



Mendip Hills **An Archaeological Survey** **of the** **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

by
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Somerset County Council



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Introduction

An archaeological survey of the Mendip Hills AONB was undertaken over a period of two years between 1986 and 1988. Twelve months were spent on the project which was sponsored by English Heritage and was carried out on behalf of the County Councils of Avon and Somerset. Detailed reports of the survey work for 1986/7 and for 1987/8 are held by Somerset County Council. The following paper comprises a summary of the project, a thematic study of the archaeology of the area, and lastly a case study of three large estates in the AONB.

Acknowledgements

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The project brief was prepared by Ian Burrow, Rob Iles, Paul Gosling and Ed Dennison in conjunction with Peter Ellis. Projecting monitoring and the production of the report was undertaken by staff of Somerset County Council, principally Bob Croft and Chris Webster and the report was typed by Sarah Bisson.

Thanks are due to the many landowners who allowed access; to David Bromwich at the Local History Library, Taunton; to the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society; and to the staff of the County Record Office, Taunton.

During fieldwork and the preparation of this report many individuals have been of assistance in various ways. The contributions of Michael Bishop, George Boon, Ian Burrow, Bob Croft, Tim Darvill, Ed Dennison, Christopher Gerrard, Leslie Grinsell, Rob Iles, Jim Hancock, Casper Johnson, Peter Leach, Bruce Levitan, Richard McDonnell, and Ann Woodward, are gratefully acknowledge. The author is however entirely responsible for the hypotheses in the following text.

Production difficulties, due to staff shortages during 1990 and 1991, have held up the publication of this survey which was prepared in typescript in 1988.

Comments on the report are invited and should, in the first instance, be sent to R. A. Croft, Field Archaeologist, Department for the Environment, County Hall, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4DY.

A limited number of additional copies are available on request from the above address.

Peter Ellis, January 1992

Project Summary

At the start of the survey project the sites and monuments records (SMR) of the two counties comprised just over 1000 entries for the AONB. These numbered sites are shown on the accompanying figures and are prefixed in the text by S for Somerset and A for Avon. The project began with the collation and plotting of the vertical air photographic coverage of the study area. This comprised over 500 black and white photographs of overlapping runs made by different agencies 1946, 1971, 1975, and 1981. The 1946 photographs form part of the RAF national coverage, and duplicates for the Mendip Hills are held by the University of Bristol Spelaeological Society and by the Local History Library, Taunton, although neither collection is complete. The 1971 and 1981 runs were carried out on behalf of Somerset County Council, and the 1975 run for Avon County Council. These are held by the respective County Planning Departments. The scale of the photographs is roughly 1:10,000.

The AP marks were plotted freehand onto transparent overlays to the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 or 1:10,560 maps, and the details were entered onto a card index. Plotting of the AP evidence resulted in the recording of 514 items of which 216 were already on the SMRs. A further 550 oblique air photographs held by the National Monuments record, mainly of known sites, have been listed by these remained unstudied. In addition, Jim Hancock has a large collection which was only briefly examined.

Fieldwork represented the principal component of the project. The AP evidence gave an impetus to the selection of areas to be examined on the ground, and the great majority of these sites were checked. Areas of rough grazing were considered to be worth detailed attention since it is the policy of Somerset County Council to maintain the currently existing areas and a full understanding of their archaeology would add support to the policy. While these two objectives acted as the parameters, in general the fieldwork programme was intended to be a non-intensive study determined to some extent by accessibility to the land. Partly in order to act as a check to the survey, three large estates were selected for a more intensive survey, and the detailed results of these surveys are outlined as the case study below.

The data gathered during fieldwork was entered onto forms devised for the project, the Avon data was then re-entered directly onto the SMR forms. Sites in the field were recorded by sketch plans with paced measurements, by photographs, and by written records. For the known sites, further details have been checked and amended where necessary. All the medieval earthwork sites, post-medieval ruined structures, ponds, and lime kilns were allotted scores and ordered according to their landscape, preservation, and research value. This should allow the preservation of these relatively common sites to be approached more systematically.

A certain amount of work was undertaken on the evidence from early maps. A list of the available evidence at the County Record Office, Taunton, was prepared, and 10 of the 42 identified early maps (excluding the parish tithe apportionment maps) were studied. The kind of evidence available from these sources is limited to two principal items. The first is landscape details recorded up to 200 years ago which are not extant, and the second is the data for field and property names which might act as a lead to further documentary research.

Fieldwork resulted in the recognition on the ground of around 400 sites. In addition to this study of map evidence allowed a further 30 sites to be added, and a study of the published fieldwork in the AONB has located 19 sites not already entered on the SMR.

Table 1: New sites located during the present survey.

Site type	Avon	Somerset
?prehistoric mounds and cairns	18	3
?barrows	1	3
standing stones		.3
?prehistoric enclosures	2	
medieval earthworks	8	12
medieval fields & lynchets	24	27
holloways & tracks	16	
post-medieval farm sites	7	
post-medieval ruined buildings	4	25
post-medieval fields and enclosures	21	
ruined agricultural buildings	9	27
ponds	19	48
stone stiles	22	
industrial sites	10	26
miscellaneous post-medieval sites	19	24
documented sites	8	22
published sites not in SMR	19	
TOTAL	123	322

The Current Mendip Hills Database

It is worthwhile looking at the data gathered during the project as a whole (Table 1). There has not been a great increase in the number of prehistoric sites. Four possible barrows have been located, with a further six possibles shown on the known aerial photographs. Two enclosures may be prehistoric and site number S11458 is linked with a trackway and field system that can now be seen to spread to the south-east and is possibly of Bronze Age date. There has been no increase in the number of Romano-British sites. It is with the medieval and post-medieval periods, as might be expected, that the increase in the database has taken place. A minimum total of 14 deserted post-medieval farm sites have been recognised, as well as 20 medieval sites indicating some early

occupation. In addition 51 surviving portions of medieval fields and lynchets have been systematically recorded.

It remains to make an assessment of how much is still unlocated and unrecorded. Initially, two variables need to be considered. Firstly it must be noted that the RAF AP coverage, which represented by far the best source of archaeological information, was incomplete and not of uniform quality. Secondly, the areas of commercial afforestation have not in general been examined, and features are, of course, invisible on APs.

The methods used for this survey produced an average of 3.2 sites per km square, each of these km squares having an average 4.8 sites already recorded. The more intensive survey of the 3 estates almost doubled this figure with an average of 6.32 new sites per km square. Thus the survey methods used for the estates, if applied to the AONB as a whole, would be likely to result in around 550 to 600 new sites. This must represent the minimum number of sites remaining unrecorded in the study area. The contrast between the results from the two methodologically different surveys demonstrates that the project has by no means completed the fieldwork potential of the Hills.

Preservation

The report on the three estates shows the diverse threats to the archaeological resource. While the archaeology of the study area remains currently fairly stable, there are changes and losses on a small scale taking place. The threats are itemised below.

1. Ploughing.
There is little doubt that sub-surface features suffer continuing damage at each ploughing. The lithic finds noted yearly in the Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society bear witness to this. The recognition at a number of sites that ploughing has taken place in the more recent past, together with the aerial photographic evidence of post-war plough damage, must indicate that although currently not the main threat, ploughing remains potentially one of the major damaging agents.
2. Reclamation of rough grazing land.
It is the policy of Somerset County Council to maintain the current areas of rough grazing. During the course of this project an area at Cheddar Head was put under the plough, and an extensive acreage at King Down Farm was turned over to pigs. This causes considerable damage and must represent a potential threat, although the Scheduled Monuments were protected.
3. Quarrying.
During the course of the project an area at Batts Combe was taken over for spoil dumping. These areas are initially stripped of topsoil and subsequently landscaped. Any exposure of subsoil should in future be analysed by an experienced archaeologist, even where there is no current

SMR information. The cost of this work should be borne by the quarry companies.

4. Leisure uses.
There are places where degradation by walkers is becoming a significant problem. Footpath erosion on Black Down is discussed in the estates report. Trail biking is another damaging agent.
5. Over stocking.
Some monuments, in particular barrows, may be seen to suffer from cattle and other stock. It has been interesting to note that although there is clearly some erosion taking place, the protective vegetation does reinstate itself once the damage has ceased.
6. Farm rationalisation.
In the current state of farm practice there is a number of elements in the landscape which are redundant to farming needs. Ruined and roofless buildings, stock ponds, lime kilns and hedgerows are always likely to be removed unless the owners and occupiers are aware of their landscape value. There is also an archaeological value which is less well appreciated. The ruined buildings may well be sited on earlier sites while the pond sites may make use of natural springs which perhaps formed a focus for earlier settlement.
7. Caving.
Without doubt the stratified cave deposits are the most Valuable and important archaeological resource in the AONB. The number of caves afforded statutory protection by Scheduling is currently being increased and although it appears that the caves are not currently suffering damage, it is advisable that some formal monitoring take place.
8. Forestry.
At Stock Hill, Rowberrow Warren and other smaller sites there are forestry stands which are cleared from time to time. There is no current advance warning or monitoring of this clearance.

Recommendations

It is recommended that where possible management agreements are entered into with the landowners of the large estates. These need be no more than a guarantee that the status quo will be maintained. On smaller landholdings interventions are less likely to be rewarding. It is clear the Monument Protection Programme will afford protection to some sites within their landscape context, and this approach is to be welcomed.

No assessment of the condition of the Mendip caves was made during the course of this project. This is a highly specialised field and one which requires more than archaeological skills. It is recommended that a report on the condition of the caves be commissioned and that policies are formalised to safeguard the resource.

Future Work

The Mendip Hills AONB is represented by three distinct landscape types: the plateau, the hillslopes and the low lying ground. The latter is currently best considered within the research aims of the Somerset Levels Project, in the work at Brean Down and in the context of research in the Vale of Wrington. The plateau and the hillslopes of the Mendips on the other hand form a coherent whole and is an area which deserves a systematic archaeological approach. There is a need for environmental data to complement that from the low lying ground of the Levels. From the last glaciation there is little environmental evidence and studies have had to be based on parallels elsewhere. Chronologically there is little precise evidence, with few radiocarbon dates. Again, hypotheses have to be based on data from elsewhere. With a few notable exceptions, insufficient analysis has been made of the artefacts found on the plateau. A systematic assessment of the lithic evidence already collected by fieldwalking would be a useful research project.

Research Objectives

It is possible at this stage to outline some of the questions which should lie behind any formalised research objectives appropriate to future work in the AONB.

- a) What land use changes have taken place, what was the early environment and what modifications to it can be observed? There is a need, as has been outlined above, for a programme of environmental sampling. Animal bone assemblages from excavations will indicate the type of stock exploited at different periods. They may also provide indications of stress and stability visible through changing patterns of animal exploitation. Studies of other environmental data would provide information on farming practices and may indicate processes of environmental decline and over use.
- b) What use was made of the plateau in the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods? Fieldwalking and the recording of surface finds may demonstrate different zones of exploitation by the contrasting of assemblages from different selected areas.
- c) Where are the Bronze Age settlements which may be inferred from the barrows? Again fieldwalking programmes may well provide some indications of settlement, and in addition a fuller examination of the available aerial photographic coverage is required. In particular it would be useful to look at those photographs held by the National Monuments Record. Additional flights in the appropriate conditions could well be rewarding, especially if focused on areas with crops adjacent to barrow groups.
- d) Where do the defensive changes in the Iron Age fit into the upland pattern? Only large scale excavation will be able to elucidate their context but it is worthwhile pointing out that many of the problems of

Iron Age studies in this area require a programme of hillfort study with the Mendip examples as the prime candidates.

- e) Was there an abrupt change in the scale of mining and the use of the plateau as a result of the Roman conquest? What is the meaning of the links demonstrated by pottery between the Mendips and Hengistbury Head in the first centuries BC and AD? Is there greater physical evidence for the extraction of silver from lead than that from the Chew Park excavations? Is the changeover from imperial control to concessionaires apparent in the archaeological record? Finally, is there any evidence for post-Roman continuity at the mining sites? A study of the Romano-British sites on the Mendips would provide important evidence for the date and nature of the mining activities. An early occupation is inferred but the physical evidence from excavation would greatly amplify our understanding of the process. There are of course numerous other questions which examination of the Mendip data could answer or alter.
- f) What is the timescale of the medieval (and probably late Saxon) farming on the plateau edge? What position did this farming occupy in the agrarian economy and did this position alter? Initially a programme of documentary work with appropriate further fieldwork is necessary, with Aston's work on abandoned Exmoor farm sites as the example (Aston 1983).
- g) Finally, there are a number of questions which can be posed about land use and industry on the plateau in the post-medieval periods. One of these is how far there still remains evidence of pre-Enclosure settlements ancillary to the mines. These questions are best answered within a framework including industrial archaeology and local history.

While the long term objectives can be outlined within an open ended timescale, there is work which may usefully be undertaken in the near future. A programme of selective small-scale excavation and geophysical survey is suggested as a follow up to this project which may be seen within the context of the Monument Protection Programme. The positive identification of some of the doubtful sites, and an assessment of the scale of known sites, would fulfil a double purpose. The identification of the function and extent of sites would lead firstly to a secure policy of protection, and secondly would afford an opportunity for the collection of environmental data. The following sites are suggested.

1. The true status of the Pen Hill bank barrow or pillow mound clearly needs clarification. If, as seems probable, this is indeed a bank barrow, then environmental samples could be collected from buried soils beneath the mound.
2. A long mound recorded by Burrow (S24230) could equally be the subject of a limited examination.

3. The reported Iron Age and Romano-British site at Carscliff (S10347), the potential Bronze Age field system at Batts Combe quarry (S11116), and the suggested Bronze Age enclosure above Cheddar (S11458) are all sites which require confirmation of their suspected identification which might lead on to statutory protection.
4. The Romano-British lead mining sites at Charterhouse should remain undisturbed due to the concern over lead poisoning to animals. However, the sites at Priddy (S23946), St Cuthberts (S23963) and at Wookey Hole (S24440) are poorly defined. Site S23946, although scheduled, has been only partially located and pottery finds have been made beyond the scheduled area. The other two are unscheduled and only partially examined. A limited excavation programme to define the nature and extent of these sites would aid the case for preservation of these potentially important areas, and would provide a valuable insight into the date and function of the Romano-British use of the plateau.
5. The deserted medieval farm sites on the plateau are highly vulnerable. It is to be hoped that a representative sample may be preserved. It may prove necessary to establish their nature and extent by selective excavation.

Conclusions

The Mendip Hills Survey has resulted in the addition of some 642 items to the Avon and Somerset SMRs and additional data for many of the monuments already recorded. A programme of further work has been suggested, and long term objectives defined. The database has been placed within a discussion framework which allows hypotheses to be tested by future work. Finally the ground has been prepared for possible management agreements. It is to be hoped that the survey will result in a greater awareness of the potential of the archaeology of the Mendip Hills, and in a programme combining protection with an increased understanding of this exceptional resource.

Summary of Recommendations:

- A programme of small-scale selective excavation and geophysical survey within the framework of the MPP.
- The establishment of management agreements with the three principal AONB landowners.
- The commissioning of a separate report on the Mendip cave deposits and the establishment of a framework of monitoring and long term protection.
- The monitoring of all quarrying processes.
- The monitoring of major forestry processes.
- The continuation of current policies to protect the rough grazing upland together with appropriate monitoring.

Thematic Survey

Introduction

The following study is based on the sites and monuments records held by Somerset and Avon County Councils. It takes the form of a discussion of the themes of hunting & gathering, ritual & burial, settlement, farming, mining and communications, followed by a speculative attempt to define the likely political consequences imposed by the topography of the study area. Because of the fragmentary nature of the lowland areas included in the AONB, the main focus of attention has been the upland zone.

The study area contains the western part of the Mendip high ground, the more broken hill and lowland areas to the west, and a section of low ground around the Blagdon and Chew Valley Lakes. The data available for study ranges from antiquarian records, through the results of field work in this century, to the major rescue enterprises at Chew Valley Lake and on the MS. These last sites indicate the range of archaeological material still available, and the unexpectedness of the results there must make any synthesis of data, such as this one, a very temporary exercise.

Studies of sites in the lowland areas around the Mendip Hills have recognised the interdependence of upland and lowland. At Chew Valley Lake (Rahtz and Greenfield 1977), interpretation of the Iron Age and Roman periods included the role of the Mendip hillforts and lead mines, while to the south, theories advanced to place the Glastonbury and Meare Lake villages in their context (Clarke 1972, Tratman 1970, Coles and Coles 1986), have all concerned themselves with the relationship between these settlements and activities on the hills. The aim of this study is principally to bring together the Mendip Hills data, but is also in part an attempt to bring an upland perspective to the archaeology of the region.

