Bronze Age sites are barrows of one form or another. Most enclosures, either rectilinear or curvilinear, are difficult to date from aerial photographic evidence alone, but if a feature (or group of features) are between c20m- 60m in diameter and are roughly circular then they will probably have been interpreted as round barrows and dated to the Bronze Age.

### Barrows

Of the total 1186 sites dated to the Bronze Age 1159 (97.72%) were recorded as barrows of one form or another. Of these 502 (43.31%) were recorded as still extant as earthworks with another 75 (6.47%) a combination of cropmark and earthwork. This high proportion of extant barrows accounts for the high degree of existing information about them, with over half being known from evidence other than just aerial photographs. 98 (8.46%) have been subject to large-scale excavation, with another 249 (21.48%) the subject of small-scale excavation, and a further 320 (27.61%) having been surveyed.

The full range of barrow types are represented, but the vast majority are recorded as either bowl barrows (553 47%) or round barrows (477 41%). Unfortunately the distribution of different barrow types did not yield any useful information since there was a general trend to record sites as bowl barrows unless there was very clear evidence that they were of some other specific form.

All the barrow types range from 5m - 60m in diameter, but there are different ranges dependent on type. Round barrows and bowl barrows are concentrated in the 10 - 35m diameter range, but the other barrow types show some interesting differences. The bulk of bell barrows (73.81%) are concentrated between 25m and 49m in diameter, with only 7.14% less than 20m. 91.89% of disc barrows have diameters between 30m and 59m, with none less than 20m. In contrast 38.98% of round barrows and 29.74% of bowl barrows have diameters less than 20m.

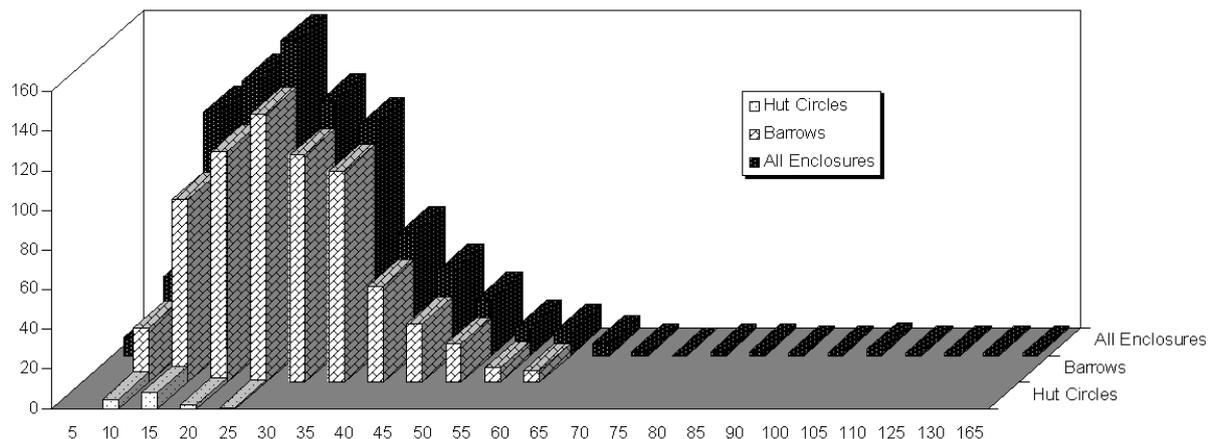


Figure 10 - Bar chart of comparative enclosure diameters

Taking these dimensions into account a search of the database revealed 85 sites recorded simply as enclosures, which are circular or sub-circular in shape and range between 10m and 60m in diameter, with 68 (80%) concentrated in the 10m - 35m range. There are very clear peaks in the diameters of circular and sub-circular enclosures at diameters in 5m steps i.e. 5m, 10m 15m, 20m, 25m etc. This is almost certainly due to a combination of using stencils with 1mm intervals for drawing circular enclosures such as barrows, and the scale of

1:10,000, which does not really allow for measuring accurately to more than 5m (i.e. 0.5mm). These false peaks were removed by taking 5m bands of diameters i.e. 0-4m, 5-9m etc and the results plotted in Figure 10.

These show the clear concentration of sites between 10m and 35m diameter. Of these, eight sites are definitely modern in date and are associated with military activity, and two are definitely related to Neolithic and Bronze Age features. A preliminary assessment of the remaining 58 reveals a number which could easily be interpreted as barrows, and some which could be hut circles. The majority, however, could be either barrows or hut circles, or simply enclosures of unknown function. The problem is that although only 21 sites have been given the interpretation "hut circle" there is a significant overlap in sizes between the two types of site and without further evidence it is difficult to reach a firm decision. The features west of Figheldean (SP 764.31.4-8) are a good illustration of the problem. Here there are a number of features visible as cropmarks on the aerial photographs, where they appear as circular or sub-circular ditches between 10 - 20m in diameter. The site has been partially excavated in advance of the laying of a pipeline. This excavation confirmed that one of the large sub-circular features, adjacent to the ring ditches, is indeed a Bronze Age barrow, as is the extant mound. Evidence of Romano-British settlement which was entirely restricted to platforms or rectilinear post-built structures was also discovered. There was no evidence for any round houses. However, the enclosing ditch was clearly dug in the late Iron Age and no contemporary features were found in the pipeline trench. It is therefore possible that the ring ditches could be round houses or barrows.

There are a number of other features which were not originally recorded as barrows, but can be suggested as further examples. There are two sites (SP 529.21.1 and SP 530.40.1) simply recorded as enclosures and dated Unknown Prehistoric and Unknown respectively, which are not far off sub-circular at 30x28 and 30x27m respectively, which fits nicely in the size range for barrows. In each case they are in close proximity to known Bronze Age barrow sites. Another site (SP 530.45.1) is also close to known Bronze Age sites, indeed it is part of the Tytherington barrow cemetery. It is very elongated and at first sight might appear a good candidate for a long barrow/mortuary enclosure. Closer examination, however, suggests there are two component parts to it and thus it is in fact most probably a double barrow. The enclosure SP 528.32.1 on Cotley Hill is almost certainly a round barrow given the proximity of the group SP 528.31. The three north of Fyfield (SP 505.12.1-3), and the two groups north of Neveravon airfield (SP 512.5 and SP 513.2) are again quite possibly barrows, though SP 512.5 lies on a former airfield and so could perhaps have a military origin.

## **Barrow cemeteries**

A total of 1,159 sites were recorded as barrows; 661 sites are recorded as part of 74 barrow cemeteries. These include 316 Bowl barrows, 246 Round Barrows, 36 Bell Barrows, 35 Disc Barrows, eight Pond Barrows, 11 Saucer Barrows and five Barrows, (these five are so described since they cannot easily be classified as fitting any of the other categories). The 74 cemeteries also include the causewayed ring ditch on Ablington Down (SP 501.22.10), now interpreted as a possible long barrow, a mound in the Coniger, and two enclosures on Earls Farm Down and Bulford Down (SP 2.10.14 & SP 5.17.4).

72 sites with five barrows or more were identified as barrow cemeteries, with an additional two sites recorded as having the requisite number of barrows, but not being interpreted as barrow cemeteries. In one case (SP 26.29) on the slopes south of Rollestone Camp there is some question as to the validity of a couple of the barrows, and in the other near Collingbourne Ducis (SP 521.9), there is some doubt about the interpretation of all of them. A further three sites were interpreted as barrow cemeteries without having the requisite five barrows. The two sites at Brigmerston Firs (SP 503.3) and south of Bulford (SP 5.21) were each recorded as barrow cemeteries because there are other known barrows in the vicinity

# Salisbury Plain Training Area

## Distribution of Bronze Age Barrows

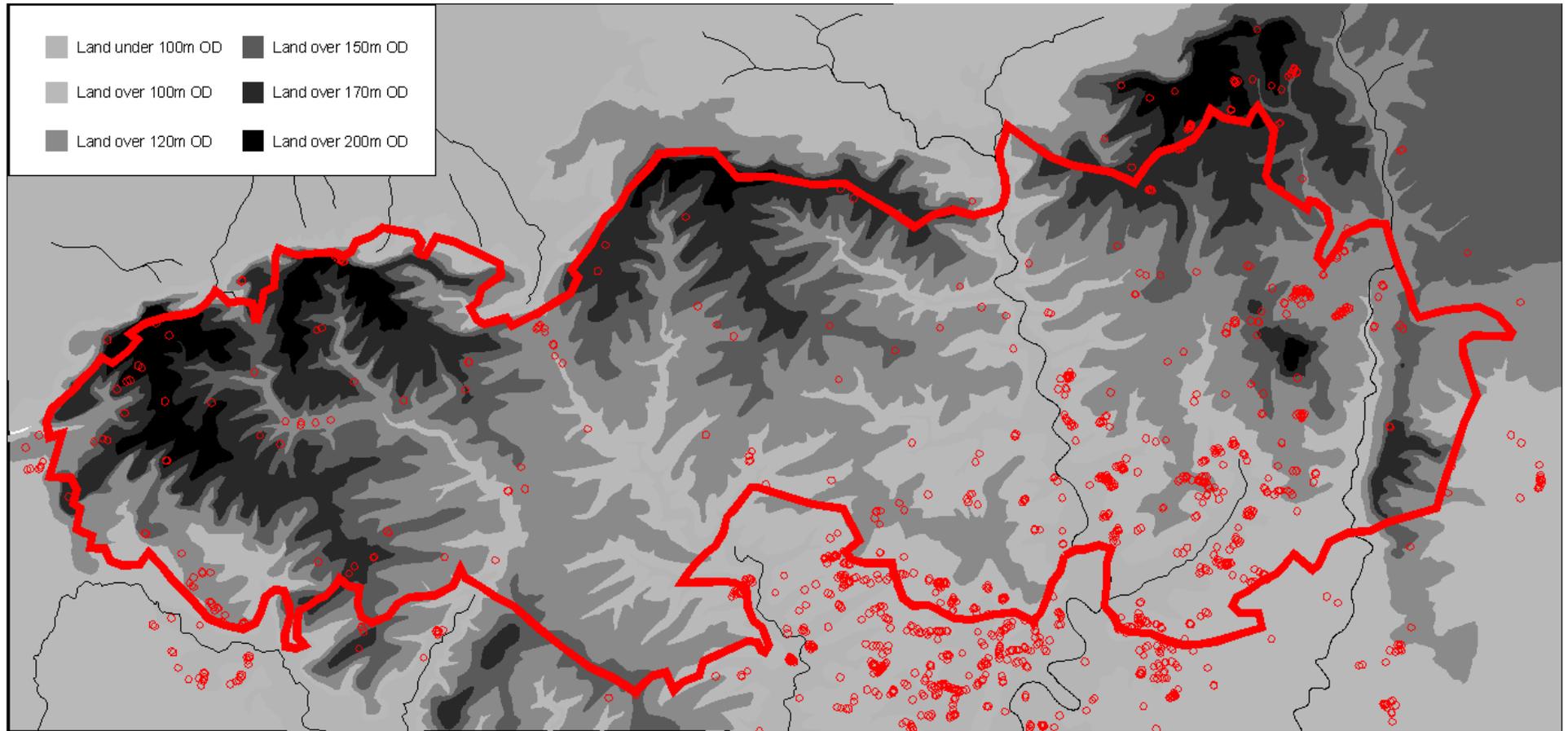


Figure 11 - Distribution of Bronze Age barrows

which were not visible on the air photographs and hence not recorded. The two barrows on Brimmerston Field were recorded as a barrow cemetery due to their relationship with the Long barrow (SP 502.2.1).

The largest cemeteries are those on Snail Down and Normanton Down both of which include 27 individual barrows. As well as Snail Down and Normanton Down there are cemeteries on Figheledean Down, Earls Farm Down, Silk Hill, and Winterbourne Stoke crossroads with 20 or more individual component parts, including occasional outliers. There are a further two barrow cemeteries with 15 barrow or more within them, 18 with ten or more, and 46 with five or more.

The distribution of all round barrows Figure 11 shows that although there is a definite concentration of barrows in the south-east of the Plain especially in the areas between the Till, the Avon and the Nine Mile River, there are sites spread all over the Plain. The same cannot be said for barrow cemeteries. There are a total of 72 barrow cemeteries with five or more barrows, and with the exception of eight sites, all are in the central or eastern zones. These 8, all with less than ten barrows, split into two separate groups. They are either down in the valley away from the Plain such as SP 533.12 at Upton Scudamore or SP 530.33, SP 530.44 & SP 530.49 at Tytherington, or else occupy strategic sites such as SP 528.36 on the hill top subsequently occupied by Scratchbury hillfort, SP 528.31 on Cotley Hill or SP 774.11 on Codford Down.

With the exception of these eight all the barrow groups with more than five barrows within them are clustered in the east, and mainly in the south-east. As with the overall distribution there are again distinct clusters around and between the Till, the Avon and the Nine Mile River.

Visual examination of the various barrow cemeteries shows that where there are five or more sites within a group they tend to fall into one of two morphological types; linear or clustered. Of the 73 sites 44 are linear and 29 clustered, although there are a couple where there is a slight ambiguity.

The linear cemeteries contain a number of variations. There are a few straightforward simple straight lines such as SP 752.44 The New King Barrows, SP 752.42 on Durrington Down, SP 765.6 on the edge of Netheravon Down or 5.9 on Earl's Farm Down, or more curving lines such as SP 751.51 near the Lesser Cursus, SP 19.8 on Maddington Down or SP 23.21 on Easton Hill. The majority of "linear" cemeteries have an overall linearity, but may have occasional outlying barrows or may be composed of several separate clusters or have two lines of barrows. The best examples of these are the largest cemeteries such as those from Normanton Down SP 752.71 or Winterbourne Stoke Crossroads SP 752.10, but there are numerous examples such as SP 505.17 at Kimpton, Cow Down SP 519.14, or SP 6.31 on Bulford Down.

Where the cemeteries are on one alignment there is no evidence to suggest that this has been determined by the cardinal points, but rather their arrangement appears to be governed strictly by the topography. Having said this the cemeteries split into two distinct groups. One set tend to run along the contour line e.g. along a ridge or more often just below the crest (SP 528.31 on Cotley Hill, SP 23.21 Easton Hill, or SP 514.13 on Littlecott Down). The others run down the slope across the contours (SP 751.27 on Durrington Down, SP 752.43 which crosses the Avenue, or SP 5.17 on Earl's Farm Down)

Given the concentration of barrow cemeteries in the south-east there is no clear difference in the distribution either of linear cemeteries versus clustered ones or within the linears between contour and cross-contour alignment. Likewise there is no obvious difference in their relationships with other features. It would appear that the layout of cemeteries is based

entirely on the local micro-topography. Both forms of cemetery, linear and clustered, share certain features with the majority of barrows on the Plain. Most are situated on the slopes of valleys or re-entrants leading to the various water courses of the Plain such as the Avon, the Till, the Bourne or the Nine Mile River. Many barrows are situated on the false crest, immediately below the break of slope and a major factor in the choice of layout may have been to produce a dramatic effect, when viewed from the settlements. Further work is clearly required to locate the settlements of this period so as to allow some assessment of their relative location and associations.

In addition to the barrow cemeteries there were individual barrow sites recorded. These are represented by the whole range of barrow types with the expected preponderance of bowl barrows 114 (43.18%) and those simply recorded as round barrows 124 (46.97%). In contrast to the barrow cemeteries many individual barrows are found in the central areas of the Plain, away from the water courses. Unlike the barrow cemeteries which appear to be sited near water, here there seems to be no obvious reason for siting. Barrows are found in various positions, in the valley bottoms, on the slopes and on the ridges.

As with the Neolithic, the Bronze Age sites consist almost exclusively of funerary and ritual monuments. Apart from the various barrows described above, there is a mound (SP 25.15.9) and a shaft (SP 752.11.1) which have clear ritual connotations. The mound is within the barrow cemetery known as the Coniger and the shaft is the famous Wilsford Shaft from which were recovered numerous artefacts, especially waterlogged ones. (Ref.)

## Enclosures

As stated above the vast majority of Bronze Age sites (97.22%) are barrows of one form or another, with Bowl Barrows at 46.63% and Round Barrows at 40.22% making up the bulk. There are only five sites recorded simply as enclosures, of which three are clearly related to barrow groups. The first (SP 2.10.14) is an apparent internal feature to one of the round barrows in the Burford Down cemetery (SP 2.10.13), and the second (SP 5.17.4) an enclosing ring coming off one of the barrows in the Earl's Down cemetery (SP 5.17.3) and surrounding another (SP 5.17.5). The third (SP 535.1.3) east of Enford bears striking similarities to the site (SP 505.17.1) in the barrow cemetery east of Kimpton, which is itself described as a barrow. The proximity of two other smaller ring ditches presumed to be barrows suggests that this "enclosure" might also be properly identified as a barrow. A fourth feature (SP 752.80.1) is the large enclosure "The North Kite", on Wilsford Down.

The fifth feature (SP 27.19.1), however, is simply an irregular enclosure dated to the Bronze Age by its relationship with the other features around, such as the field system, and its proximity to the Bronze Age settlement (NMR 04SE60; WAM 1968 108) which was not plotted as there are no traces visible on aerial photographs. A search of the database was made looking for enclosures of similar shape and dimensions. The resulting features were examined visually with the following results. A number of possible sites were found with a couple of especially interesting ones.

One further potential Bronze Age site is SP 511.15.1 on Milston Hill just SE of Giant's Graves long barrow which is remarkably similar in both dimensions and shape to SP 27.19.1, down to having one more pointed axis facing SE. Furthermore in 1876 a looped bronze palstave axe was found in the vicinity. The nearest known Bronze Age site is a barrow group nearly 1km away. There is a ring ditch approximately 15m across about 200m to the north which is a new site known only from aerial photographs and could be a barrow, but this is as yet unconfirmed.

There are a further three possible sites also sharing approximate dimensions, which probably deserve further investigation. One on the western end of Knook Down above Dunscombe Bottom (SP 527.29.1) not only has the same dimensions but also a very similar

shape, as has (SP 783.10.1) on Fore Hill. There have been no finds made in the vicinity to help dating.



Figure 12 - Comparison of Winterbourne Stoke crossroads enclosure SP 27.19.1 with others of similar shape and size

The work of the Wessex Linear Ditches Project (Bradley et al 1994) found that two enclosures on Dunch Hill (SP 14.12.1 and SP 15.6.1), both recorded as Prehistoric in date by this project, produced Late Bronze Age sherds and no Iron Age finds. Likewise another enclosure (SP 15.7.1) had a major scatter of Late Bronze Age artefacts less than 150m to the east. All of these enclosures are roughly sub-circular or oval in shape (SP 15.7.1 has been partially destroyed by the military digging to the north-east recorded by the SMR); they all have a breadth/diameter c50m and the other axis is 50 - 80m. A search of the database produced a number of other candidates shown below.

