

Chapter 2: Excavations 2002–2005

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Following the initial survey work in 2002, it was clear that the only prospect of establishing a useful context for the Ringlemere gold cup would be to excavate a sizable area around the findspot. Accordingly, English Heritage provided funds for the excavation of an area measuring 10 x 30m on the north-western side of mound M1 (Pl. 1, Fig. 5 Trench 1; Parfitt 2003a; 2003b). This work confirmed the presence of surviving mound material, encircled by a substantial ditch. The mound sealed an earlier soil profile and cut-features associated with large quantities of struck flints, calcined flints and Late Neolithic Grooved Ware pottery (Chapter 4).

The immediate context of the cup appeared to be a position at the ploughsoil/subsoil interface which was not very informative (but see further below). Despite this, the wealth of data and artefacts recovered demonstrated that further work on the site would be of considerable value. Indeed, since the plough was continuing to erode the mound, with the tines of the subsoiler cutting down into the pre-mound land surface, total excavation of the upstanding monument seemed highly desirable. The large area of the mound, the survival of some stratified deposits and the scale of the ditch meant that with limited funding the work would have to be spread over a number of seasons. To date, funds to cover the cost of the work have come from the British Museum, the Townley Group (British Museum Friends), the British Academy, English Heritage, the BBC, the Kent Archaeological Society and Cliff

Bradshaw.

In the autumn of 2002 Trench 2 was excavated on the lower, downhill, part of the monument, at an angle to Trench 1, with the specific aim of testing the preservation of the monument in this area (Fig. 5). Initially, it was hoped that preservation might be better here than in Trench 1, but in the event, the work showed that the edge of the mound and ditch had been severely truncated by a deep terrace or negative lynchet, perhaps connected with cultivation or quarrying. In 2003, Trench 3 was cut south-eastwards from the south-east end of Trench 1 in order to examine further the central area, complete a NW–SE section through the monument and determine an overall diameter for the enclosing ring-ditch. It also established the presence of another terrace or lynchet on the south-east side of the mound more or less perpendicular to that through Trench 2. Later in 2003 Trench 4 was set alongside Trench 1 to extend exploration of the interior (a small part of this trench was finished in 2005). An unexpected result was to find that the enclosing ditch was broken by a causeway on the north side (Fig. 5). Trench 5 followed in 2004 on the opposite side, alongside Trench 3; it examined much of the southern quadrant and demonstrated that there was no entrance opposite that on the north. The latest work, Trench 6 in 2005, saw the western quadrant of the mound between Trenches 1 and 5 fully excavated along with two flanking segments of ditch. By the end of the 2005 season about three-quarters of the enclosed area had been examined (Fig. 5).

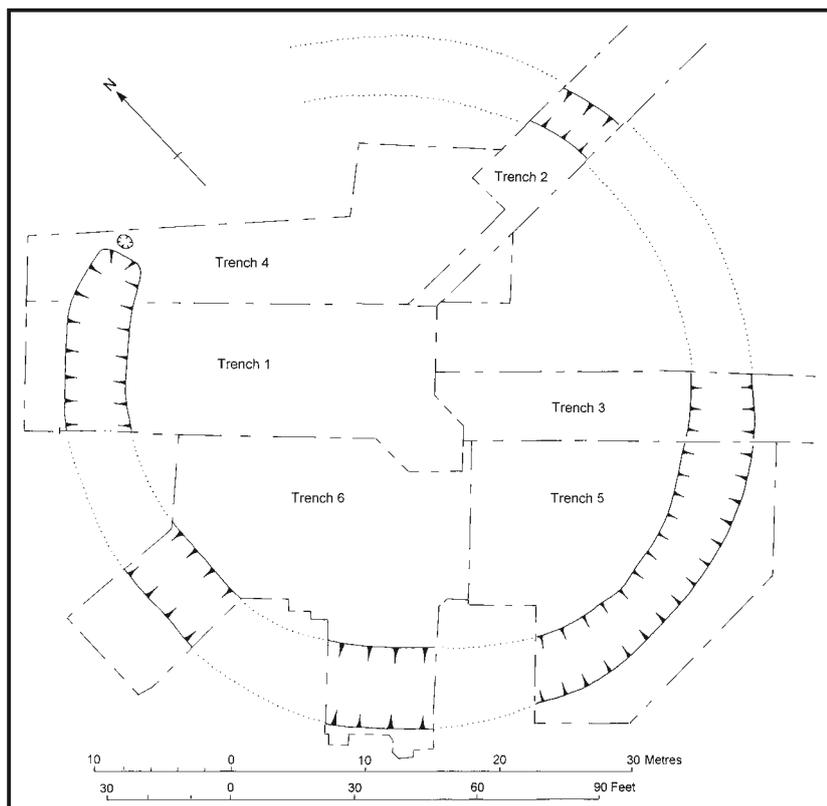


Figure 5 Excavated trenches at Ringlemere M1, 2002–2005.

Overall, the site has proved to be a difficult one to investigate, with the similarity in colour and texture of the clayey soils, the frequent lack of clearly defined edges to cut features and the occurrence of extensive animal burrows dug through most of the stratified deposits (Pl. 2), combining to hamper progress. Despite these problems, the information recovered from Trenches 1–6, now allows a provisional account of the development of the site of Monument M1 to be set out. It is hoped that detailed analysis of all the data once the excavations are completed will allow this sequence to be further refined.

Early Occupation

Mesolithic activity

A small proportion of the large quantities of prehistoric flintwork recovered from Ringlemere may be dated to the Mesolithic period (see Butler, Chapter 4). In addition, a microlith and a tranche axe (not yet studied by Butler) were found in 2005, although no associated features or implement concentrations have yet been identified to indicate activity on this very spot. The presence of fresh running water, in the form of the nearby Durlock Stream, would have made the area attractive to Mesolithic people.

Finds of Mesolithic date are not at all common in north-east Kent and are largely confined to isolated surface discoveries of axes and adzes (e.g. Ogilvie 1981; 1983; Hoskins 1995). The only

significant local site is that at Lower Farm, Finglesham, located some 5.5km south-east of Ringlemere. Like Ringlemere, the Finglesham site is situated at the foot of the downs, on brickearth. It is an occupation site with an extensive flint assemblage (Parfitt and Halliwell 1983), which is characterised by a large number of heavy axes, sharpening flakes and an absence of microliths. Associated luminescence dates indicate a late Mesolithic date (Parfitt and Halliwell 1988, 80; Butler 2005, 118).

The new Mesolithic finds from Ringlemere thus represent a very useful addition to this comparatively poorly represented period in east Kent. The low yield of microliths within the excavated assemblage, despite careful sieving of the deposits, further reinforces the view previously arrived at by the writer that microliths were seldom used in this region. Overall, the Mesolithic industry at Ringlemere presently appears to be of a broadly similar character to Finglesham. It is tempting to suggest a similarly late date but much more work is required.

Neolithic Settlement

Preserved below the mound of M1 is a buried soil profile. To date about 730m² of this artefact-rich soil have been excavated and totally dry-sieved through a 1cm mesh. Sealed under it are more than 150 cut-features, in the form of variously sized hollows, pits, post-holes and three hearths (Fig. 6). These features are most numerous on the south-western side of the enclosed area,

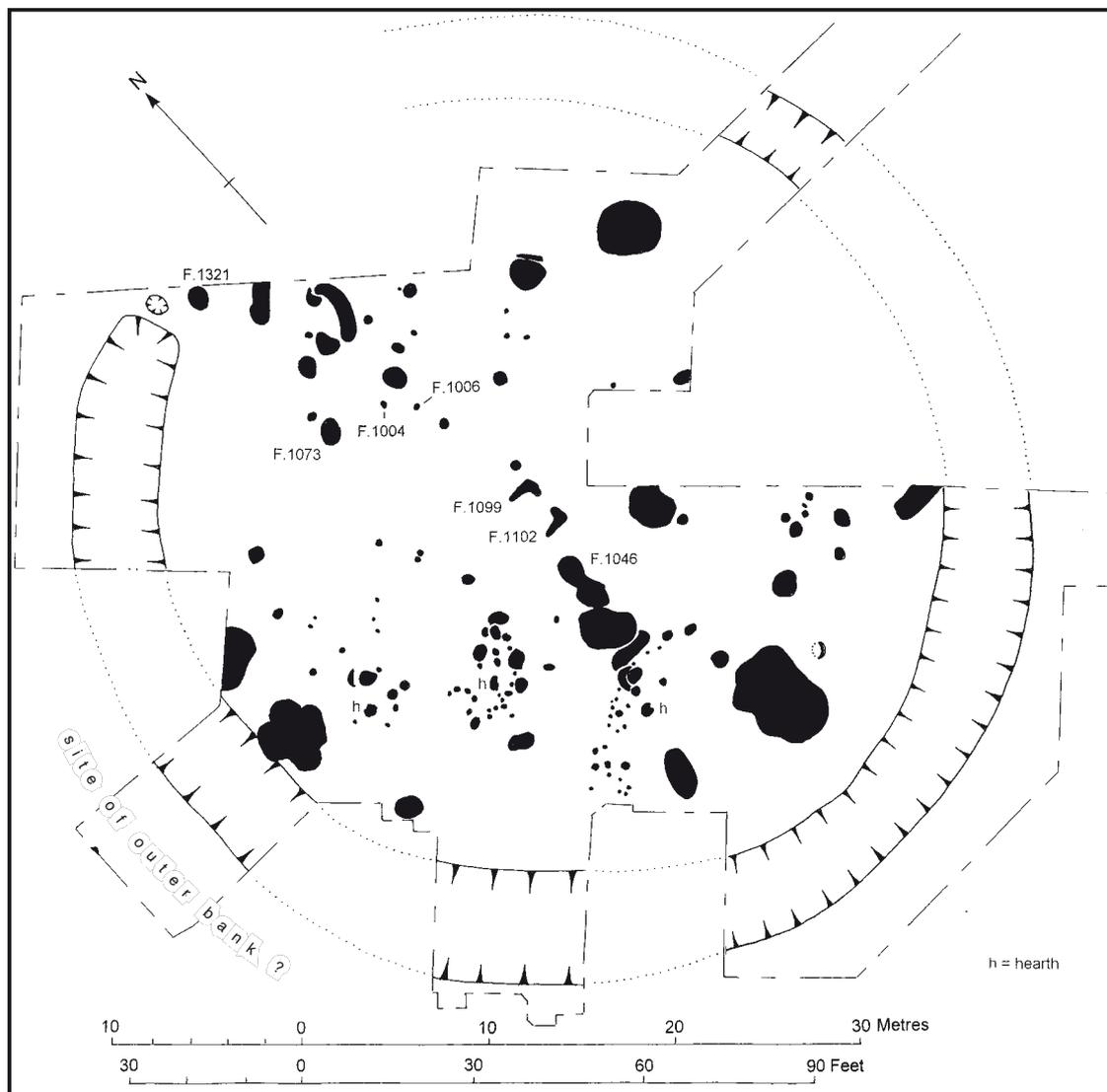


Figure 6 Plan of all pre-mound features within M1. Those discussed in text (including flint report) are numbered; the hearths/ovens are indicated by 'h'.

where the hearths are located. Indeed, pits and post-holes seem to be clustered around the hearths. An arc of 15 post-holes, possibly relating to a large building, occurs in the area of the south-east hearth. Collectively, these remains provide clear evidence for occupation on the site prior to the erection of the barrow mound.

The buried soil, cut-features and turf stack of the mound have together yielded over 5,000 sherds of pottery, large quantities of calcined flint, struck flint including many finely worked scrapers and other tools, together with parts of ground stone axes of non-local rock. The particular contents of several pits suggests that they include special 'placed' deposits of pottery and flintwork. Despite the large quantities of lithic and ceramic material recovered, however, there are no corresponding assemblages of prehistoric faunal remains. Disappointingly, animal bone and marine shell simply have not survived in the brickearth and there is virtually no such material from any of the prehistoric deposits investigated. By analogy with the faunal assemblages recovered from other Neolithic and Bronze Age sites it may be reasonably surmised that considerable quantities of bone and shell were once present at Ringlemere but that these have all decayed without trace.

The pottery recovered from the pre-mound deposits and features consists almost exclusively of Late Neolithic Grooved Ware. The same is true of the material in the turf mound and it is likely that this material was taken directly from the same occupied land surface nearby. A small number of Beaker sherds have been recognized in both the pre-mound topsoil and the mound core. Some of the pits have contained large sherds of Grooved Ware, perhaps deliberately placed, and one pit has yielded a radio-carbon date of 2890–2600 cal BC (2 sigma; Beta-183862; **Table 3**) from contained charcoal. Collectively, these finds provide clear evidence for intensive use of the site before the construction of the barrow mound. Their relationship with the enclosing ditch has yet to be established – at present they are thought to belong at least in part to pre-monument occupation, perhaps only fortuitously preserved in this area because of the protecting cover of the mound. Nevertheless, the question is raised as to whether such earlier activity on the site in some way influenced the positioning of the later monument. Interestingly, Cleal has previously highlighted the close correlation between Bronze Age barrow sites and the occurrence of earlier Grooved Ware (Cleal and MacSween 1999, 6).

Analysis suggests that the majority of the flintwork recovered from Ringlemere is of later Neolithic date (Chapter 4) and there can be little doubt that most is contemporary with the Grooved Ware pottery. In addition to the Mesolithic material identified (see above), another small group of flints appears to be of earlier Neolithic date. So far no associated pottery or features of this period have been identified.

Grooved Ware is not well represented in Kent and the present assemblage is by far the largest yet recovered from the county. Locally, small assemblages of Grooved Ware have previously been recovered from the submerged land-surface of the Lydden Valley north of Deal (Halliwell and Parfitt 1985, 40) and in pits at Mill Hill, Deal, where associated radiocarbon-dates suggest a period of use between 2880 and 2450 BC. (Parfitt 1998a, 377; see **Table 3**). Finds of derived Grooved Ware occur in several east Kent round barrows, including Eastling Wood, Sutton (Grinsell 1992, Sutton 2; Parfitt, Allen and Rady 1997),

Haynes Farm, Eythorne (Grinsell 1992, Eythorne 1; Parfitt 2004, fig. 5) and Ringwold Free Down, Ringwold (Grinsell 1992, Ringwold-with-Kingsdown 2; Woodruff 1874, 26, plate II, fig. 7). The quantity of material so far recovered from Ringlemere, however, is far in excess of the combined total from all these earlier explorations.

The Neolithic period, in general, is still poorly understood in east Kent. Major field monuments, well known in other southern counties, appear to be sparse in the landscape (Barber 1997), although the recent excavation of a large causewayed camp near Ramsgate, on the Isle of Thanet (Shand 2001), together with the discovery of a possible second, noted on an aerial photograph between Eastry and Tilmansstone, just south of Ringlemere (Oswald *et al.* 2001, 153 no. 47), suggests that this is likely to be mainly due to intensive later cultivation of the land rather than any genuine Neolithic lacuna (see Chapter 5 for further discussion). Known occupation sites are mostly represented by isolated pits and surface scatters of lithic material. Indeed, such evidence appears to be typical of large areas of southern Britain (Holgate 1988, 32, 67) and clearly much has been lost to the plough over the centuries. The site preserved below Ringlemere M1 thus provides excellent prospects for the recovery of detailed Neolithic occupation evidence which has elsewhere been destroyed.

Monument M1

The geophysical survey and excavation have now confirmed that the low mound initially identified by Bradshaw is a man-made structure of prehistoric date. It is a circular monument comprising a central barrow encircled by a ditch. There is also some evidence for an outer bank. When upstanding, the mound had provided a convenient home for generations of burrowing animals and conceivably it may have served as a medieval rabbit warren belonging to the manor house at Ringleton, on the opposite side of the valley (**Fig. 3**). The animal activity, however, has led to much disturbance of the mound structure and has probably caused some movement of artefacts.

The pre-mound land surface

Survival of part of the mound had preserved an earlier land surface beneath. A distinctive but discontinuous layer of brown to black manganese, about 10–20mm thick, separated the mound from the buried topsoil, and was best preserved under the central part of the turf core. It apparently represents decayed vegetation. Preliminary analysis of the buried soil has revealed no evidence for cultivation of the ground prior to the construction of the mound; instead it suggests long-term pasture following possible woodland clearance (Heathcote 2003). As already described, large quantities of Grooved Ware and flintwork were recovered from the buried profile, some of which may precede the first monumental phase. However, we now believe that some of the features and finds under the mound are likely to relate to a pre-mound enclosure phase (see below).