Hunting and Gathering (Fig 1)

The Cheddar cave evidence discussed by Jacobi (1982) was used to indicate the likely hilltop and hillslope environment in the Upper Palaeolithic c.11000-10000 bp. A model of upland summer pastures utilised by animal herds, especially horse, was put forward. Although snowy winters were presumed, areas cleared by wind blow were suggested, in view of the presence of species not particularly suited to snow environments. Gough's New Cave (S10398) was seen as a preferred site for groups exploiting summer animal movements between the lowland and the plateau via the Gorge, and a similar picture was envisaged for occupation of Burrington Combe cave sites (A268, A271 and A272). Upper Palaeolithic finds on the plateau show that other activities took these groups there (Fig 1) (Campbell 1970). The three findspots are all on the southern edge of the scarp, and may indicate occupation sites on the uplands (Mellars 1986, 22). Wider contacts for these groups are shown by finds of amber, flint and beach shell, the former from the east coast, the flint from the

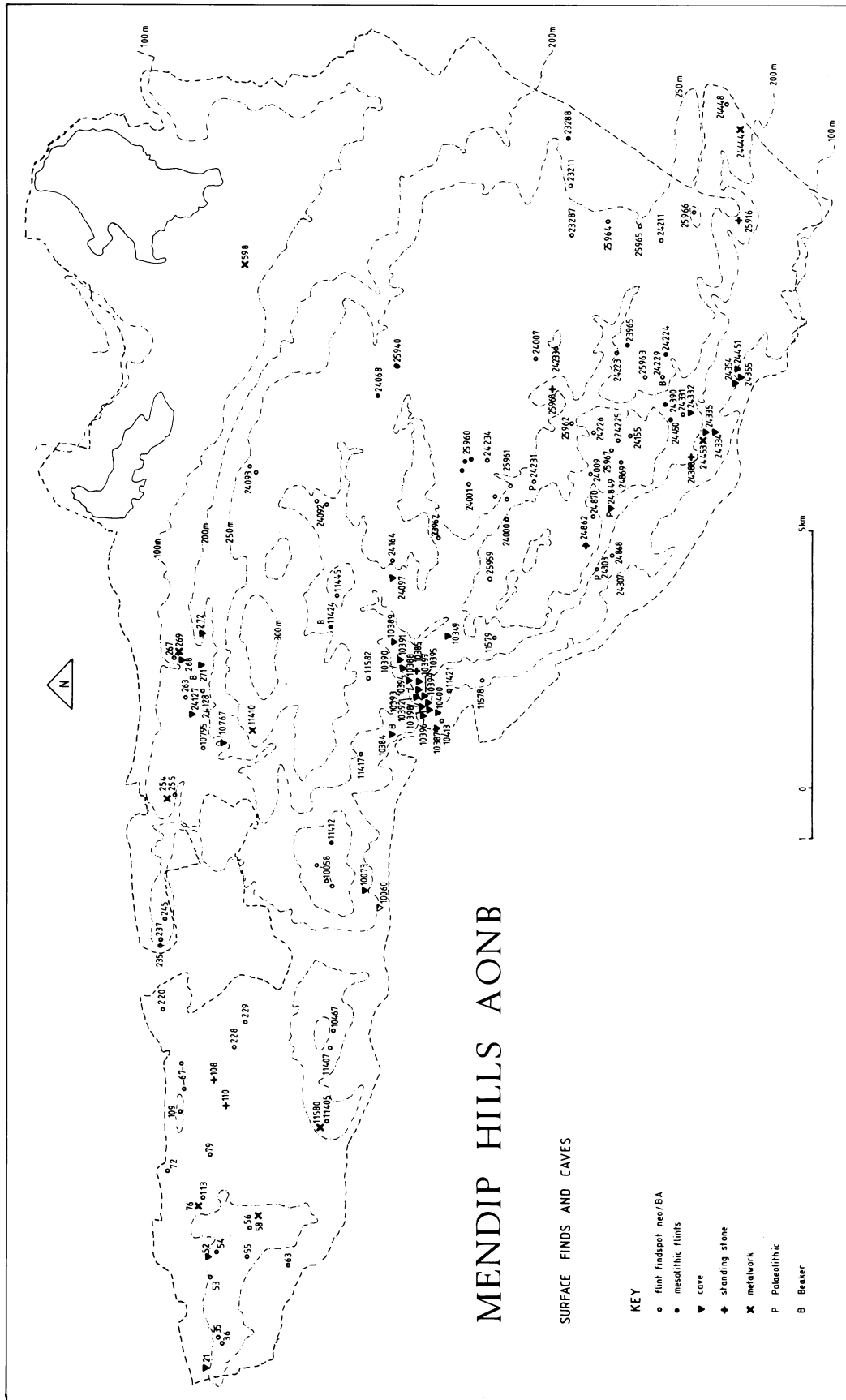


Figure 1: Early prehistoric surface finds and caves.

Wessex area and the shells from fossil beaches. The transport of flint from Wessex to Mendip is thus an early phenomenon. The beach contacts may indicate that fishing was added to hunting and gathering as part of the resources open to the groups.

The Westbury quarry finds (S24849) indicate human activity a long time before. The doubts expressed about the evidence (Cook 1982) turned on the possibility that the flint was naturally occurring and not humanly modified. However, were flint to occur naturally here, it should have been found in other layers in the cave. The absence of 'natural' flint, the similarity of the worked flint to other definite artefacts of the period, and the parallels between the faunal assemblage at Westbury and type-sites elsewhere in Britain all support the evidence suggesting the presence of humans (Michael Bishop pers. comm.).

The Mesolithic flint findspots must indicate the widespread presence of nomadic or semi-nomadic hunter-fisher-gatherer communities. They would be functioning within a lightly-wooded environment with some heathland. Although seasonal exploitation of the uplands is assumed, more permanent occupation is possible (Mellars 1986, 23). As at other uplands areas, groups of flint surface finds (S11424 and S11445; S25960, S24450 and S24390; S24223 and S23965) may indicate either the activities of social groups larger than a family unit, or repeated visits to the same site (Mellars 1986). Another possible site is at Lower Pitts Farm (S23965) where although the excavations were inconclusive, there was occupation debris in the vicinity. The Totty Pot finds indicate a kill site or a possible shelter (S10348).

The burials at Aveline's Hole (A268) suggest a site with a recognised and specialised function, and the burial at Gough's New Cave (S10398) may perhaps be associated. It may be that the site was widely known, and was used by more than one group. A large Mesolithic assemblage was recognised by Ann Everton from the Gorsey Bigbury finds (S11424), and it may be that the superimposition of the later henge was more than a coincidence and represented continued use of a preferred site.

Ritual and Burial

By far the most prolific prehistoric evidence on Mendip is for burial. Within the study area there are Upper Palaeolithic burials from Aveline's Hole, Mesolithic burials from the same site and from Gough's New Cave, two (possibly more) long barrows, at least 286 round barrows, and an Iron Age inhumation cemetery. In addition there are two Late Neolithic henge monuments, the four henge-like Priddy Circles, a bank barrow, and a pit at Chew Park interpreted as a ritual deposit.

The Mesolithic burial at Aveline's Hole and the discovery of Mesolithic material beneath the later henge at Gorsey Bigbury has been discussed in the first section, with the suggestion that the burial at Aveline's Hole indicates a specialised site, perhaps used by more than one group, and that the Neolithic ritual sites may well repeat earlier significant sites.

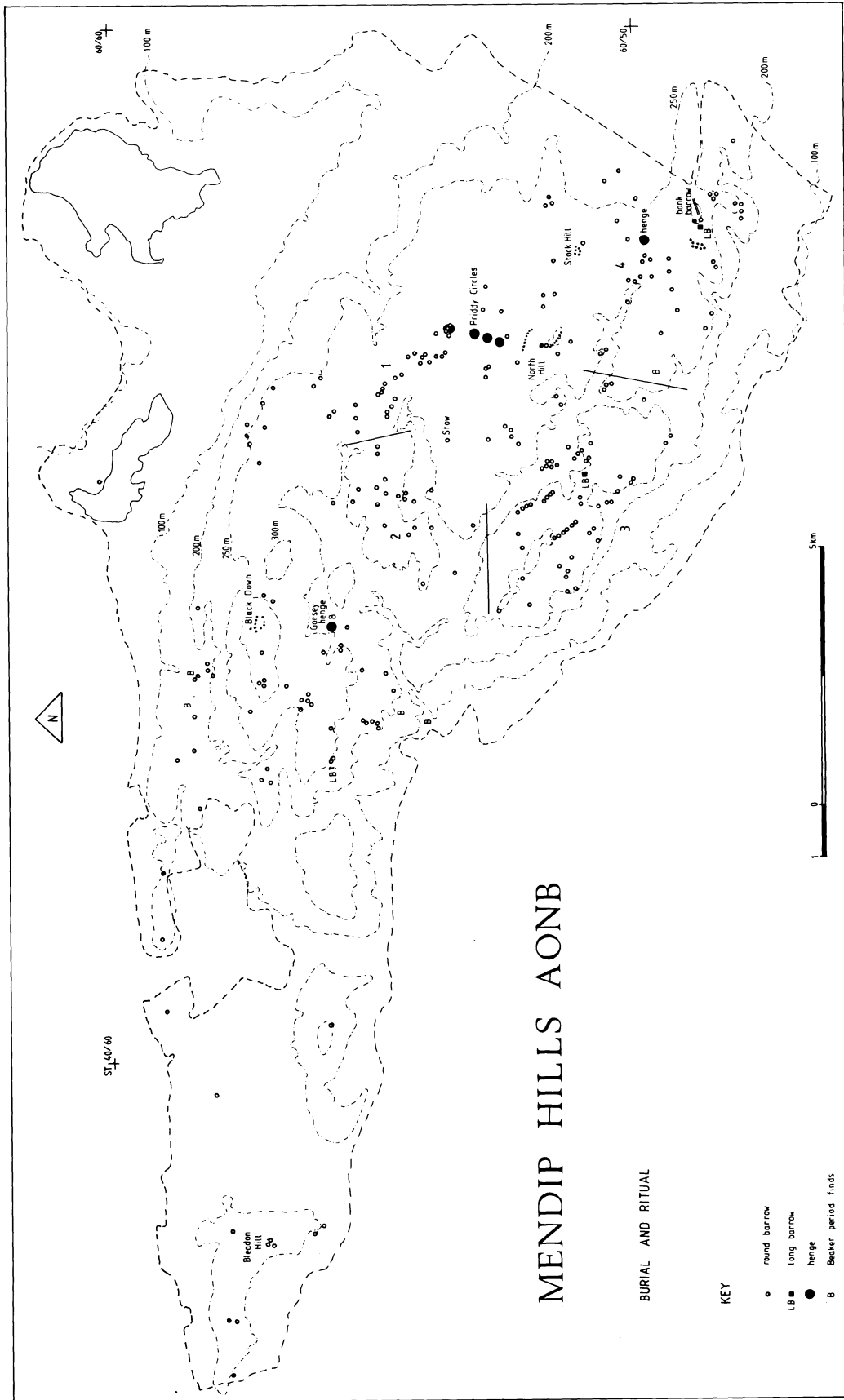


Figure 2: Burial and Ritual.

The paucity of long barrows on the Mendips has been commented on before (Ellison 1977). Although the hills lie at the south western edge of the main area of long barrow distribution, this may not be the full explanation. Two definite long barrows (Fig 2) lie within the study area at Pen Hill (S24356) and west of Priddy (S23971). A third is possible above Batts Coombe in Cheddar parish (S11435/6). Only two further long barrows, neither convincing examples, are sited on the Mendips, both to the east of Pen Hill. All lie on the edges of the plateau and appear to be unchambered from surface evidence. It seems likely that the expenditure of time and effort on the construction of the tomb, and on the preceding rites would require the associated community to be located nearby. There is a likely relationship between the Pen Hill long barrow and the bank barrow (S24360) just to the east. This latter monument has been recently reinterpreted as a pillow mound (Williamson and Loveday 1988, 307), but while there are indeed clear pillow mounds associated with it, the ground evidence suggests it is prehistoric.

At Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet (S24097) recent research (Levitan et al 1988) has suggested a hitherto unknown burial ritual. The main deposit seems to date from the Late Neolithic, on the basis of Grooved Ware finds, and included animal bones indicative of a nearby settlement site. The human bone had been curated elsewhere before deposition in the cave. Knife cuts on the bones are not paralleled elsewhere. Some of the finds are more indicative of an Early Bronze Age date and radio-carbon dates the site to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age transition.

In contrast to the long barrows, the henge monuments are placed away from the scarp edge (Figs 2 and 3), although both the Hunters Lodge henge (S24154) and Gorsey Bigbury (S11439) are near dry valleys cutting into the limestone ridge. These two sites are similar in size and construction, with internal ditches and single entrances. It is possible that this layout, common to many henges, was intended to emphasise the open undefended aspects of these sites.

The Priddy Circles (S24042, S24043, S24045, S24046), however, are ditched on the outer side of the bank, and this layout seems to foreshadow the types of defended Bronze Age enclosures recognised in southern England. There is no dating evidence at all for the Circles and although they have affinities with henges elsewhere they are essentially unique in Britain (Tratman 1967).

The Circles are located at almost the furthest point from lowland access and it is clear that in relation to the 250m contour they are placed at the centre of the consistently highest area on the hills. The gap between the northern circle and the southern three seems to be genuine and the northern one is also not on the same alignment as the southern group. These differences suggest some distinction between the northern circle and the others. One explanation is that they were divided by some feature at the time of their construction and use, and it may be of significance that a later Roman road runs here. It is also possible that the Circles lay on the interface of two spheres of influence.

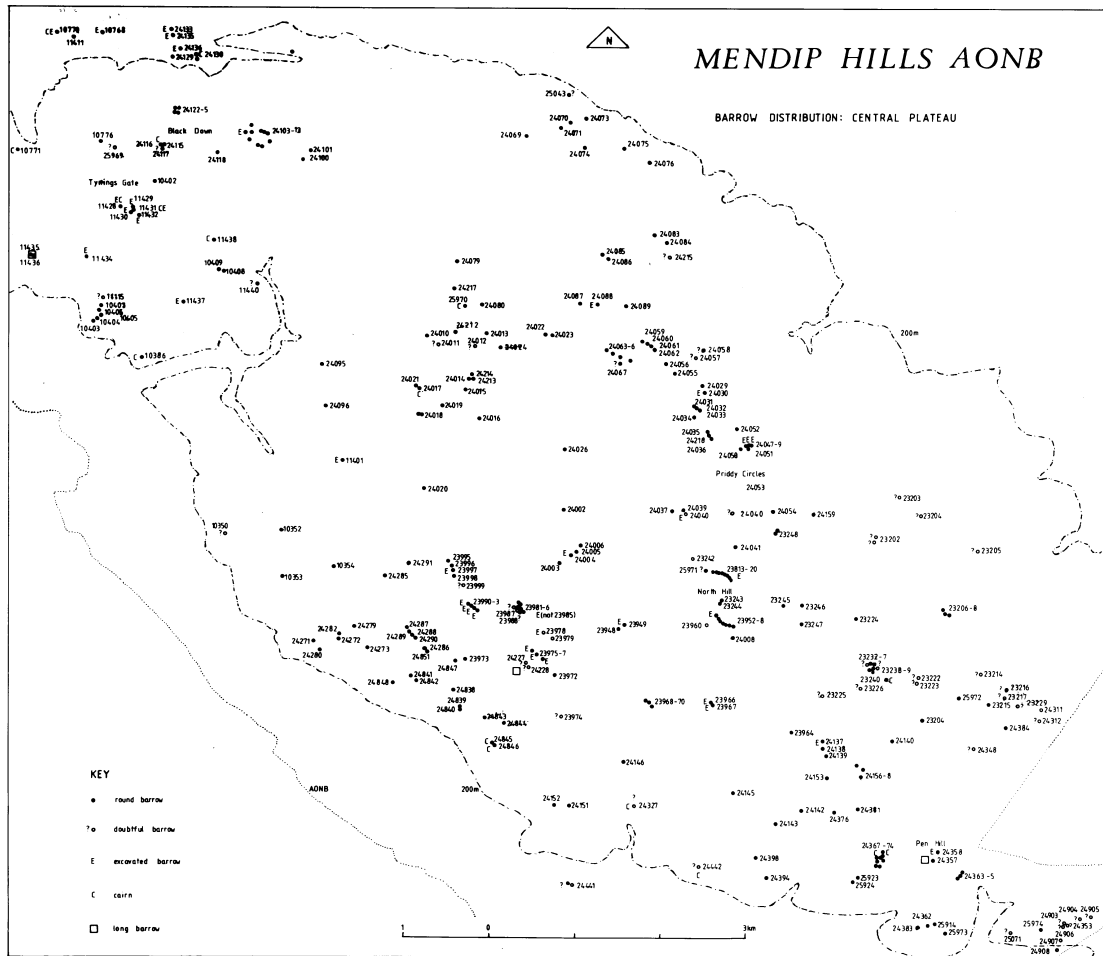


Figure 3: Barrow distribution on the Central Plateau.

The construction technique used for the southern Priddy circle and by inference for the other three is of great interest (Tratman 1967, Fig 23). It is possible that the exceptional slightness of the timber uprights reflects the apparently treeless environment in the immediate surroundings (Tratman 1967, 123), but the building of other henge monuments seems not to have been constrained by problems of this nature. It is more likely that the physical form of the monument reflects a conscious use of symbols. The double circle of closely-spaced timbers and the intervening hurdles may be a deliberate representation of an animal stockade, perhaps a sheep pen. The drystone revetted rubble core in contrast may have been intended to represent a field boundary or cattle stockade. These two elements formed a timber framed rampart, but the stone faces and the timbers themselves are too slight to have formed a substantial structure. Although the uprights appear subsequently to have been surrounded by the ditch, and the stone core sealed beneath the ditch spoil, the timbers may have remained above the soil and stone bank. The rampart and surrounding ditch may be seen as representing an earthwork enclosure for which the nearest parallels are provided by the Bronze Age enclosures at Highdown Hill, Hog Cliff Hill, Norton Fitzwarren and Rams Hill.

This curious structure can perhaps be seen as an amalgamation of features present on the uplands. The careful layout of the monuments makes it likely that they were always symbolic rather than functional. The choice for ceremonial representation suggests that sheep hurdles and drystone walls may have been the main landscape features, demonstrating a mixed land use at the heart of the economy. The existence of separate enclosures may indicate their construction by different groups. If this is so, it is of significance that a conscious effort was clearly made to construct identical enclosures, and the implication must be that they were intended to emphasise a social cohesion wider than the group, rather than competition. The Circles must also be seen as foreshadowing the later Bronze Age enclosures.

At Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet and Gorsey Bigbury there is evidence of a decisive closure, associated with Beaker pottery, of the preceding ritual and symbolic sites (cf Clarke et al 1985, 88). At Gorsey, two Beaker burials represent the new control, and at Charterhouse Warren it is possible that the hole was closed and the Beaker pot deliberately placed on the infill. The unfinished fourth circle at Priddy may represent further evidence of an abrupt change. Further Beaker period burials have been found at Burrington (beneath the barrow Burrington 1) and at Chew Park.

The round barrows comprise 286 reasonably definite examples within the AONB, and 78 doubtful sites. The distribution of the definite sites has been plotted for the AONB as a whole (Fig 2). It is assumed that the location of the present known barrows reflects the main concentrations in the Bronze Age, and that although there are many possible ways by which barrows could have disappeared in historic times, the respect shown towards them until very recently would ensure their survival. Support for this assumption comes from the failure of air photograph study to produce new barrow evidence in the form

of cropmarks or fragmentary survivals. A second assumption, based on evidence from other areas, is that there is a correlation between barrow size and chronology, with larger barrows more likely to belong to the earlier Bronze Age period, although it is recognised that the record may be confused by the secondary enlargement of earlier barrows.

Looking at the distribution of barrows on the Mendips it is clear that barrows are in groups, and that there are apparent differences in the internal layout of each group (Fig 2). The area south west of Priddy (area 3) seems to represent a discrete zone where burials are in lines of barrows. A second group (area 1) lies to the north west of the Priddy Circles and here again there are linear cemeteries. A third group at King Down Farm (area 2) seems on the other hand to contain a barrow layout marked by equidistant spacing, and there is a similar group of fairly evenly distributed barrows in the Hunters Lodge area (area 4). To north and south of Black Down, at Tynings Farm and at Burrington Combe, and further west in Loxton parish there may be further groups, but none contain enough barrows for comparison. The same applies to the barrows on the scarp edge above Ubley. Left out of this discussion are the barrow cemeteries south of the Priddy Circles at North Hill and on Black Down which seem to represent skyline sitings deliberately placed in a wider context than the others. There are of course exceptions to these groups although the number of doubtful barrows outside these areas is higher than might be expected. East of North Hill toward Chewton Mendip, for example, around half the barrows on the record are doubtful.

It is apparent that there are zones within which burial did not take place, and which, as had been discussed above, may represent in part the sites of settlements and their fields. Another possibility is that the gaps may represent wooded areas. Firstly around Stow barrow there is a zone surrounded by three major areas of burying and by the line of the Priddy Circles. Secondly there is little sign of barrows along the northern scarp with the exception of the groups above Burrington and Ubley. Thirdly there seems to be a blank area south of Cheddar Gorge and above Draycott. In the latter case there is evidence for contemporary land allotment which is discussed below.

Of all these groups it would seem that only those on Black Down, and on North Hill were deliberately sited to emphasise their visibility. The group west of Priddy is clearly not intended to be viewed from the lowland with the exception perhaps of Westbury Beacon, although it is possible that the three groups east of Bristol Plain Farm are visually complementary, and may have represented a focus when viewed from the north east.

Some support for an identification of distinct groups is offered by an analysis of the size of the barrows (Table 2). The data has been ordered in terms of barrow diameter using the measurements made by Grinsell (1971). The differences are sufficient to suggest not only that the spatial distinction of zones may be valid but also that there are chronological distinctions to be made. Ordering the average barrow size from each group suggests that the earlier barrows are in the closest proximity to the Priddy Circles, and that the

zone west of Priddy appears to be the latest. Looking again at the apparently early group north west of the Circles, it may be that it is laid out along the routeway suggested above running between the Circles.

The dating evidence for the barrows from excavation and typology has been summarised by Grinsell (1971). Within the study area 48 of the barrows have been excavated, 13 in the 1920s or later (Table 3). Excavation suggests an early Bronze Age date for some of those barrows which do not belong within the burial zones defined above. Such a date seems clear for the Ashen Hill group, the Tynings Farm group, and the Burrington group. On the other hand, making the assumption, based on evidence from elsewhere, that barrows with cremations and no grave goods are likely to belong to the later Bronze Age, it seems that the majority of excavated examples within the zones are later. The evidence suggests an initial use of the hills for round barrows, where highly visible sites were chosen for rich burials. Subsequently burial zones were more organised perhaps under the ownership of different groups. There is a suggestion of a chronological distinction between the different identified zones.

Other Bronze Age burial evidence comes from the cremation cemetery (S24134) found at Burrington overlapping the edge of Burrington 1. There is also burial evidence later than the Bronze Age within the study area. An Iron Age inhumation cemetery (A88) was found during construction of the MS (Morris 1988). Romano-British burials are widespread and all associated with cave sites. At Wookey there is evidence of Celtic burial practices (S24355) in an early Roman context. These sites perhaps offer an echo of the gradually waning importance of upland burial continuing past the Bronze Age.

In Wessex the Early Iron Age large upland enclosures are suggested to have functioned both as centres of pastoral control and organisation, and as expressions of social cohesion whether as meeting or symbolic sites. There are Early Iron Age sites in the study area, such as Pitcher's Enclosure (S24081) which, though smaller, may have fulfilled the same function. While it seems clear that the social cohesion became increasingly expressed in the form of economic submission, a blurred distinction between economic and ritual uses of a site is likely to have applied in earlier times than the Iron Age.

Settlement

The following discussion concentrates on the evidence for permanent settlement on the plateau top at different periods. The lowland evidence is discussed principally for the light it throws on the use of the upland areas.

In the Neolithic period settlement may be inferred from the presence of long barrows and henges which must be associated with locally settled groups. The animal bone assemblage found in the Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet (S24097), although possibly in a ritual context, indicates a Late Neolithic settlement site nearby. More direct evidence is forthcoming at the end of the Neolithic from the Beaker site at Gorsey Bigbury (S11439; ApSimon et al 1976), and this may be paralleled by a hypothesized site above Burrington

Combe associated with the redeposited pottery found at Bos Swallet (S24128). At Gorsey Bigbury the initial Beaker period burials were followed by occupation argued to represent a domestic site making use of the enclosure for stock (ApSimon et al 1976). The range of pottery found, and its association with the Burrington material, suggests, however, that this is more than an ordinary settlement assemblage.

The Bronze Age cremation cemetery at Burrington Combe (S24133) must indicate an adjacent settlement. Recent work has shown that settlement may also be expected near to barrows (Balaam et al 1982), and the recognition of barrow groups discussed above is likely to indicate the location of associated settlement sites on the hills. The blank areas near the barrow groups may represent the position of these settlements and their fields. There is, as yet, little definite evidence for this, with only three possible upland settlement sites which can be suggested by fieldwork. The group of barrows at Battscombe above Cheddar (S10405) may be associated with an adjacent but undated field system, and the banks surrounding the barrows appear to encompass house sites and tracks (S11116). At Ubley Drove a possible site associated with the nearby barrows is indicated by air photographs (S25838), and finally an earthwork enclosure and platform at Bradley Cross (S11458) seem to be associated with fields which may be Bronze Age (S11515).

Off the upland areas there is evidence of Neolithic occupation from two of the Chew Valley Lake sites, at Ben Bridge and Chew Park. These were chance finds made during excavation of later period sites and this may be taken to demonstrate that Neolithic occupation of the lowlands, rather than the uplands, predominated here as elsewhere. Beaker period occupation was recorded and this, taken with the upland evidence is likely to indicate the widespread nature, as elsewhere, of settlement in this period, although definite sites are hard to locate.

There is evidence of Bronze Age settlement at Christon which may be taken as the pattern for what might be expected elsewhere in the Mendip foothills. However there is no evidence of Bronze Age settlement from the Chew Valley Lake excavations despite the large areas excavated. Outside the study area on the Levels, the evidence of land use is weighted to the late 2nd and early 1st millennia (Coles and Coles 1986, 134), although there are no accompanying settlements. This evidence may indicate a shift of settlement onto the Mendip upland at the beginning of the 2nd millennium, with upland settlement predominating until the 1st millennium.

The value of the flint collections made over a number of years in suggesting the locations of settlements is lessened by the variable nature of the evidence. It is not possible to say whether these finds represent surface industries or the disturbed fills of truncated features. The distribution of find spots (Fig 2) may well reflect only the activities of collectors and/or the location of ploughed land. As the evidence currently stands there appears to be a distinct bias towards the southern scarp, and some evidence that find spots are related to access routes onto the plateau. The date range of flint implement

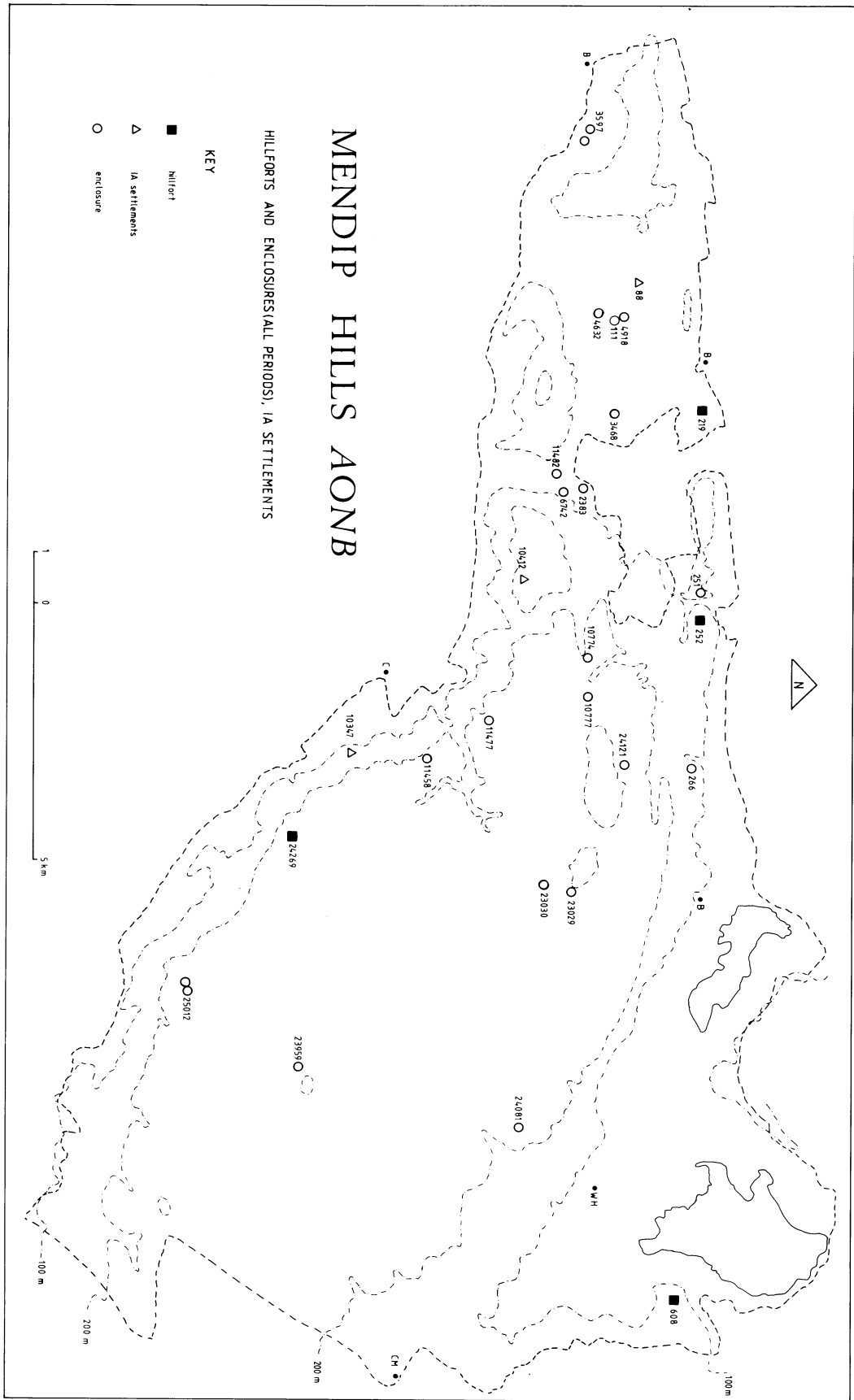


Figure 4: Hillforts and enclosures (all periods) and iron-age settlements.

types found is from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age, but it is not possible without lengthy analysis of the assemblages to bring all the data together and separate out the different strands of evidence.

For the Iron Age there is evidence of settlement on both the upland and lowland areas (Fig 4). The dating of occupation is dependent to some extent on inference, and the wider Somerset and Avon data has recently been summarised (Cunliffe 1982). The hillforts at Burlledge (A608) and Dolebury (A252) are likely to have been densely occupied, although not necessarily at the same time, while the Christon burials (A88) noted above indicate a rural site occupied during the Early and Middle Iron Age. Burlledge is recognised as an early occupied site (Cunliffe 1982, 57), as too are Pitchers Enclosure (S24081) and Banwell (A219; Fowler 1976, 66). While the Dolebury defences (A252) are later Iron Age, they may well mask an earlier phase. By the time that the developed hillfort at Dolebury was functioning (4th to 3rd century BC), it seems that Burlledge had been abandoned. At Pitchers Enclosure (S24081) the survival of hut circles suggests that the other earthwork enclosures may well have been occupied, although the apparently unfinished enclosure above Draycott (S24269) encircles a round barrow, suggesting that occupation did not take place.

The evidence can be divided into settlement types which foreshadow later patterns, and those which seem to be distinctive of the period and were not repeated. In the first group may be placed farm sites. At Chew Park there are open farmsteads dating from the middle of the 1st millennium BC. At Worberry Gate, just outside the study area to the east, occupation of an Iron Age rural site continued into the Roman period. It may well be that there is similar continuity at other Roman sites off the high ground, especially to the west where the field systems indicate an unchanged agronomy perhaps from the Bronze Age through to the 4th or 5th centuries AD. How far Iron Age mine workers can be seen as occupying sites later occupied by the Roman mine-working stations is not clear, and there may be earlier sites beneath the Roman, as suggested by the finds of Iron Age pottery associated with Roman structures at Velvet Bottom (S23023). Sites at the foot of the scarp (Christon, A88, and Carscliff, S10347, for example) may have been paralleled by others subsequently used in later periods and thus effectively masked from recovery.

There are fewer parallels with later periods for the enclosed settlements like Pitcher's Enclosure, where there was occupation in part of the enclosure, but indications that the site was intended principally for animals, and for the hillforts such as Dolebury. The pattern of Iron Age settlement and its social, political and economic links has been examined in detail for the Wessex area (Cunliffe 1984a). For the Early Iron Age, a model has been suggested where the enclosures represent the centres controlling upland pastoral land use on behalf of a community associated with the lowland farm sites (Cunliffe 1984a, 18). The establishment of hillforts follows, with, in the Middle Iron Age, a marked reduction in numbers to a few heavily defended major sites each with their own territory (Cunliffe 1984a, 30), culminating in a collapse of the system

in the 1st century BC. There is no reason to suggest why this model should not represent a hypothesis to be pursued in future research work on the Mendips.

Thus in the Early Iron Age some kind of collection and redistribution of livestock pastured on the hills must be envisaged, and later the collection and processing of food within the major hillforts as suggested by the Danebury evidence. The Mendip enclosures and hillforts all occupy the plateau edge and are related to routes connecting upland and lowland. It is clear from the Wessex evidence that the settlement pattern of the majority of people did not alter throughout the Iron Age, with the stresses of the period indicated in the settlements associated with the power elites rather than in changes in farm sites, at least until the later Iron Age. These upland settlements were not repeated except possibly in the immediately post-Roman period.

Leaving aside the Westbury quarry evidence there is a mass of data clearly indicating occupation in Mendip cave sites from the later Palaeolithic through the Mesolithic burials at Aveline's Hole, to Iron Age and Roman occupation (Fig 2). A distinction may be drawn between the earlier and the later evidence. The earlier settlement evidence up to and including the Neolithic may represent seasonal shelters probably during exploitation of the uplands. It is hard to see the later period occupation evidence, from the Beaker period onwards in the same way. For the Iron Age the users of the cave sites have been tentatively suggested as prospectors and metal workers exploiting the workings on the hills (Cunliffe 1982, 59), and there is evidence of Iron Age metalworking at cave sites (Table 4). The pottery evidence suggests Iron Age cave activity throughout the period.

It is interesting to note the presence of counterfeiters during the Roman period at the Mendip cave site of White Woman's Hole outside the study area (Boon 1972). It may be that from the Bronze Age onwards, cave settlement can be seen as the occupation sites of groups involved in marginal activities, and ones which may have been pursued by those outside mainstream social blocs. Prospecting or counterfeiting reflect the nature of the types of activity followed, and it is possible to place the curious evidence from Wookey Hole for ritual burial practices, in the context of social groups located outside normal Roman customs. The Roman period production of brooches has been suggested to have an association in Derbyshire with cave sites (Branigan and Bayley, 1989), and the same may be true on the Mendips where there is jewellery amongst the finds. Interpretation of the Romano-British finds occurring at the uppermost level of cave deposits not just on the Mendips but elsewhere in Britain has yet to be attempted. The Derbyshire cave sites have been seen as being utilised by local inhabitants (Salway 1969, 76). However, while temporary use of cave sites by shepherds is probable it cannot represent the whole story.

