

A visit to the Wor Barrow 21st November 2015

Following our exploration of Winkelbury a few weeks previously, we fast-forwarded 12 years in Pitt-Rivers remarkable series of excavations and followed him to one of his most renowned sites – the Wor barrow (right on the boundary of his Rushmore land), where he was at the peak of his powers: lambasting other archaeologists for not recognising the quarry ditches around barrows and proceeding to total excavation of the barrow, to such an extent that today the site consists of a level platform surrounded by the excavated ditches and banked up spoil from both the ditches and the mound itself. Two round barrows within the scheduled area, also investigated by Pitt Rivers, appeared to be good candidates for a vegetation clearance party in the New Year and other opportunities for further work such as field walking and geophysics were also discussed. The field notes Emma prepared for the visit can be consulted below.



A key aspect of the significance of these sites is that their use spans the transition between the Neolithic and Bronze Age. Great interest was expressed in further investigating the area around the Bronze Age Angle Ditch also excavated by Pitt Rivers.

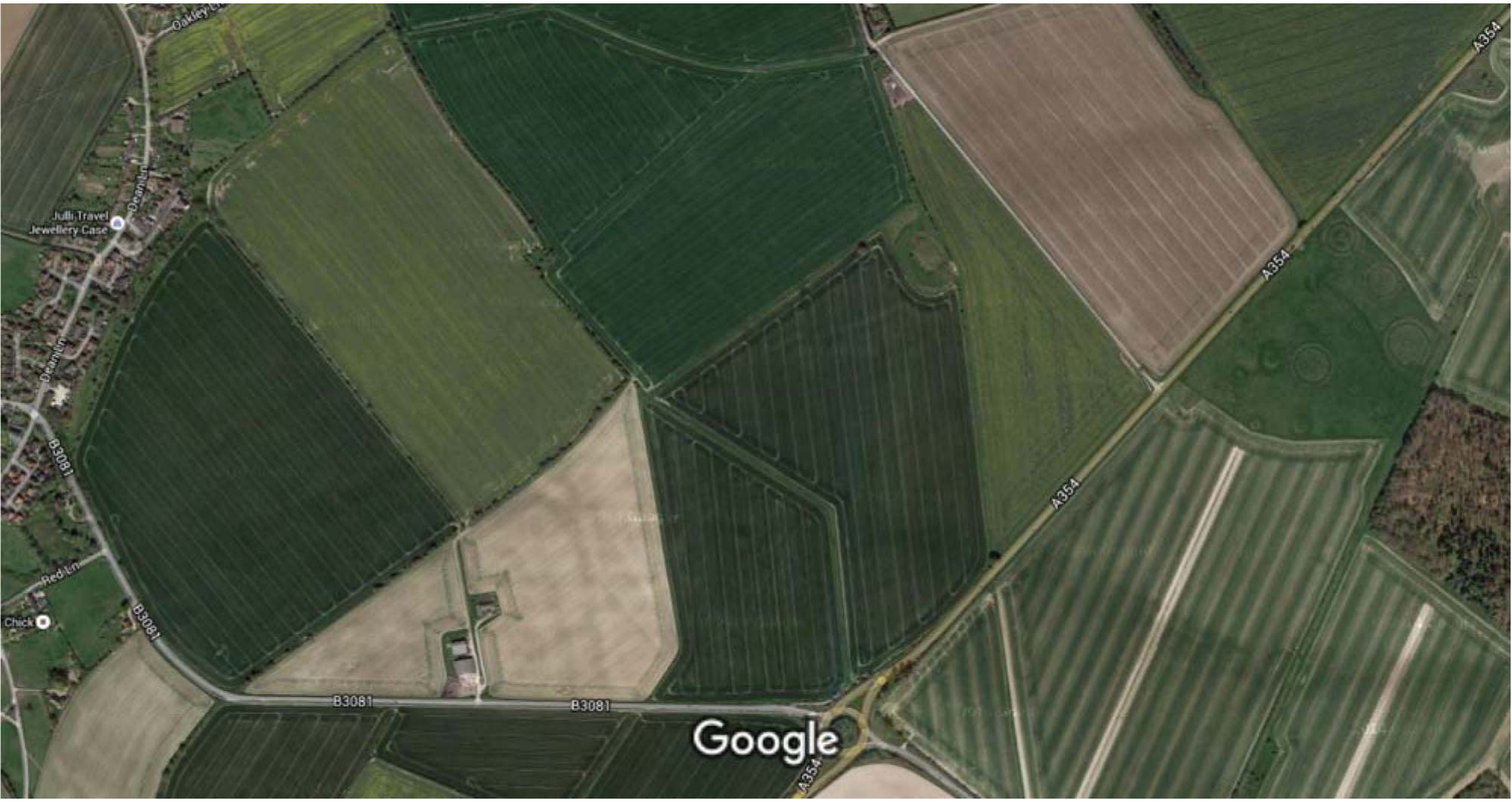
Given the sunny but very cold conditions, the day would not have been the success it undoubtedly was without the use of Martin Green's finds room at nearby Down Farm and, indeed, the participation of Martin himself in the events of the day. Whilst the morning was devoted to the Wor Barrow, in the afternoon Martin opened his private museum for us and also gave us a guided tour of the excavations he and organisations such as Wessex Archaeology and the University of Southampton have conducted on his farm. Not everyone seemed to be too keen to venture out over the 13 metre deep shaft which can be viewed from a specially constructed, and heavily insured,



platform! The opportunity to appreciate and understand the landscape setting of a succession of prehistoric monuments, from the Dorset cursus, through long barrows, round barrows, a pond barrow to settlement sites, and not forgetting a Roman Road – all explained by someone who's entire life has been spent in this landscape, would be difficult to replicate.

