

LAMBOURN (BR)

Weathercock House, Upper Lambourn, Berkshire

SU 312 804

Archaeological Assessment

**Oxford Archaeological Unit
January 1990**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

UPPER LAMBOURN, WEATHERCOCK HOUSE - SU 312 804

This assessment was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit to investigate a 'tumulus' in a paddock south of Weathercock House and just north of the B4000, prior to construction of a new road and re-landscaping.

The 'tumulus' consists of a mound which survives 16m N-S and 13.5m E-W and whose top is approximately 6.60m E-W and 7.1m N-S. The mound has a roughly circular outline on the west side, but has been cut away on the E by a metalled track (see fig 1), and is irregular on the SE, possibly indicating further disturbance here.

Two trenches were dug by hand on a NW-SE axis across the perimeter of the mound, Trench 2 on the NW, Trench 1 on the SE (see fig 1). Plans and sections of these are given in fig 2.

TRENCH 1 - E-W 1.90m x 1.10m N-S

Below topsoil (layer 1) the majority of the mound consisted of a thick homogenous brown loam (2) with small flint and chalk fragments scattered throughout. It contained one sherd of medieval pottery, a few scraps of bone and several possible struck flints. Layer 2 overlay a thinner similar clay loam (3) which contained larger sarsen pebbles. Below (3) up to 0.15m of undisturbed orange-brown clay subsoil (4) survived; this lay directly upon the chalk and was cut by feature (5), a small posthole filled with dark orange-brown silty clay loam and charcoal. (5) was sealed by (2), but its relationship to (3), which was very thin here, is unclear. There were no finds. Another posthole (6) lay at the edge of the modern track; this was probably also modern as fragments of wood survived within it.

TRENCH 2 - E-W 3.30m x 0.90m N-S

Topsoil (11) here contained fragments of post medieval pottery. It overlay (12), a homogeneous clay loam equivalent to (2) in Trench 1. (12) contained fragments of animal bone and medieval pottery of the 13th and 14th centuries. It sealed a V-profiled gully (14), which cut layer (13), equivalent to (3) in Trench 1. (14) was undated. Layer (13) directly overlay chalk - no subsoil corresponding to (4) survived anywhere within Trench 2.

DISCUSSION

The soils in both trenches are very similar, and they can therefore be treated together. The sequence overlying the prehistoric subsoil (4) consists of three periods of soil deposition, layers (3 = 13), (12 = 2), (1 = 11). From the horizons of chalk and flint fragments found on the interfaces between the layers it is clear that long periods of worm-sorting separate these episodes.

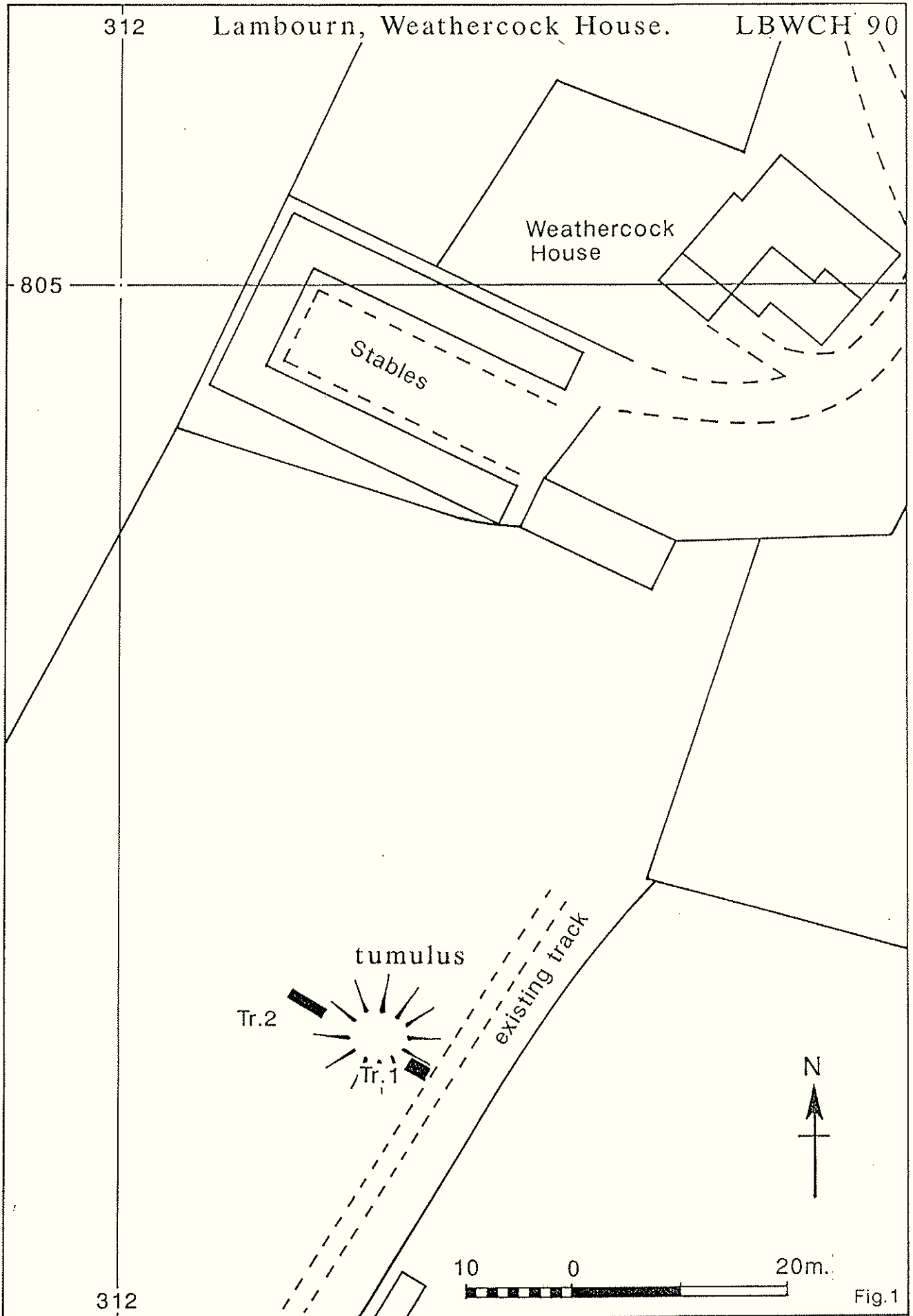
The bulk of the mound is made up of layer (12 = 2), dumped during or after the 14th century. The potsherds are small and abraded, suggesting that this is not primary midden debris, but has been scraped up from the exposed ground surface. The flints from Trench 1 are of degenerate LBA or IA character, and have a 'rolled' appearance from long exposure. Feature 14, and perhaps also feature 5, appear to relate to a phase of occupation shortly preceding this dumping.