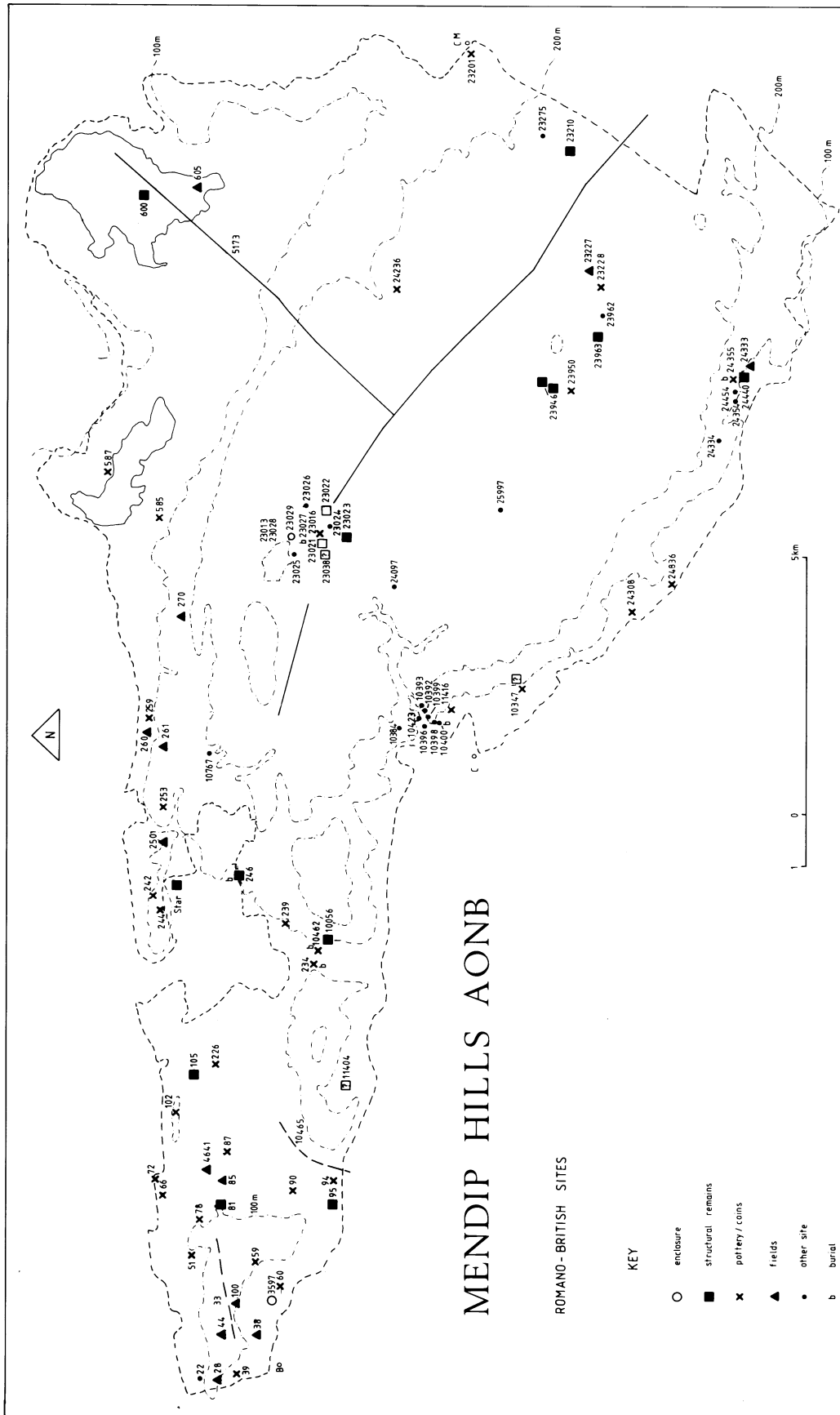


Figure 5: Romano-British sites.

The Roman settlement pattern (Fig 5) may well have its main outlines blurred by the superimposition of medieval settlements and it is possible that some of the medieval farms and villages may have had Roman precursors. Despite this it is clear that there is a pattern of farms and fields on the lowland with settlement nuclei on the uplands focused on the mine workings. At Rookery Farm (S23210), St Cuthberts (S23962) and Charterhouse the association between mines and settlements is clear. The two buildings at Priddy (S23946), one with a hypocaust and the other with evidence for plastered and painted rooms, are best interpreted as the houses of the mine overseer and officials. It is of some interest that the Priddy area was chosen, suggesting that it had advantages of shelter and access which may also have attracted earlier settlement. Other superior quality dwellings off the plateau may well have acted as the houses for those engaged in the administration and supervision of the mines and of supplies for the mine workers. This is true for the villa at Chew Park (A604), and may be true for the Winthill site (A105), and for those at Star and Cheddar lying just outside the study area. The Saxon estate at Cheddar extending as far north as Charterhouse (Neale 1976) may have had a Roman origin. The main focus of Romano-British settlement must have been the 'town' at Charterhouse (S23021). While there may be disagreement about the interpretation of the physical remains, there can be little argument with the evidence for a large and permanent population here as attested by the construction of the amphitheatre in the later Roman period.

While it is clear that the upland settlement pattern in the Iron Age and Roman periods differed markedly, there are parallels. In both periods the upland communities whether in mining compounds or hillforts were supplied by subordinated producers on low ground. In both cases a superstructure of specialised production was based on the regional exploitation of many small-scale farming enterprises.

The end of the Roman presence would have seen the commencement of a period when political problems may have dictated the settlement pattern and the functioning of separate groups seems likely. There is evidence for immediately post-Roman activity and settlement in the area. It would be surprising if there were no reoccupation of the Mendip hillforts in view of the evidence from others nearby (Burrow 1982). At Cheddar Gorge post-Roman activity is attested by a coin dated c 500 AD (S10400), and there is a second dated post 385. There are, too, arguments that would see the late Roman Celtic fields in the study area continuing into the 5th century. As argued below, the lead mines may have continued production in the centuries following the Roman departure. While any associated settlement pattern must be speculative, there are indications of continuity at Star and Winthill. To this evidence may be added Burrington Camp (A266; Rahtz and Fowler 1972, 197), which although located on the scarp is not linked with a communications route. The post-Roman enclosure at Charterhouse (S23030) and the smaller site at Rains Batch (S23029) may also belong to this period since they seem out of place in the medieval land use pattern (Fig 6). Both the Charterhouse enclosure and

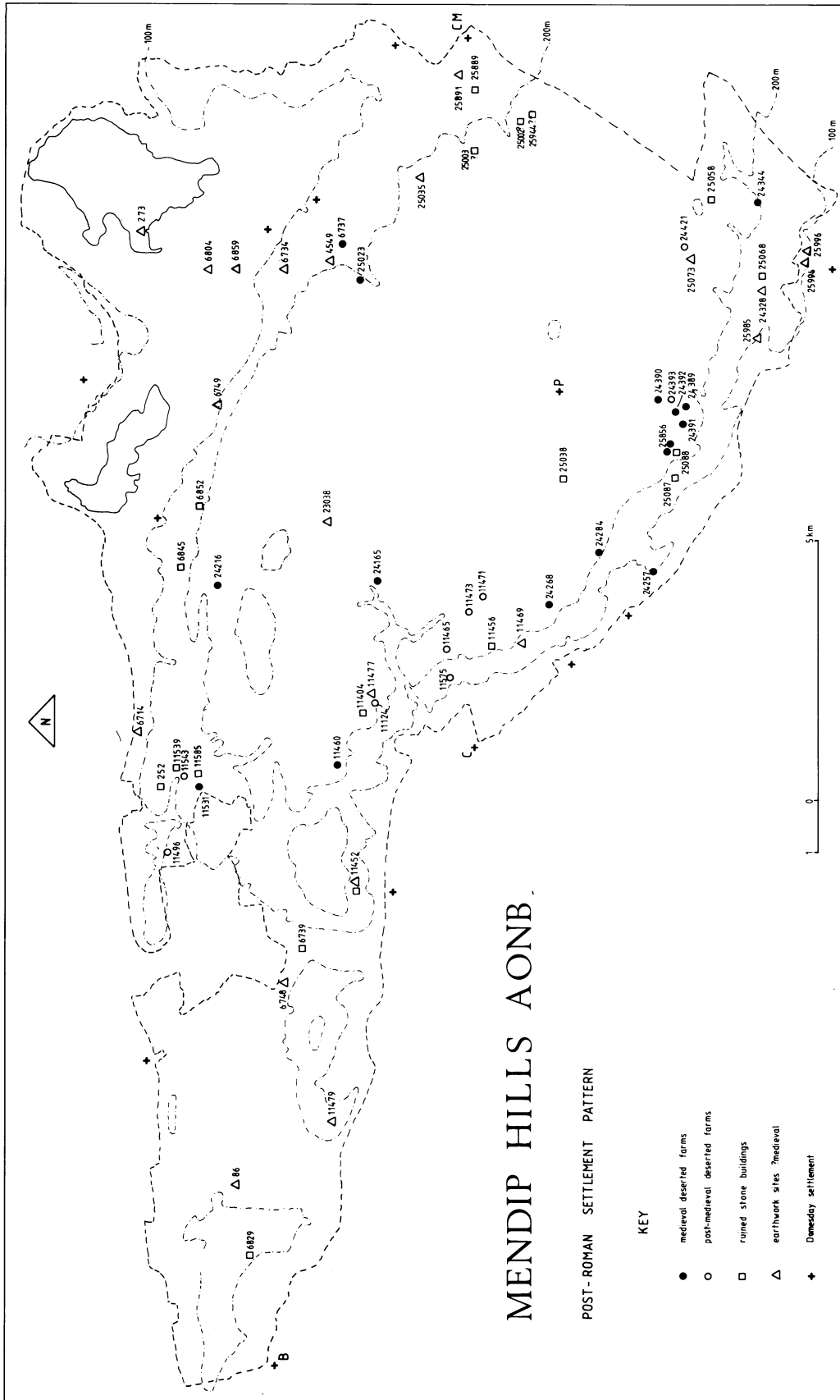


Figure 6: Post-Roman settlement patterns.

Burrington Camp are similar in size (around 100m by 80m) and form. They combine Romano-British elements in their rectangular, round-cornered, fort-like plan, together with an Iron Age scale of construction, at least in the case of Burrington Camp.

For the Saxon and medieval period, settlement on Mendip is represented by the village of Priddy, which, although not mentioned in Domesday appears to be the subject of a lost Saxon charter of the late 7th or 8th century (Neale 1976, 98), and off Mendip by the ring of villages at the foot of the upland scarp (Fig 6). The evidence suggests that settlement here was able to exploit the upland and lowland areas, and this is reflected in the layout of the parishes (Neale 1976, 79). That this was successful is demonstrated by the Domesday record (Darby and Finn 1967, 219). The village of Priddy may have depended on its fair in the later Middle Ages, which acted as an exchange centre on a seasonal basis. Other smaller scale settlements and farms existed in lowland areas according to the pattern which has continued to the present. On the upland the scarp edge was occupied in places by shielings (S11460, S24165). It seems likely that some of the later farm sites may have developed from these.

Above Ebbor Gorge the farms form a hamlet at the edge of the scarp (S25856 to S24390). Only here and at Green Ore are there name indications of Saxon farmsteads, and Ellick too (S24216) seems to be an early farm site on name evidence (Neale 1976, 97). Elsewhere there was little habitation on the plateau whether in farms or hamlets. An exception may have been the lead mines. There is a possible village type earthwork site at Charterhouse (S23038) which may be medieval, and at Rookery Farm it is interesting to note that medieval pottery has been collected in conjunction with Roman (S23210). There are no records elsewhere of medieval pottery scatters on the plateau and it is possible that there was no medieval settlement here.

Mining and farming settlement in the post-medieval period can be considered separately. There is a number of abandoned stone-built farm sites on the hills (Fig 7), with dates of abandonment, judging from ground evidence, ranging from the 18th until this century. Many of these must be sites laid out in the Enclosure period which have subsequently failed. Documentary work might establish whether they were rebuildings of established sites or fresh foundations. An abandoned hamlet at Rowberrow (S11539) seems to be an agricultural rather than industrial settlement. The housing requirements of mine workers led to pressures on land which are recorded on maps, with little evidence surviving on the ground. At Shipham for example there is map evidence in 1792 for numerous small rectangular adjoining plots representing illegal construction (S11448), while at West End in Chewton Mendip parish, now vanished house sites including some impinging on the road are recorded in 1740 (S25951).

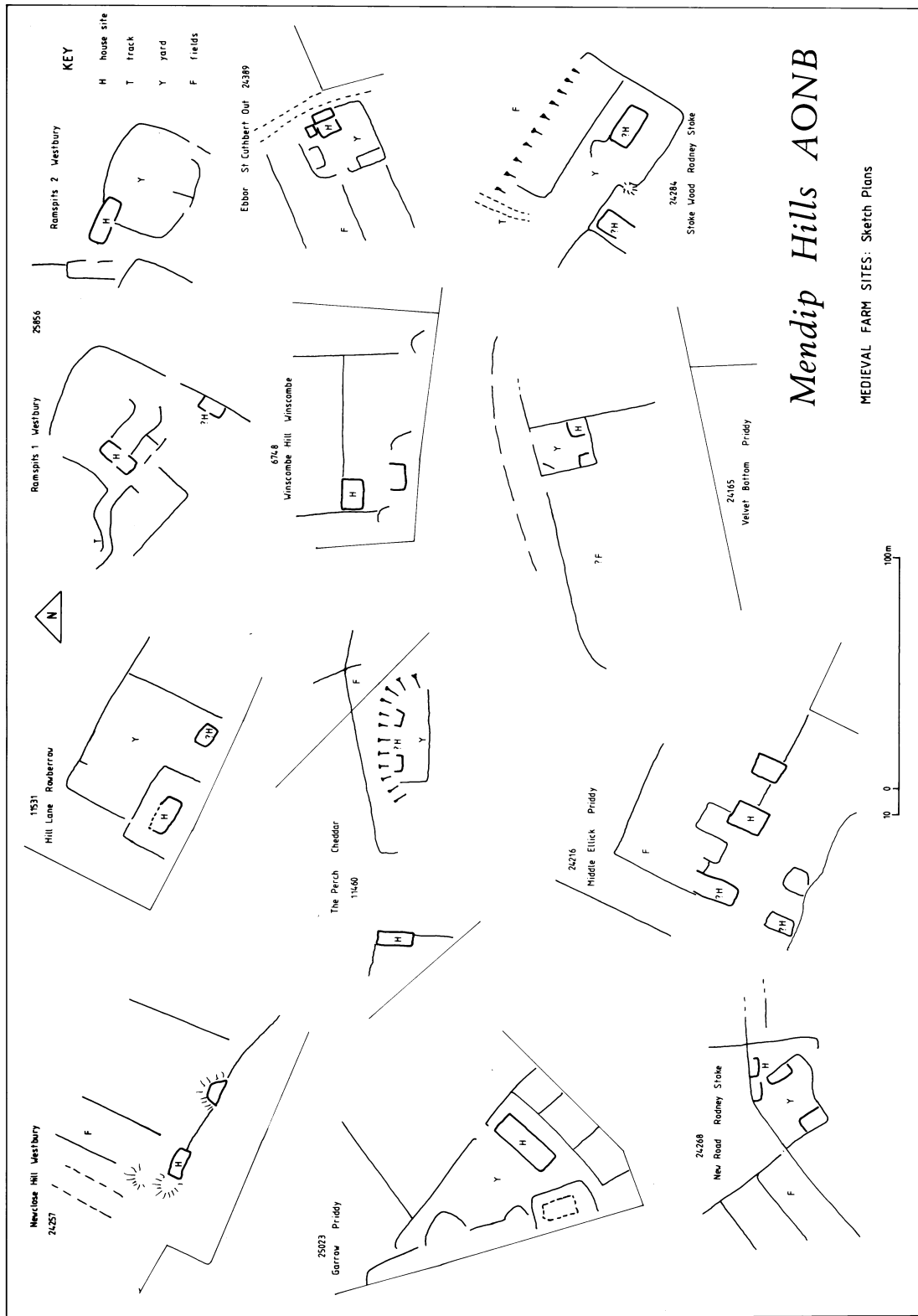


Figure 7: Sketch plans of medieval farm sites.

Finally no summary of settlement on the Mendips would be complete without mentioning the decoy towns on Black Down (S24114) and Callow Hill intended to represent the blazing lights of a town which had omitted to follow black out regulations during the last war. The success of this endeavour is questionable, with no ground indications that the hills were used as targets.

In summary, settlement on Mendip on a permanent basis appears to fall into two types. The first, apparent in the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods and repeated on a small scale in the medieval and post-medieval farms, comprised occupation by self-sufficient groups in small communities or isolated farms, the second was represented in the Iron Age and Roman periods by large sites with specialist functions, existing by virtue of their ability to exert power over lowland producers. From the Iron Age onward the ownership of land would have been of increasing importance with large landholdings based on the mines or on stock grazing, denying settlers access to the plateau or perhaps at times forcing them off the hills.

There are a number of environmental factors which would have influenced settlement at different periods. The increased temperature in the Bronze Age must have influenced the settlement shift from lowland to upland. Another factor may have been a denudation of the soil cover toward the end of the Bronze Age perhaps through over-cultivation, and reflected in the renewed exploitation of the Levels in the 1st millennium BC. The evidence from Danebury suggests that the running of large sheep flocks became the only practicable upland activity, and the same may have been true on the Mendips.

Farming

Until recently the only environmental evidence from the upland part of the study area suggested the landscape at the time of construction of the Priddy Circles (S24042). Open grassland and some scrub, but with no evidence of agriculture was suggested (Tratman 1967). The new evidence from Charterhouse Warren Farm Swallet (S24097) can now be added to this (Levitan et al 1988). Its possible Late Neolithic context has been discussed above. Using the faunal assemblage as an indicator of land use on the hills must take into account the evidence of its possible ritual deposition, but this need not preclude its analysis to indicate land use and environment. Woodland is suggested by the aurochs and red deer bones, and by the proportion of pig bones in the overall assemblage. However the presence of sheep/goat must be taken to demonstrate the existence of open pasture. The predominance of cattle in the assemblage suggests that both upland and lowland zones were used. This evidence would fit well with the Late Neolithic picture of a diversified economy and an increase in woodland exploitation (Bradley 1978).