Thank you to David Chick for allowing us access and to Martin for taking the time to accompany us to the Wor Barrow and to show us round his museum.

Phil Planel and Emma Rouse (FoA Coordinators)



Oakley Ln

Jull's Travel Jewellery Case

Dean Ln

B3081

Red Ln

Chick

B3081

B3081

B3081

Google

A354

A354

A354

A354

18

W

Tumulus MS

Tumuli 92

Oakley Down

Tumulus BS 35208

Wor Barrow Song Barrow

Tumulus BS

Tumuli DO 10

Handley Down

A354

BS

17

Mill House

Town Farm

Handley Hill

BS

Dyke ROAD

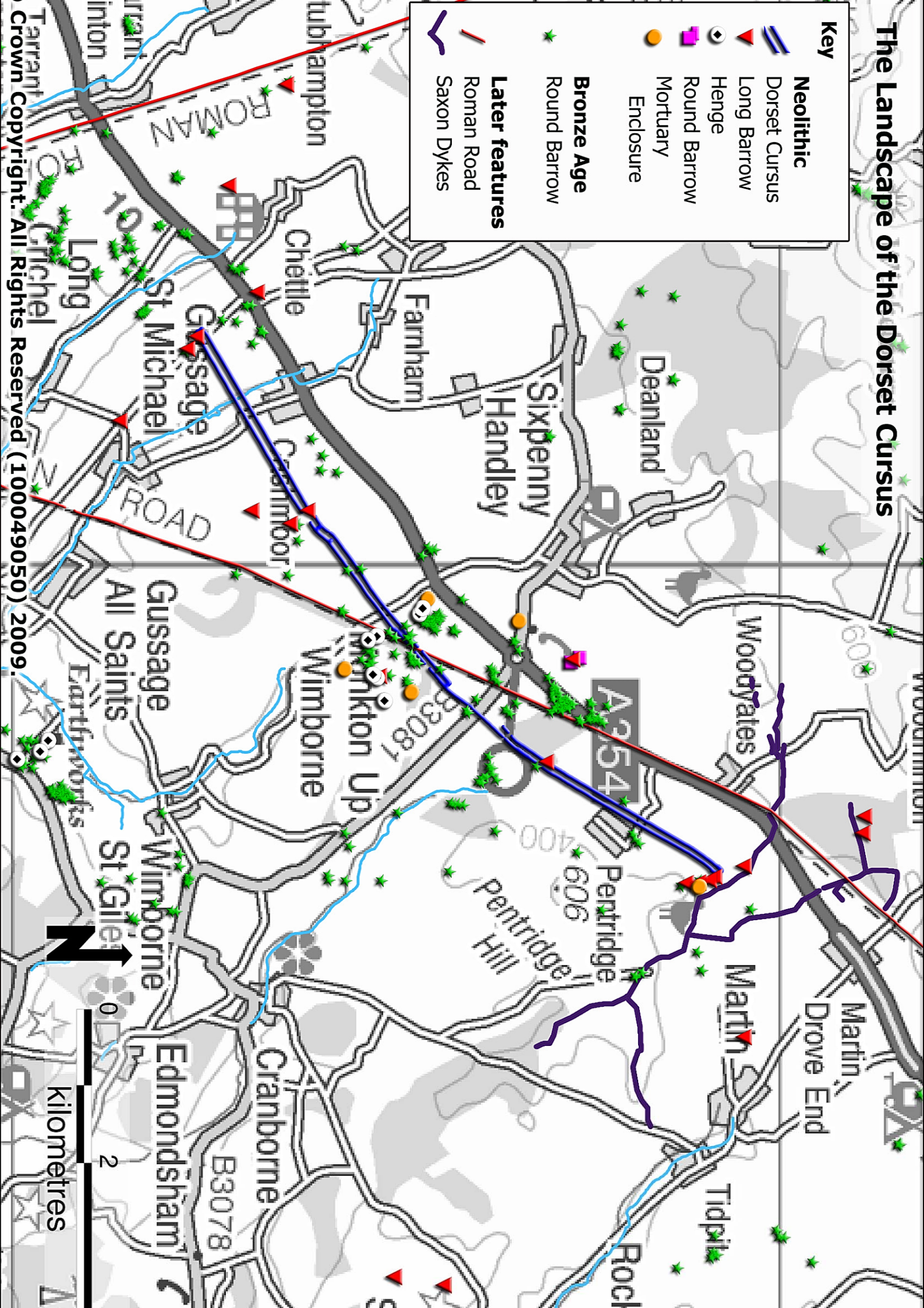
B300

BS

The Landscape of the Dorset Cursus

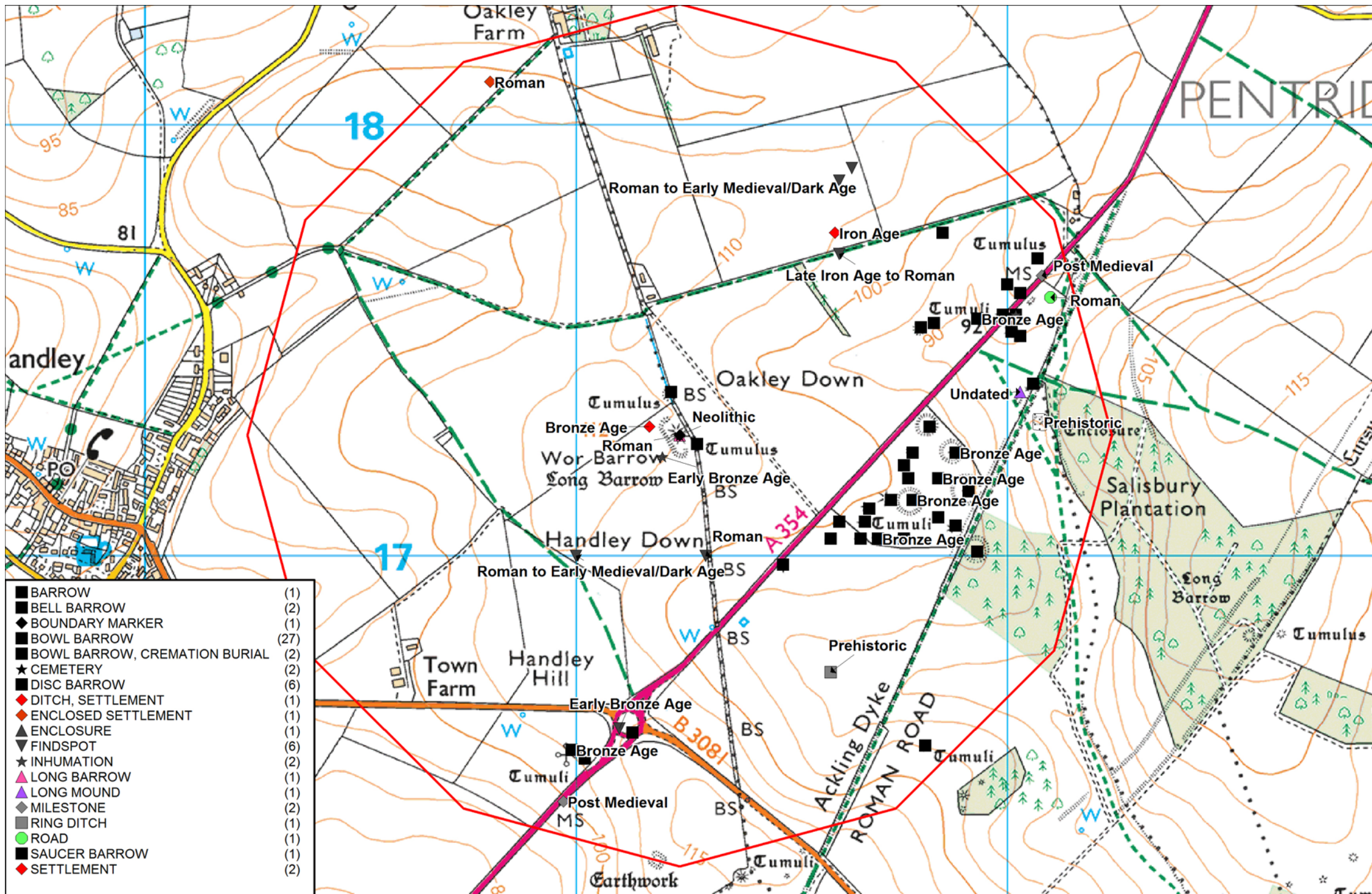
Key

- Neolithic**
 - Dorset Cursus
 - Long Barrow
 - Henge
 - Round Barrow
 - Mortuary
 - Enclosure
- Bronze Age**
 - Round Barrow
- Later features**
 - Roman Road
 - Saxon Dykes



Tarrant Trichel
Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved (100049050) 2009.

0 2
kilometres





SMR Number	Site Name	Record Type
3 020 029 - MDO6074	Wor Barrow, Sixpenny Handley	Monument

A long barrow excavated by General Pitt-Rivers in 1893-4. Before excavation the barrow was a mound 150 feet long, 75 feet wide and 12 feet high. Removal of the mound revealed a rectangular enclosure with an entrance at one end, formed by a ditch packed with flint into which was set timber posts. Six burials lay beneath a shallow turf mound inside the enclosure. Two more Neolithic burials were placed within the ditch, and seventeen Romano-British burials were found in the mound and ditch. After excavation the barrow was re-formed into an amphitheatre for public events.

Monument Types and Dates

LONG BARROW (Neolithic - 4000 BC to 2351 BC)
 Evidence EARTHWORK

Description and Sources

Description - None recorded

<1> Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), 1975, *An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset*, 71 (Bibliographic reference). SDO129.

