

# Lake District National Park Survey

Interim Report 1990/1991

LANCASTER  
UNIVERSITY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
UNIT



## Lake District National Park Survey Interim Report 1990/1991

1990/1991 was the ninth year of the project and the last year of English Heritage funding. The survey programme has to date accurately surveyed and recorded over 12,000 archaeological monuments from c.70 sqkm of unimproved moorland. Six main areas have been examined:

South-Western Fells (Bootle Fell to Devoke water).  
Western Fells (between Wasdale and Ennerdale)  
Central Fells (Langdale - Scafell Pike)  
Shap and Askham Fells  
Caldbeck Fells  
Heathwaite Fell (nr Broughton in Furness)

No further surveys or field work were undertaken this year and the resource from English Heritage and the Lake District Special Planning Board was used to complete the survey archive and to prepare a monograph publication of the survey results.

### Archive

The archive plans have now been completed for all surveys. The survey gazetteers have also been completed with the exception of the Whin Garth survey (Western Fells) which is nearing completion.

### Monograph Publication

The monograph will comprise reports of the 19 individual surveys with selected publication plans of the more important elements of each survey (attached is an example of one of the individual survey reports). The final discussion will bring together the results of all the surveys and examine the overall pattern of upland settlement in the North-West.

All archive plans and the site catalogues (in a reduced format) will be reproduced in micro-fiche for inclusion within the monograph.

Most of the in-house publication text for the individual surveys has been produced, and another nine man-weeks will be necessary to complete it. Substantial amounts of individual survey text for the monograph are being produced by external contributors and we are awaiting the completed text.

Publication illustrations for the Stockdale Moor, Town Bank and Bootle Fell surveys have been produced; however, another 30 publication illustrations have yet to be drawn.

It is anticipated that the programme will be completed within the first half of the 1991/1992 financial year.

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J.Quartermaine  
Lancaster University Archaeological Unit  
Physics Building  
University of Lancaster  
LA1 4YW

## BOOTLE FELL

J. Quartermaine

### Introduction

Bootle Fell is an area of undulating moorland on the west facing slopes of the South-West Fells; it is adjacent to the coastal plain and is only two kilometres away from Barfield Tarn where palaeoecological sampling has demonstrated vegetational disturbance, clearance and cultivation from the mid neolithic period onwards (Pennington 1970, 69).

The terrain of the moor generally has a gentle to moderate gradient with the notable exception of the Kinmont and Crookley Beck gullies; however to the south of the area there is a sharp increase in gradient leading up to the summit of Black Coombe. Near the bottom of these southern steep slopes (Great Grassoms) there is a medieval field system (BF XI), but otherwise the exposed slopes were found to be archaeologically barren. Towards the east of the survey area the cairn groups peter out with increasing altitude. The highest group (part of BF X) was found at 345m AOD and generally the cairnfields and settlements were found within the altitude range of 160m - 270m.

To the north the survey area is divided from the large cairnfields of Corney Fell by Kinmont Beck. To an extent this is an artificial boundary between the two survey areas because cairnfields extend almost up to the beck gully on both sides and the character of the cairnfields on either side of the beck are similar.

There are substantial mires across the fell which may have constrained the extent of some of the cairnfields; an expansive area of bog to the west of BF II and BF III may have limited the expansion of the cairnfields further down-slope. Cairnfield groups I, II, III, V & VI are distributed around a large area of bog centred on SD 130896 and Bootle II is almost an island, being surrounded by bog on most sides. The limits of the bog do not appear to have changed significantly since the construction of the cairnfield because the furthest extent of the cairnfield generally corresponds with the edges of the bogs. However there are a small number of sites that are presently within poor drained land which may indicate a limited expansion of the bog (BF 251,252,257 & 309 in BF II and BF 417 in BF III).

### History of the settlement on Great Grassoms

There are two historical references to Gressholmes, which corresponds to a settlement (BF XI) in an area to the south of Crookley Beck, called Grassoms on the Enclosure map of 1857.

The first reference, from the register of the Priory of St Bees (Wilson 1915, 364-5), is an agreement between John Hodilston the lord of Millom and the Abbot of St Marys, York, dated to AD 1252. In it John Hodilston and his wife declare to honour an agreement between themselves and the prior of St Bees concerning Gresholmes and that "as soon as (they) come to Copeland (they) will have the afore said land, Gressholmes, returned to the abbot and the convent" of St Marys, York. However he goes on to state that if "he is unable to return the land for some reason, some other land of the same value" will be made over.