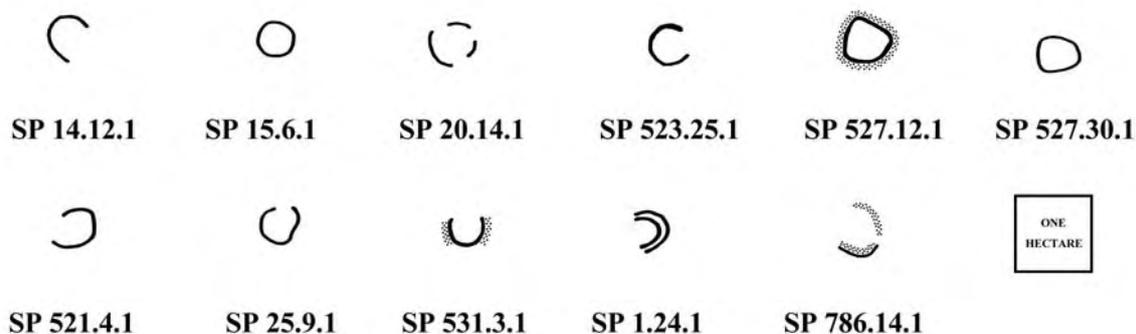


Figure 13 - Comparative possible curvilinear Bronze Age enclosures

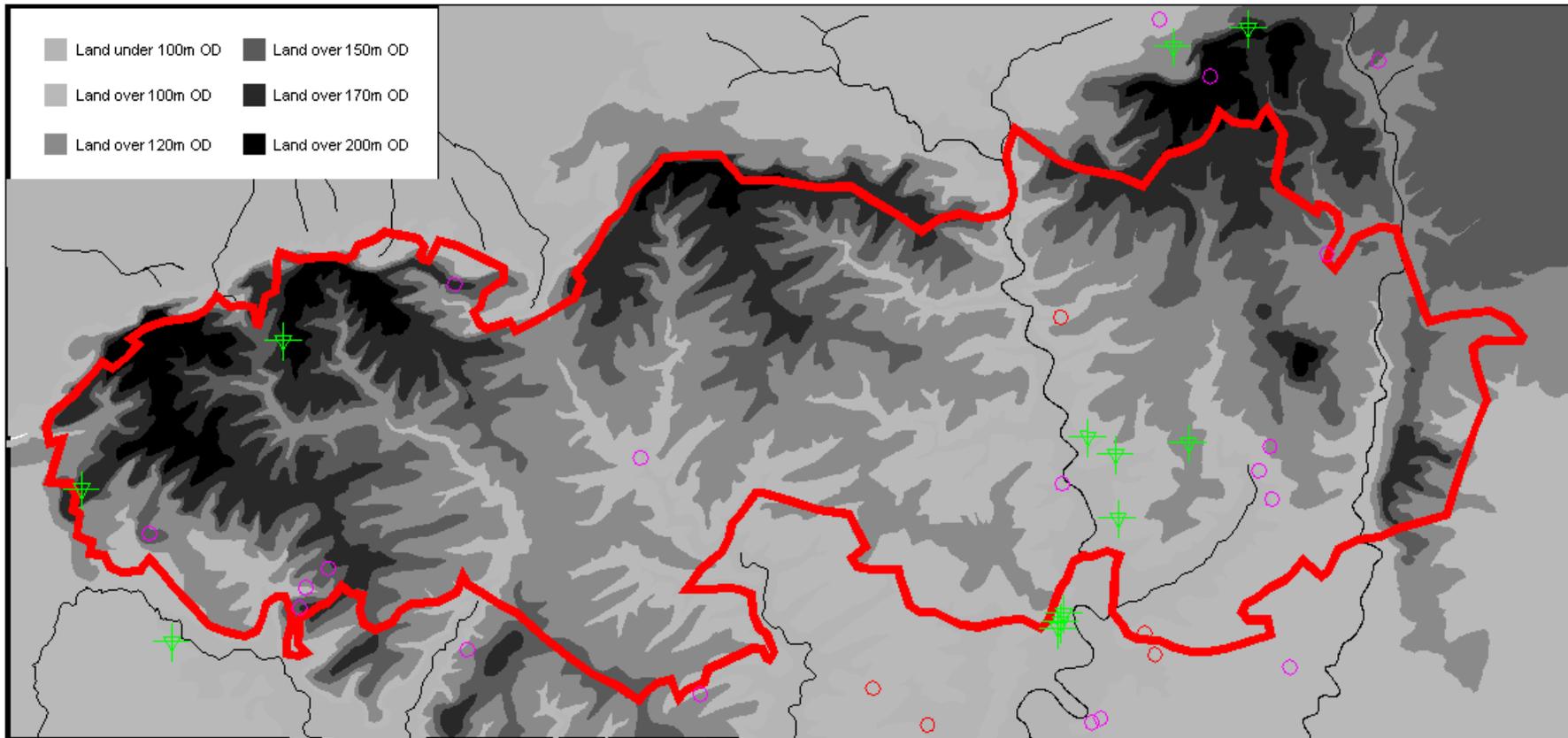
There is no dating evidence for any of these features, not even any stray finds in the vicinity. Sites such as SP 527.30.1 or SP 523.25.1 are quite close to barrow groups, but this is clearly not sufficient evidence. The relationship of SP 25.9.1 on Parsonage Down to a field system suggests that it is quite possibly earlier, as does that of SP 523.25.1 on the slopes of Clay Pit Hill. SP 531.3.1 is within the hillfort at Battlesbury, but this does not seem to be sufficient reason to give it a definite Iron Age date. Certainly there are earlier features within the other hillforts such as Bratton and Scratchbury.

The so called "Durrington Egg" (SP 3.8.4) was excavated by Cunington in 1929 (Cunington 1929) and was found to be Middle Bronze Age. There is a good possibility that the other features in the area may date to the same period too, but this is clearly a settlement consisting of a number of enclosures as opposed to single enclosures and hence needs consideration elsewhere.

A number of other known Bronze Age enclosures in the Wessex area for example those on the Marlborough Downs tend to be more rectilinear than curvilinear in plan. Likewise the sites at Boscombe Down, Martin Down and South Lodge are very much more sub-rectangular than sub-circular. The enclosures on Preshute Down and Boscombe Down are both c 40m x 45m, South Lodge is c 47m and Martin Down is larger at c 75m x 60m. Closer examination of the excavation reports by Cunington at Lidbury Fort (Cunington 1917) also suggested that this has evidence of Late Bronze Age activity. It is about the same size as Martin Down (70m x 65m). The enclosure at Ablington Furze (SP 15.38.1) recently surveyed by the field team of RCHME is considered to be potentially Late Bronze Age in date and measures c 50m x 55m. Examination of the database again revealed a number of possible examples shown below.

# Salisbury Plain Training Area

## Distribution of possible Bronze Age enclosures



○ Previously recorded Bronze Age enclosures

○ Possible curvilinear Bronze Age enclosures    ✚ Possible rectilinear Bronze Age enclosures

Figure 14 - Distribution of possible Bronze Age enclosures

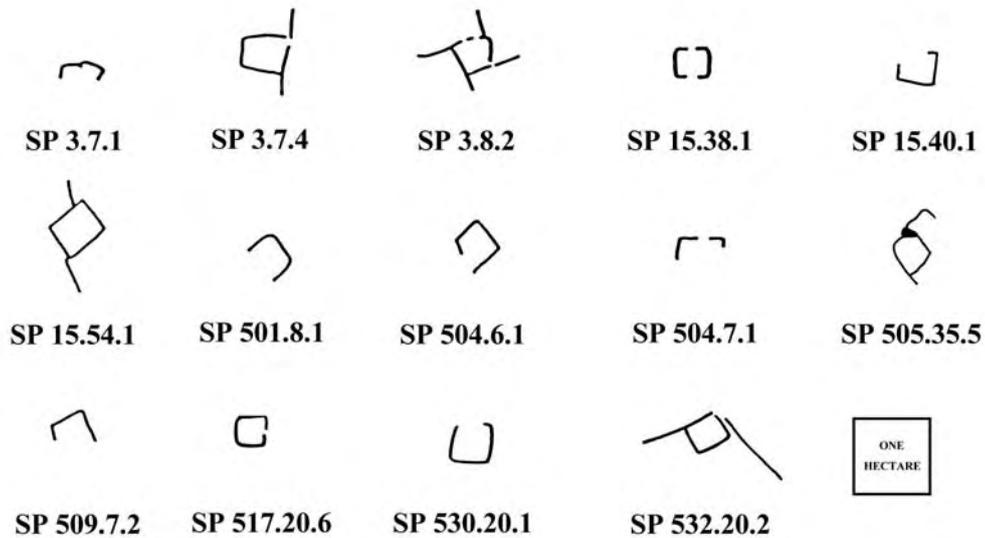


Figure 15 - Comparative possible rectilinear Bronze Age enclosures

### Linear ditches

The other non-ritual sites recorded as Bronze Age in date are the 25 boundary ditches. All of those specifically dated to the Bronze Age are restricted to the eastern zone of the Plain, but careful examination of other undated features elsewhere suggests that the extent of the ditch system was considerably greater than has been previously recognised. "Ranch boundaries" were assessed by Bowen (1978) and those in the east of the plain were the subject of a field project conducted by Reading University (Bradley et al 1994). Bowen demonstrated that certain of the boundaries clearly post-date the "celtic" fields, whilst the recent work by Reading University found a much greater degree of complexity. The results of further detailed survey by the field section of RCHME are due to be published shortly (RCHME forthcoming), but they look again at the precise relationships between various features. The overview presented by the aerial survey allowed comparison of the known with other linear features, and postulated a number of extensions to known boundaries, as well as some entirely new ones. In some cases this was the product of continuing alignments through areas where only short stretches of ditch were visible, but these often fit well into the overall pattern.

No detailed morphological comparisons were possible with other linear features, but an analysis of the longest features was carried out. The two longest features (SP 780.4.1 and SP 10.2.1) are both boundary ditches. The former is of Unknown Prehistoric date, and extends for over 7km across the western part of SPTA with other related features. The latter is of Bronze Age date and is part of the complex of boundaries on the eastern Plain. Of the nine features which are 3000m in length or longer, the five largest are extensive boundary ditches of Prehistoric date. A sixth (SP 27.24.1), which nearly joins the Bronze Age enclosure (the "North Kite") is dated as Unknown Prehistoric. The other three are all undated, but two (SP 761.6.1, SP 5.25.1) appear to have clear relations with other known Unknown Prehistoric features. SP 761.6.1 is joined to SP 758.4.1 a known boundary ditch of Unknown Prehistoric date, and SP 5.25.1 has several field systems aligned on it. The other example (SP 15.46.1) however runs across known Prehistoric field systems and boundaries but its relationship to them is unclear.

Apart from those boundaries in the extreme east there is very little in the way of dating evidence for the linears. When the linear, which skirts Stonehenge and the Avenue (SP 752.8.1) was excavated in 1968, three turf lines sealed the ditch, of which the earliest was dated to the Late Bronze Age (WAM 1968 108).

# Salisbury Plain Training Area

## Distribution of major linear boundaries

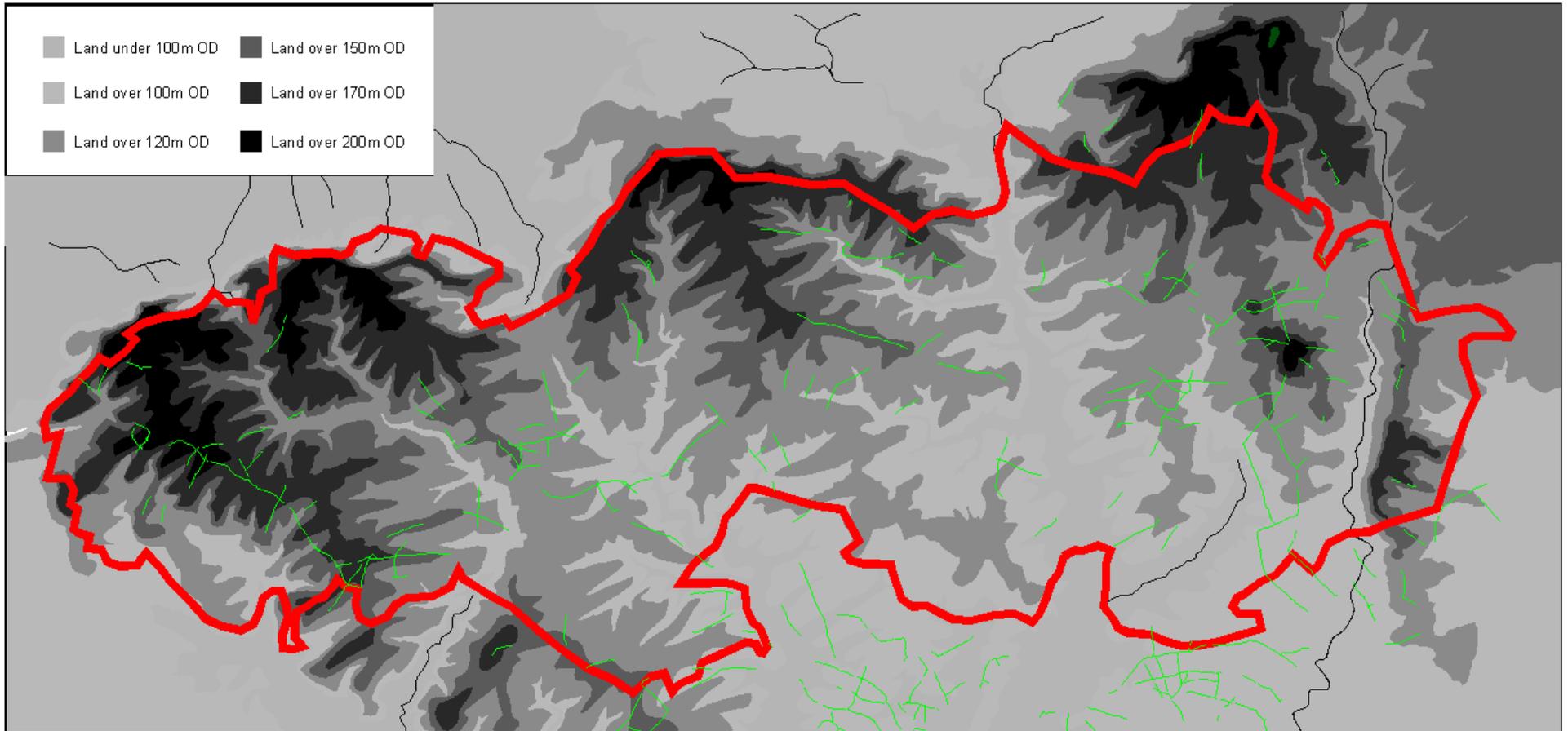


Figure 16 - Distribution of major linear boundaries

A pit alignment on Amesbury Down (SP 1.3.2) is undated, and follows a very meandering ditch (SP 1.3.1) which was considered to be a relict hedge line. Further examination of the map due south (SU13NE) reveals that the ditch lines up on an extant earthwork ditch believed to be a Bronze Age "ranch boundary". This was excavated in 1966 by the Vatchers who found that the first phase consisted of a series of post pits in a bedding trench (Notes in *Wiltshire Archaeol Natur Hist Mag* 63 (1968): 397). It is possible that in the northern section the re-cut of the ditch was slightly off the original alignment leaving the post pits as the pit alignment. This situation was seen at Heslerton in the Vale of Pickering (Powlesland 1988). Here the later phase of ditch, which had previously followed a pit alignment diverges leaving the pits comparatively intact. Finds from this feature dated it to the Late Bronze Age. There are several examples of boundary features which have components of both pits and complete ditches (Boutwood 1998), and in several cases on the Yorkshire Wolds there are sites which appear as complete, uninterrupted ditches on early photographs, but more recently appear as pit alignments (Stoertz 1997).

Besides those sites recorded as Bronze Age during the mapping phase of the project later analysis suggests that there may be examples of Bronze Age field systems. These ought to be a subject for further research as their identification relies on developing a relative chronology between a number of currently undated features. In many cases establishing the sequence of features purely from the evidence of small-scale air photographs is very problematic and will require further targeted reconnaissance or even testing on the ground.

## Iron Age Sites

### General comments

There are only 60 sites specifically dated to the Iron Age within SPTA as a result of this project, and although this may seem surprising at first, there is a very simple explanation. The limitations of the MORPH2 database only allow for a single period assignment per site. A site which would be considered Iron Age/Romano-British will probably be recorded as Unknown Prehistoric unless the evidence shows that it was only occupied either just during the Iron Age or just during the Romano-British era, or if it is a recognisable Iron Age or Roman feature. Thus eight sites are hillforts and the other sites have an explicit reason for dating to the Iron Age such as finds or its association with known features, although some ought more properly be dated Unknown Prehistoric as their dating evidence is equivocal. This limitation in the database is also the reason why there are only 91 Roman features, of which 44 relate to the settlement at Chisenbury Warren.

### Hillforts

There are eight hillforts in the project area, all of which were previously known and, with one exception, all had been subject to at least small-scale excavation. Only Knook Camp has not been excavated, but it has been the subject of detailed ground survey and geophysical investigation, although the latter was not very productive.

The sites recorded as hillforts vary considerably in size and shape, ranging from the oddly shaped Casterley Camp at 700m x 450m down to the sub-circular Chisenbury Trendle at only 160m x 160m.

MORPH No.	SP 536.47.1	SP 528.38.1	SP 531.1.1	SP 777.62.1	SP 520.1.1
Name	Casterley Camp	Scratchbury	Battlesbury	Bratton Camp	Sidbury
Size (m)	700x450	540x370	465x240	420x250	400x400
MORPH No.	SP 523.13.1	SP 523.13.3	SP 774.14.1	SP 515.3.1	
Name	Yarnbury (Main)	Yarnbury (Early)	Knook	Chisenbury Trendle	
Size (m)	350x350	250x230	200x110	160x160	

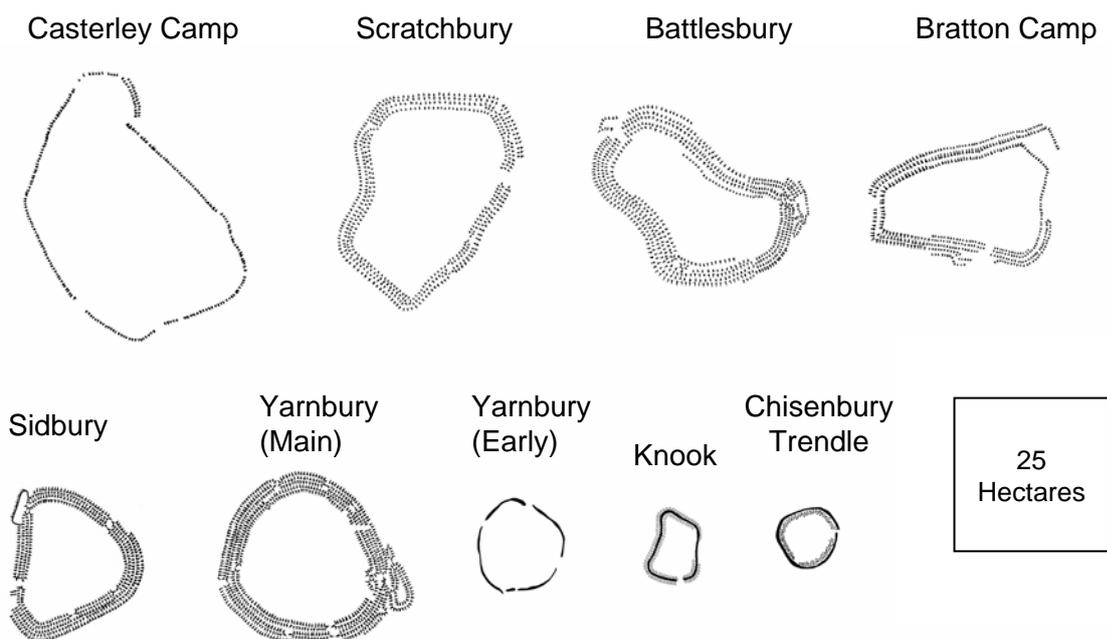


Figure 17 - Comparative hillfort plans

The position of the various hillforts is worthy of closer examination. Battlesbury, Scratchbury, and Bratton Camp are perched on the edge of the escarpment with commanding views. Yarnbury is on the edge of the Plain and looks down into the Wyllye Valley, but its siting is much less dramatic, similar to that of Casterley or Chisenbury Trendle, which look out over the Avon valley. Knook is set well back from the edge of the Plain as is Sidbury, but the topography of the eastern end of the Plain is rather different, as it is more level than that to the west, so Sidbury simply occupies the highest point in the area, visible from almost anywhere on the Plain. As such it must have been every bit as imposing as those forts perched on the edge of the scarp.

The hillforts are the six largest features dated to the Iron Age, all over 100,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Indeed of the ten largest features (by area) within SPTA, five are hillforts. Four of the others are "The North Kite" Bronze Age enclosure, the Greater Cursus at Stonehenge, the Durrington Walls henge and a military camp. The fifth feature is the massive enclosure which abuts the linear ditch known as the Old Nursery Ditch on Charlton Down, and is currently only dated as being Prehistoric. Its shape and position make it unlikely that this is a defensive feature, and it is perhaps more likely to be related to stock management.