'(29) WOR BARROW, a Neolithic long barrow (01241728), was totally excavated by General Pitt-Rivers in 1893-4. The present earthwork, a sort of amphitheatre, was created by him for the holding of exhibitions, games etc (Plate 78, top left). The material from the mound was formed into a terraced bank along the S.W. side and the area within the ditch became an arena. The barrow is prominently sited near the crest of Handley Down and is clearly visible from the large group of barrows (WIMBORNE ST. GILES (94-124)) on Oakley Down to the E., whose siting it may have conditioned.

Before 1893-4 the mound, aligned S.E.-N.W., was 150 ft. long, 75 ft. wide and 12 ft. high. Beneath it was found a rectangular enclosure, 90 ft. by 34 ft., with an entrance at the S.E. end. This enclosure was defined by a trench, 1½ ft. to 3 ft. wide and 3 ft. deep, packed with flint nodules which had formerly held timber uprights. Within the enclosure under a low turf mound lay six primary inhumations, three of them articulated and three in disorder.

The long barrow was surrounded by a ditch, steep-sided, flat-bottomed and interrupted by one causeway at the N.W. end and by three at the S.E. end. The ditch varied in width from 10 ft. to 25 ft. and for the most part was some 13 ft. deep, except at the N.W. end where it shallowed to 7 ft. Along the inner margin of the ditch on the N.E. and S. were traces of an earlier, shallower ditch, also interrupted; possibly it was contemporary with the rectangular enclosure under the mound. Two early Neolithic burials, an adult and a child, were found 8 ft. down in the main ditch at the S.E. end. The ditch also yielded a stratified sequence of pottery from early to late Neolithic. Seventeen Romano-British burials, eight of them headless, were found in shallow graves inserted into the mound and ditch, and much pottery of this period was found scattered in the upper filling of the ditch. Finds from the excavation are in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Farnham.

Bibliography – Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations IV* (1898), 58-122. S. Piggott, *Neolithic Cultures of the British Isles* (1954), 53 ff. P. Ashbee, *The Earthen Long Barrow in Britain* (1970), *passim*.'

<2> Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, 1989, *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society for 1988*, 160 (Serial). SDO88.

Sources

- (1) Bibliographic reference: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). 1975. *An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset*. Volume Five (East Dorset). 71
- (2) Serial: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society. 1989. *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society for 1988*. 110. 160

Associated resources - None recorded

Location

National Grid Reference

SU 0124 1728 (point) SU01NW Point

Administrative Areas

Civil Parish Sixpenny Handley, East Dorset

Address/Historic Names - None recorded

Designations, Statuses and Scorings

Associated Designations

Scheduled Monument - DO859	Wor Barrow	Active	DDO17146
Scheduled Monument - SM35208	Wor Barrow and two bowl barrows on Handley Down	Active	DDO19606

SMR Number	Site Name	Record Type
3 020 029 - MDO6074	Wor Barrow, Sixpenny Handley	Monument

A long barrow excavated by General Pitt-Rivers in 1893-4. Before excavation the barrow was a mound 150 feet long, 75 feet wide and 12 feet high. Removal of the mound revealed a rectangular enclosure with an entrance at one end, formed by a ditch packed with flint into which was set timber posts. Six burials lay beneath a shallow turf mound inside the enclosure. Two more Neolithic burials were placed within the ditch, and seventeen Romano-British burials were found in the mound and ditch. After excavation the barrow was re-formed into an amphitheatre for public events.

Monument Types and Dates

LONG BARROW (Neolithic - 4000 BC to 2351 BC)
 Evidence EARTHWORK

Description and Sources

Description - None recorded

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'(29) WOR BARROW, a Neolithic long barrow (01241728), was totally excavated by General Pitt-Rivers in 1893-4. The present earthwork, a sort of amphitheatre, was created by him for the holding of exhibitions, games etc (Plate 78, top left). The material from the mound was formed into a terraced bank along the S.W. side and the area within the ditch became an arena. The barrow is prominently sited near the crest of Handley Down and is clearly visible from the large group of barrows (WIMBORNE ST. GILES (94-124)) on Oakley Down to the E., whose siting it may have conditioned.

Before 1893-4 the mound, aligned S.E.-N.W., was 150 ft. long, 75 ft. wide and 12 ft. high. Beneath it was found a rectangular enclosure, 90 ft. by 34 ft., with an entrance at the S.E. end. This enclosure was defined by a trench, 1½ ft. to 3 ft. wide and 3 ft. deep, packed with flint nodules which had formerly held timber uprights. Within the enclosure under a low turf mound lay six primary inhumations, three of them articulated and three in disorder.

The long barrow was surrounded by a ditch, steep-sided, flat-bottomed and interrupted by one causeway at the N.W. end and by three at the S.E. end. The ditch varied in width from 10 ft. to 25 ft. and for the most part was some 13 ft. deep, except at the N.W. end where it shallowed to 7 ft. Along the inner margin of the ditch on the N.E. and S. were traces of an earlier, shallower ditch, also interrupted; possibly it was contemporary with the rectangular enclosure under the mound. Two early Neolithic burials, an adult and a child, were found 8 ft. down in the main ditch at the S.E. end. The ditch also yielded a stratified sequence of pottery from early to late Neolithic. Seventeen Romano-British burials, eight of them headless, were found in shallow graves inserted into the mound and ditch, and much pottery of this period was found scattered in the upper filling of the ditch. Finds from the excavation are in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Farnham.