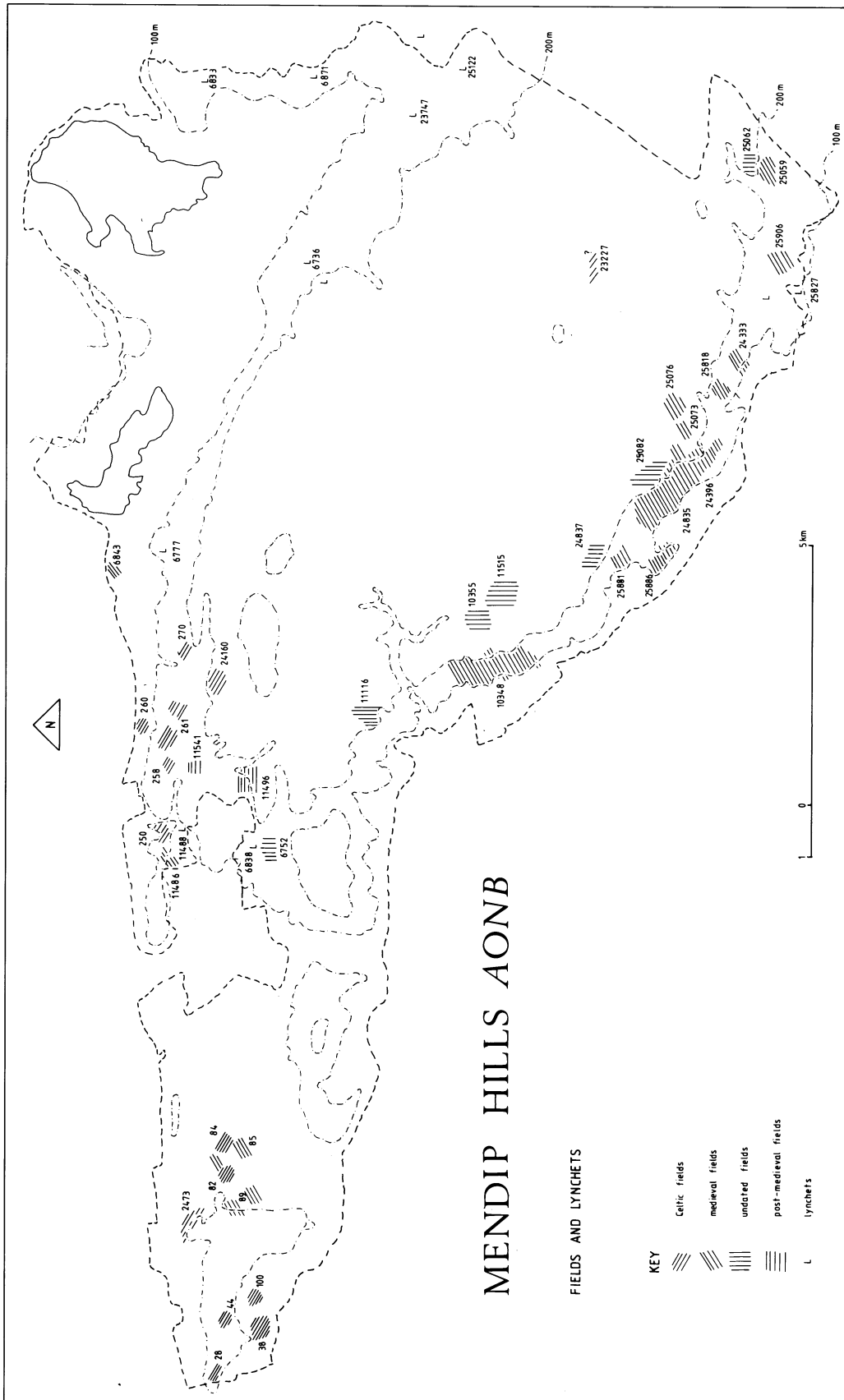


Figure 8: Field systems and lynchets.

The Celtic fields recorded in the west part of the study area and on the northern hilltop at Dolebury possibly had their origins in large scale land allotment in the Bronze Age (Fig 8). On Dartmoor and elsewhere the newly defined boundaries appear to have been imposed regardless of the terrain (Fleming 1988). There are two possible Mendip plateau areas where there are parallel boundaries laid across apparently unsuitable terrain, above Cheddar south of the Gorge (S10355), and at Dolebury (A261). In addition Celtic fields are reported in Stock Wood prior to afforestation, (S23227), and there are fragmentary fields at Battscombe above Cheddar (S11116). Those at Dolebury may be related to the settlement sites suggested above Burrington Combe, while those above Cheddar seem to be linked to an enclosure site to the west and may have a connection with the concentration of barrows to the south east.

There is evidence from the Gorsey Bigbury Beaker period site (S11439) of possible field cultivation in the form of the grain impression on one of the pots (Helbaek 1953). This site has been suggested to have been used by specialist potters, and the enclosure to have been reused for stock (ApSimon et al 1976).

Definite evidence of cultivated fields is provided by the field systems on the western hills at Bleadon and Christon (Au, A38, A82, AM, A100). Here the extensive and well known field layouts continued in use through to the later Roman period and probably beyond, with the result that landscape indications of prehistoric land use have been long obliterated. While there are some signs of Roman use of the Dolebury fields in the form of coin finds, there are no signs of longevity with regard to the fields above Cheddar.

Excavations at Chew Valley Lake have shown an intensively exploited arable landscape from the Iron Age at Ben Bridge, Chew Park and at Herriots Bridge. Particularly at Herriots Bridge the cutting and recutting of ditches must have represented a considerable expenditure of effort and one which was clearly considered worthwhile. The land here was sufficiently well exploited for it to be an immediate focus for the Romans on their arrival in the Mendip area. From the evidence of the construction of the route on to the upland this was the selected site for the production of food supplies for the mine workers at Charterhouse and at Rookery Farm north of Green Ore. The excavators assumed that in the Iron Age there was likely to have been a link between the low-lying farming land and the hillfort at Burlledge (A608; Rahtz and Greenfield 1977), and thus for both the Roman and Iron Age periods a distinction of farming type between upland and lowland is clear. At Christon (A88) the burials were in rock-cut pits, of which the larger ones would have originated as grain storage pits (Morris 1988, 74). Corn growing seems to have taken place on the low ground and from here the high ground settlers would have been supplied. The evidence from Danebury (Cunliffe 1984c) suggest that the Wessex Iron Age hillforts were centres for centralised grain processing, with the implication of the collection of a tax in kind from dependent groups. There are no obvious reasons why the Mendips should not be associated with the Wessex pattern.

By the Middle Iron Age and certainly by the Roman period, it would seem that the transport of foodstuffs between upland and lowland was required. The corollary of this lowland cultivation model is of an upland area where sheep or cattle are pastured but where there was no cultivated land. Iron Age sites such as Pitcher's Enclosure (S24081) would seem to be a provision for controlling and sorting stock and large areas of pasture may be envisaged at this time.

The Bleadon Hill field system either continued in use into the medieval period and beyond, or was brought back into cultivation using the same boundaries. At Christon, however, the medieval agricultural landscape differed from its predecessor. In the Chew Valley Lake area it would seem that the land was used more for pasture than, as formerly, for corn growing. At Chewton Mendip the shape of some of the existing fields suggest they are medieval intakes from uncultivated land, and this is likely to have been the case elsewhere. Place name endings in *-ley* suggest that the northern slopes were wooded in the early medieval period (Bettey 1986). On the upland plateau however there are no medieval cultivated fields, while in contrast the hill slopes were in places intensively utilised.

Two forms of this land use surviving as earthworks may be distinguished. The first is represented by the wholesale cultivation of fields on the hill slopes as at Westbury (S24835), at Carscliff Farm (S10348) and to the north above Blagdon (A6777). Here there are cross-slope and down-slope field banks and cultivated ridges forming an interleaving irregular mosaic. The second seems confined to cross-slope lynchets often on very steep slopes. These are particularly noticeable on the north slopes at White Hill, Litton and West Harptree (A6736, A6833, A6871, and S23747). The first type seems to represent open field layouts remarkable only because they are placed on hill slopes. On the south slopes this location would have had distinct advantages in the lengthening of the growing season. The second type represents the use of marginal land presumably over a relatively short period of population pressure. While the former appear to indicate no more than the proximity of the village settlements, it is possible to see the latter as indicating the non-availability of the plateau resources for cultivation even at a time of exceptional need.

The medieval uplands appear, therefore, to have been a significant and important resource and were not to be encroached upon by farming. The evidence for ownership in royal and monastic hands is likely to have meant a barrier to small scale farming. Interestingly this seems to be true of all parts of the upland with the exception of the area at the top of the Ebbor Gorge where it appears that some farming of the plateau took place around the cluster of farms on the scarp edge (S25076). The presence of farms here in the Saxon period must suggest an established land use which could not be affected by royal or monastic estates (Neale 1976, 97). The enclosure of fields at Priddy in 1235 was achieved in the face of opposition (Neale 1976, 98). The deserted farm sites on Mendip are all situated on the hill slopes (Fig 7). Some are exploiting

the slopes themselves and possibly lower ground, but those sited just below the scarp edge may have farmed the edges of the upland plateau (e.g. S24284).

The land uses prohibitive of cultivation are well known. Their farming aspects comprise the pasturing of sheep and cattle, principally the former, as well as the exploitation of rabbits. These activities were in conflict with the mining and hunting which is also recorded for the upland. It seems likely that the use of the uplands for stock represents its use from the Iron Age until the Enclosures, and possibly for the Neolithic period as well, since, as noted above, the Priddy Circles have been suggested as a representation of two kinds of stock enclosure which may have been present in the contemporary landscape.

An extensive post-medieval field layout at Shipham (S11496) suggests the cultivation of common or marginal land by the mine workers. There may have been other similar cultivated plots, in parallel with the widespread but subsequently abandoned settlements associated with the mine workings.

The Enclosure alterations took in virtually all the upland area. It would seem that the hope of transforming the upland into rich cultivated land was a mistaken one. Further upland cultivation took place during the 2nd World War but has not been continued in the post-war period to the same extent. This has saved the archaeology of the uplands from further damage.

Mining

The role of the Mendip lead mines has been frequently emphasised. The original exploitation of the mines may be taken back into the Late Bronze Age when there are technological changes in metal working indicating the use of lead (Ellison 1977). In addition an association between the Mendip mines and the relative concentrations of bronze hoards and artefacts has been noted (Fowler 1976, 64). The Roman invasion, and possibly the preceding period of involvement in the internal affairs of the south of England, was inspired in part by the potential of the Mendips. It is clear that Iron Age exploitation on a large scale may be inferred. A great deal of the attraction of the lead mines must have been the potential for the extraction of silver for which there is evidence at Chew Park. The EX ARG VEB stamps on the Mendip lead pigs specify a desilvering process (Palmer and Ashworth 1957; Cockerton 1959) and cast silver ingots have been found in Frances Plantation (S24236). In a note prepared for a field visit, George Boon noted that the silver coinage of the Dobunni and Durotriges is likely to reflect the availability of silver from the mines.

The location of mining settlements and communication routes is not clear until the Roman period. There is then considerable information available for the organisation of mining and its ancillary services. The mine at Charterhouse (S23013) was controlled by a fort (S23024), and although other military installations are possible at the Green Ore mines and perhaps elsewhere, it may be significant that the fort at Charterhouse appears not to have been altered or enlarged-implying that its use was short lived. The layout

of the road from the Chew Valley Lake area (Margary 540) may indicate that more mines than that at Charterhouse were in operation from the start of the Roman period. The road was intended for the dual purpose of carrying supplies of foodstuffs to the mines and carrying lead to the river Avon area. Its course to the main spinal route on Mendip (Margary 45b), rather than directly to Charterhouse, may indicate the intention to service more mining centres than Charterhouse alone. The effect of the mines on the agriculture of the Chew Valley Lake area was to intensify an existing land usage, and the introduction of a system of appropriation of part of the locally produced material not in the direct control of the administration (Rahtz and Greenfield 1977). The same effect may have been felt elsewhere in the vicinity of the mines. At Priddy it may be possible, as noted above, to identify the two buildings found there (S23946), with their evidence for painted walls and hypocausts, as the mine superintendent's quarters.

The Roman period use of the mines seems on the current evidence to fall into two parts (Elkington 1976). There would appear to be a distinct difference between the period of direct control, and the later period of mining by concessionaires. While the earlier period seems to be marked by an organisation that maintained control both of the production process and supply, the second period may be seen as marking an increased prosperity not just for the concessionaires but also for other classes. The marked wealth and prosperity of the Somerset and Avon areas in terms of villas has been linked with the second stage (Salway 1969, 148), while more widespread prosperity is suggested at many sites together with indications of a small scale industrial expansion in the Bath area associated with the production and distribution of pewter products. A number of sites within the study area, both near to and away from, the mining centres show evidence of metal working of some kind (A105, A234, A246, A604, S10462, S10767, S23021, S23210, S23228, S23963, S24236, S24440). It may be that in the later period the process of working the lead, presumably often for its silver content, was less centralised, and became geographically and perhaps socially widespread with many groups involved in cottage industries associated with the mines. As noted above the size of population involved in the later Roman mineworkings must be indicated by the construction of the Charterhouse amphitheatre (S23025). Public executions may have taken place at these sites as well as other 'entertainments' (Wacher 1974, 54), and it may be that the amphitheatre performed a function of social control.

The Mendip evidence may be compared with that from Derbyshire. An association between the military and mining is clear in both areas, but in Derbyshire the military evidence is far more widespread (Hart 1984, 85; Jones 1986; Ellis 1989, 124). In both areas the early provision of a road network seems to have been of paramount importance, although the termination of the Chew Park road at the River Chew, and the distribution of Derbyshire lead pigs suggests river transport was used (Hart 1984, 106). A connection between the lead workings, the use of cave sites, and the production of jewellery is possible,

and has been noted in analysis of Derbyshire brooches (Branigan and Bayley 1989). Recent work has indicated that the actual working of lead may have taken place at a number of dispersed upland sites, rather than at military camps (Hodges and Wildgoose, 1981).

It is likely that the Mendip mines continued working after the official end of the Roman occupation. As noted above the Somerset area is remarkable for its evidence for the sub-Roman period, whether in the form of cemeteries or of occupied sites. It is tempting to associate this evidence with a continued exploitation of the mines and a resultant economic stability. The mines may have acted as the focus for the post-Roman trade routes and possible commodity exchange marked by the distribution of 6th-century Mediterranean pottery (Thomas 1988). It has been suggested above that the post-Roman earthwork enclosure at Charterhouse (S23030) may have been a 5th or 6th century construction (Fig 9), associated with local potentates who derived their power from control of the mines.

The working of the mines is attested in the medieval period. The earliest documented reference is for the Charterhouse mines in 1189 (S23014). By the end of the medieval period a complex body of customary law had come into existence dealing with the four Mendip mineries. That medieval control was in the hands of the monastic foundations may indicate some continuity of tenure of large scale holdings, focused on the mines, from the Roman period. The Mendip mining landscape although partially medieval is likely to be principally post-medieval. The discovery of Roman buildings and pottery and of Iron age pottery beneath spoil tips at Velvet Bottom in 1969 (S23023), indicates that there may well be other evidence preserved beneath the later waste mounds.

The documentary coverage of the mine workings process becomes more detailed toward the present, and for the post-medieval period there is a considerable body of data (Gough 1967). The kinds of evidence may be summarised. From the owners and investors viewpoint there were enterprises which failed, there were legal fights between the owners of different mines, as between the Chewton and Priddy mines in the 18th century, and there were unexpected changes in market values which altered the basic economics of enterprises. Clearly too there were profits to be made. From the mine workers point of view there seems little doubt of the danger attendant on the process, and pay, housing, inconsistent employment, and no long term facilities for families were other problems. There were independent prospectors in addition to companies, with no place in the legal system to resolve disputes between individuals. More than any other capitalist enterprise, mining fails to attract long term investment, or concern over conditions. The process of removing a non-renewable resource does not encourage a long term view. It is surely significant that the documentary evidence is overwhelmingly concerned with conflict expressed through the law.