The mound

Exceptionally for the heavily ploughed landscape of east Kent, the base of the barrow mound survived at Ringlemere, with a maximum thickness of 0.50m at the centre. A core of soft, decayed turf (**Figs 7 & 8**) was enclosed by an outer deposit of

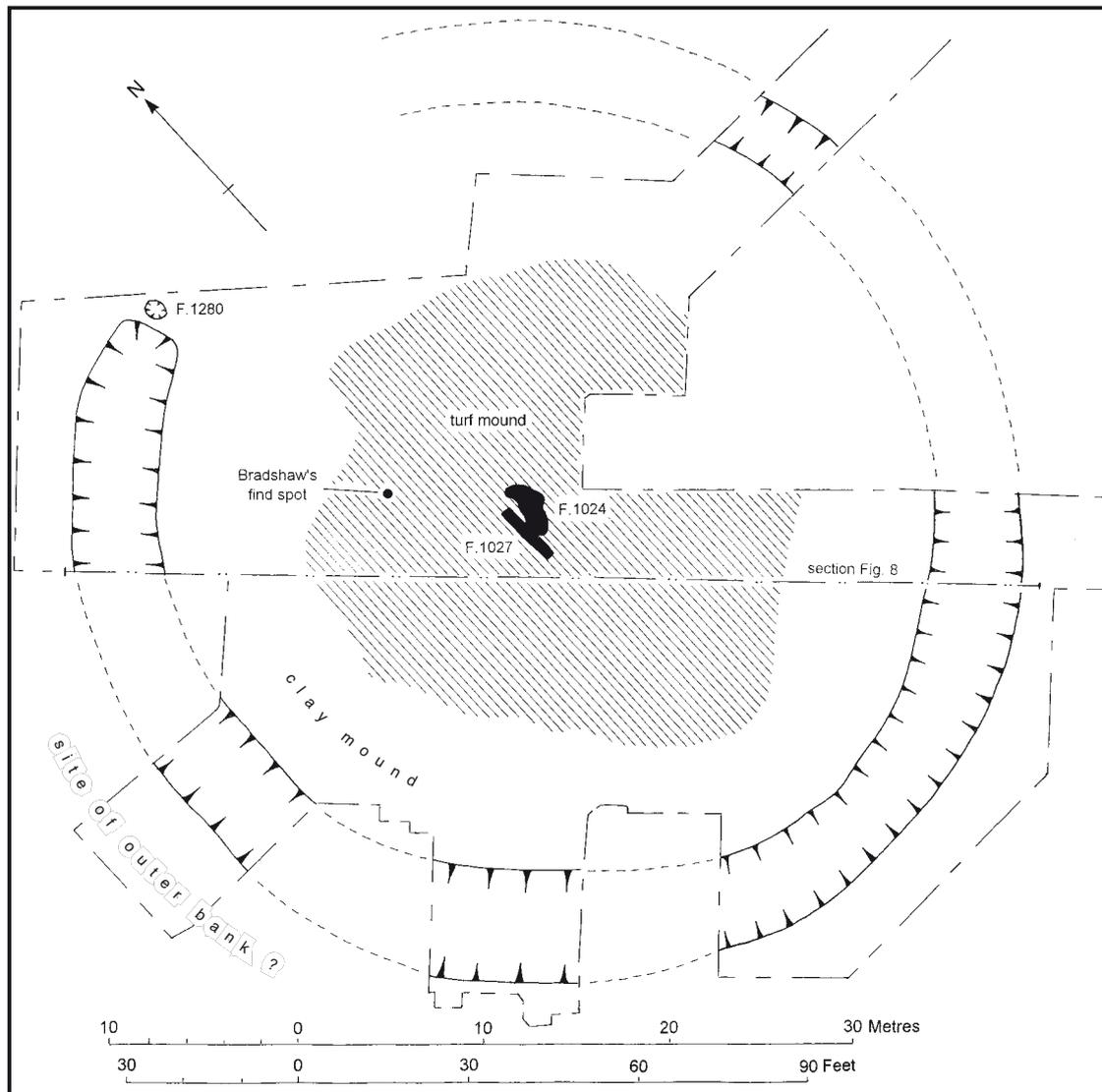


Figure 7 Plan of surviving and interpreted earthworks constituting M1, features cut into the turf mound, and Bradshaw's location for the cup.

orange-brown clay; although they are different in character, the interface between the two elements was diffuse and in many places difficult to closely define. The turf core contained much residual domestic rubbish in the form of struck flint, calcined flint and broken pottery (mostly Grooved Ware with small amounts of Beaker), clearly derived from earlier activity on the site (as described above). Despite the fuzzy definition, it was possible to map the extent of the central turf stack and show that it survived to between 25 and 29m across (Fig. 7). It appears to have been somewhat irregular in outline, with a tendency towards a vaguely sub-rectangular, rather than neatly circular, plan. This shape might imply that the turf stack was simply a dump which lay in the centre of a broader mound and not a free-standing structure in its own right.

The outer part of the mound seems to have been composed of fairly clean clay. It sits on a surface that is often a little lower than the old ground surface under the turf stack and which, moreover, does not have as well developed a soil profile. This might suggest that the turf had been stripped in order to contribute to the body of the central core, the clay later being dumped on the resulting lowered surface. The outer mound appears to have originally extended as far as the lip of the enclosing ditch (Fig. 9, context 1020) but it had been partially cut away by later terracing in most areas (see below). Within the

make-up of the outer mound, an absence of material derived from the distinctive lower clay and gravel deposits through which the ditch was cut implies that the material of the mound did not include up-cast from the ditch.

The ditch and bank

The enclosing ditch is of substantial size, 41.5m in diameter internally and 50m externally (Figs 7 & 8). The ditch itself survives between 4 and 5m across and about 2m deep, with a broad, flat bottom (Fig. 9). Analysis of laminar sediments in the base of the ditch has shown that they were water-laid, implying that the ditch had held water, at least in wetter seasons. This is likely to be a reflection of the nature of the clayey subsoil rather than any specific design feature, however. The higher ditch fills in excavated segments from the north-west to the south-west show that more material was slipping in from the outside than the inside (Fig. 9), suggesting the former presence of an external bank, of which no trace now survives. The bank was evidently made from the spoil from the ditch, for it had a proportion of gravel derived from the natural gravel bands which are sealed under the brickearth.

None of the deposits filling the ditch were rich in artefacts and many of the layers were sterile. Most of the finds recovered seem to represent residual material derived from earlier activity

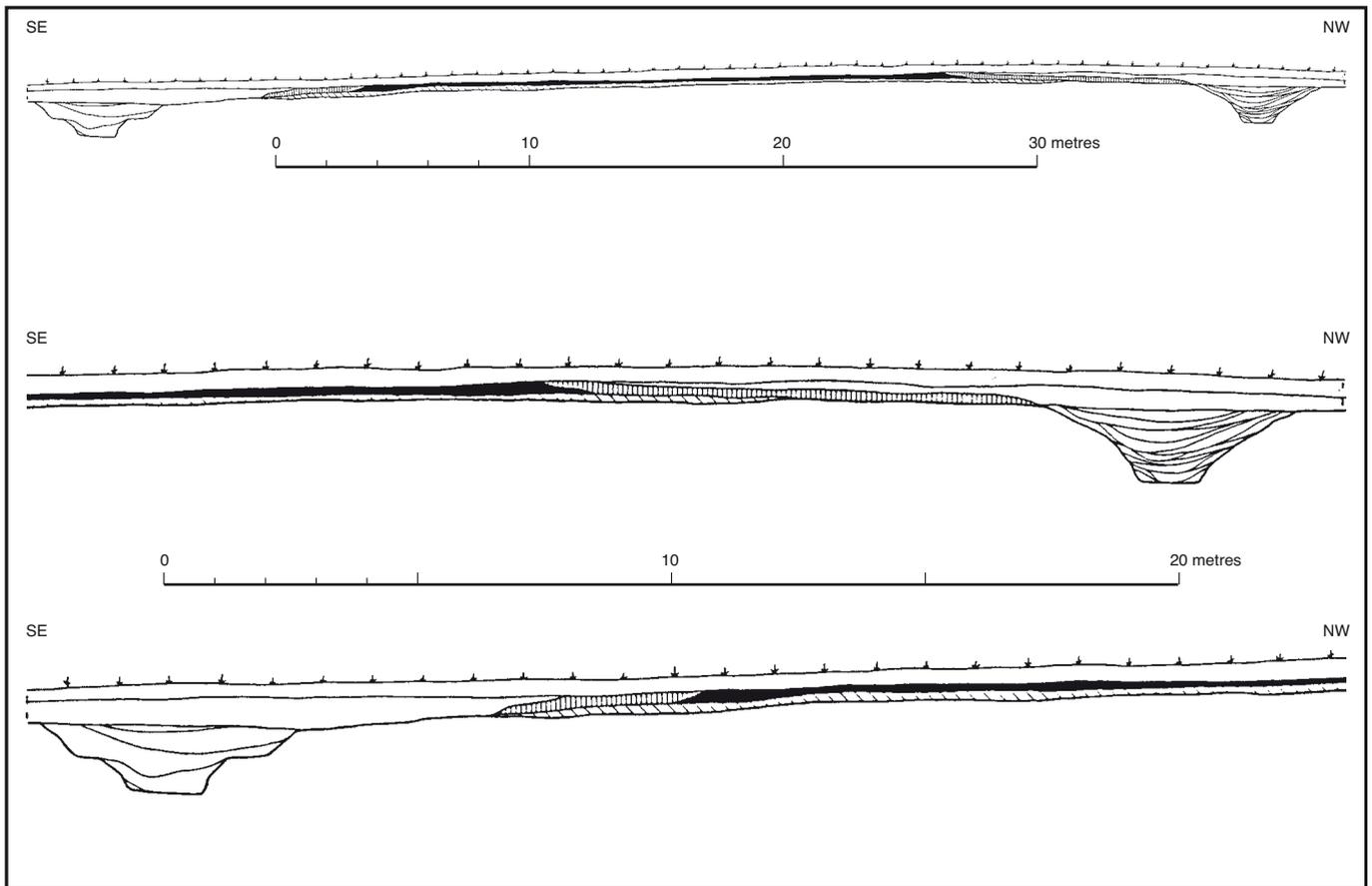


Figure 8 Cross-section of monument M1, south-east to north-west (Trenches 1 and 3). Turf core in solid black; outer mound shaded vertically

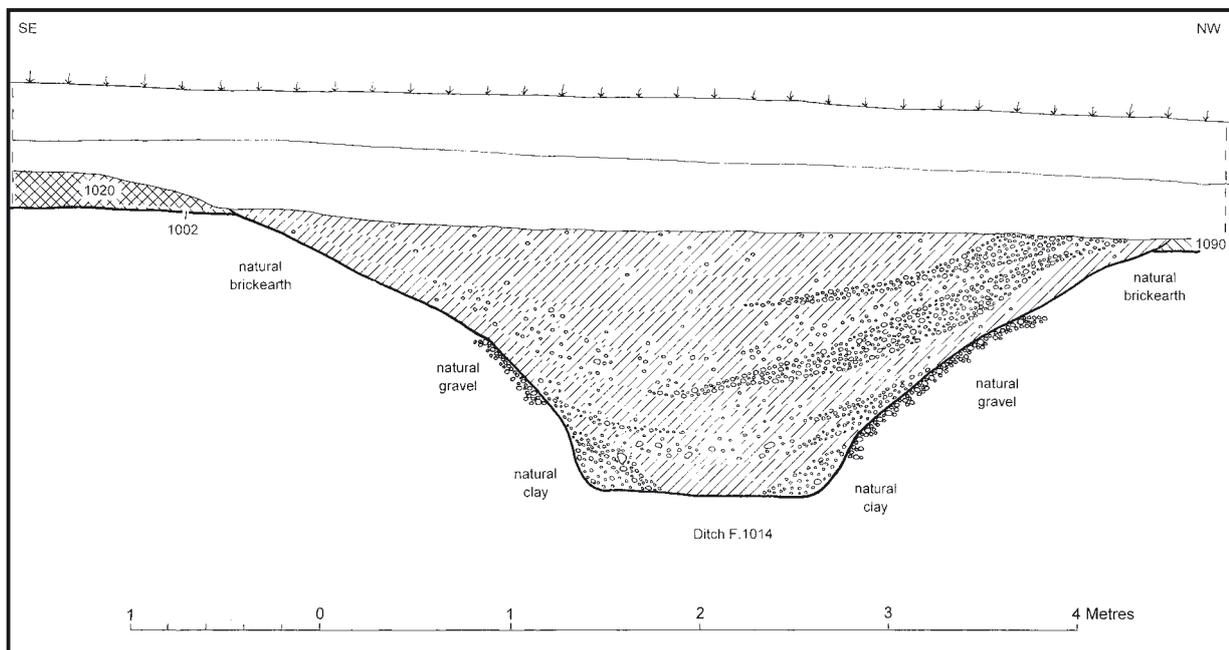


Figure 9 Cross-section of excavated ditch in Trench 1, north-west side of the monument

on the site. On the south side, however, two areas of deliberately laid flint cobbles were found lying on the base of the ditch. These included a small amount of humanly struck flint but, overall, the date of the construction and filling of the ditch remains to be ascertained.

On the northern side, a deliberate break in the circuit of the ditch formed an entrance causeway at least 3m across. What appears to be a large post-pit (F. 1280) is set immediately adjacent to the terminal (Fig. 6), but complete excavation of the entrance and phasing of the interior features is required before

its full significance can be determined.

Evidence for human burial

Given the character of the monument, it initially seemed likely that Early Bronze Age burials would be associated. This prospect was encouraged by the gold cup, since some of the parallels are from graves. However, after excavation of almost 80% of the mound no formal prehistoric burials have yet been located and evidence for the presence of human remains on the site is still extremely sparse. Tiny flecks of calcined bone, possibly human,

were recovered from a large oval pit, F. 1073, sealed under the mound 12m NNW of the monument's centre (Fig. 6). The burnt bone was mostly confined to the upper layers of the north-eastern half of the pit and may represent a scattered, unurned cremation deposit. It is possible it relates to the Grooved Ware phase of activity rather than later and there is currently no evidence that the addition of the mound was connected with interments.

Central structures

Although excavation of the central area of the monument has failed to produce unequivocal evidence for a burial or grave, it has revealed a noteworthy sequence of structures absolutely at the centre of the monument. These merit detailed discussion here because one feature produced one of the Early Bronze Age amber objects from the site and may also have contained the cup.

Immediately beneath the modern ploughsoil, the mound remnant was found to have been cut by an irregular pit (Figs 10 & 11; F. 1024), which showed some evidence of disturbance from burrowing animals. This pit was roughly oval in shape and measured 3.30m (N–S) by 1.45m (E–W). It survived to a depth of 0.13m, with steeply sloping sides and a slightly undulating base, which was somewhat banana-shaped in plan. The main filling consisted of a grey-brown silty clay-loam with decayed wood fragments (Context 1026), which contained a few prehistoric sherds, a quantity of struck flints and calcined flints. The pottery is likely to be residual; four sherds are tiny and another is from a thick base, probably Grooved Ware. This main fill was sealed by a 0.02m thick layer of decayed wood (Context 1025) which

occupied the top of the pit (as truncated). It has been possible to identify some of the wood as coming from three species (Cartwright – Chapter 4). The amber object – a pendant fragment – was the only find from this upper layer (Chapter 4).

Below the pit and cut from a lower horizon was a pair of narrow L-shaped slots (Fig. 11; Fs 1099 and 1102). These were sealed under the mound material and became visible only after the buried topsoil horizon had been excavated. The main axis linking them roughly aligns on the entrance to the north (Fig. 10). The slots seem most suited to holding upright contiguous posts or planks; indeed, highly degraded woody remains were recorded in the base of the southern L-slot, F. 1102. Such a timber structure would form a rectangular 'cove', 2.4m across and open to the west. This was potentially a mortuary structure (cf Ashbee 1960, 52–4) or a focal point for ritual performance at the very centre of the enclosure such as can be paralleled in certain Late Neolithic ritual monuments (discussed later in this Chapter). No internal floor or specific occupation deposits were associated with the cove. A few small pottery sherds were found in the feature fills, together with some struck flints including three scrapers (Butler, Chapter 4) but all this material is probably residual.