## Enclosures

The next six largest Iron Age sites, those over 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> in area, are mainly recorded as simple enclosures, the exceptions being the fort at Knook and the Chisenbury Trendle. The feature SP 536.11.1 near Widdington Farm is similar in size and shape to the Chisenbury Trendle, which sits at the same height on the ridge on the other side of the Avon Valley, and as such ought perhaps to be seen as a mini-fort in the same vein. The site was excavated as part of the Salisbury Plain project being carried out by Reading University and although the assemblage was limited it was exclusively Iron Age (Entwistle et al 1993). A search of the database for other as yet undated features sharing the same characteristics produced a number of sites; a visual check produced several good candidates. At the top of the size range were three sites; SP 782.20.1 on Stoke Hill, SP 18.19.1 on Snoddington Down and SP 777.49.2 on Edington Hill. All have roughly the same dimensions, are of similar shape and are also all sited in comparable positions on high ground. The sites on Snoddington Down and Stoke Hill also both appear to have attached enclosures, the former inside, the latter outside. Unfortunately both of these sites can only be dated as Prehistoric and that on Edington Hill is totally undated. There were Iron Age remains found in the vicinity of SP 18.19.1 on Snoddington Down in the 1920s, but their precise location is unclear. (Notes in Papers and Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club 9 (1920-4):397)

Closer to the dimensions of Chisenbury and Widdington Farm are several other sites. One (SP 511.16.1) sits on the northern scarp of Pewsey Hill looking out over the Vale, and is in close proximity to the two sites known as "The Spectacles" (SP 510.12.1 & 3). Another (SP 524.10.1) sits on the north-east spur of Maddington Down looking out over the northern reaches of the Till valley. SP 528.28.1 sits on the summit of Cotley Hill, the south-eastern ridge continuing from Scratchbury, and surrounds the Bronze Age barrow SP 528.29.1. The enclosure SP 525.9.1 sits on a southern spur of Wick Down commanding the valley to the south. SP 780.22.1 lies on the down slope from Battlesbury hillfort. SP 19.24.2 lies on the eastern end of a spur of Copehill Down commanding views of the whole of the upper Till Valley.

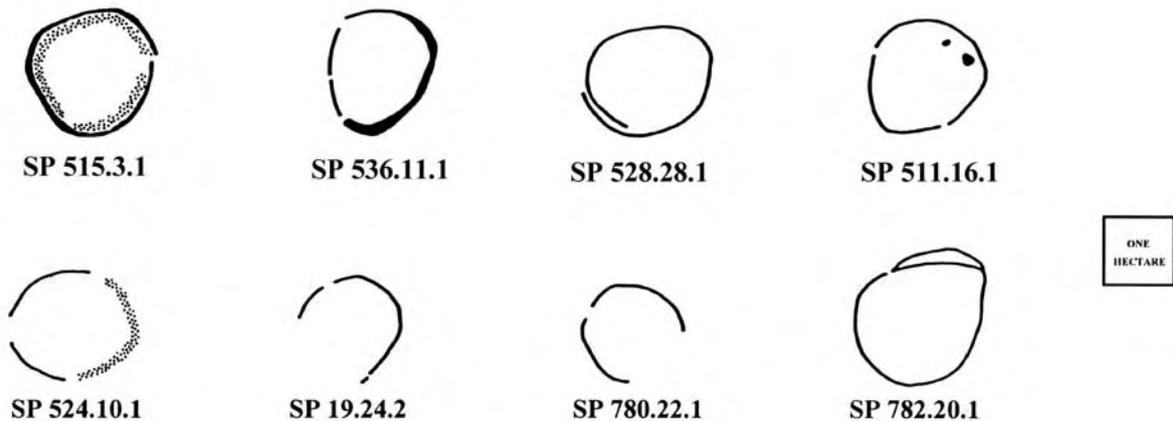


Figure 18 - Comparative plans of possible large Iron Age enclosures

Looking at the smaller sites, there are a group of sites which are between 85m-125m (in both dimensions) and are roughly sub-circular or ovoid in shape. These include three sites on Pewsey Hill, all of which produced Iron Age pottery (SP 510.9.1, SP 510.12.1. and SP 510.12.3). There are another four sites, three recorded as Prehistoric and one undated, but which can almost certainly be dated to the Iron Age. The first is an apparent classic Banjo enclosure on Pewsey Hill (SP 511.7.1) previously identified only as a sub-circular enclosure.

The others were excavated as part of the Salisbury Plain Project carried out by Reading University which provided firm Iron Age dates for them all; Warren Hill (SP 506.44.1), Chisenbury Field Barn (SP 515.6.1) and Everleigh (SP 520.20.1) (Entwistle et al 1993). The first two revealed a substantial "V" shaped ditch approximately 5m wide at the top, whilst at Everleigh the ditch was smaller and had a less pronounced profile. The Warren Hill site had early Iron Age sherds at the base of the ditch and numerous Middle Iron Age sherds throughout the main fill; the Chisenbury Field Barn site produced mainly Middle Iron Age sherds throughout and the Everleigh enclosure produced only a small number of finds, but of uniformly Early Iron Age date.

A search for similar features initially retrieved 52 potential candidates, which were reduced to 22 by visual checking, a selection of which are shown below. The site at Chisenbury Field Barn may appear to be different in having two ditches, but the excavation evidence suggests that it is similar to the other single ditched sites at Everleigh and Warren Hill. A distribution plot of these features (Figure 21) shows how they appear to hold the high ground. Along the northern edge of the Plain they appear at regular intervals along the scarp, around the centre they overlook the valleys dividing the Plain, fitting in to the pattern already set by the hillforts.

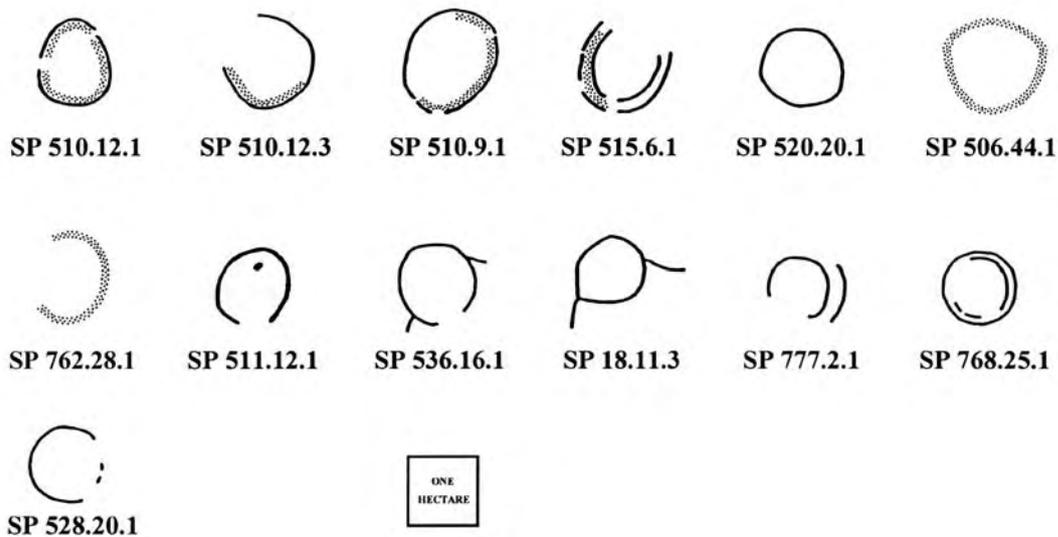


Figure 19 - Comparative plans of possible medium sized Iron Age enclosures

There appear to be gaps in the distribution of these enclosures along the northern edge of the central Plain these are due to the fact that the survey area did not cover certain of the most northerly maps, where only a tiny proportion of the SPTA was included. However, in this area there are at least two known sites, possibly three. The incomplete defended Iron Age enclosure at Broadbury Banks sits right on the scarp at SU093 555, and an enclosure measuring c 150m x 120m was noted (but not plotted being outside the area) at c SU108 556. There is almost no specialist photography of this stretch of the central northern scarp, none post 1950, but one photograph shows what could possibly be a sub-circular feature, which was also noted by Crawford, above the scarp at c SU057 555.

In 1964 P J Fowler excavated an earthwork (SP 532.24.1) on Mancombe Down. At the time Fowler said this was almost unique in Wessex applying the criteria of being roughly sub-circular and approximately one acre (4100 m<sup>2</sup>) in area (Fowler et al 1965). In fact the criteria fit a number of sites including the following, all of which are sub-circular and have dimensions between 60m and 85m.

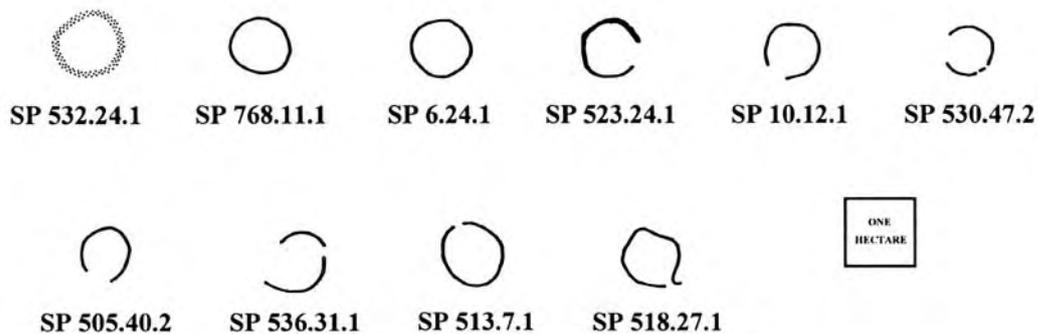


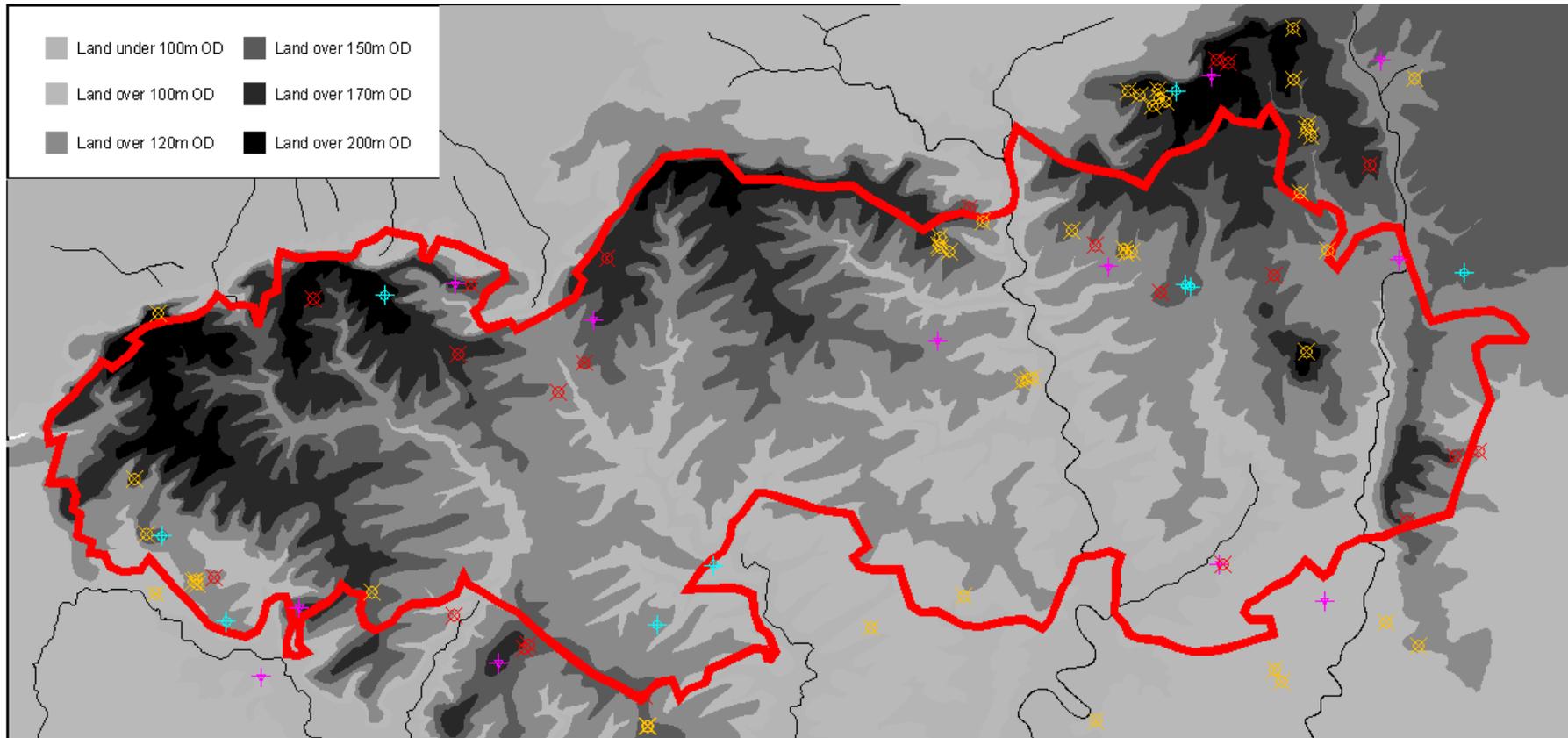
Figure 20 - Comparative plans of possible small Iron Age enclosures

Unlike the larger enclosures mentioned above, these smaller enclosures do not follow any clear distribution pattern.

Figure 21 shows the distribution of Iron Age sites with the other potential sites. The results of the analysis show how there are different, but largely complimentary distributions for the different enclosures of different sizes. This is only possible because of the range of morphological and other data recorded for each site, and the overall pattern can only be seen because NMP looks at the landscape, not just individual sites within it.

# Salisbury Plain Training Area

## Distribution of possible Iron Age enclosures



⊗ Previously recorded Iron Age enclosures

⊕ Potential Medium sized Iron Age enclosures

⊗ Potential Large Iron Age enclosures

⊕ Potential Small Iron Age enclosures

Figure 21 - Distribution of possible Iron Age enclosures

## Hut circles

At the bottom end of the size range for enclosures are hut circles. Unlike many previous NMP projects, such as the Thames Valley, which recorded 1164 hut circles, only 21 sites in SPTA were given the interpretation hut circle, and none were specifically dated to the Iron Age. This is due to the fact that in general the Prehistoric settlements on the Plain are characterised by hut platforms of various shapes, which tend to be recorded as maculae, rather than by more clearly sub-circular hut circles. There is at least one example, east of Figheledean, (SP 764.31) where a number of features could be interpreted as hut circles, but due to the proximity of other barrows have been interpreted as the latter. This is discussed in greater detail under barrows in section 4.2.

## Viereckschanzen

The site recorded as a viereckschanzen lies within Casterley Camp and was excavated by Maud Cunnington between 1909 and 1912 (Cunnington 1913) but only identified as a viereckschanzen by Piggott in 1969 (Piggott 1975). It is Iron Age in date and takes the form of an enclosure 55m square. A search of the database revealed 24 sites with similar shape and dimensions, of which one was the Iron Age site at Lidbury Camp, one a moat, one a Medieval enclosure associated with stock control and one a modern military feature. The others were a selection of sites interpreted as "enclosures" either dated to the prehistoric era or totally undated. It is considered that these others are unlikely to be further examples of the site type, viereckschanzen, because of the rarity of such sites.

## Fields

As noted above there are problems with dating features to the Iron Age according to the current recording methodology, and this is particularly true with potentially long lived features such as fields. This is further complicated by the fact that fields are not generally subject to excavation, which is in contrast to settlement or funerary sites. They generally tend to be dated by finds recovered during field walking or on morphological grounds. There are eight field systems and five field boundaries recorded as Iron Age in date. All five field boundaries (SP 510.11.3 & SP 510.12.4-8) are related and are dated by association with the enclosures on Pewsey Down as is one field system (SP 510.11.1). Another system is associated with Lidbury Camp (SP 515.15.5).

Those field systems in the south-east towards Quarley Hill (SP 9.1.1 & SP 11.1.1-2) and the north-east on Easton Hill and Grafton Down (SP 20.11.1 & SP 23.11.1) are dated purely on the basis of evidence from aerial photographs and as such ought technically be better placed in the Prehistoric section as continued use into the Romano-British era cannot be excluded.

Fields are discussed in greater detail in the sections on the Prehistoric and multi-period sites.

## **Roman Sites**

### **General comments**

As noted above the reason for the small number of sites dated to the Roman period is the single period limitation within the current recording system. It should also be noted that there would in fact be considerably fewer sites was it not for the interpretation of the house platforms at Chisenbury Warren as enclosures, rather than a group of maculae. Chisenbury Warren in fact accounts for 44 of the 91 Roman sites, i.e. nearly 50%; of the 47 Roman features recorded purely as enclosures Chisenbury Warren accounts for 39 (82.98%)

### **Settlement**

The majority of sites dated to the Roman period are settlement related, especially bearing in mind Chisenbury Warren, as noted above. There are a further two settlement sites (SP 762.19.3) on Chapperton Down and (SP 786.7.2) on Charlton Down. In each case they consist of large numbers of house platforms, with around 64 for Chapperton Down and over 200 on Charlton Down. In other areas of the country, particularly in lowland areas such as the Thames Valley, large settlements like these would have consisted of large numbers of small enclosures with individual houses. These have been destroyed and are visible as cropmarks leaving traces of individual enclosures and hut circles. In these upland areas where the structures remain extant they are better described as building platforms. The majority of sites dated to the Prehistoric period follow the same pattern with the two settlement areas at Knook West having 13 and 33 platforms respectively, and that at Knook East 29. The same is true of the extensive earthwork settlement at Church Pits. The other example of a Roman settlement site was that between Kimpton Gorse and Kimpton Wood below Warren Hill, first revealed by finds. Detailed examination of the NMR records revealed that in most cases the finds from the settlement related sites were Romano-British in date.

### **Enclosures**

As with the settlement sites, there are very few enclosures specifically dated to the Roman period, and those which are are usually dated so because of finds or associations, which is not a secure basis for dating.

The site (SP 26.25.6) on Winterbourne Stoke Down is dated as Roman by association with the field system surrounding it, which is in turn associated with the settlement to the west (SP 26.25.2). Its irregular shape would suggest it is quite possibly earlier than the field. Two other sub-oval features SP 756.15.1 and SP 527.30.1 are similar to SP 26.25.6 but unfortunately neither on them are dated.

The site SP 21.5.1 is dated to the Roman period by finds of Romano-British pottery and mortar on the site, but its form is more reminiscent of an earlier date. It is an irregular curvilinear shape similar to a kidney bean and it is possible that the reason for this unusual shape is that it represents the superimposition of two sub-circular enclosures similar to SP 783.25.1 on West Lavington Down and SP 25.1.1 on Shrewton Down.

On Bratton Down is a small square enclosure with rounded corners (SP 777.6.1) interpreted as Roman in date, due to finds of sherds of an amphora. This site shares the same curved corners and dimensions as another (SP 504.8.1) on Figheldean Down which is recorded as an enclosure of unknown date, but could perhaps also be Roman.

There are two other sites, both dated to the Roman period by finds recovered from fieldwork, but both are too dissimilar in size and shape for comparison with any other recorded features. One (SP 20.20.1) is a single large (c95m wide) incomplete enclosure with associated ditches. The other (SP 506.23.2) is a smaller enclosure (50m x 35m) forming

part of a complex with a number of possible enclosures a trackway etc. This area has yielded a concentration of tile, stone and potsherds suggestive of a substantial building over many years, although no trace is now visible on the ground.

## **Fields**

The dating of field systems dated to the Roman period is based on their association with settlements for example those on Charlton and Thornham Down in the central Plain and that on Winterbourne Stoke Down.

Fields are discussed later in greater detail in the sections on the Prehistoric and multi-period sites.

## **Roads**

One interesting feature appears as a soilmark of a broad (15-20m) positive linear feature across Aughton Down. This lines up exactly on the line of what is taken as part of the Roman road further north. There is only thought to be one Roman road within the project area, which is presumed to run from Sorbiodunum (Old Sarum) to Cunetio (Marlborough). This is in fact assumed to be a Romanised trackway, preserved in more recent trackways and no trace of any agger has been found except at the northern end in Savernake Forest. Further investigation is required to ascertain whether this is a Roman road.

## **Buildings**

There are a couple of possible examples of buildings. One was seen as a lodged crop suggestive of a building with internal divisions. Its importance is that its size and form suggest a small Roman villa. Its siting on the slopes overlooking the Till, however, would put it in a slightly different position to other villa sites discovered in the Avon valley to the east, which tend to be right next to the water.