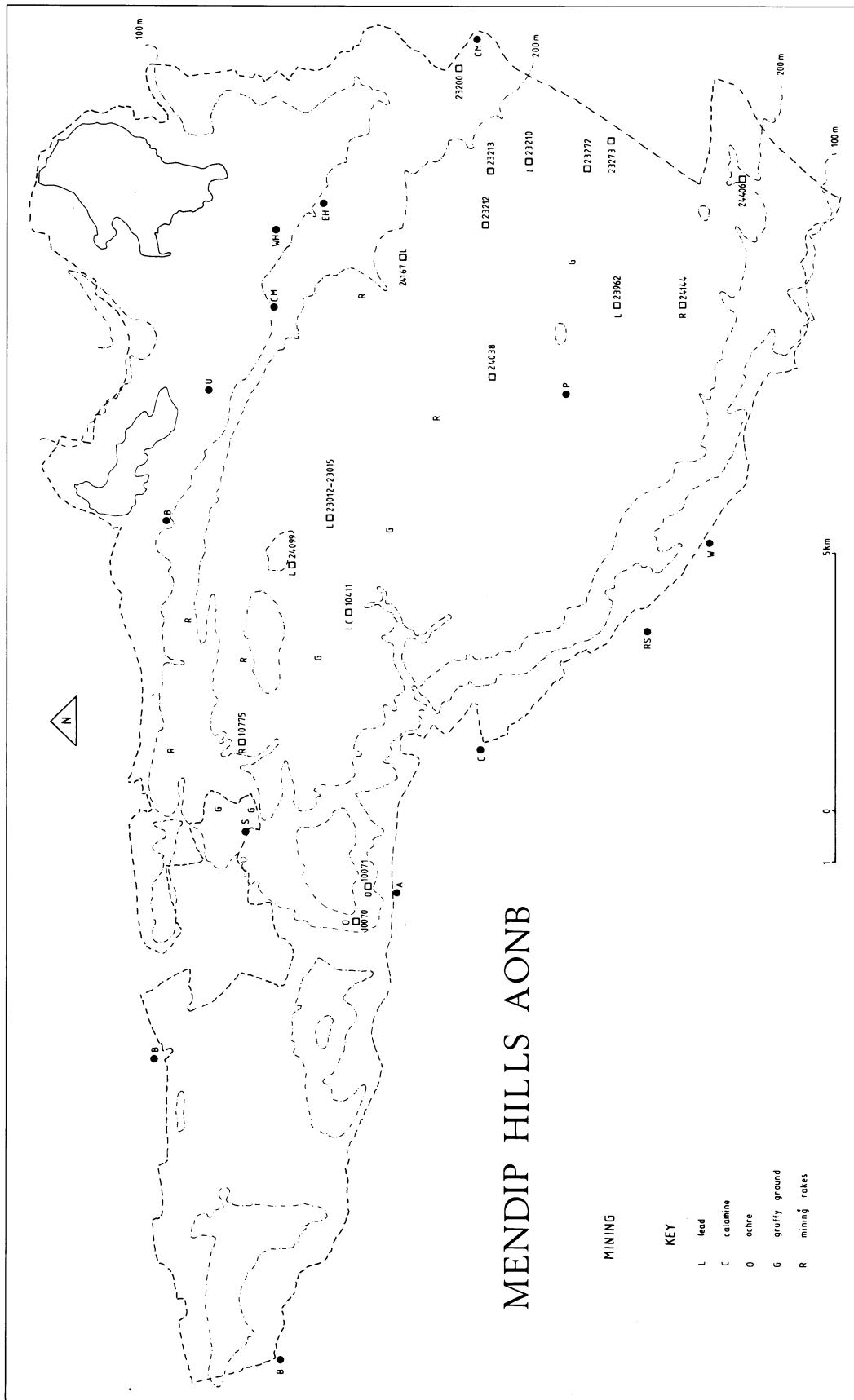


Figure 9: Mining.

How much of this evidence may be assumed to have applied as much to the medieval as post-medieval period is hard to say. The archaeological evidence, as noted above, is for houses surviving only as ruins or as records on maps, and it is possible that medieval miner's settlements may still be found. It would seem likely that any such settlements were poor and marked by impermanent structures.

Communications

The topography of the hills must suggest a layout of roads which would principally comprise access routes from the lowland to the upland via the gorges and dry valleys cutting the hill scarp. In addition a route along the hilltop ridge may be postulated. The principal north-south routes are unlikely to cross the plateau but would have been located west of the high ground. The use of Cheddar Gorge as an access route to the high ground is suggested from the later Palaeolithic period (Jacobi 1982), and a route through Burrington Combe seems to be marked by cave occupation. A route along the hilltop has been tentatively postulated as cutting between the northernmost Priddy Circle and the southern three, prior to the present route marked initially by the Roman road. The 250m contour indicates the position of slight dry combes on the Mendip plateau, and these may well have been the location of routes on the hills. At the top of Cheddar Gorge two diverging combes indicated by the contour, running north-east and south-east may mark early routes. The association of prehistoric enclosures with the dry valley access points has been noted above and it is likely that prehistoric tracks lay in these valleys.

The layout of the Roman routes is noted above and an overriding concern with servicing the mines is clear. While the ridgeway route may well have been influenced by an earlier road, above West Harptree the Roman road seems to have ignored the line of a possible prehistoric route running across the hillslope edge to Burlledge hillfort (Williams 1986, 40). It has been suggested above that the junction of the two Roman roads indicates that the shortest route was taken to the ridgeway road because mines other than Charterhouse were exploited from the beginning. The western continuation of Margary (1973) 45b would seem likely to run via Shipham onto the Bleadon Hills down to Uphill, with additional routes to the north and south. In particular a route may be postulated at Rose Hill, where there are good indications of Roman settlements (A234 and S10056).

Post-Roman and medieval routes are likely as access tracks onto the plateau. A track from Cheddar up to the Tynings Farm area has been suggested (Rahtz 1979, 372), and others may be picked out, often marked by holloways toward the foot of the hill slope. There are very few routes which run along the hillside contours, but an exception seems to be one between East Harptree and Chewton Mendip. Pre-Enclosure maps of the Mendip plateau show a variety of alternative routes between the same localities, and a pattern of use and periodic abandonment similar to that found on the Wessex uplands is likely (Betty 1986, 195). In the post-medieval period, the gradual layout of the Enclosure

fields had to take account of numerous rights of way, by then no more than pathways, which are marked in the enclosed landscape by stiles, and are currently public footpaths. These tracks interestingly occur near to, and at, the earthwork farm sites of the later medieval period, while showing little connection with the modern distribution of farms, and they may continue early routes. East of the Priddy Circles two slight changes of direction in the Roman road coincides with trackways to north and south (525936 and 525941). These paths may represent the survival of Roman routes south to St Cuthberts mine and north to the Rookery Farm mines. Off the Mendip upland, map evidence from 1740 shows a network of trackways in Chewton Mendip parish which are marked today only by field boundaries and occasionally by stiles.

Political Geography

It is possible to speculate on possible political arrangements in the study area, and to suggest the economic basis of communities dependent on the natural resources. At the time of Domesday the villages north and south of the Mendips represent some of the wealthiest areas in Somerset (Darby and Finn 1967,219), and this evidence may be taken to represent the agrarian potential in part of the upland zone. Earlier the Mendip mines attracted the Romans to the area immediately following the invasion, and a connection between the widespread wealth of 4th-century Somerset and A von and the mines has already been suggested. It is clear that economically the area would represent a valuable agricultural and industrial resource.

The Mendip Hills are likely to have formed a natural barrier between groups and may have represented a frontier between them. There are a number of possible models, two of which can be suggested here. The hills may have acted as an area enjoyed by different groups in common. Such communal use may have also included the establishment of places where communities might meet. Alternatively access to an unoccupied area on a regular basis by groups living in different areas may have given rise to conflict, and this may have led to either the control of the resource by one or other group, or to a division (which may have been north-south or east-west). The first hypothesis is supported by the henges indicating that the uplands formed the focus of ceremonial activities possibly involving regional groups (Clarke et al 1985). Inter-commoning in the medieval period represents a continuation of a possible shared resource in prehistory. The barrow zones suggested for the Bronze Age may indicate use by different groups, and the hillfort period may have seen conflict. The two models may both be applicable, with one or other predominating at different periods.

In the Iron Age, political divisions have been suggested by the distribution of pottery. The inception of the period is marked by pottery styles which may represent the only surviving material symbol of a recognised common ethnicity (Cunliffe 1984a). The Mendips may be seen as on the western limit of a Wessex territory in the early Iron Age, and the appearance of Glastonbury ware in the 3rd century BC may mark a zone which seems to

extend north of the hills (Cunliffe 1984b), and to the west of the Parrett. The potters used tempering material originating from the hills, and must have worked on or near the upland area. By the Roman period the tribal division lies south of the hills along the Brue, and recent work on the Meare Lake Village has suggested that the villages formed frontier exchange areas (Coles 1987, 251). The Wessex evidence suggests that hillforts acted as regional centres through which power was exercised and economic control took place. The collapse of this system and an increase in Roman trade and influence may have coincided.

In the century preceding the Roman invasion there were trade contacts between Hengistbury and the Mendip area (Cunliffe 1982, 59) and there is evidence of lead working at Hengistbury. Subsequently the Dobunnic area offered little resistance to the Roman invaders. Prior to the establishment of the Province, Roman diplomacy may have effectively smoothed the way to a peaceful takeover of the mines, while in contrast the Durotrigian area had to be forcibly pacified. The evidence from the plains below the hills suggests a movement away from the high ground in the 1st century BC (Coles 1987, 251) and it may be that the collapse of the social system where the hillforts dominated, combined with the effects of Roman diplomacy, resulted in some population shift prior to the invasion.

In the earlier Roman period the area was under direct imperial control giving way to the leasing of mine concessions. In the Saxon period there was royal control of part of the Mendips. There may be connections between the Roman and royal estate boundaries, particularly that at Cheddar (Neale 1976), and between Roman land holdings and later monastic land holdings.

Politics may well have influenced settlement and land use in the post-Roman period, with hillfort reoccupation and the possible construction of new earthworks a response to the difficulties. The kinds of post-Roman response possible have been discussed (Rahtz 1982). The model of continuity proposed here would have involved elite groups only on the basis of their control of the mines. Professor Thomas has suggested (1988) that the distribution of Mediterranean pottery of c 500-550 AD in Somerset represents the only archaeologically recognisable evidence for a trading voyage or voyages from the Mediterranean seeking Mendip lead or finished objects in pewter. Silver might, equally, still have been an attraction. The political background to such an activity would be one of kings to whom tribute was owed. Tribute and goods might be amassed at a centre which was perhaps only temporarily occupied-Cadbury Congresbury for instance-and this would have been the goal of the traders.

Desertion of sites rather than continuity is evident in the medieval period, and this pattern continues to this century. The establishment of farms and their subsequent abandonment reflects marginality. The main economic foci lay in the parish centres at the foot of the hills. Unlike the farm sites, the villages were buffered to some extent against the demographic and economic changes of the day.

In addition to the lack of protection from the economic climate, documentary evidence from the modern period suggests that there was conflict between the various users of the upland resource (Atthill 1976). The conflict arose between three main groups, those who maintained an ancient right to community use of the upland for sheep grazing, those who were attracted to the mining potential of the hills as prospectors, and lastly the power-holding class wishing to exploit the resource and also enjoying control over the process of arbitration. The ancient communal rights may well have been long-lived and rooted in custom, but equally the presence of prospectors has been suggested from the Iron Age. Not until the enclosure of the upland did the third group, the power-holding class, finally achieve dominance.

Table 2 Diameters (in Grinsell paces) of round barrow groups, central plateau

Zone	Location	No.	Groups	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	40+	Ave.
1	N	31			6	7	5	6	6	1	22.5
2	W	17		1	5	3	7			1	17.6
3	SW	43	5	3	13	13	9	4	1		17.3
4	SE	31	1	12	10	6	1	1		1	13.2
-	S Priddy Circles	23	2	1	1	5	10	6			20.7
-	At Stow Barrow	6					4	1		1	26.2

Table 3 Barrow excavations

Zone	Total	Grave goods	Names (Grinsell numbers and SMR numbers)
1	5	2	Compton Martin 6; E Harptree 2a, 2b, 2c; W Harptree 8 S24047, S24048, S24049, S24088
3	15	3	Priddy 3; Priddy 9-12, 14-17, 19, 20 or 20a, 21-23, 39 S23997, S23990-23993, S23981-23986, S23978 or S23979, S23975-23977, S23966
4	1	-	St Cuthbert Out 24a, S24358
S Priddy Circles	13	10	Chewton Mendip 5-12; Priddy 7,8,26,28; E Harptree 4, S12813-23820, S24004, S23952, S23949
Others	17	12	Cheddar 1-5,9, 13, 19 (S11428-1 1432, S11434, S11437, S11401); Burrington 1-3, ?11 (S24133-24136, S24103); Shipham 2-4 (S10763, S10770, S10768); Hutton 1 (A3073); Bleadon 1a (A2143)

Table 4 Cave sites with Mesolithic and later finds

SMR Number	Name Location	Mesolithic	Neolithic	Bronze Age	Iron Age	Roman
S10073	Axbridge		F			
S10348	Totty Pot	F	F			
S10384	Chelmscombe		P,B	P,B,M	P,H	P,C,M
S10390	Sow's Hole				P from 1	
S10391	Pig's Hole				of 2.	
S10392	Pride Evans					C
S10393	Soldier's		P,F		P(early)	P,C
S10395	Cooper's				P(early), B	
S10396	Sun Hole		P,H,B	F,P	P	C,P
S10397	Gt Oon's				P(early),M	
S10398	Gough's	B			P(early)	P,C
S10399	Gough's Old				P,H	P,H,C
S10400	Long Hole			M		C,H,B,M
S10423	C/Gorge					C,B
S24097	C.W.F		P,B	P		B,P
	Swallet					
A268	Aveline's	B				
S10767	Rowberrow		F,P		H	C
S24354	Badger Hole				P(early)	P,C
S24355	Wookey				P(early)	P,C
A21	Hutton					H,B
S24127	Read's				P	
S24334	Ebbor			M		B
S24335	Ebbor				P,B	

Key: P = Pottery F = Flint
 H = Hearth C = Coins
 B = Burial M = Metalwork

A Case Study of the Wills, Waldegrave and Tudway Quilter Estates

Introduction

- 1.1 During the course of the Mendip Hill survey undertaken between 1986 and 1988 three privately owned estates were subjected to intensive archaeological survey (Fig 10).
- 1.2 The purpose of the work was twofold. The main intention was to attempt to measure the degree of completeness of the survey work undertaken within the AONB as a whole. The main survey had used aerial photographs as an indicator for fieldwork and it was clearly necessary to undertake some intensive survey from which inferences could be drawn to indicate the number of undetected sites remaining to be located. The second intention was to provide the basic archaeological data on which management plans could be based.
- 1.3 The areas to be intensively surveyed were not chosen to represent any particular landscape type but simply comprise the three largest single landholding units known to Avon and Somerset County Councils.
- 1.4 Coincidentally all three estates contain land above 300m and take in both the plateau top and the hill slopes. None of the estates falls wholly within the AONB. In the case of the Tudway Quilter estate so little land lay outside the designated area that it was felt appropriate to complete the estate survey by including non-AONB land. Survey work on the Wills and Waldegrave estates was limited to the areas within the AONB.
- 1.5 For each of the estates the method of survey was similar and the results should be comparable. Every field has been entered and enough walked to allow all parts of the field to be viewed. In the case of arable land a systematic but non-intensive fieldwalk was undertaken so that linear strips of around 20m widths were viewed in a succession of passes across the field. Densely afforested land has not been entered but open woodland has been examined. Heathland at Black Down and Burrington Ham in the Wills estate was found to be impenetrable off the pathways. Data has been accessed onto pro forma as for the main AONB survey.
- 1.6 A comparison of the results from these estates and from the overall Mendip survey occurs elsewhere. There follows below an account of the archaeological component of each of the three estates. Individual sites are described in the SMRs and on the survey pro forma and these details are not reproduced here. The accounts below provide a summary of the data and highlight its significance. They should be seen as a component of possible management statements (Morgan Evans 1986, 11).

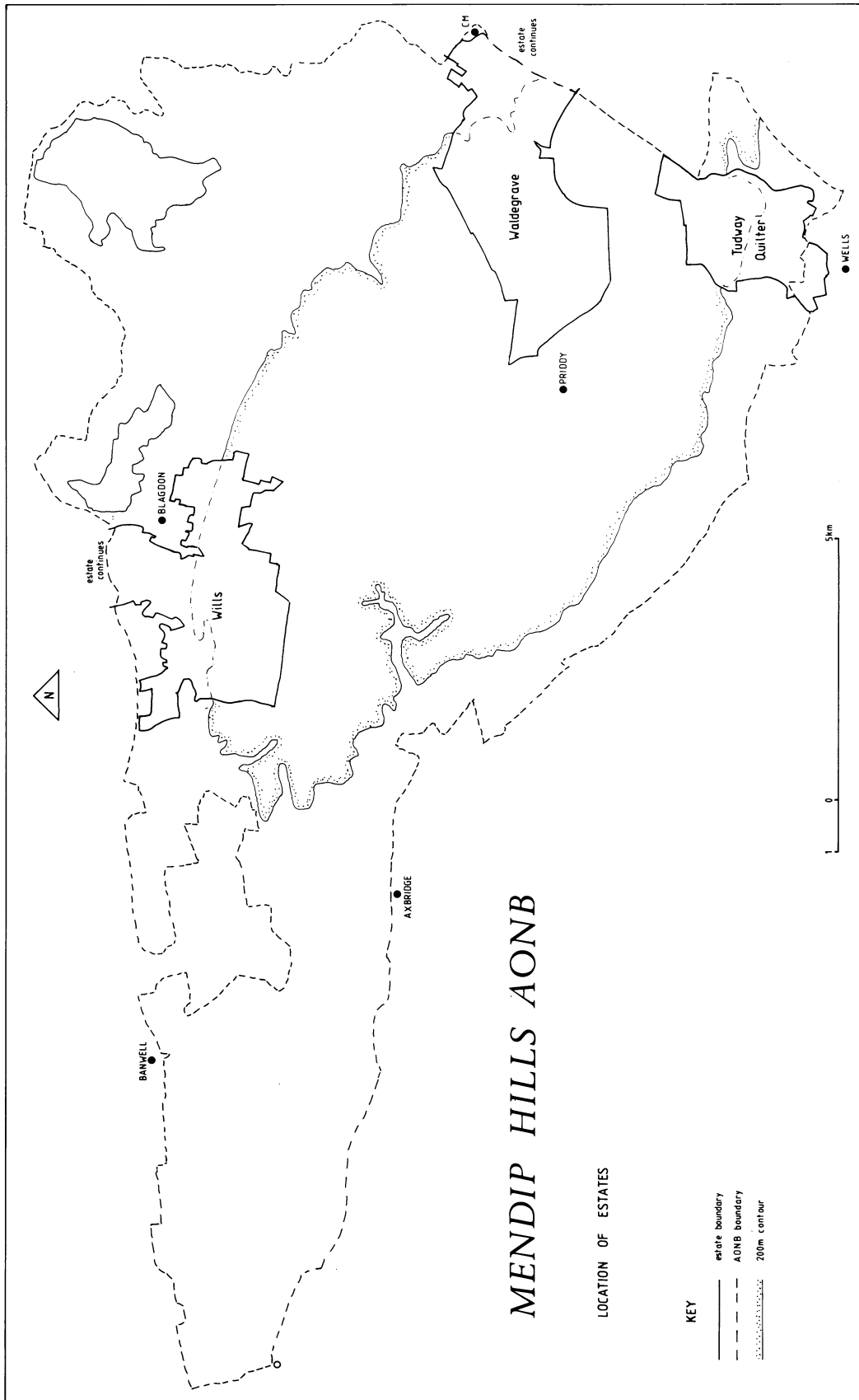


Figure 10: Location of the three surveyed estates.