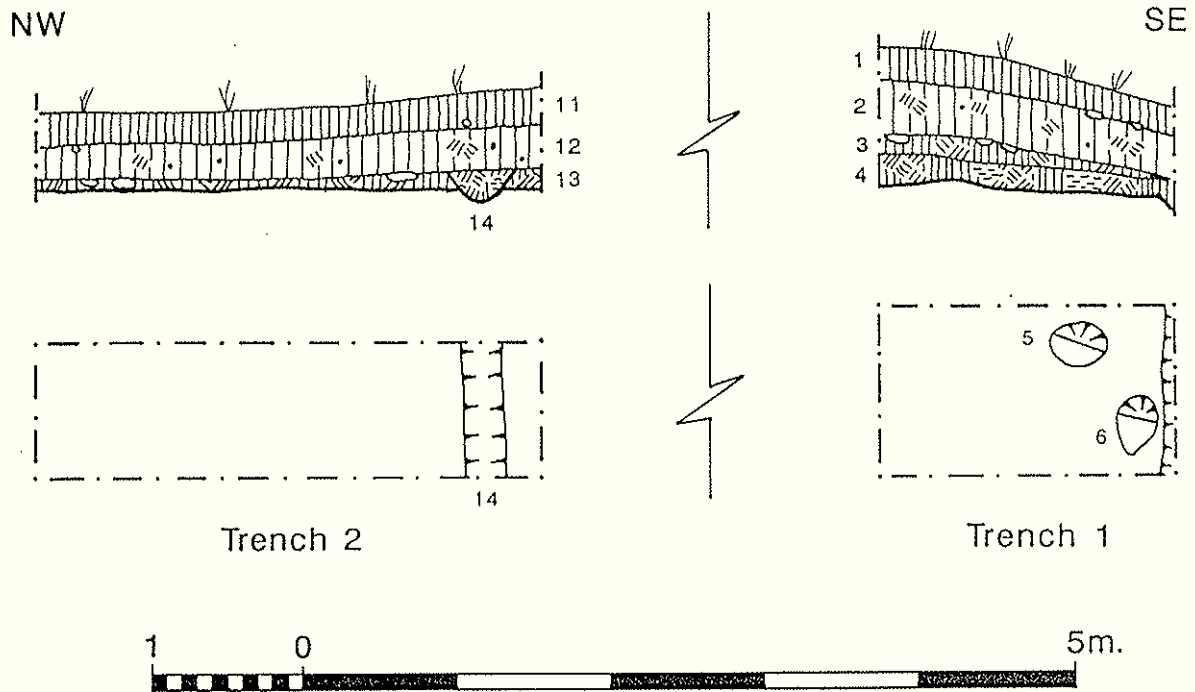
Layer 3 = 13 was undated. The fact that this directly overlay chalk in Trench 2, rather than subsoil (4) as in Trench 1, may indicate that this was a ploughsoil in origin, particularly as there was a concentration of chalk and flint fragments at its base where it overlay (4). These are likely to reflect worm-sorting after the cessation of ploughing. The differential survival of (4) may be due to cultivation of ridge-and-furrow variety, though no trace of this is now visible on the ground surface.

CONCLUSION

The 'tumulus' is of Late Medieval or Post-Medieval origin.

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- 1 & 11 Dark brown friable loam
- 2 & 12 Mid-brown slightly clayey loam & small chalk and flint fragments (less than 45mm)
- 3 & 13 Greenish-brown clay loam, large sarsen pebbles (less than 200 mm) and smaller flint fragments.
- 4 Orange-brown silty clay loam, some sarsen pebbles and flints.
- 14 Dark orange-brown silty clay loam and occasional flint fragments.

Fig.2