Four samples containing wood and charcoal from the southern slot were assessed for their identification potential by Rowena Gale (2003) and later fully analysed (Cartwright – Chapter 4). Some charcoal fragments were subsequently extracted from two of the samples (Samples 2 and 3) and sent for radio-carbon dating in the hope of obtaining at least a broad indication of the age of the feature, which at the time of excavation did not seem at all certain. They gave very different

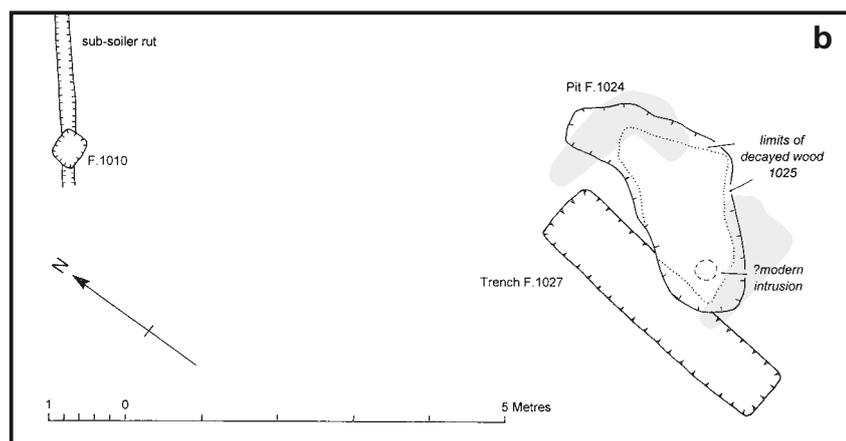
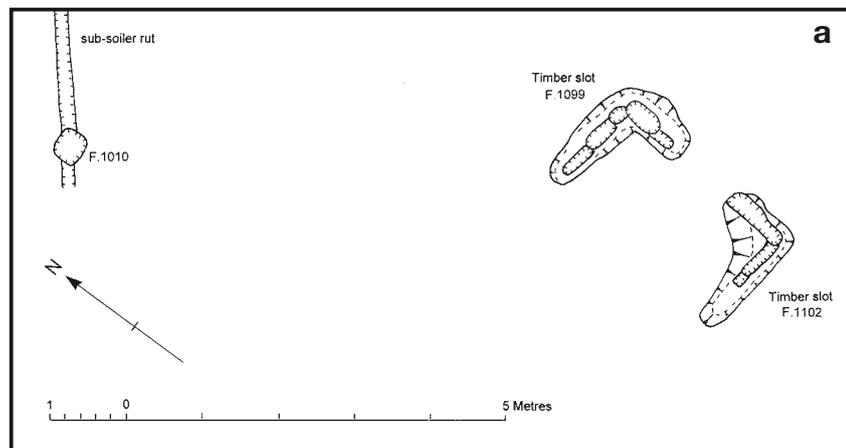


Figure 10 Detail plans of central features: a) pre-mound; b) post-mound

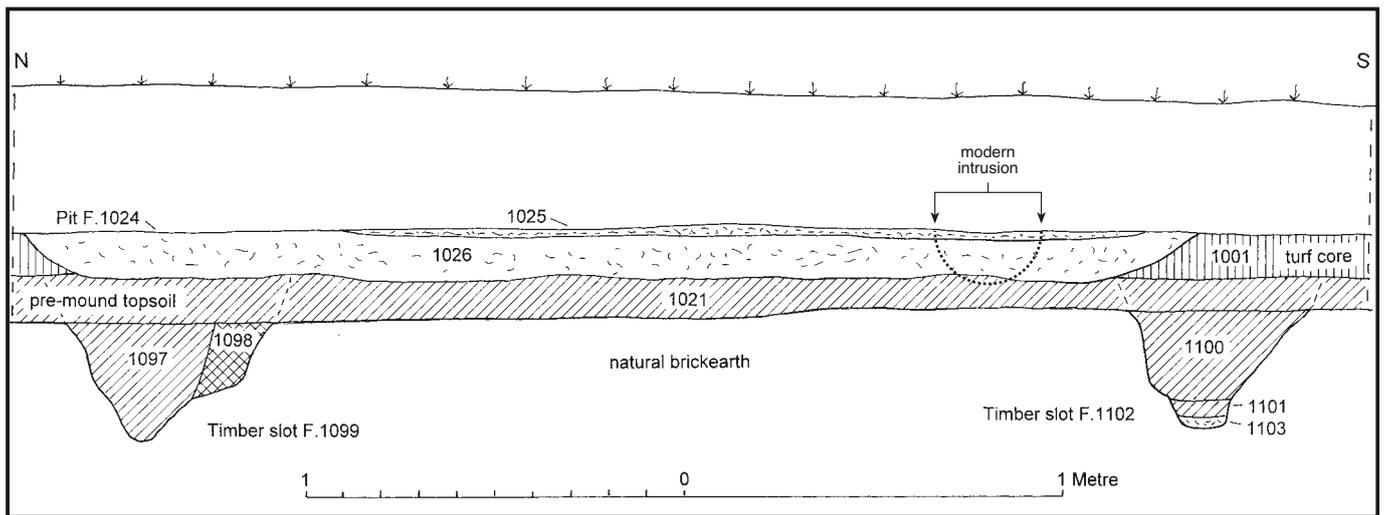


Figure 11 Composite section through the central features

results. Sample 2 produced a determination of 3460 ± 40 BP (Beta- 180487; 1890 – 1680 cal BC; Table 3), whilst Sample 3 gave a determination of 1750 ± 40 BP (Beta-180488; AD 130–410). Given that it was well sealed by the main fill of the slot and the mound, presumed contamination is likely to be from percolation of organic matter or adjacent animal disturbance. It is hard to account for a Roman period date otherwise. If contaminant organic matter was responsible, it is possible that it had also affected Sample 2 from the same context, thereby making the radiocarbon measurement fall later than the true age of the sample. On balance, therefore, neither date can presently be rated with much confidence.

Immediately west of the three features so far described was a long rectangular trench (Figs 7 & 10; F. 1027). This was parallel to the main axis of the cove, but in contrast was clearly dug through the mound core. As recorded it was 3.68m long and 0.78–0.88m wide, surviving to a depth of 0.23m, the top having been truncated by the plough. The trench penetrated the subsoil much less deeply than the cuts for the cove (Fig. 11), which is consistent with the feature being dug in from a higher level (0.35m difference between the deepest parts of the two features). This slot had, however, been clipped on its eastern edge by the later pit (F. 1024). Like the earlier and later intercutting features, F. 1027 too contained some decayed wood, this time small quantities scattered through the fill of fine brown loam (Context 1028); none could be retrieved for identification. Three small sherds of pottery are probably residual.

There are two questions to resolve in relation to this set of central features. Firstly, the presence of unburnt wood remnants in all phases of the sequence initially seemed to suggest they were not particularly ancient (cf Parfitt 2003b, 36). The material present in the L-slot (F. 1102), in fact contains a mixture of unburnt wood, partially burnt wood and charcoal, but no burnt material was discovered in layer 1025. Wood is known to survive, exceptionally, under barrows even when there is no waterlogging. The second problem was the conundrum that the trench F. 1027 on the one hand seemed to relate to the cove structure, closing its western side, yet on the other was cut from a different stratigraphic horizon to the cove slots. This can actually be resolved by interpreting a sequence which encompasses the building of the turf mound and for which the northern alignment remained important. On this basis we offer

the following interpretation of the sequence.

1) A timber cove, c. 2.4 x 1.2m in plan, was erected at the exact centre of the enclosure at the time of its original construction or during later use. The main axis was aligned approximately on the north-facing entrance through the ditch. The cove was apparently originally open to the west, while the gap between the L-slots could have offered a narrow (0.85m) window facing east – in effect a portal. The posts set at right angles at either end were in shallower slots and may have been braces for the main alignment. The surviving depth of the post-emplacements below the old ground surface (up to 0.50m) could have easily supported a structure 2m or so high. Indeed it is possible that the uprights would have been linked by lintels, in which case the structure could have been a little taller.

2) Either while the cove remained standing or later, a turf mound or platform was built around it covering the central area within the ditched enclosure. It was probably not especially high, to judge from the next phase.

3) A trench (F. 1027) was dug through the centre of the turf mound, again respecting the N–S axis. This is now presumed to be a foundation trench for a later façade of timbers set in the top of the mound. It may be coincidence that this new façade largely closed the open side of the original cove for it is offset a little to the south. As an entirely new façade it could still easily have respected the original north-south alignment. The difference in positioning of this new façade could perhaps reflect a slight shift in the apparent centre of the monument following the construction of the turf mound.

4) Finally, an irregular pit (F. 1024) was dug into this central spot from the top of the turf platform, or from a higher level if the mound had been raised in between times. The pit occupies more or less the full area of the underlying cove and this must by now have decayed or been truncated. The western side of the pit clipped the façade bedding trench, potentially when the posts were still standing. Indeed, it is possible that the façade and pit were functionally linked, one dug quickly after the other had been erected. The overall dimensions of the pit, at about 3.30 by 1.45m, are rather large for a grave and, in the absence of any skeletal material, other ritual functions for this pit seem more likely (see below); there is no reason to think the new pit was intended to contain a replacement façade.

5) The woody layer present across virtually the whole pit is

likely to represent a lining, perhaps a 'floor' of branch material; had it been timber subsiding from higher it is less likely to have resulted in such a uniformly horizontal layer. As found, the lining was 0.10m above the base of the pit, but we cannot know the original depth of the pit, nor whether the soil below the decayed wood was early silting while the feature stood open or deliberate backfill. The amber ornament recovered from this woody layer had presumably originally lain on top prior to decay; if not a grave good, it seems highly likely to be another form of ritual offering.

6) Close to the south end of F1024 was a small intrusion, a pit of about 0.30m diameter. It was filled with loose soil and some decayed vegetation and appeared to be of very recent origin. We now believe that this could have been Bradshaw's original excavation to unearth the gold cup. If so, the findspot is placed 1.5m to the south-west of the estimated centre of the monument but some 8m from Bradshaw's stated findspot.

Re-establishing the gold cup findspot

The primary objective of English Heritage-funded Trench 1 had been to establish a context for the burial of the gold cup. Bradshaw had marked the spot, but his marker was removed by ploughing before archaeological inspection of the site thirteen days later. Fortunately, Bradshaw had also at the time of discovery paced out the location from a nearby electricity pole, 38 paces away, and by repeating this exercise he felt confident he could re-establish the findspot to within a metre or so. This exercise was repeated at intervals over the following three years and resulted in locations varying by about 2m. The original stated position is shown in **Fig. 10** (F.1010).

Bradshaw was also able to describe something of the soil around the cup. He particularly remarked on a thin black/brown deposit (c. 1cm thick) of organic material like decayed wood below the ploughsoil of about 0.25m depth. The original Treasure Receipt Form (filled out by Michael Lewis, then Finds Liaison Officer for Kent) stated that he had 'noticed narrow black/brown band around hole'. Shortly after, Bradshaw drew a sketch section of the soil profile with his hole dug through it, the cup lying at the bottom. About half way down through the soil his sketch shows the horizontal band; at the hole it is shown bellling upwards a little, this presumably being a convention to show it curving round the back wall of his hole as if viewed from a little above the horizontal. When asked later about the relationship, Bradshaw replied that he was unsure whether the organic layer had gone across the soil containing the cup; he evidently did not remember seeing the layer first, before reaching the cup. The cup lay in what he described as a 'light sandy soil' below the level of the organic layer.

The cup lay on its side with the heavily dented face uppermost. It contained a quantity of organic material which Bradshaw carefully tapped out (dry) and placed in sealed bags. These were submitted to the British Museum with the cup and are reported on in Chapter 4.

Careful excavation around the spot first indicated by Bradshaw revealed a shallow depression, cut about 0.22m deep below the base of the ploughsoil and containing some modern vegetation (F. 1010). No ancient sub-soil features were found within a radius of 4m. This might be Bradshaw's original hole, but its re-excavation revealed no traces of gold, no other artefacts and, most importantly, no evidence for the distinctive

dark organic layer previously described by Bradshaw. The location is 8–9m to the north-west of the centre of the monument (**Fig. 10**). The surrounding deposits are riddled with animal burrows and there was also a deep sub-soiler furrow running across the spot which might have accounted for the damage sustained by the vessel.

However, there is now strong evidence that the findspot was really at the centre of the mound – the hole recently dug into pit F. 1024 (see above). There are reasonable grounds for accepting that the thin organic layer Bradshaw noted in the side of his original excavation is the same deposit as the woody layer (Context 1025) subsequently discovered in the top of pit F. 1024. No other comparable organic deposits have been found at the relevant level anywhere else on the site, including the area of Bradshaw's stated findspot for the cup. The sample of organic material which Bradshaw had found within the cup proved to contain decayed wood without any charcoal not unlike that exposed in the top of F. 1024; moreover, one piece was identifiable as possibly *Acer campestre* which matches one of the species from F. 1024 (Cartwright, Chapter 4).

In order to argue that the cup originally lay within the fill of pit F. 1024, we would need to assume that the presumed plough impact had not moved it far. Farmer Andrew Smith and his ploughman Cedric Marsh, from their long experience of working this field, are both of the opinion that a fragile vessel such as the gold cup could not have been pulled any distance through the ground by a plough or sub-soiler tine without being very much more extensively damaged than the present find. Impact by the plough, however, could well have pressed the cup through the woody layer in F. 1024 if the vessel had originally lain upon it. This would have punched a hole through the layer, but the finder's observations were not specific enough to know whether this was the case.

Bradshaw remains adamant that his paced-out location to the north-west of F. 1024 is the true findspot of the gold cup, but given the loss of his definitive marker before scientific investigation of the site, the writers of this report favour the vessel's original place of deposition as being within F. 1024, along with the amber pendant.

Post-monument activity

Later prehistoric to Roman activity

At monument M1 itself, later prehistoric activity may be attested by struck and burnt flints recovered from the plough soil and, particularly in the upper filling of the ditch. Some of this material may be reworked from the artefact-rich underlying deposits. However, Trench 6 also revealed a broad scatter of charcoal with occasional sherds spread across the levelled ditch; the pottery includes a rim and neck of Earliest Iron Age type, c. 850–600 BC. This shows that the ditch was already totally full with the implication that the outer bank was also largely or entirely denuded; certainly material from the bank is inferred from the ditch fills. A likely explanation is that agriculture early in the 1st millennium BC was levelling these already eroded features. Broadly contemporary, or only a little earlier would be the scatter of copper and copper alloy material recovered from 150m south of M1 (Chapter 1), with the slightly later Hallstatt brooch to the north-east (**Fig. 3**; Parfitt 2005).

Finds of Roman date are similarly thinly scattered, but coins, pottery, tile and other odd artefacts recovered from both the

survey work and excavation imply activity somewhere in the vicinity during the Romano-British period. The nearest site presently known is that at Black Pond, located near the top of the slope, several hundred metres to the south-west (Ogilvie 1982). However, the more immediate source of small Roman finds is likely to be manuring scatters, especially given the evidence for persistent ploughing around the mound at this time. Indeed, as excavations have proceeded on different sides of the mound, it has become clear that a distinct negative lynchet is present on three sides; it cuts laterally into the west, south and east sides leaving a steep erosion scarp through the mound remnant and underlying profile. Only on the northern side does this feature appear to be of slight gradient.

Having bitten into the mound, at some point erosion ceased, and accumulation of soil, presumably gradually transported from up-slope, began to fill the negative lynchet. The resulting profile, accumulated over a lengthy period from before the 5th century AD to some time after the 6th century, is in places 0.70m deep. The soil comprises three layers of different character and ultimately laps up onto the sides of the mound. However, only the modern ploughsoil has been found extending unbroken right across the surface of the remnant mound.

Anglo-Saxon occupation and cemetery

The clearest evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement in east Kent is

generally provided by cemeteries, rather than occupation sites and the region around Ringlemere is well endowed with such remains (see Meaney 1964; Richardson 2005). Collectively, the evidence suggests that this general locality had been extensively occupied by Anglo-Saxon settlers from the start of the 6th century and it seemed that this was an area of early, if not primary, colonisation (Everitt 1986, 116–7). Before excavation work commenced at Ringlemere, the possibility had been considered that the ancient mound might have served as the focus for a subsequent Anglo-Saxon ‘flat’ cemetery because such post-Roman re-use of prehistoric burial sites is now becoming an increasingly familiar situation in east Kent and beyond (Parfitt and Brugmann 1997, 4). Indeed, Bradshaw had initially speculated that the mound (M1) might be of Anglo-Saxon date. Nor did it seem to be pure chance that the Ringlemere site was overlooked from the north-east by the important 6th century Anglo-Saxon burial site at Coombe, some 750m away (Davidson and Webster 1967).

A number of metalwork items known from around the Ringlemere site had implied some sort of Anglo-Saxon activity in the immediate area from the outset of the fieldwork and the discovery in 2002 of a complete 6th-century pottery vessel set into the outer mound of M1 further raised expectations. Nevertheless, the discovery the following year of a classic Anglo-Saxon sunken hut cut into the north-western side of M1, not far

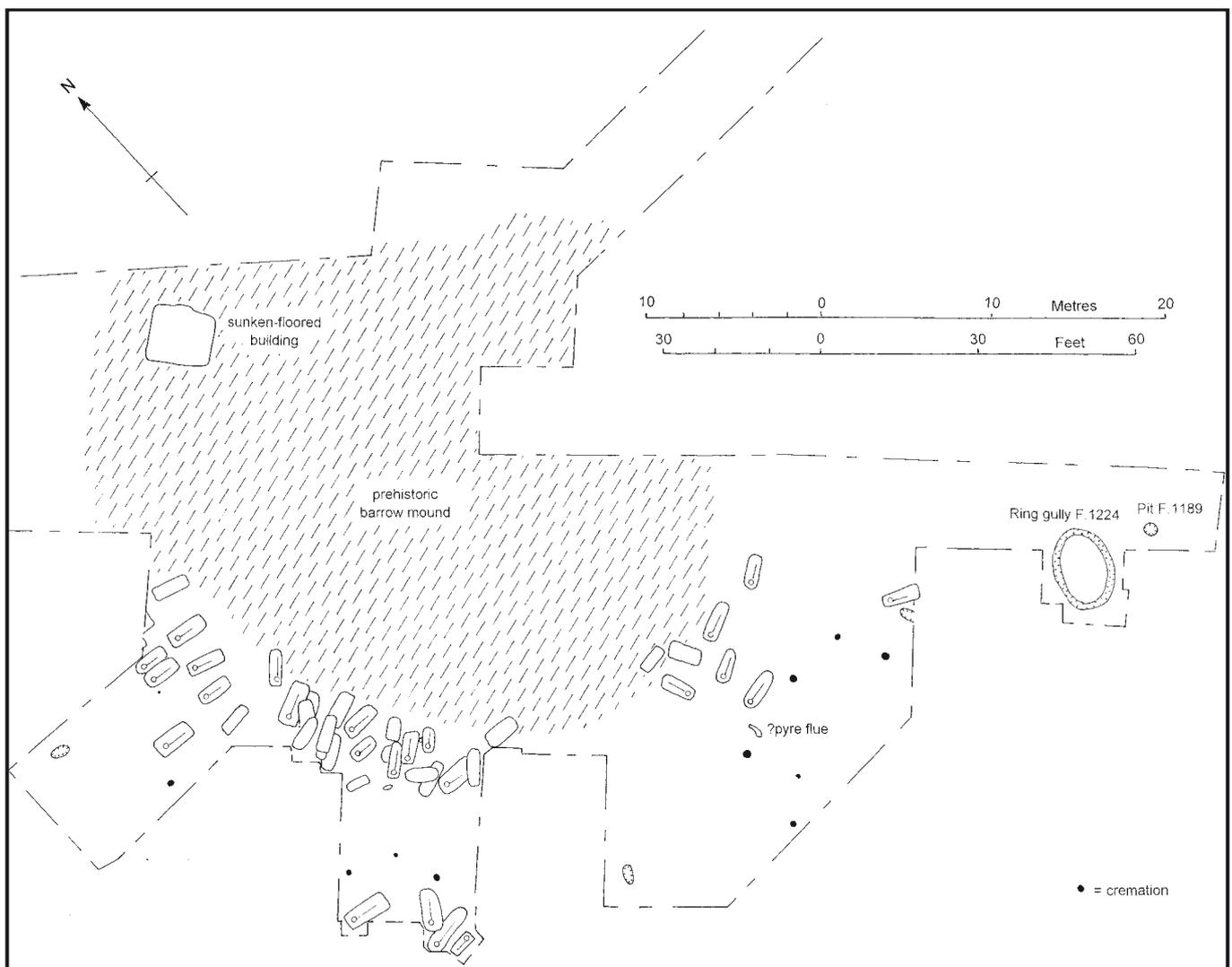


Figure 12 Plan of Anglo-Saxon use of M1

from the findspot of the pot, was completely unexpected (Fig. 12). Probably in-filled during the 7th century, the hut-pit is so far an isolated structure but it serves to alert us to the possibility of further buildings. On topographical grounds, any focus of settlement might well be found sheltering low on the valley slopes, close to the Durlock stream – presumably always a reliable source of fresh running water.