The second reference is from the Millom Courtbook of 1510-1523 (CRO D/LONS/W/Millom Courtbook 1510-1523/pp64); within it there

is a rental of AD 1510, which includes the paragraph:

"And for a tenement called Gresholmys and Whytehowclos in the hand of the lord because the said lords shepherd remains on that place and guards the sheep" (rent 21s 2d).

Gresholmes was still owned by the lord of Millom in 1510 and although it is clear from the first reference that the St. Bees priory had a claim upon the land it was not necessarily ever monastic land.

Although the 1252 agreement only refers to the land of Gresholmes, the fact that there was a dispute over it would suggest that it was of value and was therefore probably in agricultural use. By the time of the second reference there was a shepherd resident on the land which would suggest that the Grassom settlement (BF XI) pre-dates this rental.

### **Archaeological History**

Although a number of round cairns on Bootle Fell have clearly been the subject of antiquarian explorations (eg. SF 637 & 804) there is no published record of any excavations.

Some of the cairnfields (BF II, III, VII, VIII, IX & X) were depicted schematically on the 1900 series 6" Ordnance Survey map.

The settlement on Grassoms (BF XI) was first recorded as an archaeological site by James Wilson (1915, 365); he describes a "quadrangular area, surrounded by an earthen dyke, faced with stones, having a ditch on the outside".

In 1961 the cairnfields depicted on the 1900 6" Ordnance Survey map were scheduled (SAM CU 50, 51 & 52).

### **The sites:**

The survey was undertaken in May 1987 on 3.5 sqkm of unenclosed moorland (fig XXX); 918 monuments were found within 12 site groups.

### **Bootle Fell I**

**Component sites:** BF 1-182                      **Plans:** 2,3 & 1

A large cairnfield on uniformly sloping moorland, which is edged to the south and west by bog and to the north by the very steep sided Kinmont Beck gully. To the east it is not contained by topographic features and there is a very low concentration of small, clearance type cairns extending upslope from the main site concentration.

The cairnfield is split into three basic sub-groups A, B & C (cf. plan 9):

Sub-group A is divided from B by a substantial break of slope and although the cairns of the respective sub-groups are immediately above and below this topographic feature they generally differ in prominence and to a lesser extent size; there is therefore a possibility that the two groups represent different episodes of stone clearance. Sub-group B is separated from C by an area devoid of cairns. Again the component cairns of the two groups differ in definition, size and irregularity of form and may be a result of different clearance episodes.

**Sub-group A** (BF 10-84) comprises a compact cluster of moderately large, well-defined and occasionally prominent cairns. At the south-east edge of the cairn group there is an alignment of eight cairns (BF 39,42,48,50,51,54,56 & 58) which may reflect stone clearance along a boundary.

**Sub-group B** (BF 85-149) has generally small, and fairly ill-defined cairns although there is an increase in average size towards the western end of the sub-group. A straight but ill-defined stone bank runs through the centre of the group (BF 139) and there is a further, possible boundary with a right angle bend, defined by the alignment of cairns: BF 107-113,115,117,119 & 103.

**Sub-group C** (BF 150-182) has cairns that are fairly prominent and well-defined. There are no obvious cairn alignments and they would appear to have an essentially random distribution.

At the eastern edge of the cairnfield there is an unusual type of monument (BF 30) comprising a well-defined mound with an attached semi-circular enclosure. There are no other monuments of this type on Bootle Fell but there are other examples on Stockdale Moor (SM 423, 151 & 169); cf. chap XXX, pp.X for further discussion.

#### **BF I: Further comment**

While there are very few stone banks within the group there are a number of cairn alignments which in some cases appear to define the extent of the cairnfield and may correspond to the lines of former boundaries. Thus the alignment of cairns BF 39,42,48, 50,51,54,56 & 58 apparently defines a south-eastern edge of sub-group A and the cairn alignment BF 107-113,115,117,119 & 103 defines part of the south-western extent of the sub-group B cairnfield. The stone bank BF 139 is a more obvious form of boundary marker, but even this has an apparent continuation marked by cairns 140 & 141; it appears to define the southern extent of one concentration of cairns (sub-group B).