Amongst the smallest of the square and rectangular "enclosures" (i.e. less than 20m across), there are some which could possibly be buildings. There are two sites (SP 505.37.6 and SP 506.22.2) which are each 10m square enclosures in association with Roman features. Each is interpreted as an Unknown Prehistoric enclosure, under group interpretations of settlement and farmstead respectively. The possibility must be considered that these are in fact Roman buildings. Slightly larger but in the same context are SP 505.37.3 part of the Romano-British settlement at Fyfield and SP 27.26.3 (Oatland's Hill). There are however, also certain individual sites currently undated and unassociated such as SP 14.11.1 on Brigmerston Down, SP 785.28.1 on Wilsford Down or SP 15.44.1 on Figheldean Down, which could be buildings. The latter two of these are particularly interesting given their proximity to field corners. Although not recorded during SPTAMP the site of a possible barn was discovered as a building platform in a corner of a field in the settlement at Knook east.

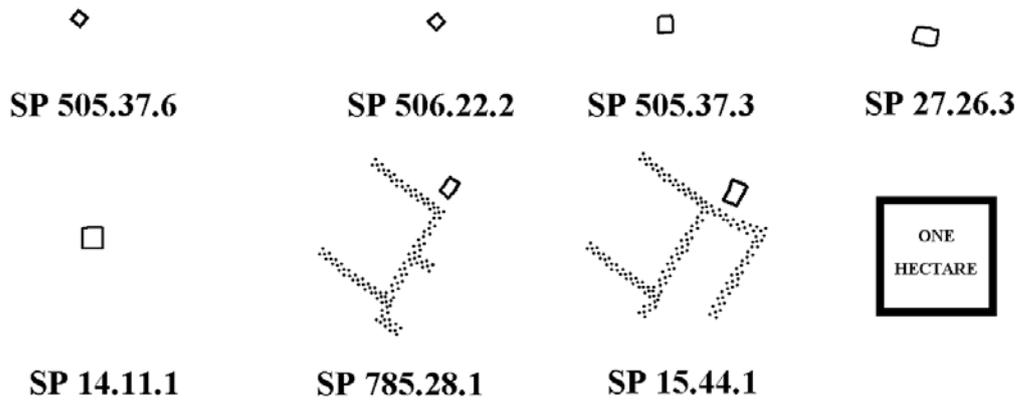


Figure 22 - Comparative plans of possible buildings

## ***Prehistoric Sites***

### **General comments**

As noted above (Section 3.4.1) sites are dated as Prehistoric either when they are simply thought to be Roman or earlier, but cannot be more securely dated, or when they are thought to span more than one period of time, as with Romano-British sites. This can best be illustrated with some specific cases. Excavation on Silver Barrow (SP 761.33.1) produced evidence which might date it anywhere from the Neolithic to the Romano-British era, hence its Unknown Prehistoric date (Goddard 1913; Kinnes 1992). The barrow SP 18.37.1 in the field immediately north of Thruxton airfield only appears as a partial circuit and as such may represent either a round barrow or perhaps something more elongated with an earlier origin. The round barrow SP 752.83.1, west of Vespasian's Camp is most probably Bronze Age, but the possible causewayed nature of its ditch, coupled with its relationship with the long barrow (SP 752.87.1) mean that it may have an earlier origin. The barrow SP 530.29.1 was originally interpreted as a long barrow, but later examination suggested that it should be considered as a round barrow. It has suffered heavily from ploughing and has been truncated to the north by a road. There has been no excavation to date it one way or another.

As might be expected, the majority of sites recorded as simply Prehistoric tend to be those where their function is not diagnostic, such as settlement, fields, or enclosures, or where the feature type is specific, but existed over a long period of time such as cairns.

### **Cairns**

There are just two sites recorded as cairns within the project area. Both survive as earthworks and were recorded as medium sized round macula (4-15m). The site (SP 785.12.5) on Chirton Down is part of an unenclosed settlement of Unknown Prehistoric date surveyed by the field team of RCHME. That on Imber Down (SP 781.14.1) is a single feature recorded from vertical photographs. There is a small levelled area, possibly a settlement platform nearby. Examination of the database for other mounds of similar size and shape, which might be interpreted as cairns produced five potential candidates, all of which are recorded simply as mounds. Four of the five are cropmarks, known only from aerial photographs; one is dated as Unknown Prehistoric the others Unknown. The other is an earthwork mound within the Bronze Age barrow cemetery known as "The Coniger". The cemetery was subject to excavation, but it is unclear whether this particular feature was excavated (Hoare 1810).

### **Settlement**

The sites interpreted as being settlement-related vary significantly in appearance, ranging from comparatively simple enclosures with few internal features such as those on Longstreet Down (SP 517.20), through more complex sites such as those between Fyfield and Thruxton (SP 505.35 or SP 505.37) or Collingbourne Ducis SP 518.27 to intricate multi-phased settlements like SP 27.26 on Oatlands Hill or the well preserved Romano-British settlements at Knook.



Figure 23 - Collingbourne Ducis Settlement © NMR Crown Copyright (NMR 4200/19)

Two additional sites, consisting of a series of earthworks, most probably of Prehistoric date, were recorded as being settlement related on Summer Down (SP 777.54.1 & SP 779.28.1). Later ground survey, however, suggests that these are in fact merely complex areas of field system.

In addition to those sites and groups mentioned above interrogation of the database followed by a visual examination of the overlays revealed a number of possible candidates not recorded as settlement. There were examples of the full range of forms of settlement i.e. simple through to complex.

At the simple enclosure level are sites such as SP 521.3 on Gore Down or SP 506.22 at Great Shoddesden, the latter of which is given the group interpretation farmstead. This is also true for SP 1.14, SP 1.18 and SP 5.23 on Amesbury Down and raises the question of just what the difference is between a farmstead and a settlement. There are clearly similarities between SP 536.16 described as a settlement, SP 1.18 described as a farmstead and SP 505.40 which is not given any description. There are also two cropmark sites of simple enclosures on Clay Pit Hill (SP 523.16.1-2), recorded as stock enclosures, which might just as easily be for settlement as for stock.

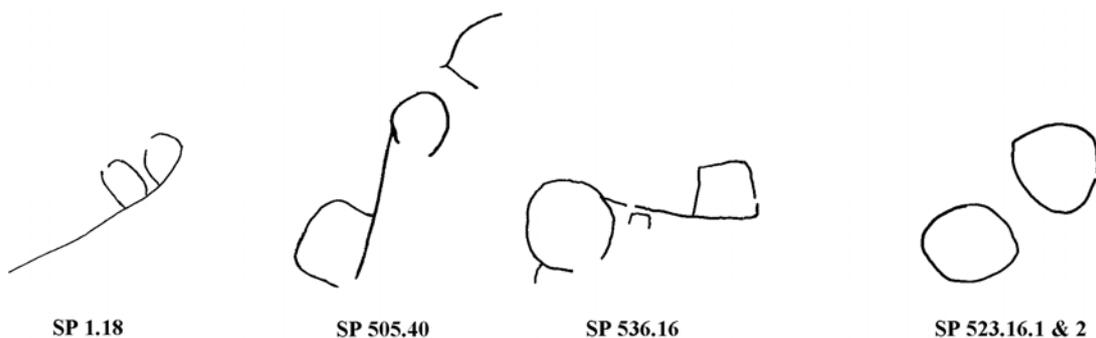


Figure 24 - Comparative settlement plans

Unfortunately all are totally undated, except in so far as a number of Iron Age pits were excavated in the area of SP 1.18 as part of road widening schemes in the 1960s. They have been assigned an Unknown Prehistoric date on morphological grounds.

There are certain features which might bear comparison with the Wadmans Coppice enclosure (SP 781.3.1). They are a series of irregular polygonal features such as SP 509.7.1, SP 24.9.1, SP 506.22.1, SP 521.3.1, SP 524.2.1 and SP 25.20.1. The second two of these have clear internal features suggestive of enclosed settlement and there is a partial enclosure within SP 509.7.1. There are however no other obvious connections between them. SP 24.9.1 is on the edge of the scarp, SP 25.20.1 is on a ridge, and SP 524.2.1 on a spur, whereas SP 506.22.1 and SP 509.7.1 are both on relatively flat low lying ground. There are Roman finds from the vicinity of SP 506.22.1 and a Neolithic axe butt was found 20m away from SP 509.7.1

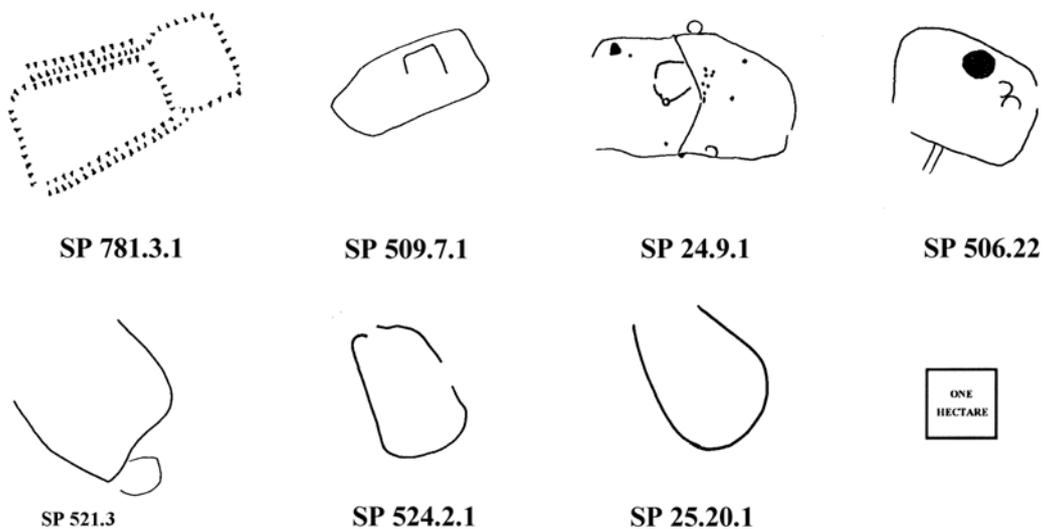


Figure 25 - Comparative simple settlement enclosure plans

At a slightly more complex level, the site (SP 766.7.1) on Enford Down above Haxton is recorded as a settlement and dated to the Iron Age. SP 765.20 west of Briggerston has certain similarities including a possible trackway and some internal ring ditches. Because one of these is quite large with two ditches it is interpreted as a Bronze Age barrow, but it is quite possible that this is a Prehistoric settlement complex. This is clearly also possibly the case with SP 1.24 on Amesbury Down where there are a number of sub-circular ring ditches. SP 523.2.1 just south-west of Yarnbury consists of a number of smaller fields within a system of generally larger fields and as such might also be a candidate as a settlement or small farmstead.

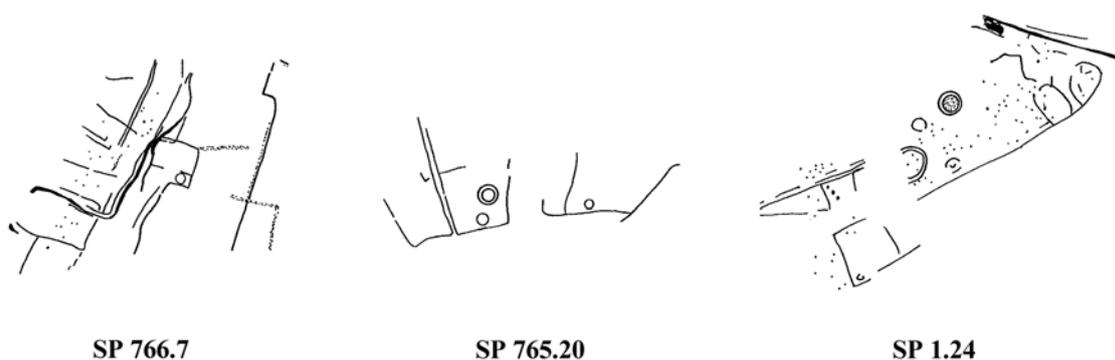


Figure 26 - Comparative complex settlement enclosure plans

There is even one potentially partially extant settlement on Norton Down (SP 780.31). Here at the head of the coombe is a system of linear banks which have previously been interpreted as part of a field system. The size of individual units close to the possible central trackway is at the boundary between settlement and agricultural features and the layout is more reminiscent of settlement. Clearly this site needs further investigation on the ground.

Another, SP 781.2.2, is the area within the feature recorded as The Coney (SP 781.2.1); apparent settlement earthworks set within a trapezoidal enclosure. Due to its name The Coney has been interpreted as a feature to do with the management of rabbits, and therefore of Medieval date and the features within have been interpreted as being of Medieval date and associated with it. The morphological similarity in shape, pattern and unit area, however, suggests that they might in fact be Prehistoric in origin. It is not inconceivable that the warren was constructed around an area of disturbed ground, formed by a Prehistoric settlement, which was considered to be a good setting for it.

## **Enclosures**

There are 153 sites simply recorded as "enclosures". These vary significantly in size and shape, and where they bear similarities to any dated sites they have been examined under the appropriate period heading.

## **Fields**

The difficulties in dating field systems and field boundaries have already been noted above, and thus there are 128 examples of fields and field systems simply dated as Prehistoric.

The Prehistoric field systems ranged in area from 500 m<sup>2</sup> to 18,000 m<sup>2</sup>, with a concentration (65.22%) between 2000 m<sup>2</sup> and 7500 m<sup>2</sup>, and a peak around 5000 m<sup>2</sup>. Of the seven sites over 12,500m<sup>2</sup>, three almost certainly had sub-divisions which would put the unit areas into the central block. The other four ranged between 13,000 m<sup>2</sup> and 18,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

Fields are discussed in greater detail in the section on multi-period landscapes.

# Salisbury Plain Training Area

## Distribution of sites of Prehistoric date

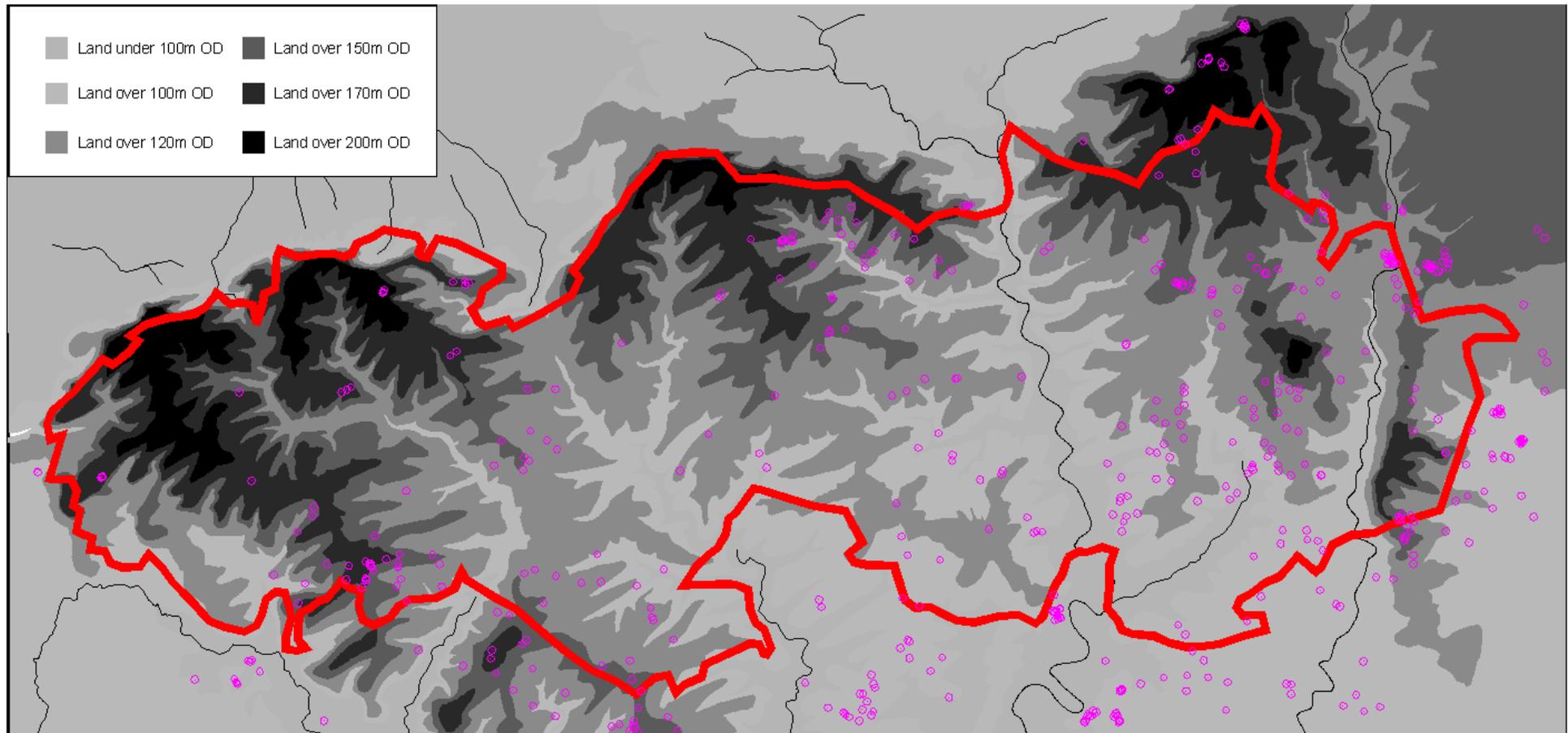


Figure 27 - Distribution of sites of Prehistoric date

## ***Early Medieval Sites***

Only one site was dated to the Early Medieval period and there are considerable doubts about it. The dating for the field system is apparently based purely on Crawford's annotation of his 6" field maps, where he describes them as "Saxon lynchets" (Crawford 1934-8). The feature is not traceable on the ground. The form of the features and the general unit area is in keeping with the Prehistoric field systems in the area, and there is no easily perceptible reason why Crawford decided to date it otherwise.

A total of 116 sites are recorded in the NMR as being of Early Medieval date within the project area, but the vast majority of these are finds or intrusive burials, and as such are not susceptible to recovery from aerial photographs.

## ***Late Medieval Sites***

### **General comments**

The 113 sites recorded as Late Medieval cover a wide range of site types relating both to settlement and agriculture. 113 sites represents just over 2.5% of the entire database, which is a reflection of the broad category of "Late Medieval" within MORPH2. Not surprisingly almost all sites (92.9%) are recorded as extant earthworks, and as the distribution shows (Figure 28) the sites are very much concentrated off the high plain, lying either on the low ground to north or south or along the river valleys cutting into the Plain.

### **Settlement**

There are 13 sites recorded as deserted villages at either the site or group level, which comprise 48 individual elements, including building platforms and tofts; ridge and furrow, field systems and boundaries; gardens and crofts; fish ponds, ponds and moats; trackways and hollow ways. There are likewise 14 shrunken villages, which comprise 32 sites including buildings, enclosures and tofts; ridge and furrow, a paddock and field boundaries; a trackway and two pits plus some indeterminate features such as drains, ditches, banks and a mound.

Those sites recorded as building platforms associated with either shrunken or deserted villages might be better described as tofts. There are several examples of ponds associated with settlements. The Medieval pond (SP 782.1.2) appears as a large rectangular depression c30m x 15m associated with Coulston House. The site SP 20.19.2 appears as a large amorphous depression apparently related to the settlement shrinkage at Brunton. The sites SP 528.5.3-4 are two adjacent oblong ponds both related to the deserted village of Middleton. A single site (SP 500.3.3) is interpreted as a fishpond. It is part of the Late Medieval settlement at Knighton Farm in the Avon Valley.

Ten of the 13 deserted villages and 12 of the 14 shrunken villages were thought to be Late Medieval in date whilst the rest were simply Medieval.

Two sites (SP 514.7.1 - 2) have been given the interpretation garden. They have been dated as Late Medieval and probably relate to West Everlee mentioned in 1347 (Gover 1939,329).

With the exception of Tilshead, Lower Everleigh and Everleigh all the village-related sites are off the Plain, either in the river valleys or in the Pewsey Vale to the west.

The unit size of the various features within the settlement areas were compared, but did not produce any useful information. They ranged in area from less than 500 m<sup>2</sup> to over 4000 m<sup>2</sup>.

The large variations in size are caused by the recording of different features such as individual tofts versus the main settlement plots.

It is interesting to note that this same structure is reflected in those sites dated Unknown Medieval where three sites have areas under 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, (2 of these under 500 m<sup>2</sup>) and one of 3000 m<sup>2</sup>.