Despite the examination of several substantial areas outside the barrow ditch no trace of any Anglo-Saxon burial ground around the mound had been discovered by the end of the 4th season of excavation (Trench 4) and it began to seem unlikely that there had been such a re-use of Ringlemere M1. Then, new excavations on the south side of the mound in 2004 (Trench 5) led to the discovery of no less than 13 burials of Anglo-Saxon date, perhaps part of a larger cemetery extending away from the mound to the south.

The excavation of Trench 6 in 2005 led to the discovery of another much larger group of Anglo-Saxon graves, tightly packed onto the terraced area along the south-west and west side of the mound. These cut through the earliest soils filling the terrace and over 50 graves have now been excavated in all, with every suggestion of more lying beyond the investigated area (Fig. 12). Most of the burials are inhumations, but there are also a dozen cremations – a burial rite rarely encountered in east Kent during the early Anglo-Saxon period. On the south side, a small oval pit with heavily burnt sides located adjacent to cremation Grave 2 may represent the base of an associated cremation pyre flue, although no datable evidence was recovered from the feature, which had been partially disturbed by burrowing animals.

Preliminary inspection of the cremation urns and grave goods associated with the inhumations indicates that the bulk of these burials are of 5th-century date. Objects recovered from the inhumations include fine glass vessels, beads, brooches, silver rings and pins, buckles and various iron objects, including knives. No weapon-graves have been discovered as yet.

Some exceptionally important early graves appear to be represented at Ringlemere and these will require detailed study. Their analysis will form the basis of a separate report in due course but already it seems that this new cemetery site is going to be of considerable significance for Kentish Anglo-Saxon studies.

Later history

According to historical records, the Ringlemere monument complex once lay on land belonging to Ringleton Manor. The site of the manor house is situated across the valley 300m to the north-east of the excavated site (Fig. 3). The history of this manor has been previously outlined by Hasted (1800) and Davidson and Webster (1967). Here, we may usefully note that it is recorded in the Black Book of St Augustine's Abbey (1070–82) and Domesday Book (1086) and thus was in existence by late Anglo-Saxon times (Davidson and Webster 1967, 6).

Evidence for cultivation of the adjacent lands during the medieval period and early post-medieval periods is provided by a scatter of medieval peg-tile, together with smaller amounts of pottery and metal-finds, presumably brought out to the field with the manure. No doubt this material originated from the farms at Ringleton Manor and Ringlemere.

Recent changes to the landscape seem to have been

relatively few. In 1912 the East Kent Light Railway line was laid across the area, just below the barrow site (Lawson Finch and Garrett 2003), although the associated earthmoving seems to have been quite limited and no archaeological discoveries are recorded. A number of old field boundaries have been removed in recent years to create larger fields and a substantial length of the Durlock stream has been confined within an underground pipe (Andrew Smith pers. comm.)

The field containing Monument 1 has been regularly under the plough since at least the 1930s (Andrew Smith pers. comm.) and the Tithe map implies that this was the case 100 years earlier. In all probability, the area had been cultivated for many centuries before this; indeed, we have described above the evidence for prolonged agricultural activity in or around the Roman period. Even if the mound itself remained out of cultivation at this stage and later, the persistent attrition of the edges could have given rise to enhanced erosion off its slopes. Finally, given the extent of animal burrowing encountered during excavation, it may not be unreasonable to speculate that the mound served as a rabbit warren during medieval times. Such burrowing activities can lead to deflation and accelerated erosion of mound structures.

From henge to barrow: Ringlemere M1 and comparable monuments

by Stuart Needham

Once it had been established that a remnant of a mound survived at the site and, moreover, that this was encircled by a ditch, the initial assumption was that the monument was, straight-forwardly, a round barrow. The diameter of the ditch suggested that it would have been an unusually large example, but such are known scattered across the country; Ann Woodward has termed them aggrandised barrows (Woodward 2000, 139–40). However, any initial assumptions that the mound once rose to a considerable height or that it was contemporary with the digging of the ditch now have been reconsidered (Parfitt and Needham 2004).

Certainly by the 7th century AD the outer skirt of the mound would not have been very much higher than it is today to judge from the sunken-floored building cut into the northern side (Fig. 12). This might be explained by previous agricultural activity. A little earlier, probably mainly during Iron Age and Roman times, the mound had been subjected to lateral plough erosion, causing the negative lynchets all around. However, we can now also argue that the core mound of turf was never particularly high, for the comparatively narrow second-phase façade trench described above, which survived to a depth of 0.23m, if correctly interpreted as a foundation for prehistoric timber uprights cut through the thickness of the mound, seems unlikely to have ever been more than say 0.75–1.0m deeper. This would suggest a first phase mound little more than 1m high.

It is likely that the mound was enlarged later. This depends on reconstructing the thin surviving layer of orangey clay encircling the core as originally having formed a capping over the turf mound, a bipartite structure familiar in conventional Early Bronze Age barrows. Often such mound additions followed secondary interments in an already established burial monument. Again, it is the erection of the timber façade in the top of the turf core which suggests the outer mound would not have been added immediately.

Monument phase 1

Whatever the original size of the turf mound, we have to take account of the implications of the first central structure, the cove, which preceded it. It seems unlikely that the cove stood before the ditch was constructed and it is possible that it was added secondarily to the centre of an existing enclosure and was part of a sequence of activity leading to construction of the inner mound.

Small rectilinear structures of varied forms can be found under Early Bronze age barrows (Ashbee 1960, 52–4). Two examples very like the Ringlemere cove are worth drawing attention to. A cove structure in a probable burial context has recently been excavated at Llanfair Discoed, Monmouthshire (Chadwick and Pollard 2005). Slot foundations on three sides are very similar in plan and orientation to the Ringlemere cove, but at Llanfair it occupies the base of a pit interpreted as a grave, itself central within a small ring cairn. Barbed and tanged arrowheads and Beaker sherds suggest it is a Beaker period grave with associated mortuary structure.

Another cove-like setting with a maximum width of 2.3m occurred under the burial mound of a barrow at Arretton Down, Isle of Wight (Alexander *et al.* 1960). Again the cove is formed of two angled slots, each formed of two intersecting pits. In this case association with a burial deposit is not in doubt; a cremation was placed centrally within the structure and was accompanied by a riveted bronze flat dagger and possibly also a

bone belt-hook. Clare (1986) covers other examples of square settings inside small ring ditches which are most likely burial sites. While these are plausible comparisons for the cove at Ringlemere, here there is no evidence for associated burials and, moreover, we can point to a quite different setting for such structures.

The early phase of Ringlemere M1 can be reconstructed as a penannular enclosure with substantial ditch and an external bank enclosing a level interior surface of some 42m diameter (Fig. 13). The entrance points a little west of north and, if contemporary, the cove is situated at the very centre of the enclosure. It remains to be determined from full excavation of the interior and post-excavation analysis how many other features are contemporary, rather than belonging to earlier settlement activity. The first-phase monument is clearly a henge, apparently with just one entrance (class 1 – Atkinson *et al.* 1951; Harding and Lee 1987).

Enclosures accepted as henges or hengi-form have widely varying diameters, orientations, earthwork morphologies and internal structures and, taking account of all these constituent features, they have defied any simple classification (Burl 1969; Clare 1986). One should not therefore necessarily expect to match all features closely between individual sites, for there was clearly an element of ‘bricolage’ in the designed or accretive plan of henges. Nevertheless, some important comparisons can already be made between Ringlemere and other henges. This

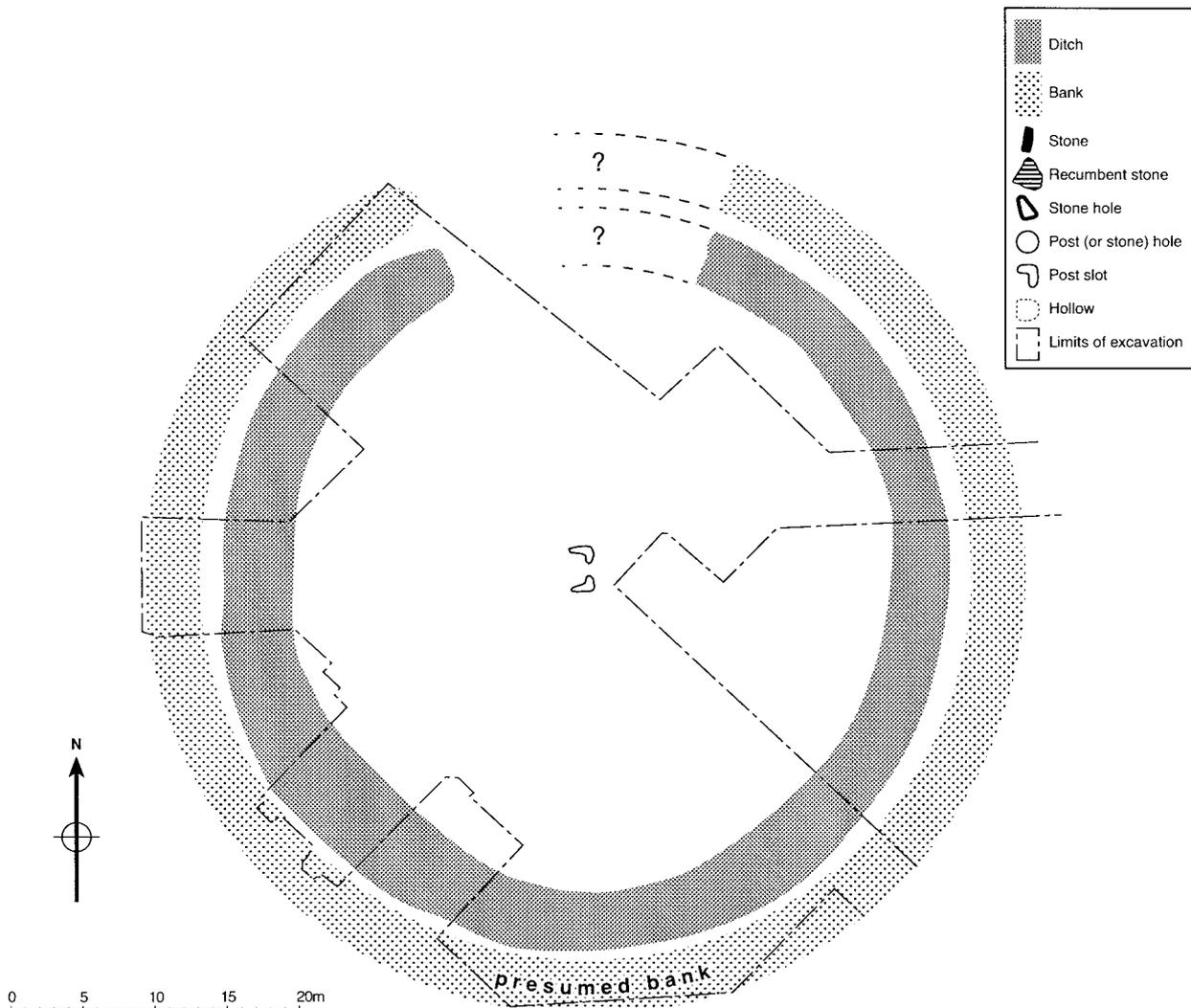


Figure 13 Simplified plan of the initial henge at Ringlemere. (NB It is likely that further internal features will prove to belong to this phase.)

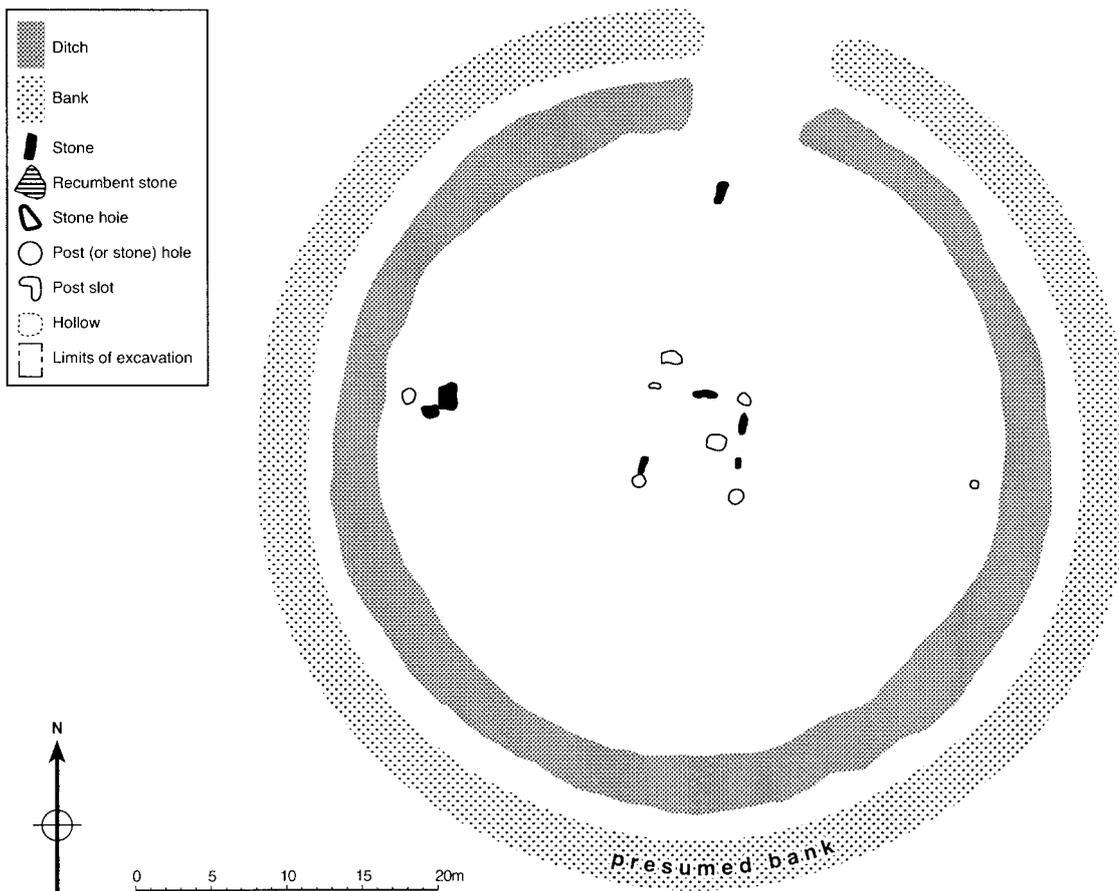


Figure 14 Simplified plan of henge at Site IV, Mount Pleasant, Dorset; Wainwright's phase 2 structures are shown (after Wainwright 1979)

will need more refined consideration later when more is understood of which features belong to the first monumental phase at Ringlemere M1.

The diameter of the Ringlemere example corresponds with the main peak for class 1 monuments, 40–50m internally (Harding and Lee 1987, 39 fig. 28B). Orientations in the north-east quadrant are also the most frequent for single-entrance classic henges, with a smaller number facing in the opposite direction (Harding and Lee 1987, 37, 38 fig. 27a). In these respects, therefore, the Ringlemere monument fits into the modal plan for class 1 henges. More intriguing, however, is the fact that at least two class 1 henges not only match the diameter and approximate orientation of M1, but also have similar rectilinear central structures.

The first is the 'Site IV' henge situated inside the vast 'henge enclosure' of Mount Pleasant, Dorset (Wainwright 1979, 29 fig. 16). The internal layout shown in **Figure 14** is that interpreted as phase 2 by Wainwright in which stone monoliths and pits or post holes are used to define a central rectilinear space 6.5m² and, just inside the ditch, three 'cardinal' points. The latter are in fact systematically rotated a few degrees clockwise from west, north

and east thus conforming to the enclosure's alignment, just east of north. Like Ringlemere M1, the ditch describes a good circle; it has an internal diameter of 43m, an external one of 49m.