Bibliography – Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations IV* (1898), 58-122. S. Piggott, *Neolithic Cultures of the British Isles* (1954), 53 ff. P. Ashbee, *The Earthen Long Barrow in Britain* (1970), *passim*.'

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Sources

- (1) Bibliographic reference: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). 1975. *An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset*. Volume Five (East Dorset). 71
- (2) Serial: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society. 1989. *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society for 1988*. 110. 160

Associated resources - None recorded

Location

National Grid Reference

SU 0124 1728 (point) SU01NW Point

Administrative Areas

Civil Parish Sixpenny Handley, East Dorset

Address/Historic Names - None recorded

Designations, Statuses and Scorings

Associated Designations

Scheduled Monument - DO859	Wor Barrow	Active	DDO17146
Scheduled Monument - SM35208	Wor Barrow and two bowl barrows on Handley Down	Active	DDO19606

SMR Number	Site Name	Record Type
3 020 027 - MDO6072	The Angle Ditch, Handley Down, Sixpenny Handley	Monument

Bronze Age ditch excavated by Pitt-Rivers. This feature has been interpreted as two sides of the boundary of a settlement.

Monument Types and Dates

DITCH (Bronze Age - 2350 BC to 701 BC)	
Evidence	EXCAVATED FEATURE
Evidence	STRATIFIED FIND
Evidence	SUB SURFACE DEPOSIT
SETTLEMENT (Bronze Age - 2350 BC to 701 BC)	
Evidence	EXCAVATED FEATURE
Evidence	STRATIFIED FIND
Evidence	SUB SURFACE DEPOSIT

Description and Sources

Description

'(27) Bronze Age Ditch, known as the Angle Ditch and probably part of an occupation site, lies on the summit of Handley Down (01171730), some 200 ft. W. of Wor Barrow (29). Not visible as a surface feature, it was discovered by boring and was excavated by General Pitt-Rivers. It lies in an area of 'Celtic' fields (Group (85), p. 118), now heavily ploughed, and appears to be integrated with their pattern. The ditch, 6½ ft. deep, 7½ ft. wide at the top and 1 ft. wide at the bottom, followed an irregular line for 165 ft. from S.W. to N.E., then turned at right-angles towards the S.E. and continued for a further 60 ft. Finds from the lower filling of the ditch indicate a date in the later Bronze Age; they include parts of a looped palstave and of a class-II razor; a bronze awl, a sandstone grain-rubber, a complete barrel urn and fragments of others, and a fragment of a globular urn. Possibly the ditch formed part of a roughly rectangular enclosure with broad gaps in its sides, like that on Martin Down, Hants., also excavated by Pitt-Rivers and found to be of comparable date (Excavations IV (1898), 185-214). That the Angle Ditch had already been obscured by ploughing in the Roman period is clear from the quantity of later pottery, especially Romano-British wares, found in its upper filling and as a surface scatter around it. Pitt-Rivers's excavation also revealed a shallow ditch, 3 ft. wide and 1½ ft. deep, which ran for over 450 ft. from N.N.W. to S.S.E. across the site and was apparently cut by the Angle Ditch. Its position and its apparent relationship with the 'Celtic' fields immediately to the W. suggest that it may have served to separate those fields from an uncultivated area surrounding Wor Barrow, rather than as a drain, as suggested by Pitt-Rivers. Finds from the excavation are in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Farnham. (Pitt-Rivers, Excavations IV (1898), 58-61, 102-113; Dorset Procs., 46 (1925), 92-3; Arch. J., CXIX (1962), 54, 56).' {1}

<1> Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), 1975, *An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset*, 70 (Bibliographic reference). SDO129.

Sources

- (1) Bibliographic reference: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). 1975. An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset. Volume Five (East Dorset). 70