- 1.7 For each of the three estates the aim of any management agreements would be the same: to maintain the archaeological status quo. There are however some monuments and areas which could be better protected from current land use practices and specific recommendations are appended for each estate.

The Wills Estate (Fig 11)

- 2.1 That part of the estate within the AONB comprises just under 10km². The southern part of the estate takes in the high ground of the Mendip plateau rising on Black Down to 300m. Here there is heathland continuing north onto Burrington Ham with steep slopes down from the plateau edge. To the west this slope is tree covered. To the east the plateau top has been enclosed and there are walled fields continuing down the hill slopes to the north. The scenic areas of Burrington and Blagdon Combes lie within the estate. The village of Blagdon is not included but the estate boundaries lie to its west, south and east.
- 2.2 The land use on the estate is predominantly for farming. In the winter of 1987/88 only two fields were under the plough, and stock cattle and sheep grazing predominated. The wooded land is shown on fig 11. Just under half the estate on Black Down and Burrington Ham is given over to leisure uses.

The Archaeology of the Estate

- 3.1 There are indications of upper Palaeolithic occupation from the cave sites along Burrington Combe at Aveline's Hole (A268), Foxe's Hole (A272) and Goatchurch Cavern (A271). At Aveline's Hole a group of burials were found dating from the Mesolithic.
- 3.2 In the same area at the foot of Black Down above Burrington Combe are indications of activity in the late third and early second millennia. The evidence, which is not at all clear, consists firstly of Beaker pottery found in mining backfill deposited in Bos Swallet (S24128). This must imply a Beaker period site in the vicinity. Secondly excavation of the cairn Burrington 1 (S24133), showed further evidence of the early Bronze Age at the earliest dated barrow on the Mendips (Grinsell 1977, 50). Lastly at the same site the excavators found a Middle Bronze Age cremation cemetery (S24134) where it encroached on the side of the cairn. Some 70 or 80 pits were excavated presumably representing a similar minimum number of individuals. An occupation site can be inferred since these cremation cemeteries are generally located alongside settlements.

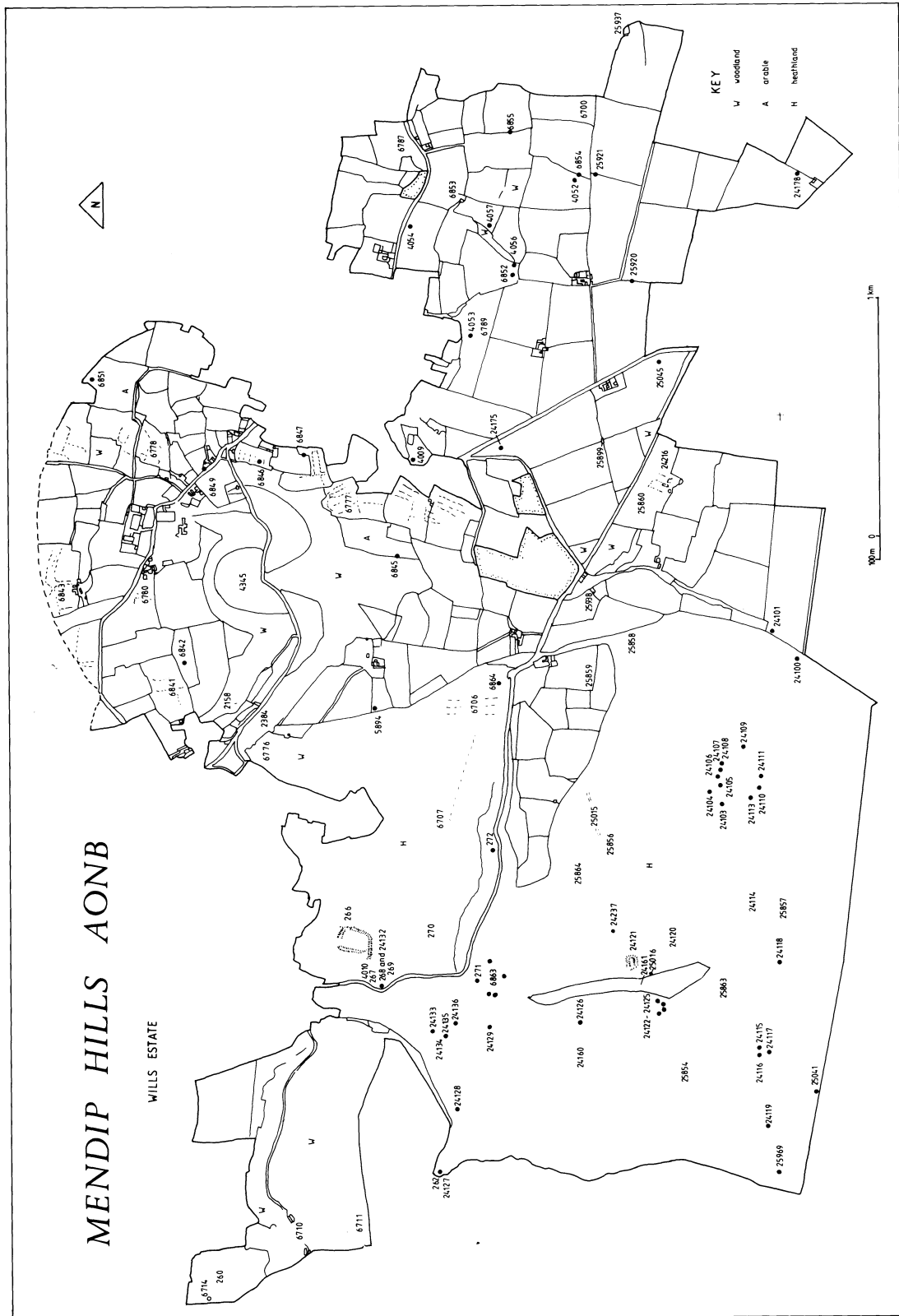


Figure 11: The Wills Estate.

- 3.3 Other Bronze Age evidence is represented by the barrows on Black Down. The circular layout of the Beacon Batch group (S24103-24113) is not paralleled elsewhere on Mendip. A possible barrow was found to the north of Swymmers Farm during the survey (S25045).
- 3.4 Parts of an extensive field system of prehistoric origin lie within the estate. There are indications from Dolebury Hillfort as far as Black Down of a layout of narrow strip fields on the same alignment (S6711, S24160). Within the estate there are some lynchet-like banks on this alignment in Mendip Lodge Wood continuing a field system to the south, and AP marks suggesting field banks have been noted on Black Down. It is possible that the supposed barrows S24122-24125 are in fact associated clearance mounds. Similar narrow embanked strips on a slightly different alignment have been recorded on Burrington Ham (A270, A6706). These field systems may possibly have had their origin in the Bronze Age.
- 3.5 For the later 1st millennium BC there are cave finds at Reads cave (S24127 and A262), the fields discussed above, possibly the enclosure or hillfort on Burrington Ham (A266) and perhaps the Black Down enclosure (S24121). Early fields west of Springhead Farm (A260) may have originated in the Iron Age.
- 3.6 Iron Age and Romano-British finds at Springhead Farm just outside the estate boundary suggest that the fields to the west, noted above, were cultivated in the Roman period. It seems clear from evidence elsewhere that the Roman lead mines were serviced from cultivated land at some distance. An extensive communications system may be presumed to have complemented this planned farming programme. The existence of Roman routes onto the plateau within the estate boundary must be a possibility. There are Roman pottery finds near Blagdon, just outside the estate. A Roman period origin for the village is possible.
- 3.7 Burrington Camp (A266) has been suggested as a possible post-Roman earthwork (Rahtz and Fowler 1972).
- 3.8 There is documentary evidence suggesting that the place name Ellick is indicative of Saxon settlement. A good example of a deserted farm site is located east of Middle Ellick Farm (S24216).
- 3.9 West of Blagdon the hill slopes from Luvers Lane down to the A368 are occupied by medieval fields and lynchets (A6777). There may have been house or farm sites on some of the platform-like areas where levelling seems more pronounced than would have resulted simply from cultivation. Agriculture on marginal land of this type is unusual, since in addition to the hill slope the ground would clearly have received less warmth than similar south-facing slopes. This land is where the Mendip slope is slightest and it is probable that medieval cultivation of the hillside was limited to the environs of Blagdon. It is possible too that the location of these fields suggests a medieval origin for the development

of the village at Street End, the fields representing in effect plots to the rear of house sites.

- 3.10 To the north there are further lynchets and relict field boundaries especially at Wadley Farm (A6843), but also west of Ridge Farm and north and west of Coombe Lodge Farm (A6780 and A6778). Air photographs suggest a former more extensive distribution. It is very likely that some of the existing farms have medieval or earlier precursors.
- 3.11 There is evidence of mining on Black Down and at Burrington Ham. Here there are landscapes of spoil mounds and rakes probably later-medieval in date.
- 3.12 Sheep grazing took place on the uplands in the medieval period and the enclosures on Black Down may be medieval constructions. Relationship between upland and lowland would have required extensive communications routes. Tracks above Upper Langford and Rickford may be originally medieval, as too may a trackway on Black Down (S25015).
- 3.13 Post-medieval land use is attested by the field enclosures and their associated ponds, lime kilns and stiles. There are ruined buildings north of Leaze Farm (A6852) and east of Fullers Hay (A6845) which may have been domestic at some point in their development. South of Ellick cottage is evidence of post-medieval settlement (S25938). Mendip Lodge with its outbuildings represents a 19th century building, now in ruins which is worth a full record (A6710).
- 3.14 The World War II 'decoy town' on Black Down with its associated blast proof shelters (S24114 and S25041) represents the most recent archaeological remains on the estate. Bomb craters are reported on Black Down but none are currently distinct. The success of the operation may be doubted.

The Conditions and Conservation of the Resource

- 4.1 There are three main elements of surviving archaeology present in the modern landscape. The first on Black Down and Burrington Ham is primarily prehistoric, the second west and north of Black Down seems wholly medieval, while the third is represented by the redundant post-medieval farming and other features which have survived until today.
- 4.2 On Black Down and Burrington Ham the threats are a direct result of increasing leisure activity and fall into two groups of conscious and unconscious activities. Pits and burrows have been dug into the Black Down Beacon Batch barrows, and rubbish appears to have been buried in some of them. To the west barrows S24115, S24116 and S24103 are being actively eroded by walkers and riders. Further north there is footpath and bridleway erosion and trackways become watercourses in

heavy rainfall. It is possible that the putative settlement sites outlined above may be exposed and eroded.

- 4.3 The threat to the medieval landscape features discussed above is clearly a renewed phase of ploughing. Air photographs from the immediate post-war period show further earthwork boundaries east of Coombe Lodge Farm which have been subsequently destroyed.
- 4.4 The disused ponds and ruined buildings, and even some of the enclosure walls themselves, are clearly at risk, since they now perform no function in the modern landscape. In the winter of 1987/88 there were no indications of levelling and infilling or of the removal of boundaries with the exception of a newly cultivated piece south east of Blagdon sewage works. Some boundaries have however been lost since the last war.
- 4.5 Scheduled monument protection is afforded to Burrington Camp, and to the barrows on the summit ridge of Black Down (The Beacon Batch group, barrows S24116, S24118 to the west, and S24100 and S24101 to the east).

Recommendations

- 5.1 Archaeological deposits within the caves should continue to be safeguarded.
- 5.2 The footpath west of Beacon Batch on Black Down should be rerouted.
- 5.3 Any clearance of heath on Black Down or Burrington Ham, whether by fire or by clearance of scrub should be followed up by an archaeological survey.
- 5.4 The effect of footpath erosion in these areas and especially on the north side of Black Down where paths lead down to Burrington Combe should be carefully monitored from time to time.
- 5.5 Damage to the Beacon Batch barrows should be checked. It may be necessary to provide some physical protection.
- 5.6 Agreements not to plough should be entered into for those areas of surviving medieval and pre-medieval fields.
- 5.7 The maintenance of the ponds, ruined buildings and field boundaries within the landscape should be sought. In addition to their archaeological interest they are of considerable scenic value.
- 5.8 The area of possible Beaker and Later Bronze Age sites at the foot of Black Down west of Burrington Combe together with the cairns and barrows located here should be afforded Scheduled Monument protection.

- 5.9 Medieval deserted farm sites are rare on Mendip. It is recommended that the fine example at Middle Ellick should be afforded Scheduled Monument protection.

The Waldegrave Estate (Fig 12)

Introduction

- 6.1 That part of the Waldegrave estate lying within the AONB comprises around 10km².
- 6.2 The edge of the upland plateau runs north west/south east across the estate with the ground falling gently to around 140m. To the west the estate takes in some of the highest ground on the Mendips rising at North Hill to over 300m. The plateau scarp is interrupted by several dry valleys principally Burges's Combe.
- 6.3 There are some areas of heathland east of North Hill together with densely afforested areas at Stock Hill, Eaker Hill and at Burges's Combe. The remainder of the land is enclosed for fields, predominantly grass. At the time of survey in the winter of 1987/88 just under 20 fields were cultivated comprising about 100 hectares. Three of these fields only were walked at West End Farm, Wigmore Farm and at Niver Hill.
- 6.4 Land use other than forestry and arable is for stock grazing.

The Archaeology of the Estate

- 7.1 The prehistoric archaeology of the estate takes a familiar Mendip form being limited to barrows and chance records of lithic debitage. This is difficult material to organise into a coherent picture.
- 7.2 With the single exception of the find of a fragment of a flint axe (S23287) there are no records of lithic surface finds from the estate. It is difficult to know what to make of this apparent blank area. In the absence of a coherent policy for field walking it is best to regard the distribution of flint finds on Mendip as reflecting the presence and absence of ploughed land and active collectors, rather than as an indicator of prehistoric activity. The upland fields walked in 1987/88 yielded a number of flint flakes but no indisputable tools.
- 7.3 The barrows in the Ashen Hill cemetery were all opened in the last century. Evidence from Chewton Mendip 11 (S23819) suggests an Early Bronze Age date.

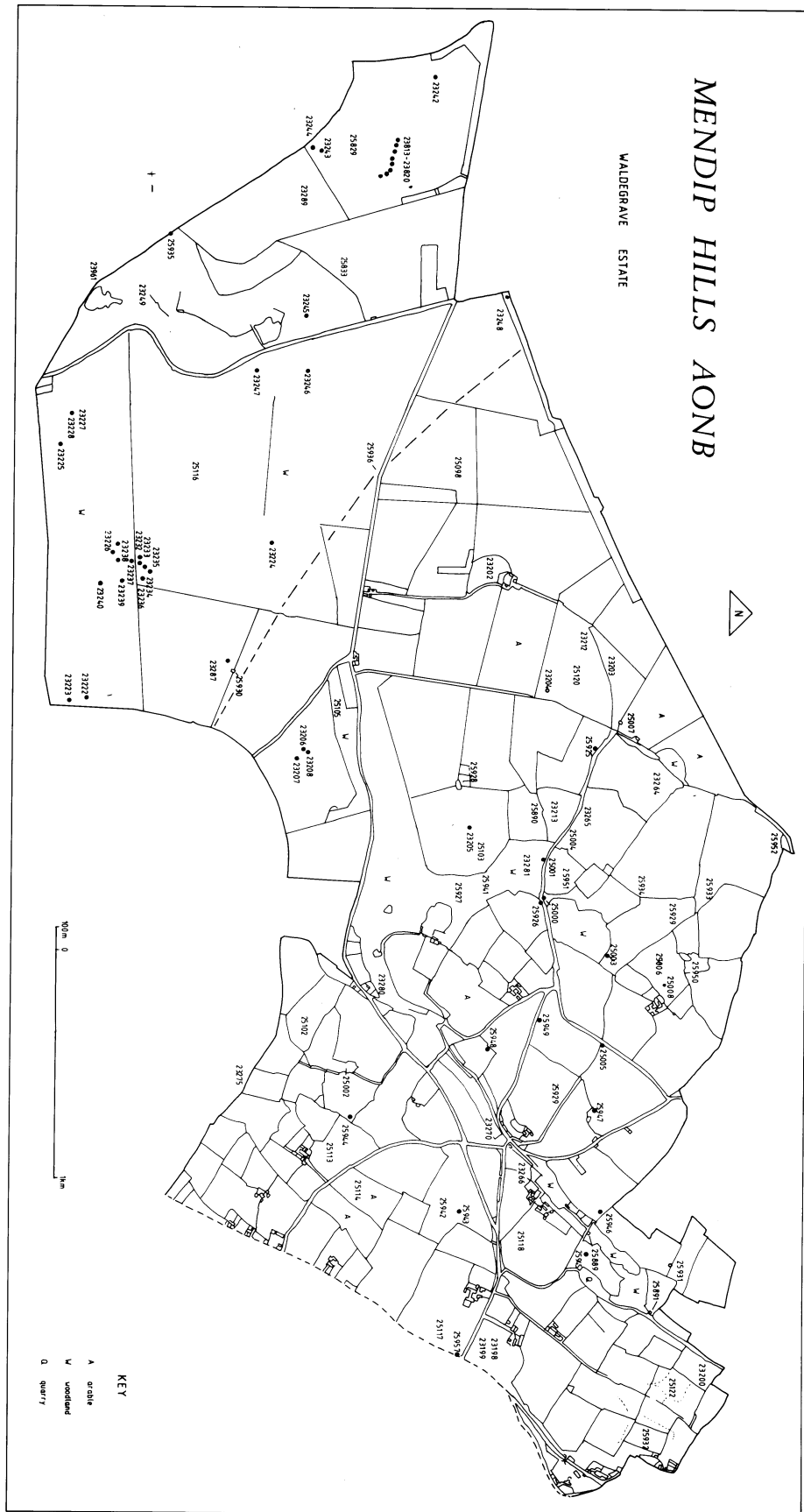


Figure 12: The Waldegrave Estate.