Dating of the Mount Pleasant IV enclosure relies on pottery and three radiocarbon dates for primary ditch silts. The latter are in good agreement with one another (**Table 1**), but may not date the very first construction phase. The antler and bone objects sampled came from ditch segment VII from the top of a pit, but immediately beneath the basal profile of the main ditch (Wainwright 1979, 17 fig. 10). The pit in question is one of several surviving beneath the ditch cut-line and may well indicate an original circuit formed of pits or shafts, not unlike Maumbury Rings (Bradley 1976). The dates, calibrating to the middle of the 3rd millennium BC, would thus relate to the backfilling of those pits with the main enclosure ditch dug thereafter, perhaps immediately thereafter. Associated pottery from the ditch is principally Grooved Ware, but two Beaker sherds in the lower fills (Longworth 1979, 75, P139, P221), although possibly intrusive from higher (one belongs with a larger number of sherds stratified a little higher), are actually unproblematic at a date shortly after 2500 BC (Needham 2005).

Table 1: Selected radiocarbon dates for Formative and Class 1 henges

Orientation	Site	Context	14C Result (BP)	Calibrated date* (cal BC; 2 sigma)	Lab. Ref.	Reference	Sample Details	
?	Flagstones, Dorset	Child burial at base of ditch	4490 ± 70	3370–2920	Har-9158	Healy 1997, 38 table 1	Human bone	
		Base of ditch	4450 ± 90	3360–2900	OxA-2322		Red deer antler	
		Child burial inserted into lower ditch silts	4210 ± 110	3100–2450	OxA-2321		Human right femur	
		Base of ditch	4030 ± 100	2900–2300	Har-8579		Red deer antler	
		Internal pit FA 370	4480 ± 50	3360–3010 (2950–2930)	GrN-22954		Lynch & Musson 2004, 118	Cremated bone; adult female
Internal pit FA 1	4450 ± 40	3340–2920	GrN-27192	Mature oak charcoal				
WSW	Llandegai A, Gwynedd	Ditch middle fill (level 4)	4420 ± 140	3550–2650	NPL-221	Lynch & Musson 2004, 119	Mature oak charcoal	
		Cove – feature ACC3	4480 ± 145	3650–2750	NPL-224		Charcoal: mainly oak, some hazel	
		Cove – feature ACC2	4420 ± 40	3330–3220 3180–2910	GrN-26818		Charcoal: mainly one oak plank?	
		Cove – feature ACC4	4320 ± 30	3020–2880	GrN-26817		Oak charcoal	
		Base post hole 7	4440 ± 150	3650–2650	BM-129		Harding & Lee 1987, 195	Charcoal
		Ditch, basal fill	4425 ± 50	3340–2910	OxA-9763		Ashmore 2000; 2001	Cattle hoof core
N	Stones of Stenness, Orkney	Ditch, basal fill	4405 ± 50	3330–2900	OxA-9765	Ashmore 2000; 2001	Cattle mandibular ramus	
		Ditch, basal fill	4390 ± 50	(3330–3230) (3180–3150) 3120–2890	OxA-9764	Ashmore 2000; 2001	Cattle left radius	
		Ditch, basal fill	4310 ± 70 (110)	3350–2550	SRR-350	Ritchie 1975–6	Animal bone	
		Ditch, basal fill	4240 ± 45	2920–2660	OxA-9762	Ashmore 2000; 2001	Wolf bone	
		Burnt deposit in central feature	4190 ± 70 (110)	3100–2450	SRR-351	Ritchie 1975–6	Charcoal	
		Bedding trench of square structure	3680 ± 270 (380)	–	SRR-592	Ritchie 1975–6	Decomposed wood	
		Ditch primary fill	4432 ± 22	(3310–3230) (3180–3150) 3110–2920	UB-3794	Pitts 2000, App. 1; Cleal <i>et al.</i> 1995	Antler	
		Ditch primary fill	4430 ± 18	(3279–3230) 3110–2920	UB-3789		Antler	
→	Excavation of ditch 3015–2935 BC	Ditch primary fill	4410 ± 60	3340–2900	BM-1583	Antler		
		Ditch primary fill	4393 ± 18	3090–2910	UB-3793	Antler		
		Ditch primary fill	4390 ± 60	3330–2880	BM-1617	Antler		
		Ditch primary fill	4381 ± 18	(3080–3060) 3030–2910	UB-3788	Antler		
		Ditch primary fill	4375 ± 19	(3080–3060) 3030–2910	UB-3787	Antler		
		Ditch primary fill	4367 ± 18	3030–2910	UB-3790	Antler		
		Ditch primary fill	4365 ± 18	3030–2910	UB-3792	Antler		
		Ditch middle fill	4425 ± 50	3340–2910	GU-1670	Barclay & Russell-White 1993, 160–2	Charcoal: hazel	
(NE)	Balfarg Riding School, Fife	Ditch middle fill	4385 ± 55	(3330–3220) 3180–2880	GU-1904	Barclay & Russell-White 1993, 160–2	Charcoal: alder, birch, hazel	
		Structure 2, boundary post	4330 ± 85	3350–2650	GU-1907		Charcoal: oak, alder	
		Structure 2, internal post	4285 ± 55	3090–2680	GU-1905		Charcoal: alder	
		Structure 2, boundary post	4155 ± 70	2900–2560 2520–2490	GU-1906		Charcoal: oak, alder	
		Central structure post hole	4370 ± 90	3350–2700	OxA-1409		Richards 1990	Animal bone
ENE	Coneybury, Wiltshire	Ditch primary fill	4200 ± 110	3100–2450	OxA-1408	Richards 1990	Animal bone	
		Primary silts in segment 176A(1), west side	4130 ± 150	3100–2200	Har-5216	Bamford 1985, 127	Small-counter sample	
?	Briar Hill inner circuit, Northamptonshire	Primary silts in segment 165B(1) [?late pit cutting segment 162]	3900 ± 90	2650–2000	Har-5125	Bamford 1985, 127	Small-counter sample	
		Cove	4010 ± 90	2900–2200	Har-2607		Charcoal: various sp.	
		Ditch primary fill or prior shaft fill	3988 ± 84	2900–2200	BM-667		Wainwright 1979	Animal bone
N	Mt. Pleasant IV, Dorset	Ditch primary fill or prior shaft fill	3931 ± 72	2620–2190	BM-666	Wainwright 1979	Antler	
		Ditch primary fill or prior shaft fill	3911 ± 89	2700–2050	BM-663		Charcoal	
		'Hearth' low in ditch middle fill (pale loam)	3630 ± 60	2200–1770	BM-668		Oak charcoal	
		'Hearth' high in ditch middle fill	3274 ± 51	1690–1430	BM-669		Oak charcoal	
		Ditch primary fill or prior shaft fill	3988 ± 84	2900–2200	BM-667		Wainwright 1979	Animal bone
		Ditch primary fill or prior shaft fill	3931 ± 72	2620–2190	BM-666		Wainwright 1979	Antler
Ditch primary fill or prior shaft fill	3911 ± 89	2700–2050	BM-663	Wainwright 1979	Charcoal			
'Hearth' low in ditch middle fill (pale loam)	3630 ± 60	2200–1770	BM-668	Wainwright 1979	Oak charcoal			
'Hearth' high in ditch middle fill	3274 ± 51	1690–1430	BM-669	Wainwright 1979	Oak charcoal			

Table 1: Selected radiocarbon dates for Formative and Class 1 henges cont.

Orientation	Site	Context	14C Result (BP)	Calibrated date* (cal BC; 2 sigma)	Lab. Ref.	Reference	Sample Details
N	Maumbury Rings, Dorset	Bottom of shaft 1 (pre-henge)	3970 ± 50	2620–2300	BM-2282N	Bowman <i>et al.</i> 1990, 65, 71	Red deer antler
		Uppermost fill of shaft 3 (pre-henge)	3940 ± 130	2900–2000	BM-2281R	Bowman <i>et al.</i> 1990, 65, 71	Red deer antler
NNE	Woodhenge, Wiltshire	Ditch floor	3817 ± 74	2470–2030	BM-677	Pollard 1995a	Antler
		Ditch, primary silts	3755 ± 54	2470–2030	BM-678		Animal bone
NNW	Gorsey Bigbury, Somerset	Ditch secondary silts, 'occupation' layer (Beaker-associated; various levels)	3800 ± 74	2470–2030	BM-1088	Harding & Lee 1987, 261–2	
			3782 ± 62	2460–2030	BM-1089		
			3666 ± 117	2500–1650	BM-1090		
			3663 ± 61	2210–1880	BM-1086		
			3606 ± 67	2150–1740	BM-1091		
		3602 ± 71	2140–1740	BM-1087			

* Ranges in brackets have relatively low probability

On Wainwright’s phasing, the central square arrangement was introduced later, as indicated by the occurrence of an ‘extensive spread of ash and charcoal, fresh sarsen flakes, stone mauls, flint artefacts, animal bones and numerous sherds of Beaker pottery’ at the base of the pale loam in the upper ditch fills (Wainwright 1979, 28). An associated radiocarbon date on oak charcoal is 3630 ± 60 BP (BM-668). On this chronology, the stone setting is later than the multiple timber circles, but the spatial coherence between the two structure sets is striking and Pollard suggests instead that they were pene-contemporaneous (1992, 218–9). At the very least the positions of the first structure were still visible when the second was laid out.

The second excellent parallel is the Stones of Stenness on Mainland, Orkney, which again is a good circle (Fig. 15). The interior is 43m in diameter, the outer lip of the ditch 54m; excavations have revealed a 6m wide bank outside (Ritchie 1975–6). The central structure is a 3 x 3 m square setting of low sill-stones, thus similar in dimension to the Ringlemere cove, but differing in being an apparently closed space which has been interpreted as a hearth by Colin Richards (2005, 218–25); burnt material was recovered from its interior. The stone phase may well be a late ‘monumental’ version of an earlier structure on the same spot (ibid); Richards finds evidence for earlier demarcation of the same space by an equi-armed L-shaped slot

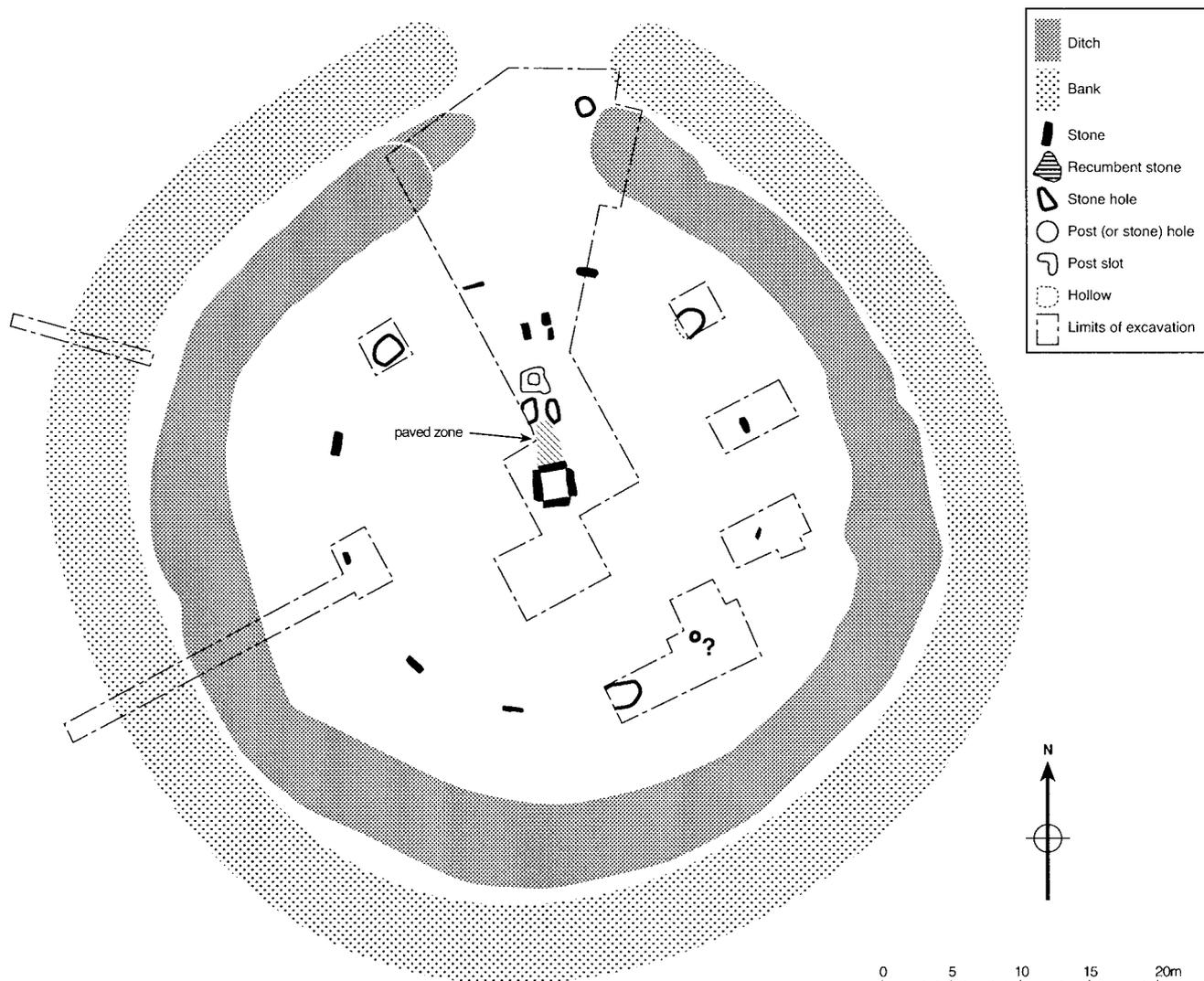


Figure 15 Simplified plan of Stones of Stenness henge, Orkney (after Ritchie 1975–6)

and this too he sees as a hearth. However, if these were slots for timbers, as seems most likely, they imply an angled wall or facade rising above the ground surface.

The limited areas excavated in the interior of the Stones of Stenness also revealed a range of other features, particularly on the line between the central structure and the entrance (Ritchie 1975–6). Moving outwards, there is first a 3m length of ‘paving’ leading to the gap between two stone-holes, perhaps forming a portal. Immediately beyond is a small square slot, 1.5m across, the foundation trench for a four-sided structure of timber or upright stones that were later removed. Next on this line is a ‘dolmen’ of three stones defining a similar ground area, but already by 1974 a restoration set in concrete. Finally, the whole central zone is encircled by a ring of 11 or 12 colossal upright stones about 30m in diameter; 4 remain *in situ*.

Dating of the Stones of Stenness henge has recently been amplified by a new suite of radiocarbon dates (Ashmore 2000; 2001). Most are for material from the primary ditch silts, presumably therefore dating the early life of the enclosure (Table 1). They show conclusively that construction must have been around the turn of the 4th to 3rd millennia BC. A single date for burnt material from the central structure seems to relate to continuing use of the site into the earlier half of the 3rd millennium.

Ringlemere, Mount Pleasant IV and Stones of Stenness are only the most closely comparable in plan among a growing body of henges and contemporary ceremonial sites which have small rectilinear structures associated. Several such associations have been noted and discussed by past researchers (Ritchie 1975–6; Wainwright 1979; Clare 1986; Burl 1988; G. Barclay 1999), but it is now possible to add a number of further examples, not all certain on extant evidence; these are introduced below.

The ‘rectilinear’ structures concerned are by no means all of

the same form, nor necessarily function. Graham Ritchie (1975–6, 19ff; followed by Burl 1988, 3–5) felt that the square structures in the centre of some monuments should not be equated with the three-sided ‘coves’ in others, whereas Clare (1986, 300) loosely grouped all rectilinear structures together and saw their origins to lie in earlier Neolithic mortuary structures (see for example Burl 1979, 116 fig. 5). Both positions are defensible, but at the same time unhelpful for understanding specific functionalities. Clearly the element of a small to medium sized rectilinear structure was well embedded in Neolithic structural principles; that might mean the basic form could be drawn upon for a variety of purposes and this supports Ritchie’s case for scrutinizing the evidence available for any differentiation. Precise lay-out in plan may not, however, be as important as evidence as to how the feature was used, as derived from position in the site, size, reconstruction of superstructure and excavated debris (eg Pollard 1992). Such factors might, for example, override formal differences between those seemingly four-sided in plan and those apparently with only three sides.