Associated resources - None recorded

Location

National Grid Reference

SU 0117 1730 (point) SU01NW Point

Administrative Areas

Civil Parish Sixpenny Handley, East Dorset

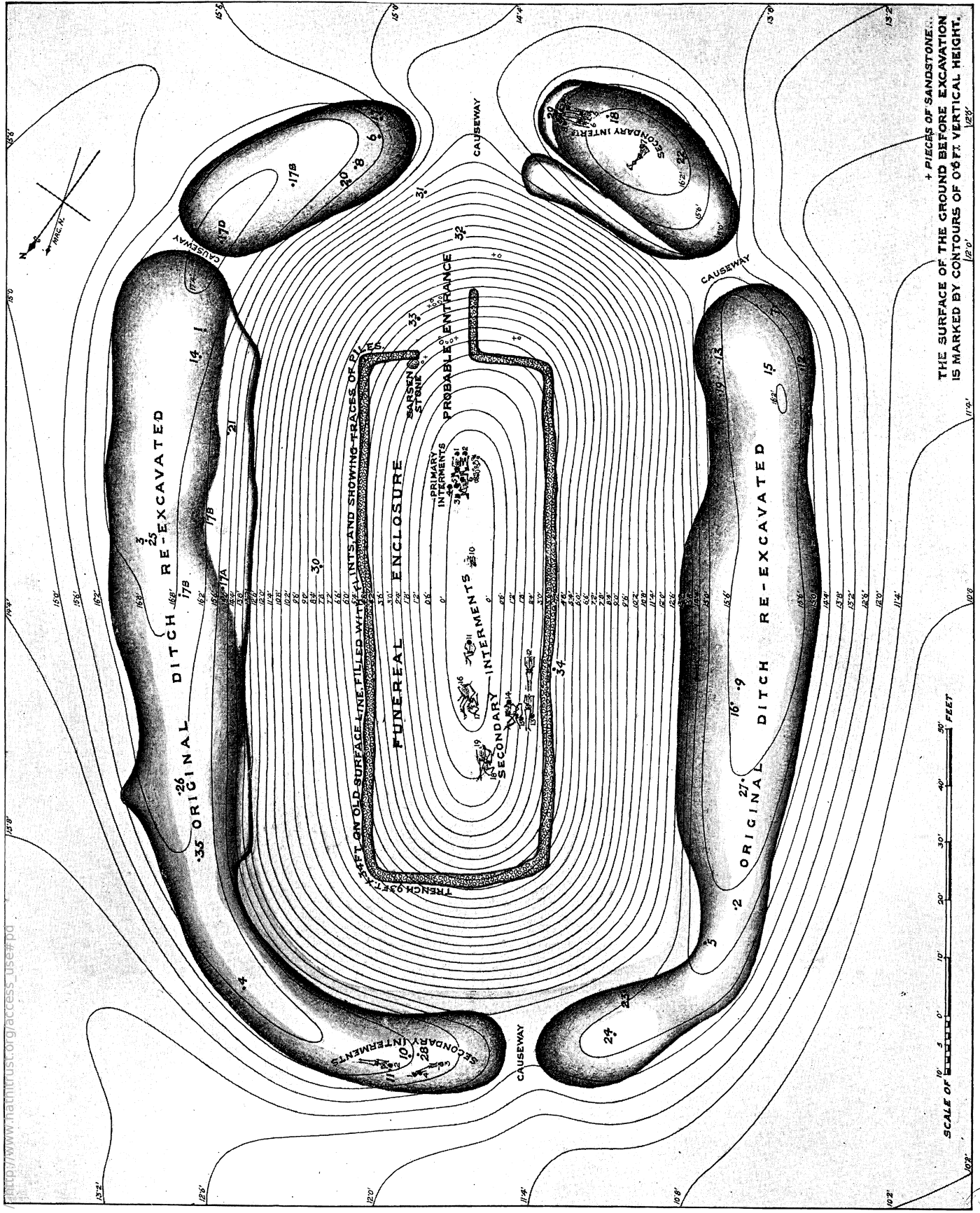
Address/Historic Names - None recorded

Designations, Statuses and Scorings

Associated Designations

SHINE	Angle Ditch. A length of ditch of Middle Bronze Age date excavated in 1893. Around 70 metres long, with a near right-angled turn, and likely to be part of an enclosure, probably a settlement.	Active	DDO18375
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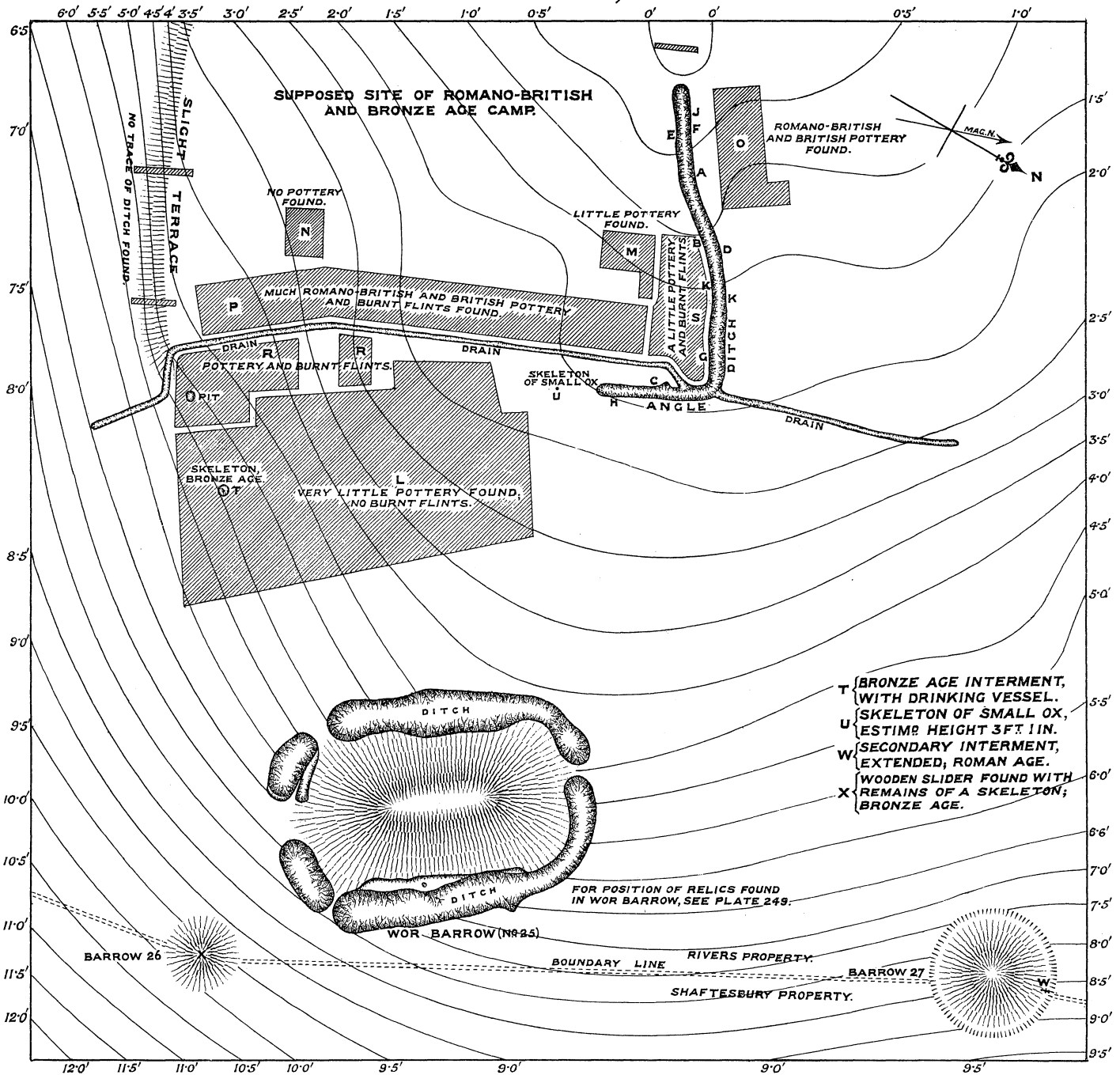
Other Statuses and Cross-References