- 7.4 The remaining barrows within the estate are not only difficult to date but are also difficult to securely identify. Grinsell accepts only 8 or the 15 barrow records in Stock Hill Wood as convincing, while of the remainder, three from Colt Hoare's map lie in an area of mine working (S23202 and S23212), one on Eaker Hill (S23205) is rejected by Grinsell, leaving only the three plough-damaged barrows north of Bendalls Farm (S23206-8).
- 7.5 It is clear from an analysis of the distribution of barrows on Mendip that there are no barrows recorded on the north scarp east of Ubley. A possible barrow found during the survey at Grove Farm (S25008) is thus an unlikely attribution.
- 7.6 Pastoral land use in the Bronze Age in this area may be inferred from the absence of barrows, but there is no solid evidence to support or refute any hypotheses which can be based on general barrow distribution data.
- 7.7 A note should be made of the field system reported on Stock Hill prior to ploughing and afforestation in 1946 (S23227). All the other Celtic field records on Mendip are on lower ground towards the plateau edge. Nevertheless the presence of Romano-British finds (S23228) and of the possibly Romano-British or earlier St Cuthberts lead mines (just outside the estate) must give some validity to the identification.
- 7.8 The estate is crossed by the Roman road to Charterhouse (Margary 45b). A Romano-British site with indications of metal working is located in Stock Hill Wood (S23228). In addition there are records of Roman finds just beyond the estate boundaries at St Cuthbert's lead mines, and at Rookery Farm. Finds of Roman coins and pottery at Chewton Mendip were recorded by Skinner.
- 7.9 There are earthworks of medieval date west of Chewton Mendip. Here relict field boundaries can be traced in places though overlain by their modern counterparts. East of Watery Combe one section of lynchet is so pronounced and with such clear entrances as to suggest an enclosure. This layout of fields and banks is shown on a map of 1740. Only two sides can however be traced (S25122). There is a second area of putative medieval earthworks at Everards Farm (S25113). At Grove Farm there are slight field banks which may be medieval (S25006). They seem to be related to the routeway discussed below.
- 7.10 This fragmentary evidence of presumably intensive medieval cultivation may be linked with Chewton Mendip and with the post-Conquest priory at Bathway (S23198).
- 7.11 Some of the modern farms may be on the sites of medieval predecessors. Fields around Everards Farm and Nedge Farm resemble medieval intakes.
- 7.12 Although some of the lead workings within the estate may have a later medieval origin, it would seem reasonable to associate the industrial

landscapes of West End; east of North Hill; at Buddles Wood and Grove Farm, and at Torhole Bottom, with the post-medieval period. These landscapes especially that at West End are exceptionally well preserved. Stock Hill Wood is currently inaccessible but air photographs show that mine workings are extensive here.

- 7.13 A map of Chewton Mendip parish dating to 1740 shows more widespread settlement than today. A number of buildings, some perhaps merely agricultural structures, but others probably farms, can be seen. At West End and at Bathway small scale settlement is shown. Four tracks are marked which have virtually disappeared today. From West End two tracks run south westward toward Hunters Lodge and Priddy. A third route can be seen joining Rookery Farm near Green Ore. Finally a route running along the hill contours from north-west to south-east is clear on the map and can be traced on the ground from Cole's Lane to Coomb's Grove (S25929). This route probably links northward with tracks toward East Harptree. To the east the location of the priory apparently on this line may be coincidental. That part of the routeway within the estate seems to predate the post-medieval landscape. Other routes marked by stiles and comprising modern public footpaths must also predate the enclosure changes.
- 7.14 The 18th-century enclosure landscape survives in the form of field boundaries, ponds, stiles and lime kilns. Within this landscape there are buildings marked in 1740 at Adams Grove (S25002). On Eaker Hill a plantation may conceal a farm site or agricultural buildings in addition to the pond and yard currently visible (S25928). This must be later than 1740. There have been successive post-medieval buildings, now demolished, on the site of the medieval priory (S23199).
- 7.15 The valley running from Watery Combe to Tor Hole represents a focus for settlement. Two finds of ruined buildings perhaps of domestic use have been made (S25889 and S25891). Neither of these are shown on the 1740 map but other buildings are shown nearby.
- 7.16 There is a large quarry at Grigs Pit Wood which was present in 1740.

The Condition and Conservation of the Resource

- 8.1 It would appear that the archaeological features recorded on the estate are currently in a reasonably stable situation. There are however certain land uses which pose problems.
- 8.2 As has been seen the archaeology of the estate is represented by a disparate and incomplete record. Three main types of evidence, prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval may be distinguished in assessing the potential threats to their survival.
- 8.3 Three of the barrows (S23206, S23207 and S23208) are currently under the plough. The barrows in Stock Hill Wood will come under threat

from tree clearance and renewed planting. At present the Ashen Hill barrows are in good condition but they are at risk from loss of surface cover from livestock and trampling by visitors.

- 8.4 Ploughing and the amalgamation of fields are current threats to the archaeology of the historic period. Fields west of Westend Farm were in the process of consolidation during the survey, with field boundaries being grubbed out. The mining landscapes recorded above are wholly redundant in terms of modern agriculture and must be potential targets for improvement. It is clear that there has been some levelling of mining mounds and infilling of ponds in the area west of Eaker Hill Farm.
- 8.5 Some of the large natural swallets are in use as infill sites.
- 8.6 With the exception of the doubtful attributions of Stock Hill Wood (S23226, S23228, S23239 and S23240) and one of the barrows north west of Bendalls Farm, all the barrows within the estate are Scheduled Monuments. No other monuments are so protected.

Recommendations

- 9.1 Monitoring of the Ashen Hill and Stock Hill barrows is maintained.
- 9.2 Forestry work at Stock Hill should be carefully monitored. Apart from the barrow groups clearer identification of the possible field system should be sought in the event of wood clearance (S23227), and the site at S23228 should be protected or a watching brief maintained under the same circumstances.
- 9.3 A management agreement should be implemented for the estate. This should maintain the land use status quo, in other words halt the removal of field boundaries, limit ploughing and conserve the mining landscape.
- 9.4 As with the Church Commissioners' estate at Bleadon it may be worthwhile to include other conservation problems in an overall approach.

The Tudway Quilter Estate (Fig 13)

Introduction

- 10.1 The estate lies on the southern slopes of the Mendips above Wells and includes a section of the plateau. At Pen Hill the land rises to above 300m while at the southern fringe of the estate the land falls to around 75m. Around 5.5km² lie within the boundaries.

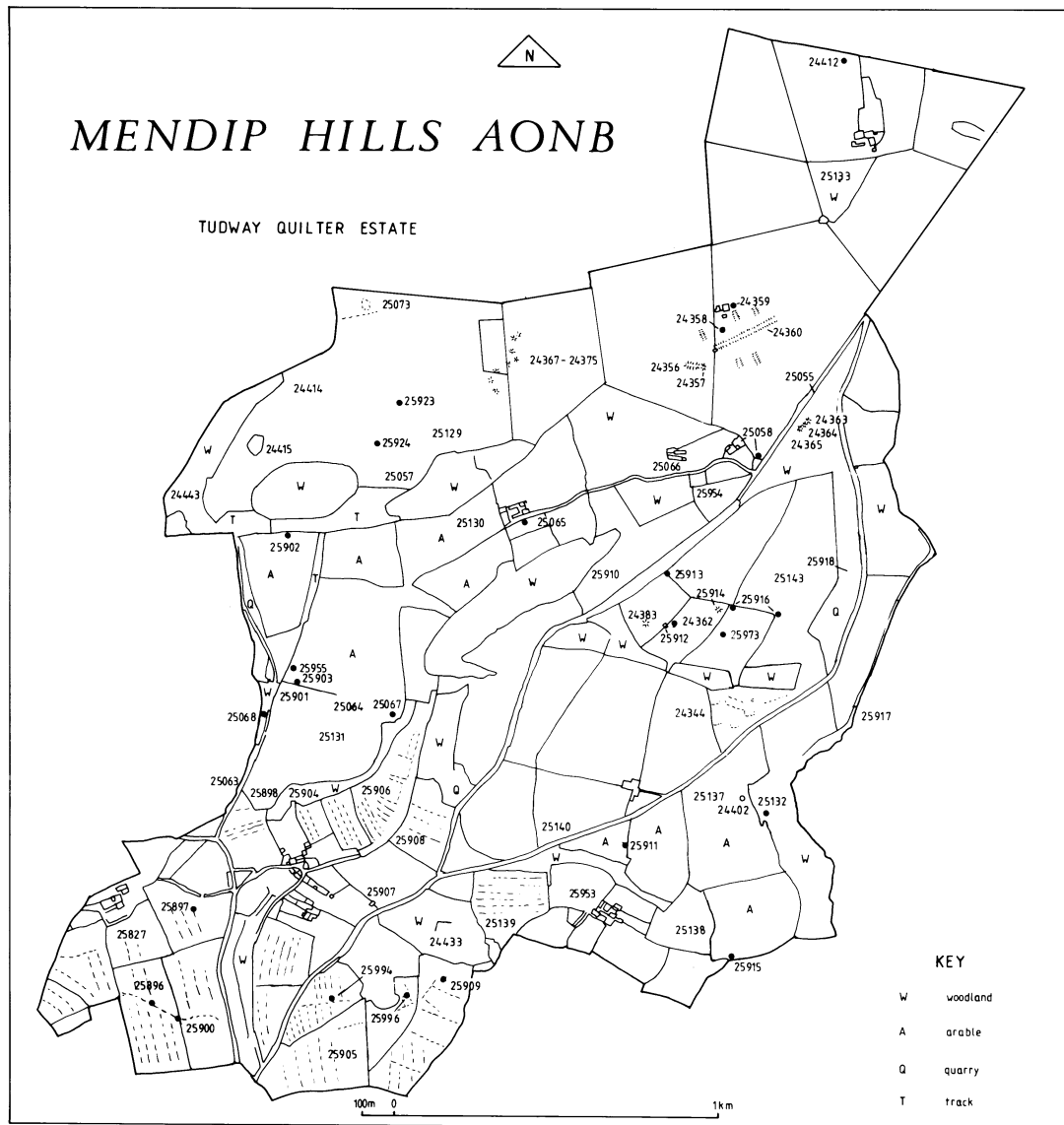


Figure 13: The Tudway Quilter Estate.

- 10.2 There are varied landscape types represented. On Pen Hill and to the north, and at Priors Hill, are areas of grass upland. The hill slopes comprise both cultivated and grass land broken by plantations. Two deep valleys at Biddle Combe and above Walcombe cut deeply into the hill slopes. In the south part of the estate there are more gentle slopes at Stoberry and Milton parks with older woodland at Stoberry Warren, Beryl Hanging and Biddle Combe.
- 10.3 Around 1km² is currently under the plough, the remainder of the farming land being down to grass. At Stoberry and Milton Lodge parks this appears to be undisturbed while elsewhere there have been attempts at ploughing and land clearance. The uplands are used for stock grazing. Forestry is commercially undertaken, and game birds are raised within and near to the afforested areas.
- 10.4 Fields west of Beryl Wood and east of Welsh's Green were fieldwalked in 1987/88. None of the woodland was entered nor areas where there were game birds.

The Archaeology of the Estate

- 11.1 One of only two (or possibly three) long barrows within the AONB lies just below the summit of Pen Hill (S24356). This is likely to have formed the focus of neolithic settlement in the area. The long mound on Pen hill summit (S24360) is likely to represent a bank barrow. These are rare monuments and this is the only Mendip example. It should be noted that the monument has been identified by some as a post-medieval pillow mound.
- 11.2 With the exception of a flint axe fragment found on the side of 24360, there are no records of lithic surface finds within the estate prior to 1987/88. During the survey a number of flint flakes were recorded together with half a dozen scrapers. The findspots were randomly distributed on the ploughed land except for a concentration of flakes west of Walcombe valley (S25067).
- 11.3 There are three groups of Bronze Age round barrows, on Pen Hill (S24367-75), on Priors Hill (S24383, S24362), S25973 and S25914) and in the Big Plantation (S24363-5), together with a single round barrow (S24357) directly to the east of the long barrow, and a cairn on the hill summit (S24358). The only excavation record is for the last.
- 11.4 Two standing stones on Priors Hill may be prehistoric (S25916).
- 11.5 In the southern part of the estate there are extensive fields and lynchets of medieval date (S25906, S25827). These have been plotted on fig 13 from field work and from air photographs. Those in the valley above Walcombe are likely to relate to a medieval precursor of the modern settlement. Those further to the south may be the northern part of the Wells open fields. This landscape is exceptionally well preserved.

- 11.6 In Stoberry Park (just outside the AONB) there are two possible house sites, one a levelled and terraced area (S25994), and the other to the east represented by a slight enclosure and a possible house rectangle (S25996). To the north east at Box's Croft is a site recorded by the Ordnance Survey and interpreted as the earthwork remains of a medieval deserted farm (S24344).
- 11.7 An earthwork boundary bank is recorded crossing the valley at Rookham and extending into the estate (S24443). Between the Big Plantation and the trackway to the west is a second linear bank (S25055). Both may be part of medieval deer parks.
- 11.8 Two routeways from Wells onto the plateau, which may be medieval or earlier in origin, run through the estate. The first is the trackway running up to Welsh's Green. This forms a deep holloway above Walcombe valley before it divides, with the western track joining the route through the Rookham valley and the eastern path leading onto Pen Hill. At Welsh's Green a track ran eastward continuing up to Pen Hill farm until quite recently. A second route leaves the modern A39 north of Stoberry Warren and runs to the west of Priors Hill before rejoining it east of Pen Hill.
- 11.9 An earthwork west of Walcombe may belong to the medieval period (S25904).
- 11.10 The majority of the field boundaries on the estate must date to the period of the Mendip Enclosures, although the relationship of the fields to the south to their medieval earthwork counterparts suggests that these are earlier boundaries. To this 18th-century landscape may be assigned the ruined farm at Gollege (S25058) and the agricultural stone buildings located elsewhere on the estate. The stock ponds and sheep washes must also be of the enclosure period. The triple entry pond in Milton Park is the only one of its type so far recorded on Mendip (S25897). The lime kilns are likely, too, to have been part of the Enclosure attempts at 'improvements'.
- 11.11 There is air photographic evidence of mining spoil at Oars Close Farm. East of Priors Hill is a quarry and trackway, and there are large quarries at Nibs Hanging and at Welsh's Green. Further industrial activity is evident from the Buddle house just outside the estate in Buddlecombe.
- 11.12 Stoberry Warren can also be assigned to the post-medieval period, as too can a group of fields apparent on air photographs to the west of Pen Hill Farm. Three failed tree plantation circles on Pen Hill must represent 19th-century activity.
- 11.13 At Welsh's Green the ruins of an apparently recent stone and brick building together with a spread of 19th-century pottery in the fields to the east bear witness to a farm or quarry building here (S25068,

S25901). A map of 1852 shows two buildings in this area, one can be identified as the building west of the track.

- 11.14 The same map of 1852 shows the name Beryl Farm to be a corruption of Burial Farm.

The Conditions and Conservation of the Resource

- 12.1 Currently three areas are under the plough, east of Welsh's Green, south of Walcombe Wood and east of Beryl Farm. At Welsh's Green there has been considerable amalgamation of fields. Ploughing was reported on Pen Hill in 1965, and Priors Hill has been levelled and ploughed this century. The fields around Dairy House Farm have been ploughed at some point.
- 12.2 The Pen Hill barrows are from time to time sustaining damage due to the loss of surface cover. The area is occasionally stocked with cattle. The northern barrows of cemetery S24374 in the lee of the tree plantation tend to suffer from trample, as too does the long barrow. The summit cairn on Pen Hill appears to have been buried or removed. One of the Priors Hill barrows (S24362) has been damaged if the grid reference is correct. The barrows in the Big Plantation could not be located or their condition assessed in 1987.
- 12.3 Any ploughing at Milton Lodge, Stoberry Park or at the farm site S24344 would cause irreparable damage to the field earthworks there.
- 12.4 There are a number of relict post-medieval features which are redundant to farming needs. The ruined buildings noted on the estate must all be at risk unless afforded some protection. One of the sheep washes has been infilled and the same could happen to others.
- 12.5 Three of the monuments within the estate, the long barrow and bank barrow on Pen Hill, and the deserted farm at Box's Croft, are of exceptional importance to an understanding of the archaeology of the Mendips in two poorly understood periods: the neolithic and early medieval. The bank barrow is a monument of national importance.
- 12.6 All the barrows within the estate enjoy Scheduled Monument protection (except S25914 and S25973), but no other monuments are so protected.

Recommendations

- 13.1 The condition of the long barrow and round barrows on Pen Hill should be monitored.
- 13.2 Medieval landscape features in the south part of the estate should be protected from the plough.
- 13.3 The medieval farm site at Box's Croft should be afforded the protection of scheduled monument status.

- 13.4 The significance of the post-medieval ruins, ponds, quarries, tracks and stiles should be brought to the attention of the estate owner and users through the agency of a management agreement. These features have a visual as well as an archaeological value. It may well be that other conservation elements may be included in an overall approach.

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