#### **Bootle Fell II**

**Component sites:** BF 183-310

**Plans:** 4 & 3

This is a large cairnfield on a well-drained, long natural ridge (A: BF 183-287). The distribution of cairns is clearly defined by the natural topography; it is bounded to the east by an area of bog and to the west by a sharp break of slope. However at the far northern end of the ridge there is a more gentle change of gradient and there are a few cairns spread down hillside. There are also two small, but distinct, cairn groups at the foot of the break of slope (B: BF 288-306, C: BF 307-310). The long ridge is crossed by two small stream gullies, however, these do not appear to have affected the distribution of the cairns.

There is a gradual increase in size and prominence of the component cairns towards the southern end of the ridge. Those at the far northern end are generally small, ill-defined and irregular, although there are a couple that are moderately prominent, whereas at the far southern end of the cairnfield the cairns are very prominent (0.5m height), very large and are well-defined. Despite the size and prominence of the southern cairns their distribution is comparable with that of the rest of the cairnfield and are probably large stone clearance type cairns.

There are no obvious cairn alignments throughout the cairnfield and the distribution is essentially random.

Along the western side of the ridge there are ten examples of a distinctive type of monument; these are irregular, approximately semi-circular banks of similar size (c.5m across) which all have

their open face towards the west (BF 186,195,221,222,225,228, 229,232,242 & 255). The banks are usually low-lying and often ill-defined and they contain an internal area that is bumpy and has not been terraced. An alignment of five lies approximately parallel to the western break of slope (BF 221, 225, 228, 229 & 242). No other examples were identified from the rest of Bootle Fell and there is no evidence that they were contemporary with the cairnfield. In each case the open face is towards the south-westerly prevailing winds so it is unlikely that they served as shelters. It is unlikely that they were grouse butts since they are not very prominent and also they are fairly close together.

At the northern end of the ridge there is a very prominent, oval ring-bank (BF 206). The internal area is off-centre, but is circular and approximately level, however the ground outside the ring is also level and there is no evidence of terracing. There is a large entrance on the south-western side, facing into the prevailing winds. The function is unclear, but there is the slight possibility that it was a ring cairn.

Below the long break of slope, within sub-group B, there is a very large, very prominent (height: 0.5m) oval cairn (BF 298). The profile is fairly regular but it has a flat top which appears to have been capped with small stones, contrasting with larger stones around the outside. Although it is not in a prominent position it clearly contrasts with the adjacent cairns and there is a possibility that it was a funerary monument.

### **Bootle Fell III**

**Component sites: BF 311-438**

**Plan: 4**

Like BF II this large cairnfield is also constrained by the local topography; it is on a gradually undulating ridge formed between two stream gullies. It comprises a large group of cairns (A) at the northern end and two distinct, but smaller, sub-groups at the lower, south-western end of the ridge (B & C).

**Sub-group A** (BF 311-397) The distribution of the cairns in the main cairnfield (A) is essentially random; there do not appear to be any significant cairn/stone bank alignments. The cairns are generally varied in form and size, although there are some larger and more prominent towards the southern end of the cairnfield (eg. BF 365, 380 & 394) by comparison with those up-slope. Despite the size of some of the cairns they all show irregularities of shape and form and are consistent with a stone clearance function.

**Sub-group B** (BF 398-414) is on a protruding limb of the ridge and comprises a narrow band of cairns and banks; however the northern and southern limits of the sub-group are not precisely defined by the topography. There is an alignment of banks and cairns (BF 398, 399, 403, 406, 407, 409 & 412) defining the southern edge of the cairn group which was possibly the line of a former boundary. A further possible, albeit short, cairn alignment (BF 408 & 409) runs approximately perpendicular to the other alignment.

**Sub-group C** (BF 415-438) is located on gentle, sloping ground below and to the west of the main ridge and is adjacent to areas of bog.

Banks 415/417 display evidence of dry-stone construction and were probably discontinuous sections of a single wall. The wall is aligned adjacent to the ridge, in between sub-groups A & C and runs along the bottom of a 'dip' which is partly filled by bog.

It is orientated towards the terminals of walls BF 439, 441 & 442, has a similar form to these walls and may be a further element of the BF IV field system. Attached to the side of wall BF 415 is a circular structure with large stones incorporated into the foundations; there is no obvious entrance but this may be obscured by collapse. There is a similar example within BF VII (BF 640).

An alignment of cairns (BF 420, 421, 423, 426, & 427) was identified on a line extending from the north-eastern end of bank BF 417, which may represent a further boundary of the field system.