+ PIECES OF SANDSTONE...
 THE SURFACE OF THE GROUND BEFORE EXCAVATION
 IS MARKED BY CONTOURS OF 0.6 FT. VERTICAL HEIGHT.

PLAN OF WOR BARROW ON HANDLEY DOWN.
 AFTER EXCAVATION BY GEN: PITT-RIVERS IN 1893-4,
 SHOWING THE DITCH RE-EXCAVATED AND THE BARROW REMOVED.

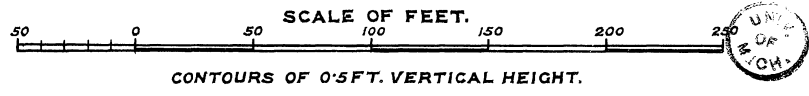
**PLAN OF WOR BARROW, (STONE AGE),
THE ANGLE DITCH AND BARROWS 26 AND 27, (BRONZE AGE),
SHOWING THEIR RELATIVE POSITION, AND THE SUPPOSED SITE OF THE CAMP
ON HANDLEY DOWN, DORSET.**



T { BRONZE AGE INTERMENT,
{ WITH DRINKING VESSEL.
U { SKELETON OF SMALL OX,
{ ESTIM? HEIGHT 3 FT 1 IN.
W { SECONDARY INTERMENT,
{ EXTENDED, ROMAN AGE.
X { WOODEN SLIDER FOUND WITH
{ REMAINS OF A SKELETON;
{ BRONZE AGE.

FOR POSITION OF RELICS FOUND
IN WOR BARROW, SEE PLATE 249.

■ AREAS TRENCHED TO THE UNDISTURBED CHALK
FOR THE DISCOVERY OF PITS OR RELICS.
WOR BARROW IS SHOWN WITH THE DITCH
EXCAVATED AND THE BARROW UNTOUCHED.



- RELICS FOUND IN THE SILTING OF THE ANGLE DITCH.**
- | | |
|--|---|
| A. FRAGMENT OF FLINT HAMMER-STONE, DEPTH 1'5 FT. | F. BLADE OF BRONZE RAZOR, DEPTH 4 FT. |
| B. BONE AWL, DEPTH 2'5 FT. | G. BRONZE PALSTAVE, DEPTH 6 FT. |
| C. BONE CHISEL, DEPTH 2'5 FT. | H. SANDSTONE RUBBER, DEPTH 6'5 FT. |
| D. BONE CHISEL, DEPTH 3 FT. | J. BRITISH URN FOUND IN FRAGMENTS, DEPTH 7 FT. |
| E. BRONZE AWL, DEPTH 4 FT. | K. PORTION OF HUMAN SKULL AND PELVIS, DEPTH 2'5 FT. |

J. Akerman Photo Lith London

FIG. 1.