## **Moats**

Sometimes associated with the larger villages, but more often on their own there were examples of smaller settlement sites such as moated sites. All eight sites recorded as moats came from the extreme north-west of the survey area in the Vale of Pewsey. Three sites are firmly dated to the Late Medieval by documentary evidence with the rest simply Medieval. All are extant as earthworks and recorded as enclosures. These vary in size from 22m square at Grange Farm, Bratton to 90m x 80m. Since the sites were restricted exclusively to this small area a search of the database was carried out for sites within the size parameters in the area, but without any clear candidates appearing.

## **Fields**

There are 30 Late Medieval sites presumed to have an agricultural function. ten of these sites are recorded as ridge and furrow and of these six are extensive enough to be recorded as field systems. A further site given the interpretation field system is recorded as being composed of ridge and furrow. There are another 11 field boundaries and five lynchets also recorded as Late Medieval in date, but there is a good probability that a number of the 44 field boundaries, 85 lynchets, 12 field systems and 74 blocks of ridge and furrow, currently dated Unknown Medieval, may also belong to this period.

Fields are discussed in more detail in the sections on multi-period landscapes (Section 4.12).

## ***Post Medieval Sites***

### **General comments**

Only 22 sites, less than 1% of sites in the database, were recorded as Post Medieval in date and nearly half of these were water meadows. As for Late Medieval sites, they were only assigned a Post Medieval date if there was good reason to believe that they were not in use earlier as well. Many of the sites dated "Unknown Medieval" were quite possibly of Post Medieval date but could not be sufficiently securely dated.

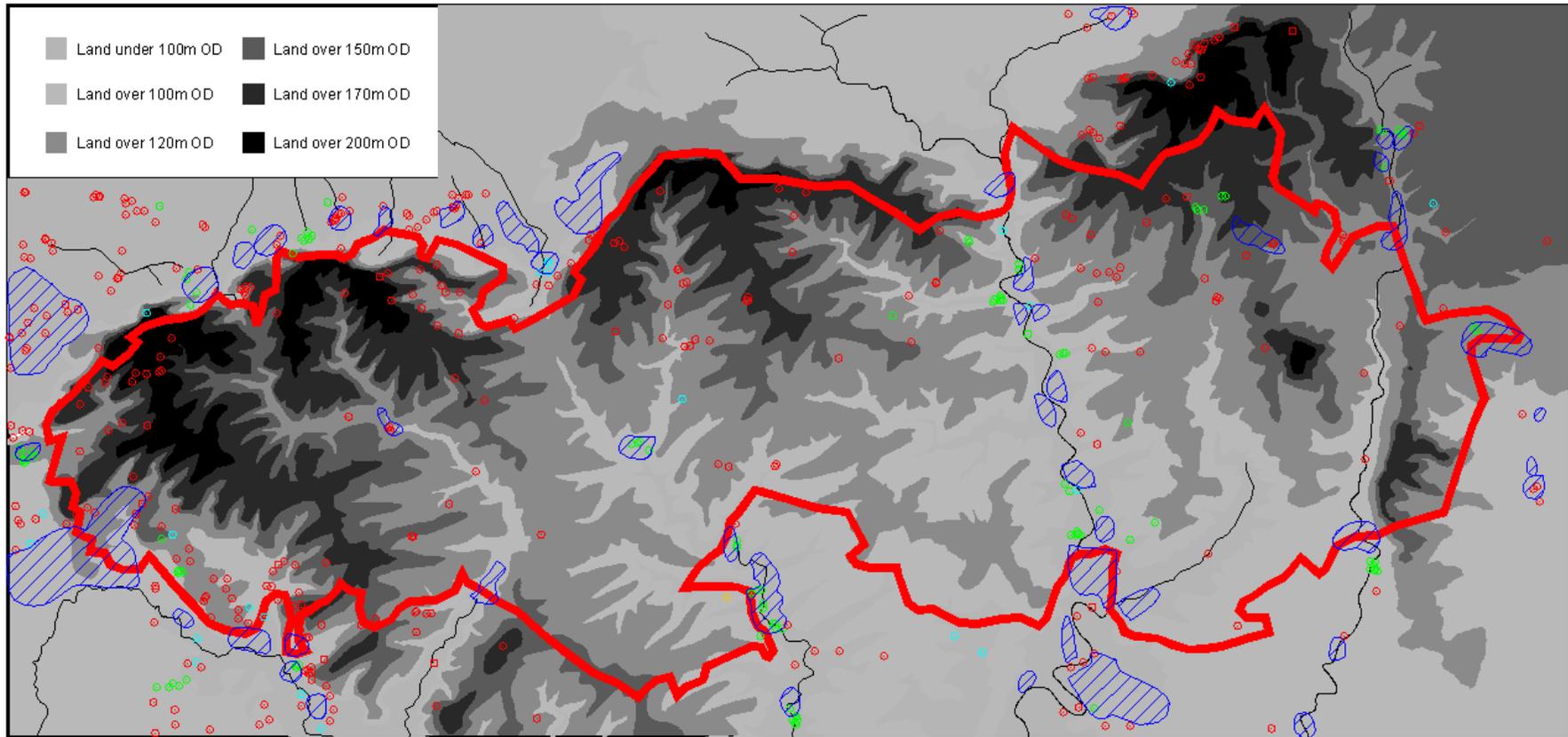
### **Roads**

Two of the more interesting sites (SP 752.20.1&2) relate to the same feature, a stretch of road, which was possibly never completed. It is shown by Andrews and Dury on their map of 1773 and by Colt Hoare on his map of 1826, but not on any other earlier or later plans. It may be part of a planned turnpike and cuts the line of the Avenue east of Stonehenge.

Figure 28 showing the distribution of Post Medieval sites reveals that with the exception of a series of apparently late field boundaries on West Down, in the centre of the Plain, the sites are mainly off the high ground, either around the edges or in the river valleys.

# Salisbury Plain Training Area

## Distribution of Medieval and Post Medieval sites



○ Early Medieval site   ○ Late Medieval sites   ○ Post Medieval sites   ○ Medieval sites of uncertain date   ○ Modern settlement

Figure 28 - Distribution of Medieval and Post Medieval sites

## ***Medieval Sites of Unknown date***

### **General comments**

The 377 sites dated to the Unknown Medieval period represent 8.85% of the total database. Section 3.5.1 explains the use of the date Unknown Medieval and shows how a large percentage of these sites could be dated in any of the more specific historic periods. There is a good representation of site types across this period with examples from most thesaurus class types. There is however a very clear preponderance of agricultural features with over half the sites comprising lynchets, blocks of ridge and furrow and field boundaries.

### **Settlement**

As noted above (section 4.8) there are three sites recorded as deserted villages and two as shrunken villages, which are only dated to the general medieval period. These sites are so dated because unlike Upton Scudamore (SP 533.15.6) and Combe (SP 535.3.1) they do not relate to the known and dated sites. They are the location of potential sites, or sites where the desertion or shrinkage is not so securely dated. SP 770.8.1 may relate to a hamlet noted in 1386 and SP 781.31 is the village of Imber which has a Medieval history, but was only deserted in the 1930s when it was requisitioned by the army for training purposes. In another case (SP 770.10.1) near the modern hamlet of Heywood, the earthworks were thought to relate to its earlier history. The settlement is recorded as Heiwade in 1224 in the Feet of Fines for Wiltshire (Fry 1930). This identification could not be confirmed. In the case of Everleigh it was considered that the features were related to Everleigh but the date of their construction or desertion was not known. The same is true of the shrunken villages at Great Cheverell and Long Cheverell.

In almost every case the form of the settlement is very close to that of known deserted or shrunken villages such as West Chisenbury (SP 535.14) or Compton (SP 536.39) in the Avon Valley or Upton Scudamore (SP 533.15) mentioned above.

In addition to the larger settlements there are two examples of smaller farmsteads, both of which are so recorded because of information other than that derived from the aerial photographs. On Black Heath SP 784.14 is recorded as a farmstead due to the presence of certain features marked on the 1st Edition base map, whilst SP 777.5 on Knapp Down consists of features associated with a known abandoned farm.

### **Agricultural features**

There are 74 individual sites recorded as ridge and furrow, together with a further three field systems composed of blocks of ridge and furrow. In addition there are a further 44 field boundaries and 85 lynchets. There are very few fields or field systems recorded as not having an element of ridge and furrow, and those that are can either be seen as being more likely to be related to settlement than agriculture, or are simply evidence of drainage works.

The comparative sizes of unit areas for settlement and agricultural purposes are discussed in greater detail in the sections on multi-period landscapes and morphological issues.

### **Stock enclosures**

There were 26 examples of stock enclosures within SPTA, the majority of which were recorded as Medieval in date. A visual examination of those others suggested that they fell into two morphological categories, being either large and sub-rectangular or not. Those which are not ranged in size and shape and included a number of variants; there was as a sub-square enclosure c25m in length (SP 784.24.1); there were three irregular curvilinear enclosures ranging from 100m x 90m to 175m x 120m (SP 523.16.1-2 and SP 759.7.1); and

there was the unusual kite-shaped enclosure on Warden Down (SP 777.10.1). In several cases their interpretation is far from clear in so far as they need not necessarily have an agricultural function. Indeed the largest of the irregular curvilinear enclosures, just north of Tilshead (SP 759.7.1) contains two smaller enclosures each of which are less than 10m in diameter and as such could be hut circles. For those sites which are large sub-rectangular enclosures there is often good reason to re-date them to the Medieval period. At the upper end of the size range for the sub-rectangular enclosures SP 752.1.1 and SP 26.35.1 are confidently dated Unknown Medieval having been examined on the ground. SP 508.2.2 on Everleigh Down, however, is dated Unknown Prehistoric on the grounds of finds recovered during the excavation of a nearby barrow cemetery. These relate to a field system which may, or may not, relate to this enclosure. The enclosure itself was still extant in the 1930s as it is depicted on the Crawford base maps. It seems quite probable that this is in fact a Medieval stock enclosure merely superimposed on the existing Romano-British field system. There are several more elongated enclosures between 100m - 200m long and 70m - 120m wide many still remaining as earthworks. Of these, sites such as SP 781.36.1 on Fore Down, SP 777.7.1 and SP 777.9.1 on Warden Down and SP 785.21.1 on Chirton Down have been interpreted as Medieval in date, whilst others such as SP 515.10.2 on Upavon Down, SP 527.16.1 & two on West Hill and SP 776.45.1 on Fore Down have been left undated. The only evidence for dating these sites to the Medieval period comes from aerial photographs, but they have been confidently dated due to their appearance and relationship to other landscape features etc. One possible problem with this theory is that the only site in this size range with a more positive dating is in fact Prehistoric, the Romano-British settlement near Wadmans Coppice above Imber (SP 781.3.1). The difference however is that all the "Medieval" enclosures are across valleys, often near the valley head, as are the undated SP 527.16.1 and two near West Hill, SP 768.9.1 below Church Hill and SP 776.45.1 on Fore Down, whereas SP 781.3.1 is up on a hill side, as indeed is SP 515.10.2, which on closer examination is probably part of a field system. There are in fact a number of even larger banked enclosures across valley bottoms which might likewise best be interpreted as Medieval or later stock enclosures (SP 536.50.1, SP 536.51.1 & SP 767.20.1).

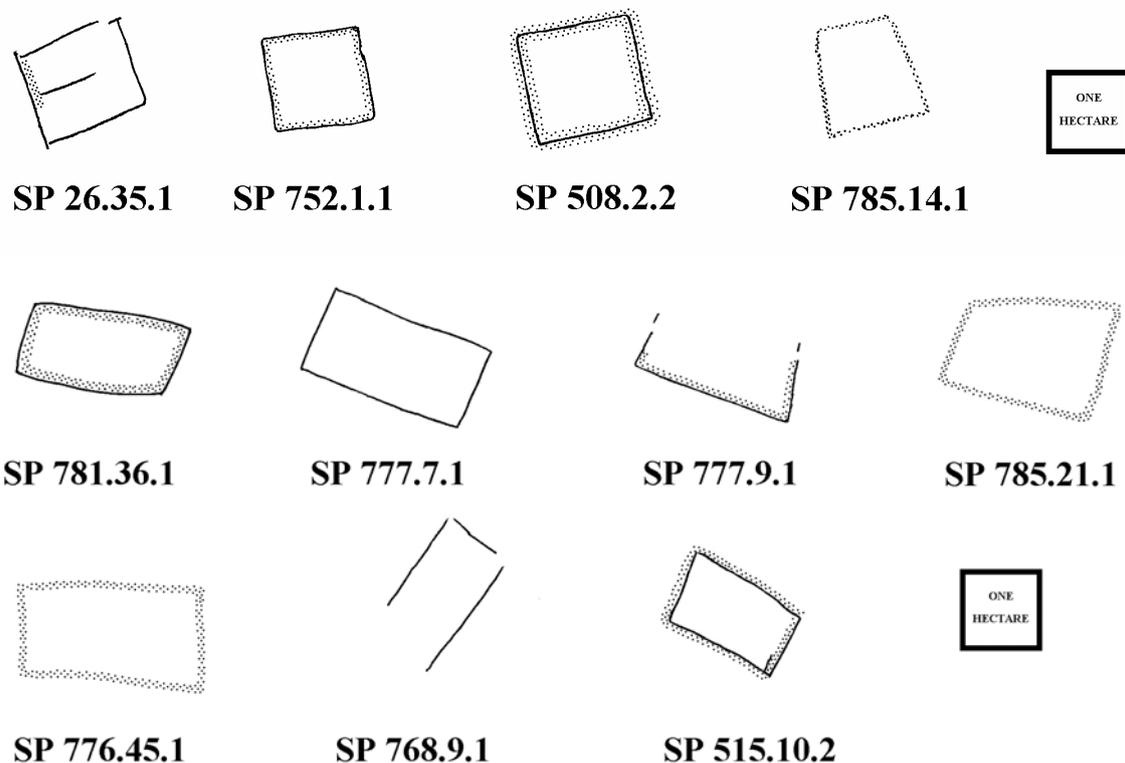


Figure 29 - Comparative plans of stock enclosures

## Warrens

There were seven sites recorded as pillow mounds with one warren, and all were dated to the Medieval period. All were still extant as earthworks. One of the pillow mounds (SP 527.14.1) had been subject to excavation by Cunnington (Colt Hoare 1821, 82) in the mistaken belief that it was a long barrow.

The warren (SP 781.2.1) was recorded as an enclosure within which are settlement remains. These are almost certainly at least in part of Medieval in date (but see section 4.5). The site is recorded as "The Coney" on the tithe map, and the bank is clearly not integral to the settlement, hence its interpretation. It was not uncommon for Medieval farmers to use existing earthworks, such as barrows, as pillow mounds. In certain cases they went so far as to erect enclosures around a group of such monuments. One example of this can be seen at the Coniger (SP 25.17.1), whose name probably alludes to its use, and possibly also at the other barrow cemetery which faces it across the Till (SP 25.14.1).

## **Modern Sites**

### **General comments**

There are 443 sites (10.4%) dated to the Modern era, more than any other dated period except the Bronze Age. This is due to the extensive military use of the Plain over the past 100 years. Of the 443 sites 378 (85.3%) are clearly military by their definition, and the majority of the others are connected with military activity. A large number of the sites were temporary military structures, visible only on the immediate post war photography, and have left no surviving trace on the landscape. Others, however, such as the networks of practice trenches remain as crop or soilmarks and need to be recorded to avoid any possible confusion with earlier features.

### **Trench systems and gun pits**

Clearly the vast majority of modern military sites are either trench systems (251) or gun emplacements (84) with an additional two sites making up another gun emplacement. All 251 slit trenches are twentieth century in date, and some can be dated more precisely to either WWI or WWII. The vast majority, 228 or 90.84% appear at least in part as extant earthworks, and the most recent photography showed that not only are some of the older trenches still in use, but the army are still digging them.

In many cases the sites were recorded from early photographs in the Crawford collection, which date from between the wars and shows the features in use, but they are often also clearly extant on the vertical photographs, which date from the end of the Second World War and the immediate post-war years.

There are numerous practice trenches, but one site is recorded as an anti-glider ditch and it is visible in the form of a rather unusual cropmark. All that remains of the obstruction are the mounds of earth extracted from the ditch, not the ditch itself.

In addition to the 84 gun emplacements there were three pillboxes, 20 firing ranges and one rifle butt.

### **Camps and airfields**

The recording of military bases, camps and airfields proved problematic. In several cases the interpretation "military base" or "military camp" was chosen for miscellaneous military activity visible over a period of years. There are no sites recorded as airfields within SPTA and indeed the only group interpretation refers to Netheravon. This was because most of those sites noted as airfields were still in operation as such after the war, in several cases appearing on the OS base map and hence fell outside the project specification. There were however certain exceptions to this rule.

On Tilshead Down c500m west of the Tilshead Camp is a forked feature consisting of parallel white lines 10m apart with each branch c100m long. It was probably not a small airstrip; the short length, the proximity of the "buildings" to the edge of the feature, and the absence of any aircraft suggest possible alternatives. Was it a "street" for practising urban warfare? Just to the west of New Zealand Camp on Cheverell Down is a small airstrip. There is no clearly marked runway, but there are a number of hangars and at least one hut. The site is first seen in operation in March 1944 when there are a few planes out on the grass, and indeed one is taxiing. The aircraft appear to be either bi-planes or high wing trainers.

Near Everleigh at the site called Milking Bushes was another apparent airstrip with the main airfield under construction in 1942. The main features visible are a set of apparent hard standings for dispersing aircraft at the edge of the trees. Photographs taken in July 1945

show the strip in use as a glider field. Around two dozen gliders are dispersed around the wood and the tug, a Shorts Stirling, is nearby. The airfield consisted of two grass runways; one ran for approximately 1100m along the edge of the wood, orientated roughly north-west to south-east. The other was slightly shorter, approximately 900m, and formed a "Y" junction near the northern end of the first strip. In spite of its shorter length this was most probably the main runway since it faced into the prevailing wind, and its length would be compensated by the fact that it is on a downhill slope. In addition, another strip already ran along the top of West Everleigh Down from the Everleigh Barrows to Everleigh.

There are also a number of bombing ranges comprising old aircraft hulks.

## **Radar**

One site was recorded as a radar station. It was visible on a set of 1945 vertical photographs with the masts still standing and later as the remains of a series of concrete bases. It is located just to the north of Thruxton airfield.

## **Miscellaneous**

There were a number of features often just noted and not recorded because they were considered ephemeral, and none of the interpreters had any idea what they were. One site which was recorded was a pit alignment near Tilshead Camp, which relates to the series of features visible on wartime photographs, thought to be a possible practice area for urban warfare, described above. The alignment may represent machine gun pits, but could be something else with a military origin.

Another site (SP 15.4.1) takes the form of a pair of parallel lines and was actually recorded as Prehistoric because it appears to align on a barrow SP 15.3.1. However since it was visible only on a single set of vertical photographs dating from the 1940s it may in fact be the result of recent military activity.

In addition to the military sites there are three sites recorded as fairs (SP 12.6.1-3). They appear as three identical circular depressions c15m in diameter. Examination on the ground reveals that they are joined by lengths of ditches. They have been variously interpreted as barrows or as searchlights or gun emplacements. They are interpreted here as the sites of fairground roundabouts as reported in the SMR.

Figure 30 shows the distribution of Modern sites. There are obvious clusters around the military bases, i.e. Tidworth and Bulford in the east and Tilshead in the centre, but otherwise the sites are spread across the whole of SPTA, with the possible exception of the extreme north of the eastern range.