The Coneybury Hill class I henge, Wiltshire, is ‘sub-oval’ in shape, encloses an area of 32 to 38.5m diameter and faces east-north-east (J. Richards 1990), in these respects differing from the previous class I henges discussed. Julian Richards thought that the excavated pits/post-pits at the centre might have formed part of a circle (1990, 134), but this looks unlikely, even allowing for what remained unexcavated. As Pollard has recognised (1995b, 125), three of the most substantial features – 1177, 1601, 1603 – are very similar in character and would make a neat rectangle 4 x 4.5m with the addition of a fourth outside the excavated area (Fig. 16). Smaller features adjacent would seem to have supported smaller timbers partially filling three sides, but remaining open away from the entrance, in this way comparable to the Mount Pleasant IV structure. As at Mount

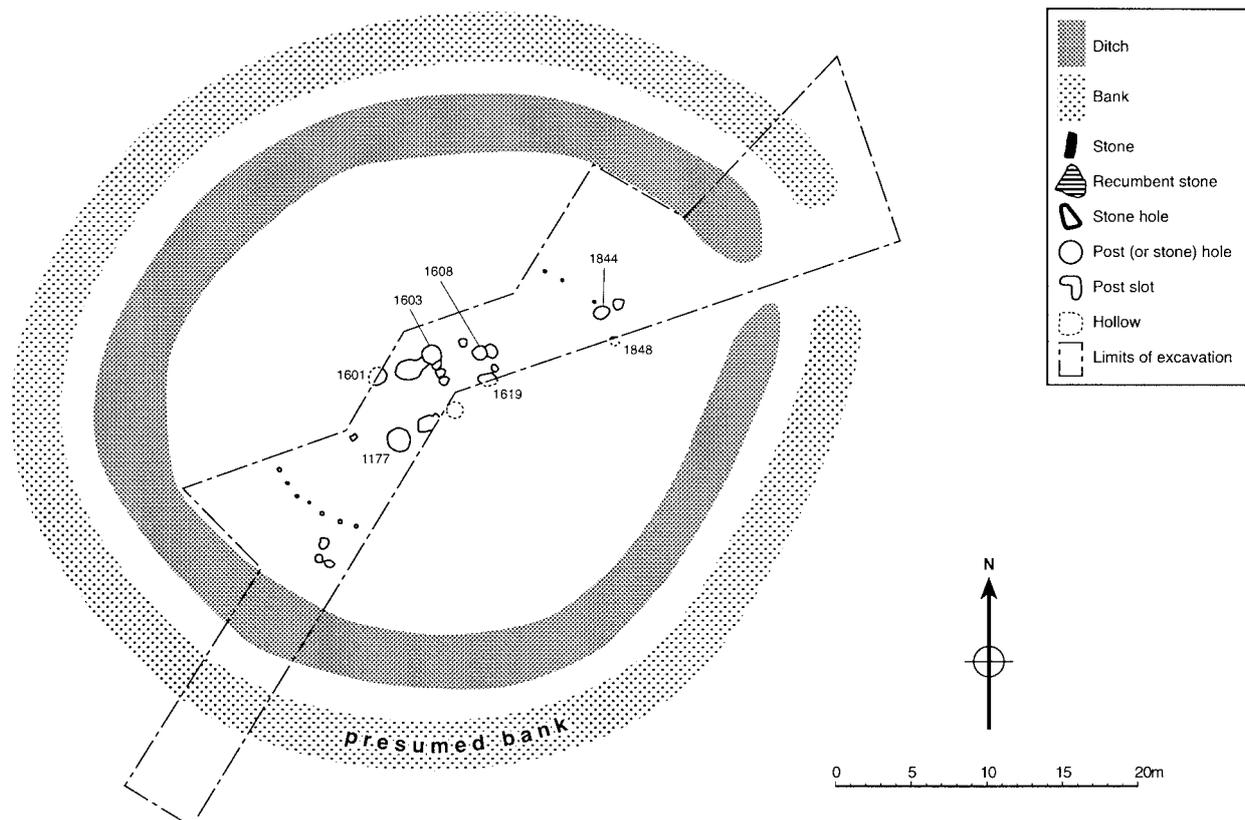


Figure 16 Simplified plan of Coneybury henge, Wiltshire (after Richards 1990)

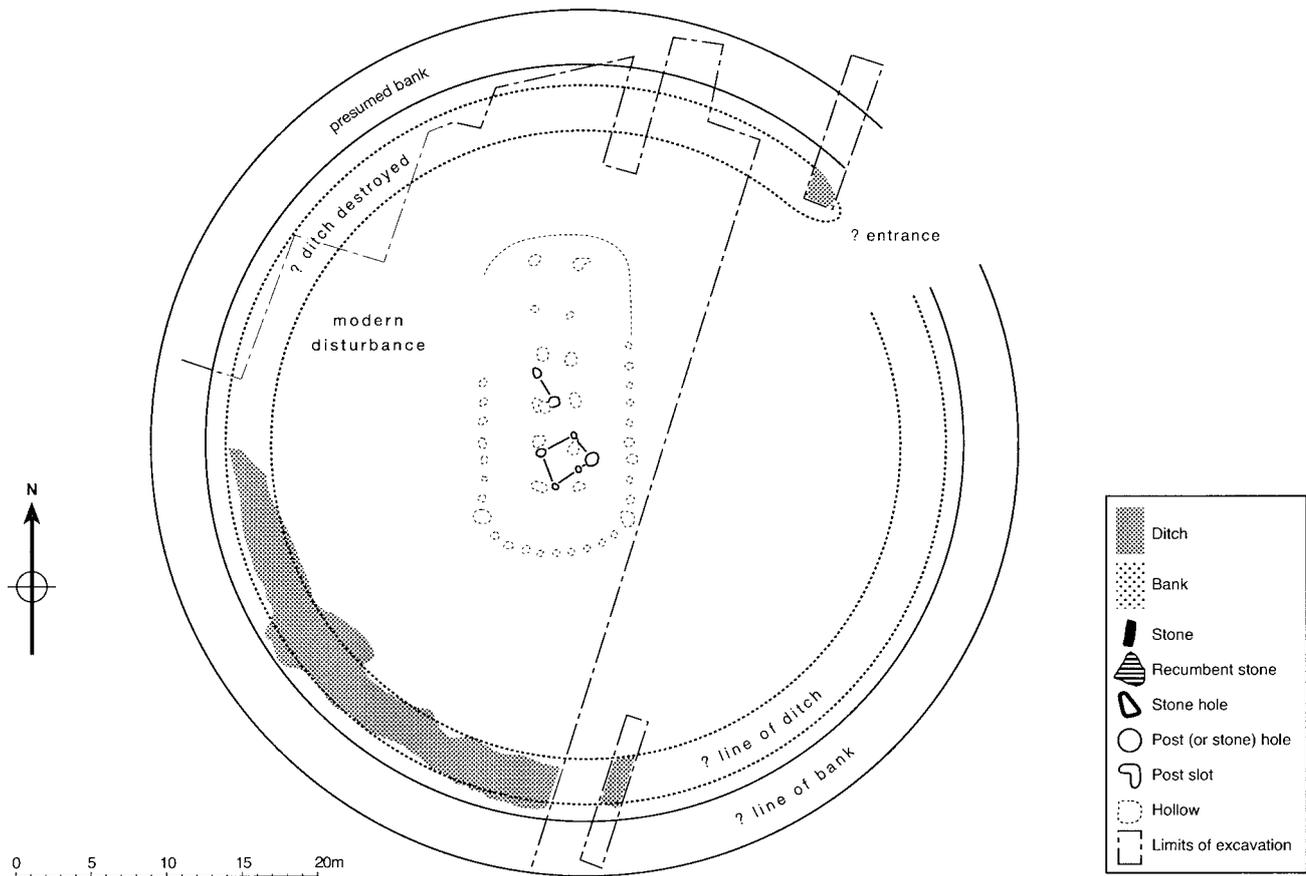


Figure 17 Simplified plan of possible henge at Balfarg Riding School, Fife (adapted from Barclay and Russell-White 1993). The internal features are suggested to belong to two main phases.

Pleasant and Stones of Stennes, the rectangle is aligned with the axis through the entrance and this alignment is enhanced by two intermediate pairs of posts noted by Richards (1990, 134–9; posts 1844 with 1848, and 1608 with 1619), these again recalling the arrangements at Stones of Stennes.

The dating of Coneybury relies on two rather imprecise radiocarbon dates. Bone from one of the larger central structure features, 1601, was dated 4370 ± 90 BP, and that from primary ditch fills, 4200 ± 110 BP (Table 1). These dates would relate best to pre-Beaker Grooved Ware phases, but sherds of Beaker pottery suggest continuing activity after the middle of the 3rd millennium BC. In fact most of the Beaker pottery is in layers also yielding still later pottery, down to the Middle Bronze Age, suggesting it was already old when deposited in the higher ditch fills, perhaps in the course of ploughing.

On the evidence of an early depiction, four monoliths once stood in a square arrangement in the middle of the large class 1 henge of Mayburgh, Cumbria (Topping 1992, 250–3); only one now survives. The enclosure has an internal diameter of 88m and is unusual in being ditchless, the massive bank being made up of imported pebbles.

A partly destroyed enclosure which is likely to have been a classic henge monument was excavated at Balfarg Riding School, Fife (Barclay and Russell-White 1993). It was also found to have suffered marked subsoil truncation in its northern half. The original shape of the enclosure is uncertain, as is the position of the ditch and entrance(s). However, the excavated ditch circuit has an internal diameter of about 40m. Grooved Ware and material datable by radiocarbon were associated with both the middle ditch fills and parts of the interior surface. A

most striking structure was revealed in the interior – a large rectangular building with bowed end walls – and was interpreted by the excavators as an unroofed mortuary house. A second, very similar in plan, lay outside, 35m away to the south west.

The post holes at the southern end of the earthwork-enclosed building were more numerous than elsewhere in this or the second house and five superfluous features can be made into a small slightly trapezoid cove, aligned diagonally to the superimposed building and enclosing 3×2.5 m (Fig. 17). One corner post lies at the predicted centre of the ditch, assuming near circularity. The henge can feasibly be constructed with a north-east facing entrance which might thus have aligned with the long axis of the cove.

Class 2 henges can also have related central structures. Arbor Low, Derbyshire (Fig. 18), is famous for its central setting of up to seven stones, some of which are recumbent, which is often regarded as a collapsed cove (Gray 1903, pl. XXXVIII; Barnatt 1990, 35–8; Hart 1981, 39 fig. 4.4, 41). Gray's excavations found no evidence for holes in between the two large recumbent stones and if they were ever upright they must cover their respective sockets, as Barnatt has conjectured. They would have been on opposite sides facing the entrances and forming a cove 3m or more across. Standing 3m high, they would have effectively blocked the view of the cove's interior from the direction of the entrances (Barnatt 1990, 38). The henge's interior is about 43×54 m across.

Another relevant class 2 henge is that of Cairnpapple Hill, West Lothian (Fig. 19). The interior was fully excavated by Piggott (1947–8). Again the internal platform is of very

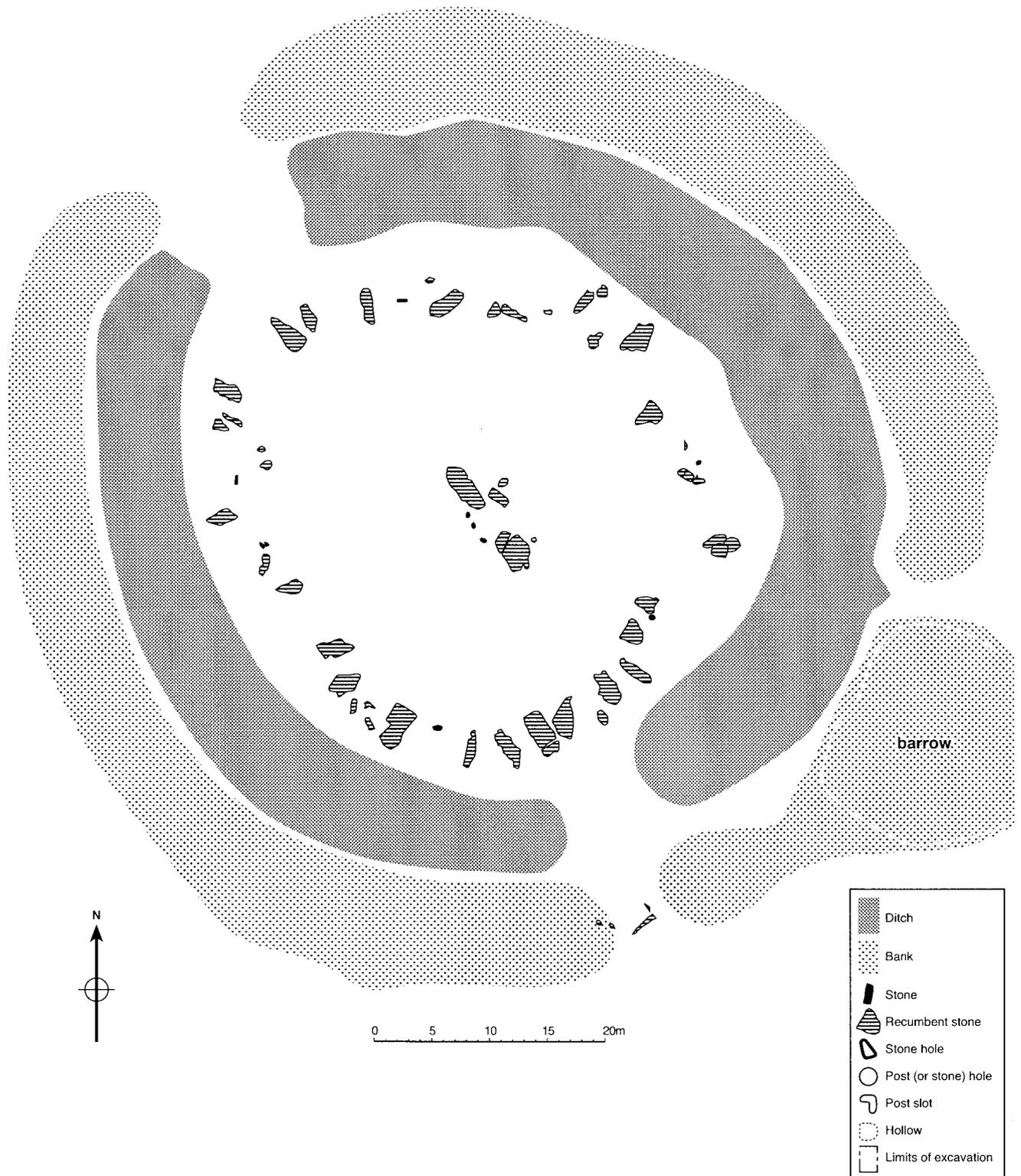


Figure 18 Simplified plan of Arbor Low henge, Derbyshire (after Gray 1903)

comparable size to those discussed so far, 35 x 40m, and it contained two relevant structures. The site sequence has been reconsidered by later writers, most recently by Gordon Barclay (1999), and there is considerable debate about the exact phasing of the early (pre-cairn) structures. The 'structure' nearest the centre is represented by three linear 'pits', or slots, set on the edges of a larger hollowed zone, which might be contemporary or later. The slots are likely to have held upright stones or timbers (Ritchie 1975–6). Piggott had reservations about whether they belonged with the initial henge phase (his period II) because of their eccentricity to the ditch and bank (1947–8,

79). However, the henge itself is one of those that seem to have been deliberately made to be asymmetric around the axis through the entrances. Moreover, it may be that he was expecting the wrong element to be central. Rather than the setting as a whole, it appears that it was the large socket, up to 6m long, that was intended to be central. The feature is aligned on the south entrance and perhaps also on a narrow gap through the terminal to the west of the north entrance (Fig. 19). It recalls the phase 2 façade at Ringlemere.

A revised perspective on Cairnpapple can be gained by developing Ritchie's suggestion that this central rectilinear

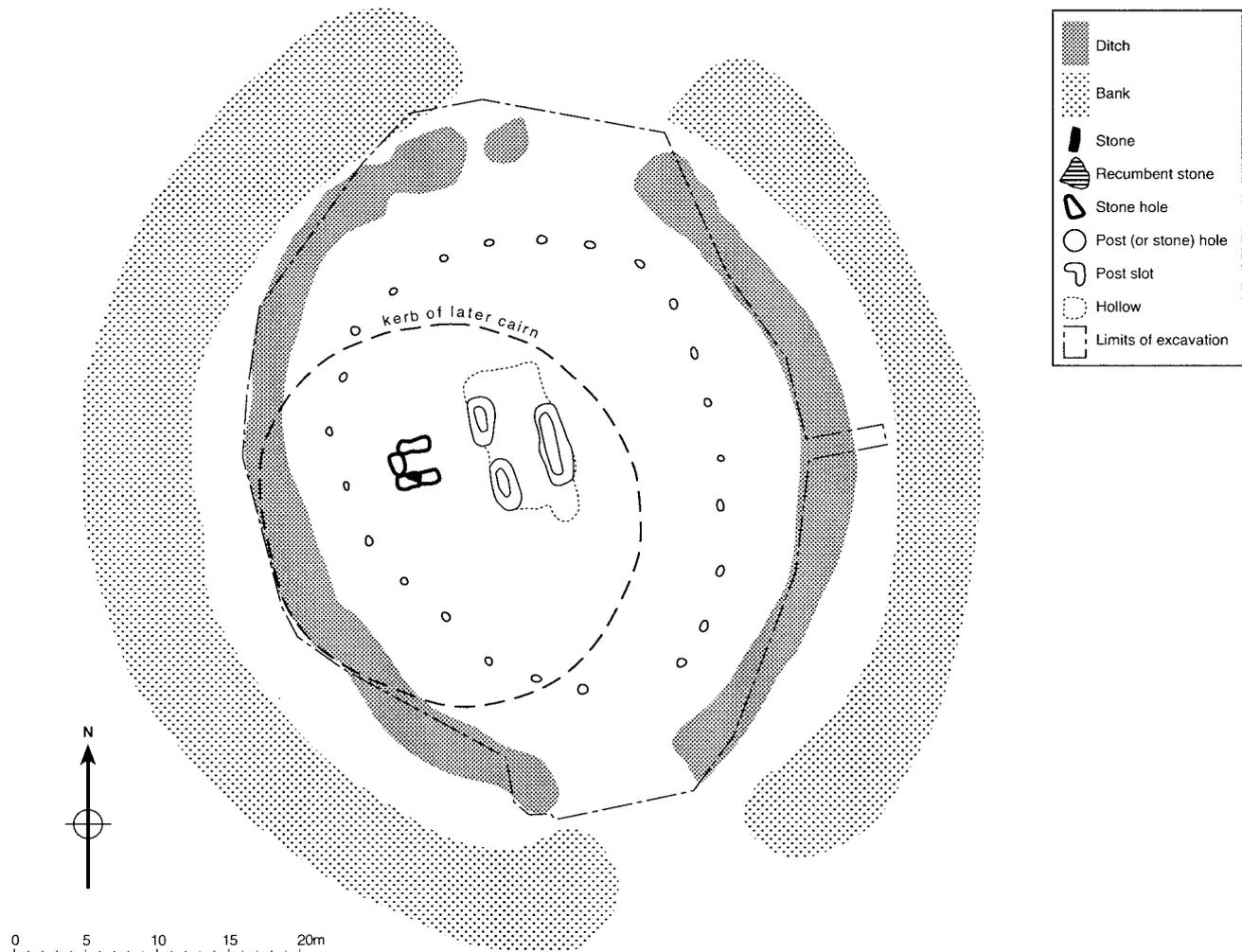


Figure 19 Simplified plan of Cairnpapple Hill henge, West Lothian (adapted from Piggott 1947–8)

structure went together with another early structure immediately to the west – the ‘cove’ (this is followed by Barclay in his phase 2; 1999, 39). The structure has a maximum external width of 3.5m and although most sockets are now empty, they are best seen as for modest sized stones. Indeed one upright is surely still essentially *in situ*; it is incorporated into, but out of character with, an oval stone-slab surround for a subsequent Beaker grave, which will have truncated the eastern end of its socket (Piggott 1947–8, 91 fig. 10, pl. IX.2). The cove faced east with a potential sight line through a portal formed by the westerly two uprights of the ‘central’ setting and thus onto the flat face of, or through a window in, the central façade. It is also noteworthy that the outer circle of uprights, probably timber posts, is flattened on the east side, opposite the westerly offset position of the focal structures, and this gives a symmetry about an axis perpendicular to the axial passage through the entrances (itself offset from the centre line of the monument).