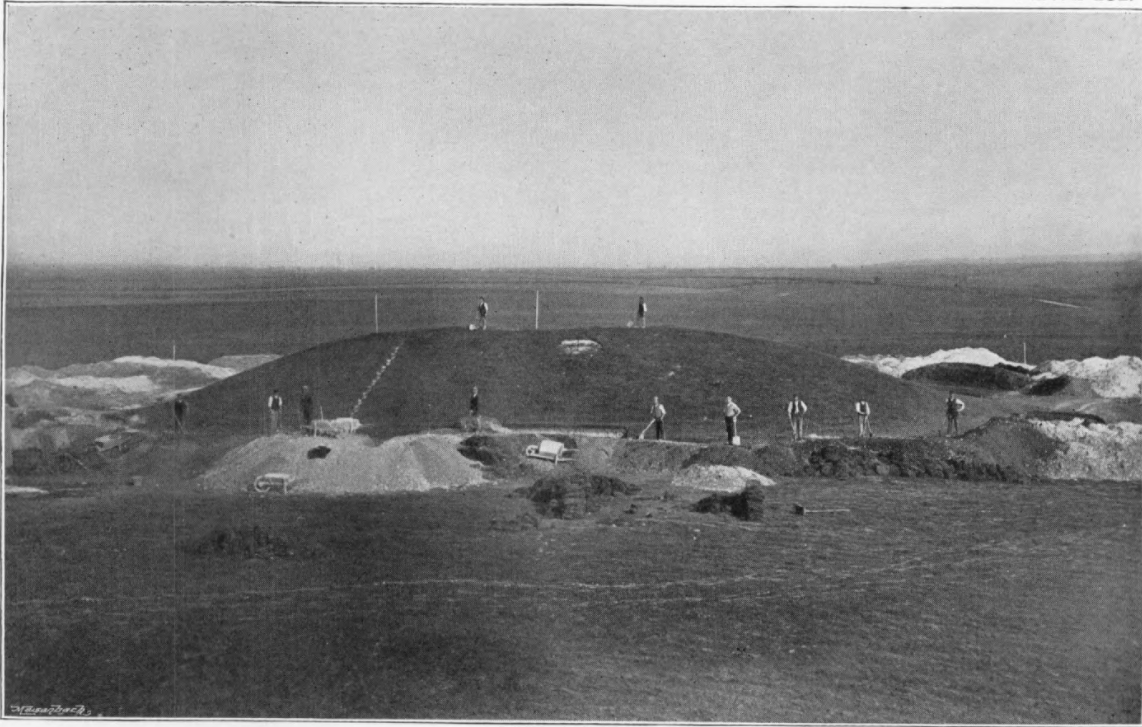
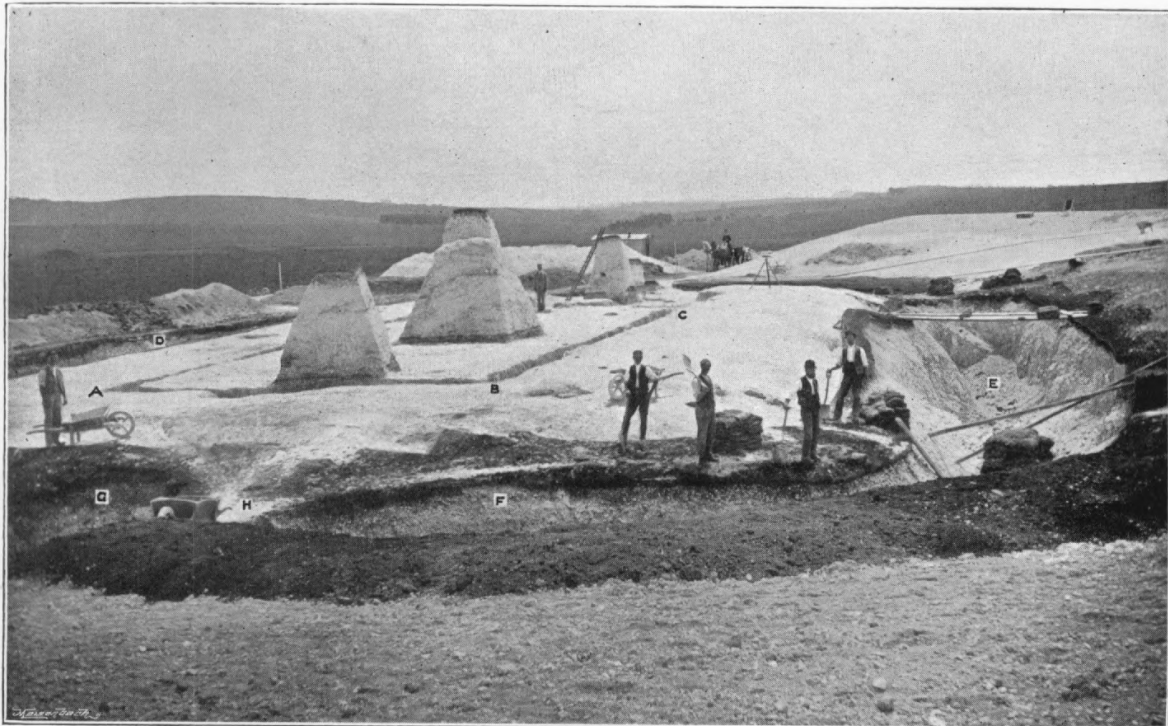


FIG. 2.



TWO VIEWS OF WOR BARROW, BEFORE AND AFTER THE EXCAVATIONS.