# Salisbury Plain Training Area

## Distribution of Modern sites

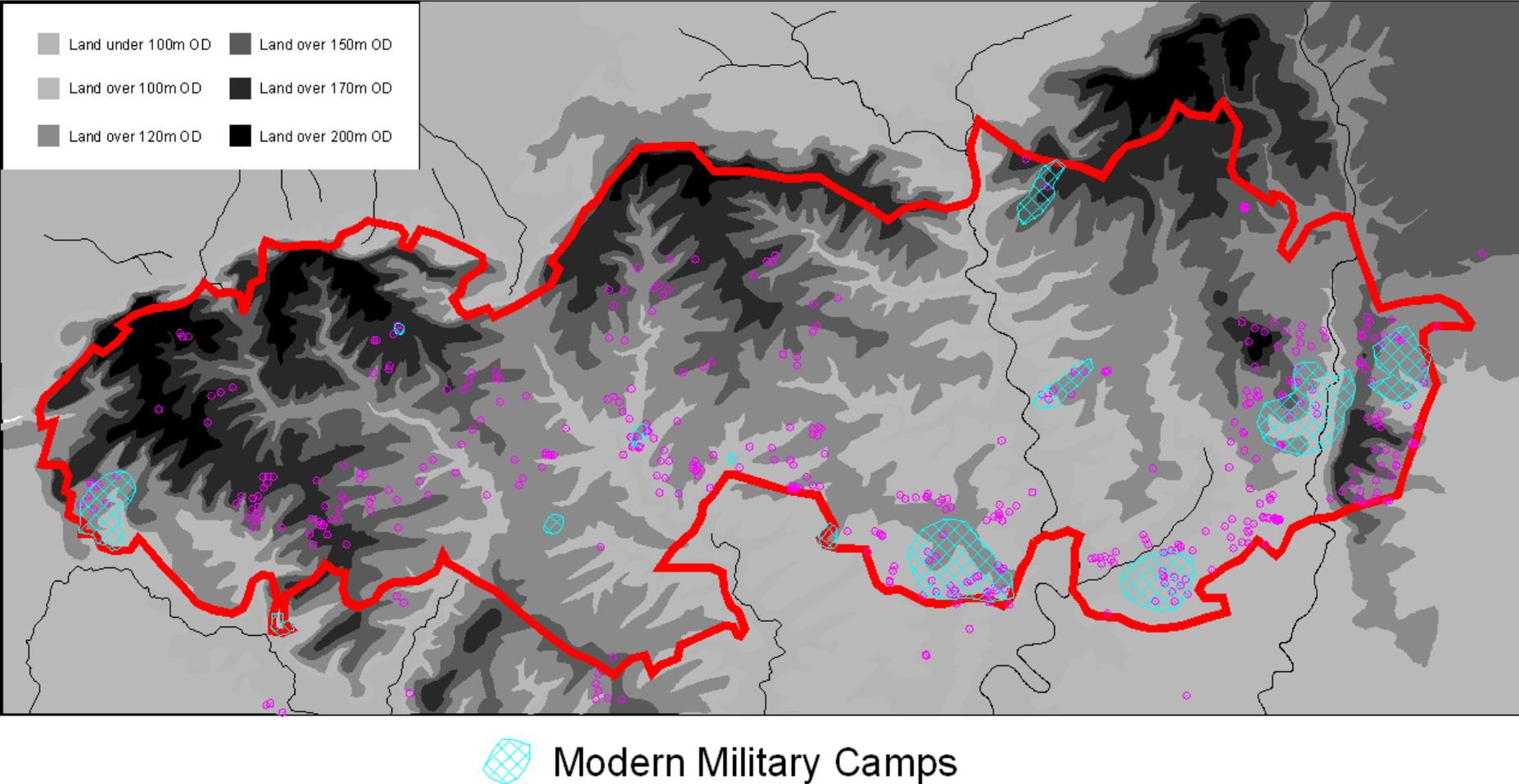


Figure 30 - Distribution of Modern sites

## ***Undated sites***

### **General comments**

It is to be expected that a project which derives its evidence from aerial photographs will produce a high proportion of sites which cannot be dated and the sites of unknown date represent 32.46% of the total database. As with dating sites merely to the prehistoric or Medieval periods, rather than more precisely, there are two different reasons for recording a site as undated. These can again best be demonstrated by a couple of examples. A large number of the undated sites also have non-diagnostic interpretations without an obvious explanation of function, the most common interpretations being (in descending order) field boundary, ditch, enclosure and field system. In many cases there was even some doubt as to the nature of the site and it was quite impossible to suggest a date. For example, the feature recorded as a bomb crater was given that interpretation, but the attached MORPH2 memo field makes it clear that these may in fact be pits of an unknown period instead. The barrow (SP 532.21.1) on Warminster Down comes from an unconfirmed overlay and hence could not be dated. The earthworks west and north of Westbury are undated and suggested as possible settlement, although the memo field again makes it quite clear that the earthworks could be of any date, or could indeed just be drainage related. In the second group of examples it was entirely clear what a feature was, but it was impossible to be sure of its period of construction or use. The size of the round barrow (SP 8.1.1) near Newton Toney, and its proximity to a possible Saxon inhumation meant that it could not be definitely dated in the Unknown Prehistoric period. Likewise much of the ridge and furrow in the central areas of the Plain may relate to Prehistoric field systems or later Medieval reuse. The pit alignment on Amesbury Down (SP 1.3.2) was originally undated since it was considered possibly to represent a relict hedge line. Further investigation now suggests that the winding ditch is Bronze Age or earlier in date and the pit alignment should properly be considered Unknown Prehistoric. (See above 4.5)

### **Settlement**

There are four settlement sites which are totally undated, in spite of the fact that all four are extant as earthworks. The uncertainty results not only from questions over the date of the site, but also there is some doubt as to their precise function and whether they relate to settlement at all. Two of the four are located in the Pewsey Vale, west and north of Westbury, (SP 770.3.1 and SP 771.12.2). SP 775.5.1 is a group of earthworks in the vicinity of Chitterne and SP 777.54.2 lies in Barn Bottom.

There are a further three undated groups given the interpretation settlement. As with the individual sites, it is as much a question of whether the features comprise a settlement as their date which is the problem. SP 759.7.1 is an undated oval banked enclosure on West Down above Tilshead and is recorded as a stock enclosure, but since it contains two small circular enclosures each less than 10m across, they could be hut circles and hence the site could be a settlement.

Analysis of the morphology and unit area of the dated settlements did not reveal any obvious trends which might help in the dating of those yet undated.

All those sites classified as settlement related had areas under 7500 m<sup>2</sup>, with most (95.83%) 4000 m<sup>2</sup> or less. The agriculture related sites, however, start at under 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, and settlement related sites make up only 31.94% of those sites with area of 4000 m<sup>2</sup> or less. Due to the small numbers of sites in individual periods two combined periods Prehistoric and Medieval were used and unit areas compared for these. (see graph Figure 31)

All Prehistoric settlement sites have areas less than 3500 m<sup>2</sup>, with 90% less than 2000 m<sup>2</sup>, and 60% less than 1000 m<sup>2</sup>. In contrast only 50% of Medieval settlement sites are less than 2000 m<sup>2</sup>, only 25% of Medieval sites are less than 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, and an equal proportion of sites

are larger than 3500 m<sup>2</sup>.

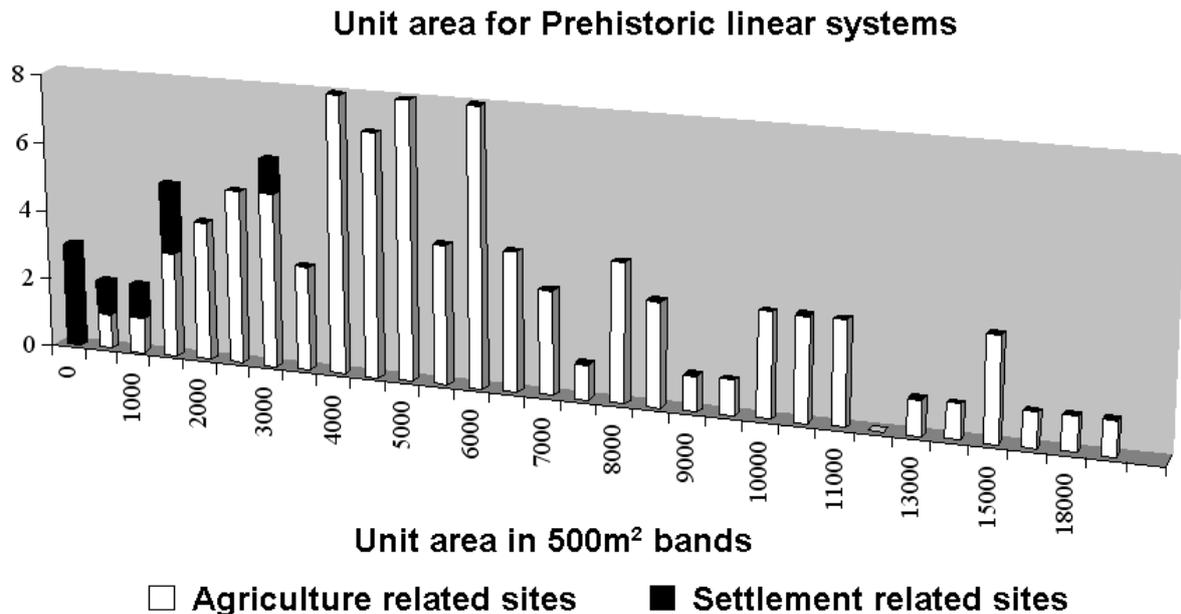


Figure 31 - Bar chart of comparative unit size for Prehistoric period agricultural and settlement related sites

There are four settlement related sites dated either Late Medieval or just Medieval which have unit areas over 3500 m<sup>2</sup>. Of these the largest, at c7000 m<sup>2</sup>, is the site SP 20.19.1, which is recorded as a shrunken village, and relates to the settlement at Brunton. Given that the settlement is still in existence, with houses probably occupying the original settlement area there is good reason to believe that the earthwork remains are the associated small fields, not further large settlement platforms. The same is most probably true for Collingbourne Kingston just to the south (SP 20.17.1) and the deserted village of Syrencot just north of Milston in the Avon Valley (SP 501.16). The site dated only to the Medieval era consists of a series of ditches in fields west of Warminster (SP 770.2). These are interpreted as relating to the documented settlement of Brook (Broke), but may again represent fields, with the actual settlement being slightly further east where there are traces of smaller, but less well preserved enclosures (SP 770.3.1).

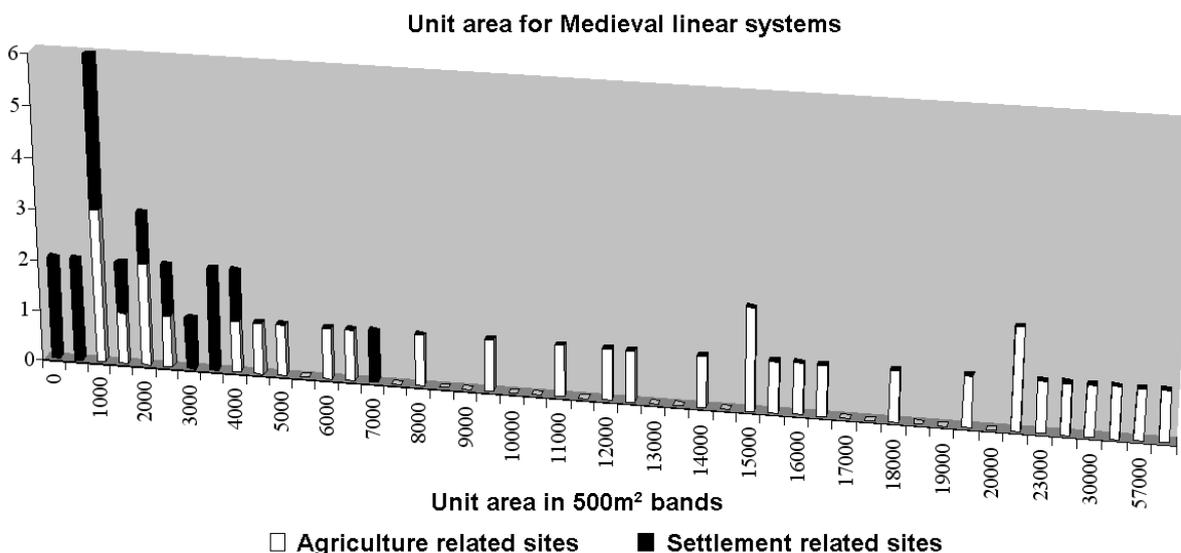


Figure 32 - Bar chart of comparative unit size for Medieval period agricultural and settlement related sites

## Enclosures

As might be expected there are a large number of sites simply interpreted as enclosures and totally undated. Some bear comparison with other dated sites and have been discussed in the appropriate sections. Others are only comparable with other similarly undated sites. Enclosures such as SP 765.7.1 west of Figheldean or SP 23.27.1 on Burbage Down are nearly oval and can only be compared with sites like SP 533.1.1 near Upton Scudamore, SP 24.1.1 on Easton Hill, SP 18.41.1 on Kimpton Down or SP 759.7.1 on West Down all of which are undated. SP 25.11.1 on High Down has certain similarities to SP 506.22.1 near Great Shoddiesden, SP 759.4.1 on West Down and SP 524.2.1 on Chitterne Down. Having said this there is a probable assumption that such oddly and irregularly shaped features are unlikely to date from historic times and as such could probably be recorded as prehistoric in date.

There is much less certainty when dealing with the more regular enclosures. There are five totally undated sub-square sites (SP 502.5.2, SP 15.16.1, SP 13.8.1-2 and SP 784.24.1) whose sides measure c25m, but which can only be compared with each other and SP 502.9.1 which is dated Unknown Medieval, although the reason behind the date is unclear.

A general analysis of enclosure shapes revealed that there were no hard and fast rules which might help to date enclosures whose date and function are currently unknown. Initial analysis of features recorded with the site type "enclosure" i.e. features which enclose an area, suggested a separation between curvilinear prehistoric features and rectilinear historic features. Within the Unknown Prehistoric period there is a 50-50 split between curvilinear and rectilinear enclosures. Of the 162 enclosures 75 are curvilinear, 87 rectilinear. Of these 55 curvilinear and 83 rectilinear are given the interpretation of enclosures. Within the curvilinear there are a further 16 sites recorded as hut circles, and three barrows. Further analysis of the various shapes is noted below.

Those enclosures dated within the Medieval period show a distinct tendency toward the rectilinear with 46 out of the 51 sites. Of these, 30 are recorded as either simple enclosures or stock enclosures. Both the square enclosures have angled corners. Of the rectangular enclosures 13 out of 14 had angled corners. The polygonal enclosures however only split eight to six in favour of angled corners.

86% of those enclosures dated to the prehistoric period are curvilinear in shape. By contrast 63% of historic period enclosures are rectilinear, but this is slightly skewed by a large number (37) of circular or sub-circular modern military features, including 20 gun emplacements. Removing these from the calculations reveals that 87% of historic period enclosures are rectilinear. The undated enclosures split 54% to 46% in favour of the rectilinear. This clearly seems to suggest that prehistoric enclosures tended to be curvilinear whereas later, historic enclosures tend to be rectilinear. This general trend is supported by analysis of other areas. In the Thames Valley 93% of enclosures of Medieval or later date were rectilinear and 60% of Prehistoric and Roman enclosures were curvilinear. These figures are again skewed by the number of Roman sites, 93% of which are rectilinear.

Unfortunately, however, what is being examined in both these cases are the numbers of sites given the site type "enclosure", i.e. they are features which enclose an area. These include all the round barrows and hut circles as well as the sites interpreted as enclosures. There are only 478 features actually interpreted as enclosures, and of these 212 date to the prehistoric period, 59 to the historic and 207 were undated. Of the 212 prehistoric enclosures, 135 (64%) were rectilinear and only 77 (36%) curvilinear; of the 59 historic sites 39 (66%) were rectilinear and 20 (34%) were curvilinear. The undated enclosures split 51% - 49% in favour of rectilinear sites. This seems to suggest that the apparent trend, suggested earlier, that curvilinear sites are earlier than rectilinear ones is not universal and

has to be treated with caution.

## **Fields**

The non-diagnostic nature of enclosures also holds true for the majority of agriculturally related sites such as field systems, field boundaries and lynchets. These are discussed in further detail below in the section dealing with the multi-period landscape.

## ***Multi-period sites and landscapes***

### **General comments**

There are a great many multi-period sites within the project area, and indeed it might not be too much of an exaggeration to suggest that, at the most basic level, there are in fact probably fewer single period sites than multi-period. If however by multi-period we mean a continuance of similar usage then there are still a great number of sites, but they break down into two very distinct groups.

Firstly there are the prehistoric landscapes with a high proportion of sites relating to burial or "ritual activity". The most notable of these is of course the area around Stonehenge, but there are many more. Robin Hood's Ball is surrounded by a number of barrows and there is a probable link between the possible neolithic causewayed camp within Scratchbury and the later barrow cemetery. There are a number of sites where round barrows cluster in the vicinity of long barrows such as on Milston Down. This would also appear to be true of the possible new barrows SP 501.11.1 and SP 501.22.10 on Brigmerston Field. Not only does the siting of round barrows appear to be affected by the position of earlier monuments in the landscape, but this is also true of the linear boundaries. In a great many cases these features align themselves on long barrows and in several cases actually run up to and skirt them, showing that these earlier features clearly had an important place in the lives of later peoples.

The second landscape type is that of settlement and its associated agriculture. There are numerous examples where cultivation extends from the Iron Age through into the Romano-British, and there are even suggestions that in certain areas field systems may date to the Bronze Age. This ought not to be too surprising as one might expect that the best land will continue to be recognised as such and cultivated by whoever inhabits the area. The best examples of continuity are in the central Plain around Charlton and Thornham Downs, but there is good reason to believe that many of the field systems across the Plain had a long life. There are two particular areas where it is clear that two systems of different dates were in operation.

Near the Romano-British settlement of Church Pits, on Orchestron Down, two blocks of co-axial field systems meet. The one to the south (SP 755.19.1) is aligned almost NE-SW, whilst that to the north (SP 755.18.1) is more NNE-SSW. There is no clear evidence of phasing, and it is impossible to say which is the earlier, or indeed whether the two blocks were in use contemporarily. The settlement itself is aligned along a main street (SP 755.20.1), the northern end of which shares its alignment with, or perhaps defines, that of the northern field system. The street then curves to the east, following the alignment of a linear ditch (SP 755.4.1) to the west, which coincidentally shares the alignment of the southern fields.

The second region of interest is the area of the Romano-British settlements in the Larkhill Impact Area. Here, within a matter of a few kilometres, are three settlements and their associated fields. The main settlement on Charlton Down (SP 786.7.1) covers an area of c1km x ½km, larger than many of the current villages in the area and larger than several small Roman towns. It contains approximately 200 house platforms arranged within enclosures grouped along a series of main streets and subsidiary lanes. Almost due west, at a distance of just over a kilometre lies the second settlement of Upavon Down (SP 536.42.7). This is a considerably smaller settlement situated near the end of the spur of Upavon Down, and consists of a number of platforms set within enclosures and linked by tracks. Between the two settlements are several blocks of fields with their main axes aligned along the ridge. Another kilometre east, and slightly south is the third settlement, Compton Down (SP 536.42.1). This occupies approximately 0.25 sq km on the extreme east end of Compton Down, and consists of a number of structures and small compounds, all integrated

into the surrounding field system. Whilst the fields along Upavon Down follow a regular pattern those further to the south on Thornham Down and Compton Down are much more irregular. That is to say that they form several quite distinct blocks, sometimes related closely to the underlying topography, at other times ignoring it. Likewise they differ in size. There are several regular small blocks, with fields no more than 30-40m across and less than 100m long (e.g. those centred at c SU 096513, SU 090515, or SU 094519). Elsewhere fields range up to 150m by 120m. There is a strong probability that some of these variations in size are due to the same factor as was addressed in section 4.5 the apparent absence of sub-divisions due to conditions such as the direction of lighting on the photographs, or later agricultural activity. This latter point is particularly interesting. Within a number of the fields there is clear evidence of ridges associated with agricultural activity, which were they in the context of Medieval settlement would readily be described as ridge and furrow. Their interest lies in the fact that in some cases these blocks of cultivation, and their ridges, pay no regard to the underlying field system, whilst in others they do, and in one area centred at c SU 095 515 there are two sets of cultivation which overlie one another. The later block does not respect the underlying fields, whilst the early block does. One possible reason behind the different alignments would be that the earlier cultivation took place within the bounds of the existing fields, because those farmers were unable to plough over the field banks, whereas the later farmers could. This in turn suggests that either the banks had become eroded, or the newer farmers had better technology.