There is no stratigraphic evidence against these features at Cairnpapple belonging to a contemporary structural set. They pre-date two graves, one with two Long-Necked Beakers, the other with a Food Vessel, and an encircling two-phase cairn (Piggott’s periods III–IV). The structure set should pre-date the 2nd millennium BC and could be significantly earlier (Barclay 1999, 32–4). Beaker sherds (unillustrated) were apparently recovered from the fill of one of the central structure sockets (Piggott 1947–8, fig. 5), but they might relate to demolition as much as construction.

The Devil’s Quoits, a class 2 henge in Oxfordshire, yielded a cluster of shallow post holes at its centre (A. Barclay *et al.* 1995, 43 fig. 26). Most survived to no more than 11cm deep, possibly having been truncated by agricultural activity, including medieval ridge-and-furrow. Alistair Barclay was concerned that a structure may have survived incompletely and suggested that the post holes represented an oval setting (ibid 71–3). However, the main arc of post holes forms a semi-circular setting 9m across and open towards the western entrance. The presence of close-set and double post holes suggests the structure went through two-phases or was repaired. Within the crescent defined are five further post holes, one of which (F90) is equidistant from the crescent’s ends. It is just possible that three of the others may have belonged to a rectilinear setting, but if so one had been destroyed or missed. This arrangement of posts as a crescent is reminiscent of what may be reconstructed at the centre of Balfarg henge.

Balfarg is an atypical henge with two entrances set at about 100° from each other, the ditch enclosing an area of around 65m diameter (Mercer 1981; Mercer *et al.* 1988). It lies close to the Balfarg Riding School enclosure already discussed. Despite considerable erosion and a difficult glacial till subsoil, the excavator was able to identify many internal features, some of which could be reconstructed as concentric circles or arcs thereof, mainly for timber uprights. The main circle, A, had a ‘portal’ structure facing west and this seems to define the main axis of approach to the centre (Fig. 20). Inside was a lighter

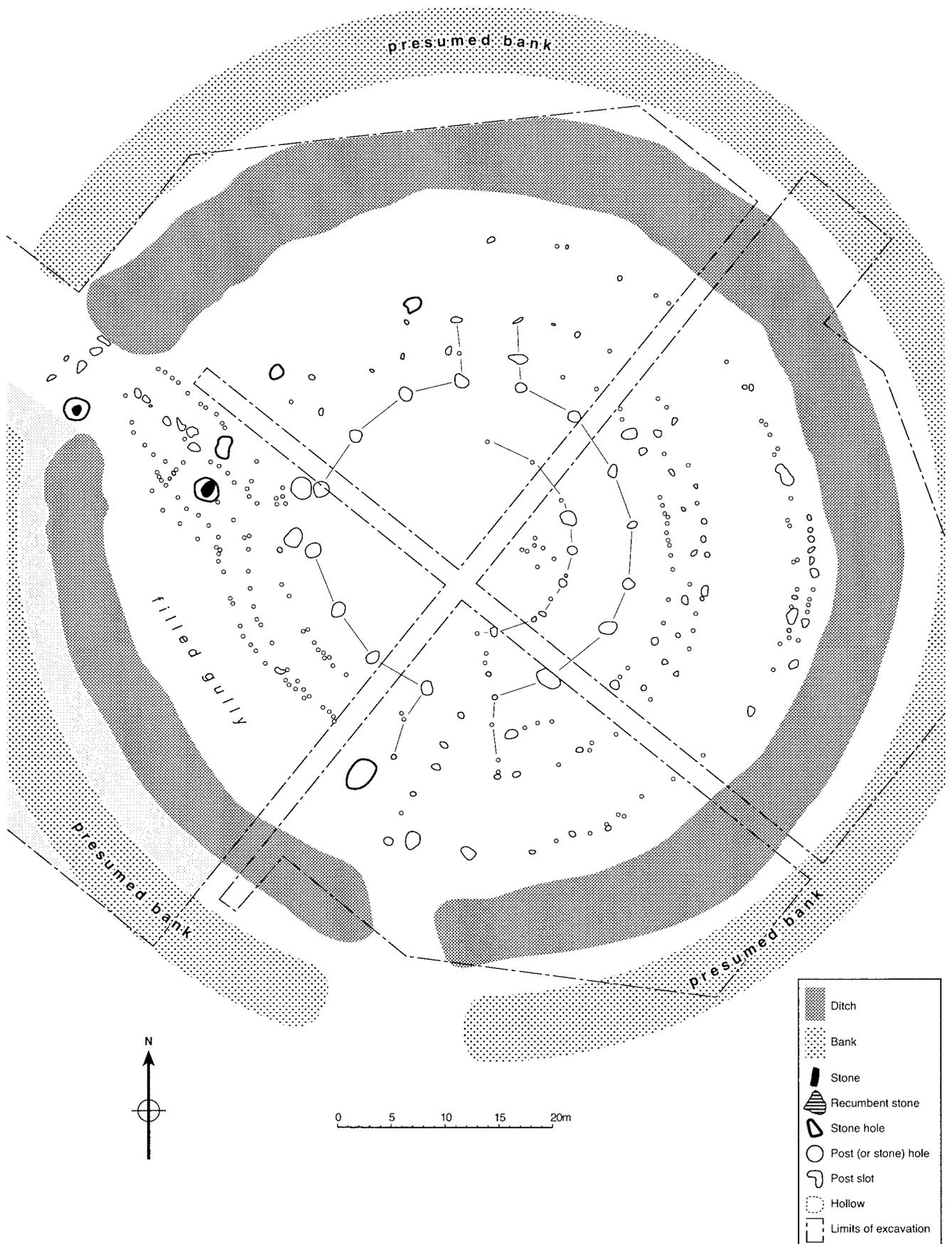


Figure 20 Simplified plan of Balfarg henge, Fife (adapted from Mercer 1981). Only selected internal features are shown here.

semi-circular structure screening the back (east) side of the inner space, away from the main approach. Focally sited towards the back of the semi-circle and a few metres behind the centre of the whole monument was a cluster of small post holes, some having evidence of burning (Z9–Z15). These are not

unambiguously reconstructed and may not all be post holes, but a small rectilinear or trapezoid structure is possible. The very centre of the site is almost bare of features, but a late Beaker grave was inserted, presumably considerably later than the site's foundation.

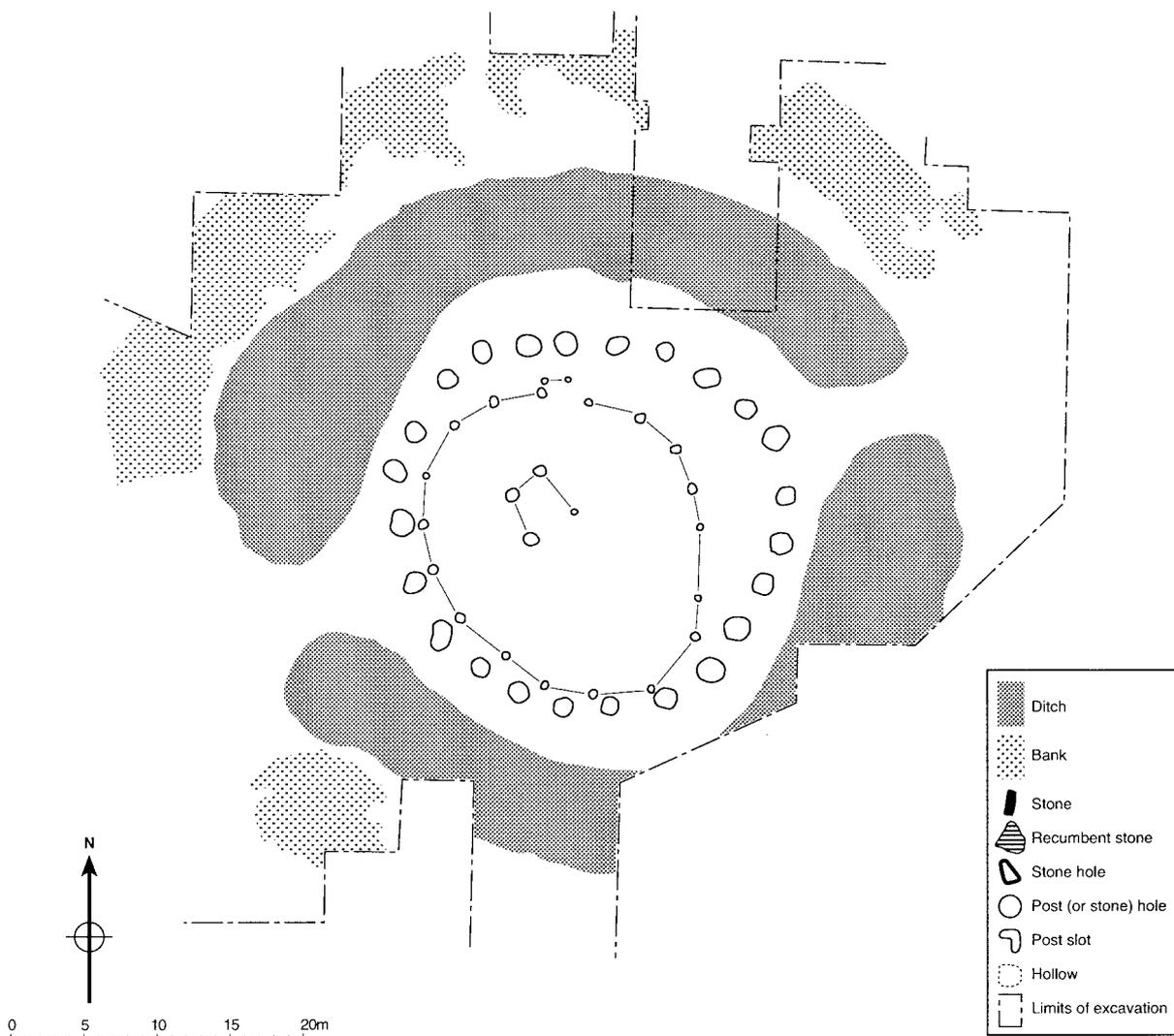


Figure 21 Simplified plan of North Mains henge, Perthshire (adapted from Barclay 1983)

At North Mains, Perthshire, there is again the possibility of a small cove or quadrangular structure near to the centre of a henge of 35 x 32m internal diameter (Fig. 21). A sequence was recognised by the excavator in which the ring of substantial posts, circle A, must have been erected before the henge earthwork was constructed because of the consistent orientation of their ramps outwards, towards the ditch; had the ditch already existed, this would have made erection of the big timbers even more difficult a task than it already was (G. Barclay 1983, 180). Inside circle A was an egg-shaped ring of slighter posts, circle B, whose eccentricity relative to circle A and the enclosure has led to the suggestion that it was earlier still (Gibson 1998, 36–7). This need not necessarily be the case since there is no overlap between the two ‘circles’ and an alternative explanation for their eccentricity could lie in the deliberate creation of a forecourt area between them on the east side, arguably the main approach.

Four pits or post holes – F40, F41, F43, F45 (G. Barclay 1983, 152–4) – form a slightly trapezoid setting, about 3.5m long and contracting from 3.5 to 2.5m in width. Although not central in the monument, it is sited focally within ring B, just north-west of its centre, its wide end facing the centre (south-east). If this was the open side of a cove, it may have faced away from the entrance to ring B, for such is potentially defined by F37 and F38 which were recognized by the excavator to form a pair lying

immediately outside the north of ring B. None of the relationships here prove contemporaneity between the various structural elements and there may have been a sequence of additions. Nonetheless, it is possible to see all these elements as constituting a unitary plan at some point in the site’s history.

The single-entrance henge-like enclosure at Llandegai A, Gwynedd, atypical in having an internal bank only really repeated at Stonehenge, may also have a cove structure, but unlike the classic henges discussed so far, the cove lies immediately outside the entrance. A set of pits and postholes containing cremated human bone deposits at that location has hitherto been described as a ‘cremation circle’ (Lynch and Musson 2004, 48–54). However, this is something of a misnomer; the three main features are elongate slots, each between four and 5m long. Together they form what can readily be reconstructed as a cove enclosing an area of 7 x 4.5m and facing NNE. Other features in the group are modest by comparison although some may have held single posts, two being situated in front of the putative open side of the cove.

Although described as pits, the long oval features could have been slots for upright timbers and/or stones. The westerly one, ACC2, even contained in its centre the base of a broken and partially keeled over monolith, but concentrations of charcoal to either side suggest that it stood between or replaced timbers which had burned *in situ*. The back-wall slot, ACC3, had a

central linear bed of charcoal all along its base, and another against its northern edge; they are suggested to have originated in planks (*ibid.*, 51), in which case they could be the base of one or more phases of a timber-framed wall. Deposits of cremated bone are recorded in plan as having formed a neat ring around the central line of the slot and would be consistent with having been buried at the foot of a wall panel, both internally and externally (*ibid.*, 49 fig. 22).

The eastern slot, ACC4, contained less charcoal occurring as five patches fairly regularly distributed along its length and suggestive of burnt post positions. Three radiocarbon dates, one for charcoal from each of the three slots, show broad contemporaneity with the earthwork of the ‘formative’ henge, ie towards the end of the 4th millennium cal BC (**Table 1**).

A slot foundation for a slightly trapezoid timber cove 5m long, 2.5m wide and facing east was excavated at Briar Hill, Northamptonshire. It stood in the southern part of the innermost circuit of a triple segmented ditch enclosure, the whole of which was initially taken to constitute an earlier Neolithic causewayed enclosure (Bamford 1985, 43 fig. 22). The innermost enclosure was 95 x 85m across, but the cove itself is dated by radiocarbon and Grooved Ware sherds to the Late Neolithic, as are three other internal features. There is also an undated linear façade trench, 6m long, placed immediately behind the cove.

The Late Neolithic features must be much later additions to the original causewayed enclosure; Chris Evans (1988, 85–6) was first to challenge the notion that all three ditch circuits were part of the ‘coherent design’ originally argued by the excavator. It is now much more likely that most of the inner circuit was appended to a stretch of the middle circuit to form a near-circular enclosure with an external bank, contrasting with the existing internal banks (Mercer 1990, 63–4; Bradley 1998b, 79; Oswald *et al.* 2001, 55, 56, 77, 133–4, 153). The earthwork in this rejuvenated phase is not well dated; sparse finds are still of earlier Neolithic material, perhaps residual, and two radiocarbon measurements are on small samples. Nevertheless, the latter do suggest contemporaneity with the enclosed cove and associated features at a date around 3000 cal BC and the complex may qualify as a ‘formative henge’ in Jan Harding’s terms (2003, 10–20).

Flagstones in Dorset is another enclosure that may fit into this category and has much in common with Briar Hill’s inner circuit – very small ditch segments and an internal diameter of 97m (Healy 1997). Radiocarbon dating again places its construction and early use to either side of 3000 cal BC. Only about half of the interior was available for excavation and it is not certain where the entrance or entrances lay. One strong candidate on the north side was defined by a wider gap than normal and shallower flanking ditch segments of distinct profile than elsewhere, possibly incorporating post sockets (*ibid.* 33, fig. 20 section J). A little south and west of that gap, 20m distant overall, were three contiguous shallow pit features (*ibid.*, 41). Unfortunately these had been partly destroyed by medieval field boundaries, but they define three sides of a space of 4 x 2m open to the south-east. It seems quite possible that this too was the foundation for a timber cove.