It is interesting to compare this with an analogous situation which occurred at the beginning of this century with regard to military activity on the Plain. The advent of the combustion engine, and particularly the invention of the tank, meant that the various remains of field systems and other monuments were no barrier to movement across the Plain. There are, however, photographs taken in the 1920s, which show horse drawn gun carriages exercising just to the south of Sidbury Hill, on the eastern part of the Plain. Other photographs show what are thought to be the remains of the turning circles for these gun carriages, aligned within the field banks, which presumably restricted their movement. (Photo references SU 2149/10 and SU 2150/5)

If we assume that the change in alignment of the agricultural blocks was due to the removal of the restrictions posed by the field banks, then whether this was due to improvements in technology or reduction in the size of the banks, it suggests a major chronological separation between the two episodes of ploughing. The extent of Medieval agricultural activity on the Plain is unclear. Elsewhere in Wessex ridge-and-furrow cultivation has been dated to the 13th or early 14th century and a similar date can be suggested for some of the furlongs on the Plain, but there was also extension of arable cultivation and temporary intakes for 'catch crops' on the lower slopes and Higher Plain during the 16th and 17th century (McOmish et al (Forthcoming)). If we assume that the later cultivation (whatever its precise date) which ignores the underlying fields does date to the Medieval period, then the earlier ploughing is quite possibly related to the original cultivation in the Romano-British period, and is therefore a unique remnant of Romano-British agricultural activity, preserving not only the fields, but also some trace of the actual farming practices. It is of course also possible that the earlier cultivation dates from the 13th or 14th centuries when farming techniques were not sufficiently advanced to cultivate over the banks, and the later cultivation dates from a period when they could.

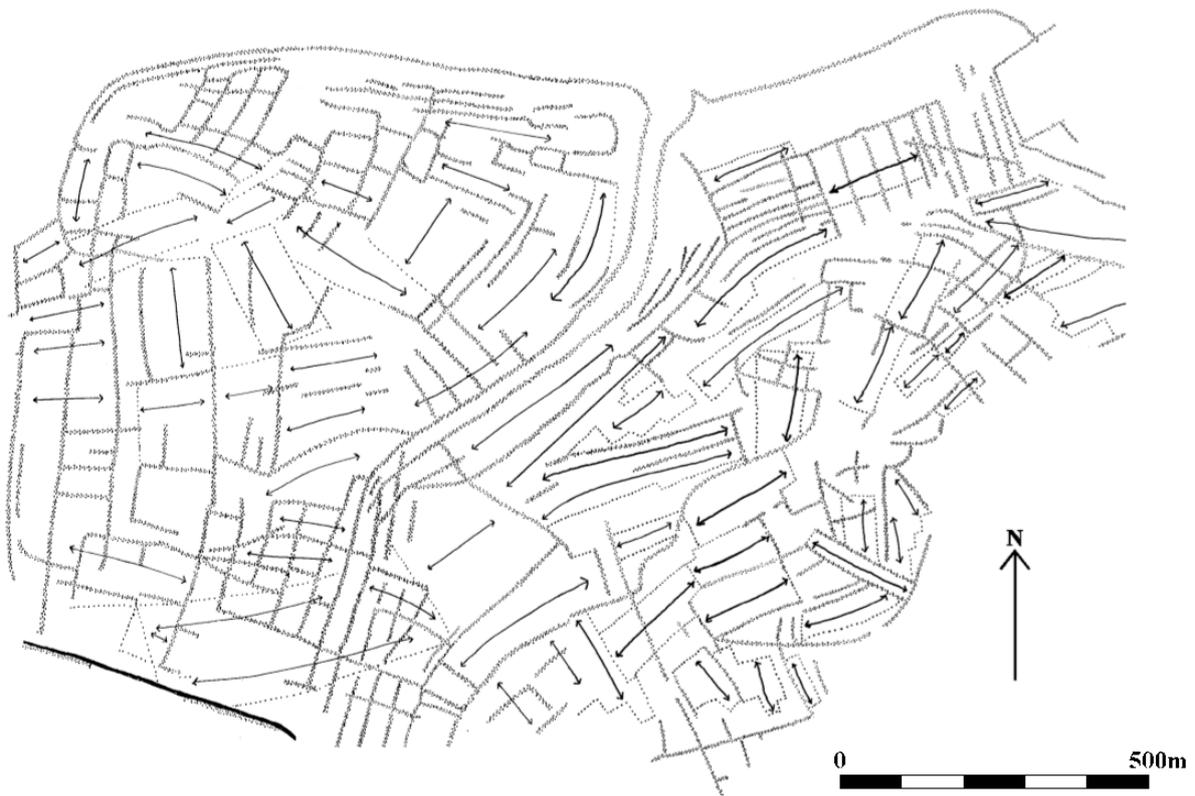


Figure 33 - Extract from transcription of Thornham Down



Figure 34 - Thornham Down © NMR Crown Copyright - Crawford collection (CCC 11752/4109)

At a broader level there is the third form of landscape continuity visible in the continued use of land divisions in certain cases from the Bronze Age into Parish boundaries still in use today.

The extent of the survival in earthwork form of the monuments of the Plain gives a unique opportunity to examine the development of the landscape over time. In many cases the influence which the monuments of one period had on another can only be guessed at

because the monuments themselves are no longer extant and it is impossible to say when they were destroyed. On the Plain there are not only the more commonly surviving monuments such as barrows, but also a large number of boundary earthworks and even extant examples of Prehistoric settlement with associated fields. This is a unique resource and should be used to gain a clearer understanding of the relationship both between the ritual monuments of different epochs and between the ritual and domestic sides of life in various eras.

## Fields

As well as examining the relationship between various settlements and their associated blocks of fields, it is also possible to compare the various fields themselves, in both their form and size.

Field boundaries (387 records) and field systems (373 records) account for 760 records, more than all other features except simple enclosures, round barrows or bowl barrows. They cover a larger area than any other feature, in several cases extending over several kilometres, and there is clear evidence that in some areas systems recorded as individual sites are actually fragments of much larger systems, sometimes extending over entire map sheets!

The nature of the current land-use on the Plain with little intrusive arable cultivation, means that a very high proportion of Prehistoric fields still remain as earthworks, with field banks and lynchets in some central areas still standing several metres high. All but one of the field systems dated to the Roman period and two thirds of those of prehistoric date were partially surviving as earthworks.

Unfortunately the dating of fields is complicated by the fact that they have not generally been subject to excavation, which tends to have been concentrated on settlement or funerary sites. They generally tend to be dated by finds recovered during field walking or on morphological grounds. At the time of this survey just eight field boundaries and 38 field systems had been subject to field survey and a single field boundary (SP 768.20.1) had been examined by small-scale excavation. Thus the evidence for field systems and field boundaries on Salisbury Plain is mainly derived from aerial photographs (94%), and only 6% has supporting evidence from field survey or excavation.

As a result of this the vast majority were either totally undated (62.40%) or dated only with the general date range Unknown Prehistoric (24.16%) or Unknown Medieval (7.62%), although the range of dates spans the Iron Age to the Post Medieval period.

The dating and interpretation of field systems etc is further complicated by the fact that there is often a degree of confusion between those features which are directly related to the settlements and their associated fields. In some cases what were in fact settlement enclosures have been interpreted as small fields, and the larger fields on the very edges of settlement have been interpreted as domestic enclosures. An analysis of all those features which were capable of yielding a unit area for sites was carried out and showed some clear trends, but also some anomalies.

The Prehistoric field systems ranged in area from 500 m<sup>2</sup> to 18,000 m<sup>2</sup>, with a concentration (65.22%) between 2000 m<sup>2</sup> and 7500 m<sup>2</sup>, and a peak around 5000 m<sup>2</sup>. Of the seven sites over 12500 m<sup>2</sup>, three almost certainly had sub-divisions which would put the unit areas into the central block. An example was (SP 767.26.1) a system of lynchets and fields following the contours around Warren Down, whose unit area, at 15,000 m<sup>2</sup>, is exaggerated since there were probably cross contour sub-divisions. The other four ranged between 13,000 m<sup>2</sup> and 18,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

By contrast Medieval field systems ranged from 2000 m<sup>2</sup> to 77,000 m<sup>2</sup>, with a concentration (if any can be seen anywhere) between 11,000 m<sup>2</sup> and 18,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The vast majority of sites are comprised of ridge and furrow, and indeed of all those sites with unit area over 12,500 m<sup>2</sup>, 52.78% were blocks of ridge and furrow.

The 61 undated field systems which produced unit areas ranged from 1500 m<sup>2</sup> to 20,000 m<sup>2</sup>, with a concentration (60.66%) between 2000 m<sup>2</sup> and 8500 m<sup>2</sup>, and a peak around 4000-5000 m<sup>2</sup>, which puts them in the same range as Prehistoric fields. Visual examination of the larger fields in this group suggests no reason why these might not be dated Prehistoric. An example is the series of fields on the top of the northern scarp of the Plain (SP 21.9.1), which have a unit area of 10,500 m<sup>2</sup>. Their size, general shape and the proximity of Romano-British finds suggests that they might better be dated Prehistoric.

Of those sites with an area over 12,500 m<sup>2</sup> most of those, which were not ridge and furrow proved to be amenable to dating in the Prehistoric period. The very largest site is Post Medieval and incorporates a number of field boundaries still depicted on the 6" map base. Of the remaining 16 sites closer examination suggests that half of them in fact have sub divisions. The remaining seven field systems (SP 1.2.1, SP 11.2.1, SP 508.2.4, SP 517.1.1, SP 517.4.1, SP 517.16.1, SP 528.18.1) which do not appear to have sub-divisions range in unit area between 13,000 – 18,000 m<sup>2</sup> with 71.43% between 14,000 – 15,000 m<sup>2</sup>. They were initially dated as follows: four Unknown Prehistoric, two Unknown and one Unknown Medieval; later examination of those dated Unknown Medieval or undated suggests that there is no reason why they might not be considered as Unknown Prehistoric, especially as there are other Unknown Prehistoric features in the vicinity of all of them.

Some attempt was made to break down the various field systems into the Monument Protection Programme Single Monument Class descriptions, but this proved rather difficult, given that the defining feature of the systems is their huge extent and their relationship to the topography, either in terms of respecting or ignoring it. There are two main types of prehistoric field system apparent, but they are not always easily distinguishable. One type is that called 'cohesive' by Bradley and Richards (1978), but which is now referred to as 'coaxial' (Fleming 1988). These consist of a regular layout of fields which form a gridded pattern, generally containing one or more "major" lynchets running through the whole system along its axis. In the very broadest terms, these sorts of fields on SPTA share a common symmetry of layout with the predominant axis being north-east - south-west. In certain areas this is more nearly due north-south, but the fields can be seen to be part of the same system because their axial geometry is adhered to in the main, regardless of the underlying topography, as though the fields were laid out in a single undertaking or a series of exercises following rapidly one after the other. Elsewhere the fields are much less organised, appearing as clusters of fields which display a wide variety of shape and size.

The large area field systems are most completely preserved on the east side of the Avon Valley. (Preservation here refers to their overall layout, and their relationship to the various linear boundaries, rather than their form as extant earthworks). There is a block of fields some 5km long, and up to two km wide in parts, running from Littlecott Down, across Longstreet Down, Coombe Down and onto Everleigh Down and Weather Hill. This follows a largely NE-SW axis, the same as that for the network of linear ditches (some of which have been broadened for later use as trackways), which is markedly different from that of the linears emanating from Sidbury Hill. This difference can be seen most clearly on Weather Hill and Snail Down (SU 200 525 and SU 220 525), where the fields are cut by the linears centred on Sidbury Hill. Another large stretch of similarly aligned fields extends for over 4km E-W and up to 2km N-S, from Figheldean Down, across Ablington Down and onto Briggerston Down. These fields, especially across Figheldean Down, were long thought to respect the linear ditches, with a "blank" area, possibly representing pasture at c SU1849. In fact the fields clearly continue into this "blank" area and in the east, around Dunch Hill,

they are quite clearly cut by one of the linears. The linear in question is part of the network, which continues south, and also cuts across a 1km sq block of fields at the Bulford Ranges on Beacon Hill (SU 206 452).

These fields and the associated linear ditches have been discussed at some length by various sources (Bradley et al 1994), but they are by no means unique on the Plain. There are other fine examples in the central zone and to the west, some of which raise the same questions about sequences of development and relationships with earlier land divisions. The best preserved of these are the fields covering Charlton Down, Thornham Down, Rushall Down etc in the Larkhill Impact Area. (Here preservation refers to the entirety of the monument, not withstanding the fact that there are a large number of shell holes across the impact area). The topography clearly has some bearing on the layout of the fields both in specific cases (e.g. SU 092 520 the top of Thornham Down, where a lynchet curves around the contour above the valley) and in the general alignment of the fields along the crest of Charlton Down. However, there is also an underlying alignment present, which disregards the topography, most notably at SU 090 520, where a group of linear fields run almost due north-south across the valley separating Charlton and Thornham Downs. This north-south alignment, where there are certain significant lynchets running through the fields, can be seen continuing for a short while to both east and west before turning slightly more NNE-SSW, reflecting the alignment of fields to the south of the Old Nursery Ditch.

These fields to the south of the Old Nursery Ditch are very fragmentary, but continue the alignment north from the area of the settlement at Church Pits, where there are clearly two separate systems, which meet at an angle (see above).

Toward the west end of Charlton Down (c SU078 522) there are groups of smaller, less regular fields, similar to those on the tip of Thornham Down mentioned above. The same is true for the west edge of Compton Down (c SU11 52) where there are at least two different groups of fields, but where the situation is further complicated by several episodes of cultivation, which may relate to medieval agricultural activity.

Around Knook there is another extensive area of fields, though the majority are now ploughed out. The fields immediately associated with the Romano-British settlement follow a north-south alignment, but although this alignment is the same as that of the settlements there is little doubt that the settlements are themselves following the alignment of earlier fields. These fields extend south and east over Knook Down and onto Codford Down, where they follow at least two different alignments, though their relationship is unclear. On the east side of the Chitterne Brook, on East Codford Down, Deptford Down and Maddington Down there are a number of coaxial systems, each separated from its nearest neighbour by an average distance of 1km. The areas between these are filled with clusters of much more irregular fields, often apparently randomly conjoined with one another, in systems which can themselves cover areas up to 1km sq.

Around Chapperton Down there are the remains of an interesting example of a coaxial field system. This covers some nine sq km, but its alignment changes, shifting gradually, following the underlying landform, moving from NNW-SSE in the west to NNE-SSW in the east. On Neveravon Down (SU 120 475) the fields follow a single alignment, but instead of the major lynchets running NNE-SSW through the whole system, they are at right angles, defining the placement of the regularly aligned blocks. Slightly further over to the east (c SU 123 477) there are a number of oddly shaped fields, and one single circular enclosure at SU 121 477, which may represent part of an area of settlement.

Elsewhere the fields are more fragmentary and less well preserved. Fore Down and the area around Imber have been badly affected by later agricultural activity associated with the village, but there are still some slight traces of field systems visible. Where they are

apparent they seem to have their alignment defined at least in part by the topography, following that of the valleys and spurs. Further west, across Boreham Down, Bishopstrow Down and North Down in the area of the Old Ditch West there are traces of blocks of fields covering one - two sq km, aligned roughly NNE-SSW, which happens to be at right angles to the ditch.

The dating of these field systems is difficult on purely morphological grounds. The work of the Wessex Linear Ditches Project in the Eastern Plain has suggested chronologies and relationships between the major linear boundaries and the various field systems. The linears certainly extend much further west across the Plain and their relationship with the field systems may be the clue to dating there also.

As with fields, lynchets make up a relatively high proportion of sites (213 records). Dates range from the Roman to Late Medieval, but not surprisingly the vast majority of sites are undated, since although they were in use during the Medieval period they may well have had prehistoric origins.

Within these fields there are 96 features which were recorded as ridge and furrow, and five which were recorded as cultivation marks. The difference in interpretation rests in the fact that the term ridge and furrow is seen as having clearly Medieval connotations. There were a number of sites within Salisbury Plain Training Area which were clearly areas of cultivation, with the appearance of ridge and furrow, but for one reason or another could potentially be Prehistoric or Romano-British in origin. This was particularly true in the central areas of the Plain where there was reason to believe that there was the presence of cultivation contemporary with the Romano-British settlement as well as later Medieval activity (See above).

Clearly further examination of the cultivation marks in the central Plain area should be a priority. If even a few of these are extant Prehistoric fields with the evidence of agricultural practice they are tremendously important remains, particularly as they can be related to their associated settlements.

## **Tracks**

Trackways have been recorded over a wide range of periods from the Iron Age through to Modern times, but the vast majority of sites, (88.49%) were not dated to any specific date. They were either categorised as Prehistoric (17.99%) or Medieval (19.42%) or were left totally undated (51.08%). Given the simplicity of the trackway and its continued use through several millennia it is difficult to assign a date with any degree of certainty except by association. Even so the longevity of trackways and their reuse over a period of time mean that any attempt at dating them can only be focussed on their origin and creation.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## ***General conclusions***

Although the area of Salisbury Plain has been subject to a number of varied investigations since at least the last century, ranging from excavations by people such as Colt Hoare, Thurnham, and Cunnington, to the large area surveys of OGS Crawford, a remarkably large percentage of new sites was recorded by this project. Of the 4261 sites recorded, 1864 (43.74%), had no previous NMR or SMR number, and an unquantifiable number of sites had additional data recorded for them. This ranged from adding the odd scrap of ditch, to extending a field system by 500 Ha. 420 of the "new" sites (22.53%) were Modern in date, and were therefore less likely to have been included in previous surveys. Excluding the Modern sites there were a total of 1444 new sites (33.89%). Of the "new" sites 850 (45.6%) were cropmarks, 878 (47.1%) earthworks, 132 (7.08%) a combination of cropmark and earthwork and four included stonework. After removal of the Modern sites the remaining 1447 were seen as 807 cropmark (55.8%), 574 (39.7%) earthwork and 66 (4.5%) a combination of cropmark and earthwork. This means that there was a higher proportion of new sites revealed as cropmarks than as earthworks, which is an indication of their erosion and destruction by ploughing in the last 20 years.

## ***Methodological recommendations***

### **Order of survey**

Clearly one of the main points to arise from this project is that detailed fieldwork should follow aerial survey of an area rather than vice-versa. Where fieldwork follows aerial survey it is possible to target resources to areas where interpretation is uncertain, or alternatively areas where the overall context of features suggests there will be the prospect of particularly useful results.

### **Size of survey**

Previous NMP projects (Fenner and Dyer 1994, Horne & MacLeod 1995) have tackled larger areas and in some cases the majority of a county (Bewley 1998) and this has created difficulties in team and project management, as well as in post mapping analysis. Experience has now shown that smaller landscape zones make better NMP type projects. Thus the area of SPTA was an ideal example. Covering just 27 OS sheets (675 square km) meant it was a compact manageable landscape, a landscape which, moreover, was also remarkably well defined and was subject, in the main, to a unique land management regime. Yet it was still sufficiently large and had a diverse range of monuments to allow the analysis of results in a meaningful way.

### **Staff resources**

There were certain benefits in having a close working relationship with the field survey team, but the percentage of newly trained staff on the project team (at one point 60%) resulted in slower progress than anticipated. SPTA is a very complex area, and it was far from ideal as a training exercise. With a full complement of experienced staff, or at least a higher proportion, the project would have been completed considerably sooner, and to a more uniform standard.

### **Sources of data**

The concordance work required at the exchange from MORPH2 to MONARCH will be significantly longer and more complex as a result of the prior updating of MONARCH. There were numerous examples where a site was recorded in the SMR from "air photographic

evidence”, which the project proved to be non-archaeological in origin. If the NMR had not been updated with full SMR data, but with just a bibliographic enhancement, these sites could simply be ignored. Now, however, the record will have to be concorded with the relevant NMR record and this record will have to be edited to record its changed interpretation.

## ***Recommendations for survey and excavation***

### **Reconnaissance**

The reconnaissance records for Salisbury Plain are probably unique in the country. Of the 5959 records for photographs of Salisbury Plain 2027 (34%) date from before 1950. There were approximately 1000 photographs taken in both the 1970s and 1980s, but these were very much targeted on specific sites. It was only really with the 1990s that recent reconnaissance has taken place over the whole Plain. Indeed a number of sites were discovered in the summer and autumn of 1995, but were not recorded by this project (see section 3.1.3.1). Continuing a reconnaissance programme will undoubtedly yield further results. There is also scope for photographing sites which are now known from vertical photography, but for which we do not have close-up oblique cover which may reveal further detail.

### **Crawford maps**

Targeted reconnaissance could be particularly useful in conjunction with the records recovered from Crawford's annotated 6" maps. Since they only came to light part way through the project they were not generally consulted for comparison. A brief examination of these maps after the end of the mapping phase revealed some sites recorded by Crawford which were not recorded by the project. In certain cases the photographs from which the features were recorded were seen by the interpreters and the sites were clearly regarded as non-archaeological in origin. In others, however, the negatives referred to by Crawford were not seen (they were quite probably amongst those destroyed by the bombing of Southampton in November 1940), and it is entirely possible that there are sites visible then which have not been seen since due to the reversion of large areas of arable to pasture. A further detailed comparison of the Crawford maps with the project should lead to a better idea of the quality of Crawford's interpretation and also a quantification of the number of missing photographs which might have shown other sites. Given this information it might be possible both to re-examine the known photography of those areas which might yield sites and also target them for new reconnaissance at the appropriate times.

### **Interpretation**

Salisbury Plain is a unique area of archaeological preservation in England, but it cannot be considered in isolation from its surroundings. There is no doubt that the same patterns of land-use and settlement, which occurred within the Training Area was also occurring on the Plain beyond the Wylie valley, around Cow Down and on to Cold Kitchen Hill and indeed on the Marlborough Downs across the Vale of Pewsey to the north. To the south-east the findings of the project must be compared with those from the Danebury environs project (Palmer 1984). There is in fact a degree of overlap between the two project areas. The western edges of the Berkshire NMP project will almost reach the eastern most extent of the present survey and may show some continuation of the field systems.

### **Field walking**

The nature of much of the Plain as a military training area rules out access for field walking on a regular basis, and indeed the majority of the central areas is not under cultivation and therefore not susceptible to field walking, as it is normally perceived. There are, however, a

number of areas around the edge of the Plain, particularly in the south-east where the field systems have been ploughed out where a concerted programme of field walking might recover evidence for associated or earlier settlement. If the results of the Wessex Linear Ditches Project are any guide unenclosed settlements may well be discovered by field work and they are of a site type not easily visible on aerial photographs.

## **Field survey**

Although large areas of the Plain have been subject to detailed field survey there are clearly more areas that would benefit from further survey on the ground. Prior to the NMP project, survey has been restricted to the bounds of the ASG's set up in the 1980s, but the results of this project have shown that there are possibly sites worth investigating outside those areas.

One clear target for examination is the potential settlement on Norton Down (SP 780.31), another is the strange kinks in the linear ditch along Middleton Down between ST 928 469 – ST 930 467 and the more pronounced angle just east of Kill Barrow, and the odd looped extension to the linear just west of White Barrow. These are just a few sites where detailed field survey could add useful information to that gather from aerial photographs alone. There may be some benefit in examining some of those sites which have recently been ploughed, both from the point of view of finds collection, but also to see whether there are still traces of features extant on the ground.

## **Remote sensing**

As with field walking there are restrictions with regard to access to large areas of the Plain and its use as a military training area provides the additional difficulty that there are large amounts of old metal ordnance present. These will not only create interference for a number of methods of prospection, but in the case of certain items could even be triggered by magnetic fields. Away from those areas most at risk there is evidently scope for targeted geophysical investigation. Work in the river valleys and around the edges of the Plain has already yielded spectacular results, in terms of finding the Roman villa sites clearly missing from the centre of the Plain (M Corney pers comm.). This would probably be particularly useful in association with a programme of field walking, but there are already a couple of sites of potential buildings. (Building debris has been recovered at one site near Kimpton Wood and cropmarks are suggestive of another above site St Joan a Gore farm, and a third on the slopes above Rollestone.)

## **Excavation**

The only way to securely date a site is to carry out excavation. Since the majority of sites which survive as earthworks are not under threat (except so far as increased military activity on the Plain is concerned) there is little justification for destructive survey. Small-scale excavation of certain sites would however help to resolve a number of questions. Following on from the work of the Wessex Linear Ditches Project there is clearly scope for examination of some of the large linear boundaries in the central and west Plain, both for direct dating evidence and also to establish their relationship with the field systems. Excavation might also help to resolve some of the questions of relative chronology of some field systems. Examination of certain of the cropmark enclosure sites might establish whether the proposed dates are accurate and help to create a broader database from which to make morphological comparisons.

## ***Recommendations for research***

### **Prehistoric settlement**

Salisbury Plain has long been known for the funerary and ritual monuments of the Prehistoric era. The concentration of long barrows and Round Barrows of various forms is

remarkable. The evidence for settlement however has largely been restricted to the major hillforts such as Battlesbury, Scratchbury or Casterley Camp and the Romano-British villages like Chisenbury Warren, Knook or Charlton Down. Very little was known about simple enclosed settlement perhaps representing small farmsteads. The results of this project have changed this: the 1447 new sites 198 (13.86%) were recorded as enclosures, the most common site interpretation, after field boundary and ditch. This number is nearly 40% of all sites recorded as enclosures, and shows to what extent the presence of simple settlement enclosures had previously been underestimated. There is clearly a good opportunity in the future to examine the numerous, but undated sites, with a view to dating them and/or relating them to the field systems which surround them.

## **Field systems**

The field systems on Salisbury Plain cover approximately 22% of the area within the boundaries of the Training Area and extend beyond it to the south and east. They are not, however, regular blocks of uniform fields. Where, at first sight, there may appear to be a large degree of uniformity suggestive of continuity, closer inspection reveals a number of anomalies. There is a great deal of re-use and redevelopment. Because of their large extent and the limitations of recording in MORPH2 the majority of field systems have been recorded as virtually indistinguishable one from another. Detailed examination, first of the transcribed evidence, then if necessary on the ground, may help to reveal the chronological sequence and perhaps also relate them to settlements or the major linear ditch systems.

## **Neolithic sites**

There are two potential areas of interest for Neolithic sites on Salisbury Plain. The first involves the possible causewayed enclosure within the hillfort at Scratchbury. As noted in section 4.1 the ditch was not fully excavated by Grimes, and the surface indications are that it does have causeways in the ditch.

The second is the number of potential long barrows. These have been discussed in greater detail in section 4.1, where several new candidates have been proposed. These were all visible as cropmark sites, and therefore require further investigation either by means of remote sensing or excavation.

## **Bronze Age sites**

Bronze Age monuments, the round barrows, make up the largest single monument type on the Plain, yet whilst there is ample evidence for their funerary and religious activity there is very little indication of settlement. The work of the Wessex Linear Ditches Project (Bradley et al 1994) has shown that there are some areas of potential settlement within those areas enclosed by the linear ditches on Dunch Hill and some suggestions have been made by this project regarding other possible enclosures of Bronze Age date.

Likewise the work carried out by the Wessex Linear Ditches Project gave a clear date for the linear boundaries in the east, but there are similar features stretching across the Plain and indeed the Long Ditch extends for some distance further west. These need investigating both in themselves and with regard to their relationship with the field systems that cover the area, so as to assess whether in some cases the field systems have origins older than the boundaries.

The ditches are interesting as boundaries perhaps defining territories and as such it is important that we know their full extent. Reference to antiquarian research by Colt Hoare, for example, can be useful (if treated with caution) in so far as there were greater lengths of such features extant than nowadays. Colt Hoare in his description of the Old Ditch talks as though he walks along it without a break, but draws it with a large gap where it would cross the valley of the Chitterne Brook (Hoare 1810, 74). It is assumed that the ditch is a single

continuation, whereas there is no evidence for this and indeed the two sections do not line up on one another. If the ditches are not of the same date, nor part of the same system, this will affect our understanding of the possible territories.

## **Iron Age and Romano-British sites**

This period is best examined as a single area of concern for two reasons. Firstly, one of the main spheres of interest must be the transition from the Iron Age to Romanised settlement. Secondly, but equally important from a practical point of view, only a very small proportion of sites were specifically dated to the Iron Age or Roman period during the project.

There is clearly an opportunity for further work on the series of enclosures recorded by the SPTA Mapping Project, to see whether they are all of the same date, and whether they, therefore, represent any discernible settlement pattern. This can then be compared with the later pattern of the Romano-British sites such as Knook, Charlton Down etc. These themselves could be examined for evidence of precursors.

In the more distinctly Romano-British period there is clearly more work to be done to find more villas. There are a couple of examples of possible buildings seen on aerial photographs within the project area, but geophysical prospection has also recovered sites (See above). The presence of villas along the river valley shows that there were villa complexes in the area, which may mean changing the theories about the Plain as an imperial estate, as has been postulated by others (Collingwood and Myres 1937 224-5; Hingley 1989 124,127).

The possible road over Aughton Down might also bear further investigation, to see whether it is a section of the road from Sorbiodunum (Old Sarum) to Cunetio (Marlborough).

## **The Medieval era**

The main area of interest for the Medieval period concerns activity on the plain, especially the extent of later cultivation, and how this has effected the earlier prehistoric fields, and the remains of cultivation patterns.

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## **Appendix 1 - Sources**

## **Photographic sources**

Full details of the main photographs used for plotting each site are recorded on the Site Record Forms stored as part of the project archive along with a complete listing of all the photographs examined.

### **Specialist oblique photography:**

**National Monuments Record: Air Photographs (NMRAP)** - obliques from a variety of sources, including RCHME reconnaissance, early OGS Crawford and some CUCAP.

**Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography (CUCAP)** - specialist, often low-level obliques; in-house photography only.

**Wiltshire County Council SMR** - a number of specialist photographs taken by Roy Canham which can be viewed in Trowbridge.

**Hampshire County Council SMR** - a small number of specialist photographs held by the Council can be viewed at Winchester.

### **Vertical photography:**

**NMRAP** - verticals primarily from RAF and OS, dating from 1945 onwards.

**CUCAP** - high quality in-house verticals.

**Wiltshire County Council SMR** - high quality verticals from 1971, 1981 and 1991 (colour). They also hold various other surveys covering the Plain such as that carried out for the planned Esso oil pipeline.

**Hampshire county Council SMR** - high quality verticals from 1971, 1984 and 1991 (colour), taken for the census.

**English Nature** - they have flown the Plain for management purposes, their most recent cover being in 1994. These flights were flown by CUCAP and copies are also held by Wiltshire SMR.

## ***Archival sources***

***NMR*** - copies of record maps. Print-outs to accompany the record sheets from (now NewHIS) MONARCH.

***NMR Excavation index*** - the excavation index consulted through the MONARCH, as above.

***Wiltshire County Council SMR*** - Copies of the 1:10,000 SMR maps and their accompanying print outs; copies of the specific SPTA database and plots. The plots show the archaeology plotted in different colours relating to the source from which it is derived.

***Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6" maps*** - a very useful source of information about earthwork remains and industrial sites.

## **Appendix 2 - Conventions used for SPTA**

## NMP CONVENTIONS FOR 1:10,000 SCALE MAPPING

Ditches: extant or plough levelled.

*Variable line thickness.*



Stone and/or earth banks/mounds: extant or plough levelled.

*Heavy stipple.*



Hollow ways and un-surfaced trackways not defined by other depicted features.  
(1mm dashes. Single line per track where braided)



Area features (small): storage pits, grubenhaüser, clearance cairns, standing stones.

*Drawn solid as seen.*



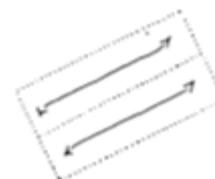
Compacted or made stone surfaces/spreads: paved areas, surfaced roads

*Medium stipple.*



Ridge and furrow: units are defined by dots (1mm spacing) if not bounded by headlands, banks, ditches, or any other feature with a specific convention.

*Double headed arrow to show shape and direction of rig.*



Water meadows: Units are defined by the extent of feature (1mm dashes at 0.5mm spacing) if not bounded by banks, ditches, or any other feature with a specific convention. Within each area the main drains are depicted as ditches together with a sufficient number of subsidiary drains to give an impression of the form.



Negative features (large): extant or back filled fishponds, quarries etc.

*"T" hachure 0.5mm.*



Railway/tramway: This convention should be used even if the only visible remains are embankments/cuttings.

*2mm spacing for crossing lines.*



Extent of feature: A hard boundary marking the outline of a feature (e.g. the runways of a disused airfield)

*1mm dashes at 0.5mm spacing.*



Extent of area: A soft boundary marking the perceived limit of an activity (e.g. a lead mining area)

*3mm dashes at 1mm spacing.*



## **Appendix 3 - Contents of the SPTA archive**

The archive for the SPTA NMP project is lodged at the NMRC in Swindon and consists of the following items:

27 ink overlays to 1:10,000 OS base map showing archaeological features

27 pencil overlays to 1:10,000 OS base map showing archaeological features (working drawings including annotations)

27 "MORPH" sheets showing the site numbers allocated to each drawn feature.

Site Record Forms (SRF's) – used to record such details as the main photography used for the transcription and any other information which might prove useful when entering the feature on the database.

Map note sheets (MNS) – used for each quarter sheet to note problem areas for more detailed investigation, built up regions, areas with no photographic cover etc

Backup copy of the MORPH2 database

Copy of the SPTA specification

Copy of the SPTA report

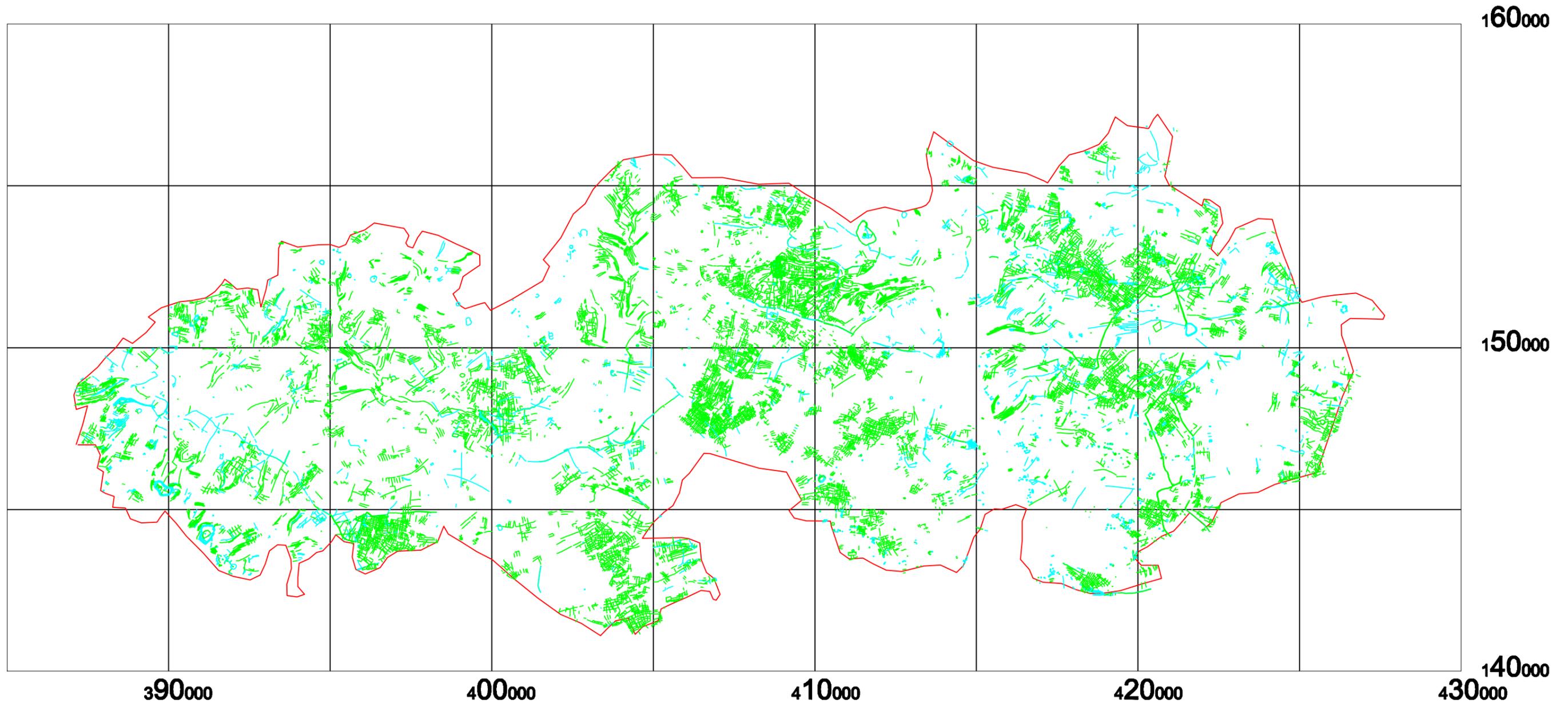
## **Appendix 4 - A list of previously surveyed sites**

## Previously surveyed sites

The principal existing sources of mapped information used for the Salisbury Plain Training Area Project area were as follows:

- a) Digicart Transcriptions: a total of c60km<sup>2</sup> have been mapped by RCHME's Air Photography Unit (APU) over a number of years using the Digicart stereo photogrammetric plotter. The plots cover 4 distinct areas each relating to one of the previously allocated Archaeological Site Groups (ASGs). The plots produced are at a scale of 1:2500 and are accurate to within  $\pm 2$ m.
- b) APU Special projects: an area of c44km<sup>2</sup> around Stonehenge had been surveyed by the APU as part of a number of projects relating to the replacement of the current Stonehenge visitor facilities and the development of the A303 trunk road. The plots produced are at a scale of 1:2500 and are accurate to within  $\pm 3$ m.
- c) The Danebury Environs Survey: The quarter sheets SU24NW, SU24NE and SU24SW all fall within the area covered by the Danebury Environs Survey published by RCHM in 1984 (Palmer 1984). This utilised the photography held in the NMR's and CUCAP's specialist collections up until December 1980 and the CUCAP verticals up until December 1973. Little use was made of County Council cover or post-war RAF vertical photographs. The majority of sites were plotted using a computer rectification program designed in Cambridge (Palmer 1977) at a scale of 1:10560 with an accuracy in the range  $\pm 2$ m.
- d) Fieldwork: RCHME's Salisbury Field Office had carried out a number of surveys of specific sites and small landscapes within SPTA over a number of years. Several of these areas had been concentrated within the ASGs mapped by the APU, but others have included the forts at Battlesbury Hill, Scratchbury Hill, and Sidbury Hill, sites at Knook East and West, Robin Hood's Ball, a henge on Everleigh Down, plus various barrow groups, enclosures and other earthworks on Snail Down, Warden's Down, Cheverell Down and Silk Hill.
- e) Wiltshire SMR: They hold 1:10,000 map coverage for the whole of Wiltshire, on which all known features and find spots are plotted. These refer to a computerised record giving details of date, location, interpretation etc. In addition there is a separate, but related database devoted specifically to SPTA, where individual features such as barrows are given separate numbers. Much of the information regarding the features on the Plain has been sketch plotted from air photographs.
- f) Hampshire SMR: They hold 1:10,000 map coverage for the whole of Hampshire, on which all known features and find spots are plotted as single references. These refer to a computerised record giving details of date, location, interpretation etc. In addition they have carried out a programme of air photograph transcription for the county. All NMR photographs up to 1994 had been consulted as well as the county's own census cover for 1984. Overlays had been produced for each quarter sheet, but the information contained had not yet been integrated into the SMR at the time of the SPTA project.

# Total plot of all archaeological features on Salisbury Plain visible on aerial photographs

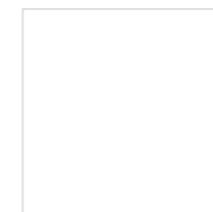


**Banks/Positive features**



**Ditches/Negative features**

(These features are from the Wiltshire County Council SMR plot which incorporates information from the NMP project, but only extends to the SPTA boundary)



(These features are taken directly from the scanned overlays from the NMP project. They cover entire OS quarter sheets and also include features such as ridge and furrow cultivation and Modern military features not plotted by the SMR)

PROJECT NAME : <b>Salisbury Plain Training Area</b>	SCALE : <b>1:125,000</b>	DATE OF SURVEY : <b>December 1994 - August 1995</b>	SURVEYORS : <b>GB, SC, CAD, KG, KR &amp; FJS</b>	OFFICE OF ORIGIN : <b>Swindon</b>	© <b>English Heritage 2000</b>	 <b>ENGLISH HERITAGE</b>	
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