In the south-west quadrant of the enclosure, immediately inside the ditch, was a semi-circular ditch about 7m across, three enclosed pits each contained cremated human bone (*ibid.*, 41).

Although semi-circular, this mini-enclosure is highly reminiscent of the Llandegai A cove in its size, position on the south-west perimeter and association with bone.

Another monument created in this ‘formative’ phase was Stonehenge; there may even be indications of a rectilinear feature here amidst the considerable ground surface losses caused by the subsequent stone settings in the central zone. The timber structures are generally believed to have belonged to pre-stone phases and are ascribed to Stonehenge 2 (Cleal *et al.* 1995). This may be an over-simplification arising from the fragmentation of the evidence, but a thorough consideration of this problem cannot be tackled here. However, a trench opened by Atkinson close to the centre of the site yielded just two post holes 3.5m apart (Cleal *et al.* 1995, 149 fig. 69). Moreover, these would be consistent with one side of a square or quadrilateral four-post setting symmetrically disposed around the theoretical centre of the enclosure. It is tempting, on this limited evidence, to hypothesise that an early phase of Stonehenge had a central rectilinear structure.

Similar questions need to be asked of the features that have been revealed by geophysical survey at the centre of the Stanton Drew great stone circle which is now seen to lie immediately inside a ditch enclosing a space of 125m diameter (David *et al.* 2004, 344–9). At least two major features here are now shown to lie at the centre of as many as nine concentric circles of pits and/or post holes. For the sake of completeness, we should also mention the record of a possible cove inside a now lost earthwork – perhaps a henge – at Tisbury, Wiltshire (Bradley, in Barrett *et al.* 1991, 106).

Related structures also occur within circular stone and timber monuments that lack an immediately enclosing earthwork; even so, some of these are associated with great-henge enclosures or with large palisade enclosures. The great majority of the ‘open’ circles have a maximum diameter much smaller than the henges and formative henges discussed. The stone circle at Balbirnie, part of the Balfarg complex in Fife, is only 14m in diameter and central within it is a closed kerb-defined square about 3.5 x 3m which only really finds structural parallel at Stones of Stenness (Ritchie 1975–6). In contrast is the North circle within Avebury great henge, some 97 x 93m across, with its equally grand stone cove facing north-east and enclosing about 8 x 4.5m (Smith 1965, fig. 68; Burl 1976, 307 fig. 50a, 320–33; Gillings and Pollard 2004, 13 fig. 4). The southern circle inside Avebury is of similar size and had instead the tall ‘obelisk’ stone at its centre. To the west of the obelisk Keiller excavated stone holes forming a three-sided setting of smallish stones, the long side being 32m long, but the short axis (7m) may be incomplete if the setting extended beyond the excavation trench (Smith 1965, 198–201; Gillings and Pollard 2004, 122 fig. 16, 13 fig. 4).

The two timber circles inside the Durrington Walls great henge both feature four-post central settings which are slightly trapezoid and comprise substantial timbers (Wainwright and Longworth 1971). Dimensions are 5 x 5m tapering to 4m within the North circle and a little larger within the South circle. Similar arrangements of comparable dimensions are becoming recurrent in timber ‘circles’, some having extended entrance features. Examples are now known at Knowth, Co Meath (Eogan and Roche 1997, 101 ff), and Ballynahatty, Co Down (Hartwell 1998, as well as nearby at Durrington 68, sealed under a later

barrow mound (Pollard 1995b), and perhaps some more Irish sites (Sheridan 2004, 28–9). An additional structure was set inside the Ballynahatty four-poster (BNH6): 14 posts defining a 3 x 3m square which Hartwell sees as having supported an excarnation platform (1998, 39–40). Ten metres outside the entrance of this structure was excavated a three-sided cove foundation of similar dimensions; a second matching example is deduced from geophysical survey.

A variation on this pattern may be evident at the north-east stone circle at Stanton Drew (David *et al.* 2004, 352). Here, the long-known stone circle of about 33m diameter with a short approach avenue facing east has recently been found to enclose substantial features, presumably once holding big timbers – a four-post setting (c. 6m²) with a narrower appended ‘portal’ facing east. A similar but larger ‘portalled four-poster’ has appeared inside the south-south-west circle in the same complex. It is as much as 17m square and the portal instead faces NE. In fact, the addition of an earth resistance survey here suggests that this timber-cum-stone circle is enclosed by a ditch of a little over 40m internal diameter (David *et al.* 2004, 350–3); it may well be a second henge to go alongside that found around the great stone circle.

Yet another variant on the theme appears at West Kennet structure 2. A small rectilinear setting of posts, 3.5 x 3m, lies immediately outside the inner of a double-ring palisade, itself set within the large palisade enclosure 2 (Whittle 1997, 76–85). It appears to have been an annexe to the inner ring of posts which has a gap at this point, thus forming an entrance porch, but its posts would have been much less substantial than the ring itself. This particular structure was not dated by radiocarbon, but did contain Grooved Ware. The palisaded enclosures at West Kennet are mainly datable to the later 3rd millennium BC.

Two final coves should be mentioned, neither apparently inside an enclosure, but both associated with complexes already discussed. The destroyed stone cove at Beckhampton was again trapezoid, faced south-east and enclosed a relatively large space, about 10 x 8m. It stood at the end of and perpendicular to the Beckhampton stone-lined avenue leading west out of Avebury, but was as much as 1.5km from that great henge (Burl 1988, 4 fig. 3). However, it is also necessary to consider its relationship to a previous unknown enclosure alongside; this was subsequently traversed by the avenue (Gillings and Pollard 2004, 79–81). The outlying stone cove at Stanton Drew is again situated south-west of the complex of three stone circles, but is much smaller in scale, about 3 x 2m. These ‘external’ locations bring back to mind Llandegai A, where the cove lies outside the henge’s south-west entrance.

Three other class I henges have yielded dating evidence and offer parallels for Ringlemere in terms of orientation and/or area enclosed. Maumbury Rings, not far from Mount Pleasant, is difficult to reconstruct in detail because of the substantial alterations made to convert it into a Roman amphitheatre (Bradley 1976). This involved significant reduction of the internal ground surface which will have removed any internal prehistoric features, including all but traces of the ditch. Nevertheless, Bradley’s careful calculations leave little doubt that a ditch was originally present directly above the ring of deep shafts which penetrate well below the later destruction level. As far as can be estimated the internal diameter of the ditch would have been in the region of 45m and the outer

diameter 55m or more. The probable single entrance was just east of north. Two radiocarbon dates have been obtained from red deer antlers from the early excavations by H. St George Gray: 3970 ± 70 BP (BM-2282N) for the bottom of shaft 1 and 3940 ± 130 BP for the uppermost fill of shaft 3 (BM-2281R).

Other class I henges of similar orientation to Ringlemere are less comparable in dimensions and regularity. Woodhenge has a slightly oval plan and its diameter is larger (internally around 50m); the entrance faces about 30° east of north. Two radiocarbon dates are from early contexts within the ditch; antler from the ditch floor produced a result of 3817 ± 74 BP (BM-677) and animal bone from the primary silts gave 3755 ± 54 BP (BM-678). Another somewhat irregular example is that at Gorseley Bigbury, Somerset, it points just west of north and has an internal diameter of between 20 and 24m. A rich deposit of occupation debris in the secondary silts of the ditch yielded many Beaker sherds and six radiocarbon dates on charcoal falling between 3800 and 3600 BP (Table 1; Harding and Lee 1987, 261–2).

As a henge in its first manifestation, the Ringlemere M1 enclosure would belong to a tradition of ‘Late Neolithic’ monument design. In reality, the construction of such monuments spans the very end of the fourth and much of the 3rd millennia BC (J. Harding 2003, fig. 6), the last part of which is contemporary not only with continuing Grooved Ware, but also with early Beaker material and the earliest metallurgy. Nevertheless, there is little evidence that classic henges (*sensu* Harding and Lee 1987) were constructed after 2000 BC; indeed, the latest good dating for an early phase of a class I henge is around 2200/2100 BC (Table 1).

In this context the current dating of the cove at Ringlemere, 1890–1680 cal BC, might suggest that it was a later addition to the enclosure and related more to those examples known from Early Bronze Age burial contexts. However, there are significant uncertainties relating to its radiocarbon dating (Chapter 4) and there must be a strong presumption, given the emerging pattern of evidence for Late Neolithic ceremonial monuments, that it was a key feature of the original henge. From this non-exhaustive survey it can be seen that up to 15 earthwork enclosures share with Ringlemere the presence of a cove or similar rectilinear structure – a *secretum*; in 11 or 12 cases the *secretum* lies at the heart of the monument. Furthermore, there are nine ‘open’ circles of timber or stone uprights that again, with one exception, have central *secretums*. These open circles tend to be smaller in diameter, but often set within a larger monumental complex involving great henges and large palisade enclosures. The same is true of two known ‘outlying’ coves, one of which is linked to its associated complex by an avenue.

It should be emphasized that in drawing together this set of broadly comparable sites in terms of their lay-out, it is not to be suggested that all functioned in exactly the same way, either at *secretum* or whole-site level. This is an aspect that will be explored in greater detail in another context.

Monument phases 2 and 3

In its second phase as a monument a turf mound was added in the interior of Ringlemere M1. Aside from the off-centre pit (F. 1073) with possible flecks of cremated bone, there is no evidence that it was erected to cover a burial deposit. A berm may have been left between it and the lip of the ditch, but the later edge

truncation makes this impossible to ascertain with certainty. Given the arguments presented above, that the turf mound was never more than about 1m high, it would seem that the intention was not to impress viewers with sheer monumental scale, but rather to create a raised platform for the enactment of ritual activities. Although not high, such a platform set amidst gently sloping topography would have distinctly enhanced visibility of the performances from the immediate surrounds. It may for example have off-set the partial barrier effect of the encircling bank.

The turf platform was given a new structural focus, the linear façade of timbers (F. 1027), again respecting the previously important northerly orientation. Together, platform and post setting would have provided an excellent dais for performing ceremonies (Fox 1959, 139–43; Barrett 1988, 38; Barrett *et al.* 1991, 128). Attention has also recently been given to the potential role of barrow mounds to enhance inter-visibility between critical parts of the landscape (Woodward 2000, 139–140, 142). Dating of this Ringlemere phase is not yet very precise, but some Beaker sherds occur in the old ground surface sealed by the mound and in the turf of the mound itself. The mound is unlikely to have been erected before the last quarter of the 3rd millennium BC (see Chapter 4, Beaker pottery).

Periodic activity in the centre of the platform around the façade could help explain the curious survival of wood fragments in the central cut features. It is possible that regular trampling there would have compacted and depressed the surface locally, acting to exacerbate puddling whenever rain fell. This might just have tipped the balance towards longer periods of wetness in the underlying deposits, at the same time producing a less permeable capping which prevented rapid drying out. The latter effect might also have been aided by the later capping with a clayey mound.

The third monument phase may, perhaps, have related to a burial, but even this is uncertain. The pit (F. 1024) dug into the centre of the turf mound contained a raft of wood, perhaps a 'floor' lining, the amber pendant fragment and quite probably the gold cup. Had this been a burial by inhumation, the skeletal remains would have decayed badly or totally; furthermore, any fragments surviving above the wood layer could have been dispersed by modern ploughing. If the orange clay deposit encircling the turf core is the basal remains of a secondary capping mound, this would traditionally be seen to be associated with a significant secondary burial. However, the shape and large size of the phase 3 central feature is far from classic for an Early Bronze Age grave, and it must be considered equally possible that the pit had another ritual purpose connected to the activities on the mound. Whatever, it continues the sequence of events that make it clear that the centre of the henge-cum-barrow retained a focal position for some time.

The addition of a mound within or attached to a classic henge (ie discounting small sites which merge into conventional barrows – see Chapter 5 for some discussion of Kentish examples) is not a particularly common phenomenon, but a growing number of examples are known. The most celebrated are the large mounds at Knowlton, Mount Pleasant and Marden (Bradley, in Barrett *et al.* 1991, 105; Woodward 2000, 92) and the smaller one attached to Arbor Low (Gray 1903). The Knowlton mound has not been excavated, but on the aerial photographic evidence it would seem that the large mound stood within its

own ditch and then, separated by a wide berm, the earthworks of a substantial henge with a narrow entrance facing north-east (Grinsell 1959, 159 fig. 6, 174 – Woodlands 1; Woodward 2000, colour plate 17). The mound itself is about 38m in diameter and 6.1m high, while the internal diameter of the henge ditch is about 100–102m (Harding and Lee 1987, 127 fig., 129).

At Cairnpapple, West Lothian, much of the interior, including the early structures discussed above, was covered by a cairn erected in two phases (Piggott 1947–8). One difference from Ringlemere is that the cairn was offset to the west rather than being centrally placed; secondly, it was clearly erected to commemorate formal burials, which seems not to have been the case at Ringlemere. At Catterick, North Yorkshire, the reverse sequence has been found; the bank of a henge incorporated a pre-existing cairn (Richard Bradley pers. comm.).

An unexcavated monument – either disc-barrow or henge – at Eggardon Hill (Grinsell 1959, 169 Powerstock 4a), Dorset, has two mounds, one impinging on the south-west side of the bank, the other centrally placed with a maximum diameter of about 14m leaving a wide berm outside (Piggott and Piggott 1939, 151 fig. 8; RCHME 1952, xxxii, 185 no. 29). The internal platform diameter is about 40 x 45m and two possible entrances aligned NW–SE have been noted in the past. On the ground these are unconvincing as original entrances, instead appearing as partly denuded earthworks due to later traffic. It may be no coincidence that these two breaches align on the nearby road junction, suggesting a past footpath crossing the monument. There is also good evidence for a second, outer ditch, grouping this site with Grinsell's 'Dorset' variant of disc barrow (Grinsell 1959, 18).

A similar monument on the South Dorset Ridgeway (Grinsell 1959, 171 Bincombe 6of, pl III; Woodward 2000, 141 ill. 73) is more promising as a henge-with-barrow. There is today a good break in the bank on the north side, although the internal ditch seems to continue uninterrupted. Grinsell noted that the berm around the mound was not of constant width, which might perhaps signify a two phase design with the original site centre not closely re-located in the second phase. The internal diameter of the ditch is about 54m. If nothing else, sites like these emphasise the grey boundary that may exist between classic henges and the succeeding 'fancy' barrows with ditch and external bank.

At Maxey, Cambridgeshire, a circular ditched enclosure of large diameter, some 120m, has an east facing entrance which straddled an oval barrow. At some point in its history a ditch-enclosed turf mound 32 x 36m in internal diameter was added at the centre (Pryor and French 1985; Bradley 1993, 101–2). Francis Pryor regarded the enclosure as a henge (class 1), but the combination of large diameter and yet relatively slight ditch profile is not normal for such monuments and an alternative possibility is that it is akin to the perimeter enclosures seen round Neolithic round barrows at Duggleby Howe and Maes Howe, or it is a 'formative' henge.

Flagstones enclosure is in many ways similar to Maxey and has much more secure dating evidence. Almost centrally in the original enclosure of 97m diameter a burial was inserted much later, in the early 2nd millennium cal BC. The grave was enclosed by a new ring-ditch about 25m internal diameter and covered by a mound (Healy 1997, 39).

A much smaller monument – class 2 henge or henge-form –

at Ballymeanoch, Argyllshire, may also relate in that it has a low surviving mound (Craw 1930–1, 278–9; RCAHM Scotland 1988, 52). The entrances are aligned ENE–WSW and the internal diameter is a maximum of 20m. The presence of two cists might suggest that this was initially constructed as a burial monument, but neither is central or obviously primary.

A possible mound remnant has been suggested at Balfarg Riding School, the probable henge discussed above. The post holes of the southern end of the internal building were sealed by a stoney layer, doubtless originally more extensive, but surviving here due to a surface hollow (Barclay and Russell-White 1993, 84). The excavators considered it possible that this was the last vestige of a low mound erected over the site of the former building. Although they suggest that the ditch was dug after the building already existed, this is not supported by any stratigraphic or radiocarbon evidence. If a mound was indeed once present, it is clear that it need not be contemporary with initial ditch digging.

A final site to be discussed in this context is Bryn Celli Ddu, Anglesey (Hemp 1930). Frances Lynch has argued that its

passage grave set within a circular mound is concentrically placed over an earlier circular monument comprising a ditch and internal circle of stone uprights (Lynch 1969, 110–12 fig. 29). The internal diameter of the enclosure was about 21m. This provides another possible parallel sequence, although no evidence has been found for an external bank or an entrance causeway. This leaves some uncertainty over the relationship of the first Bryn Celli Ddu monument to henges, a difficulty compounded by the fact that the passage grave is best dated to the late 4th millennium BC. Moreover, a number of variant sequences have been proposed for the site, in one of which the ditch initially encircled a mound with a peripheral ring of monoliths. These features were later all covered when the mound was enlarged to the diameter of the now largely silted ditch, in the top of which was set a new mound-edge kerb (Bradley 1998a, 8–9). Intriguingly, just outside the ditch at the entrance to the passage grave Hemp uncovered a small cove-like setting of stones in the centre of which was the burial of an ox. The cove is 3.5 x 2m but not datable relative to the main monument phases.