To the west of BF 417, and apparently independent of it, there is a possible arable plot defined on two sides by the banks of BF 429. The downslope bank (BF 429a) is irregular in width and profile and does not display evidence of dry-stone construction; the across slope bank has a lynchet-like profile and there is an implication of soil slippage from the down-slope side. The other two sides of the field are possibly edged by the cairn alignment BF 432-436 which defines an approximate right-angle.

#### **BF III: Further comment**

Sub-group C contrasts with the rest of the cairnfield which mainly comprises randomly distributed clearance cairns. Although sub-group C does have clearance cairns, they are generally aligned; it also includes a dry-stone wall, with a possible attached shelter, and a partly enclosed plot which may have been used for cultivation. The sub-group was not necessarily contemporary with the main cairnfield but it may be a part of the BF IV field system which contains similar elements.

#### **Bootle Fell IV**

**Component sites: BF 439-448**

**Plans: 7, 4 & 15**

This comprises an irregular field and enclosure on a gently sloping section of a natural spur formed between two stream gullies. The northern and western limits of the spur are edged by two long banks (BF 439 & 442) which converge on the enclosure. Bank 442 is prominent, uniform and well-defined and may be a decayed dry-stone wall; it runs parallel to Old Close Gill and is similar to bank BF 887 within the BF XI field system, which also follows the edge of a stream. Bank 439 is both prominent and uniform and runs along the line of a natural shelf above an area of bog. There is a gap between the terminal of the bank and the enclosure to enable access into the field.

#### **BF IV field**

Bank BF 439 forms the northern boundary of the field; however, it continues to the west and probably pre-dates the field which was subsequently enclosed by the construction of banks BF 440 & 441. These latter banks are discontinuous, erratic and occasionally ill-defined and they clearly contrast with BF 439. Within the field there is patchy, narrow ridge and furrow, aligned east/west, which terminates short of bank 439, and there is a short section of bank at NY 1231089105, which appears to be headland for one of the areas of ridge and furrow. BF 443 is a prominent annular feature with well-defined outer banks and no obvious entrance. The ridge and furrow is particularly ill-defined in the area of this ring feature and unfortunately the stratigraphic relationship between the two elements is not clear; there is, however, no evidence of a furrow cutting the

edge of the ring.

#### **BF IV Enclosure**

The enclosure forms the northern terminus of bank 442 and comprises a well-defined, prominent bank set into the slope to the east and north; the western bank, by contrast is ill-defined, non-prominent and irregular in form. No obvious entrance was observed but any through the western bank may have been obscured by tumble. The internal area is approximately level and appears to have been terraced.

#### **BF IV: Further comment**

The field system has a very different character to that of the adjacent BF III cairnfield, which coupled with the presence of medieval type ridge and furrow within the field would suggest that they were not contemporary. There are, however, similarities between this and the BF XI field system which also has large fields without cairns, defined by continuous banks, and includes similar small enclosures and a long boundary parallel to the adjacent stream.

#### **Bootle Fell V**

**Component sites: BF 449-489**

**Plans: 6 & 4**

This is a pair of small cairnfields on an area of gently sloping, well-drained land, bordered to the south and east by a beck, to the north by an extensive bog and to the west by the break of slope of the Oldclose Gill gully. The cairnfields are separated by a break of slope and have very distinct characters. The westernmost cairnfield (A: BF 449-451) lies below the dividing break of slope and comprises fairly low, ill-defined cairns with regular rounded profiles. The easternmost cairnfield (B: BF 452-489) is on top of a slight hillock and the cairns are generally better defined and slightly more prominent. This latter group includes four tightly clustered ring features in varying states of preservation; sites 471 & 474 have regular outlines, are well-defined internally and externally and have flat internal areas, whereas site 472 is only visible as a semi-circular feature and is not particularly well-defined.

#### **BF V conclusion**

This concentration of ring features is reminiscent of the cairnfield at Birrel Sike, West Cumbria, where there are 39 similar features (Richardson, 1982). The excavation of one of these (HC1) revealed that it had been deliberately constructed with larger stones around the inner and outer edges and it was interpreted by the excavator as a ring cairn; it produced a carbon date of 1720 +/- 100 bc.

#### **Bootle Fell VI**

**Component sites: BF 490-554**

**Plans: 6 & 2**

This is a pair of small cairnfields (A & B) separated by a possible field.

The southernmost cairnfield (A; BF 490-514) is a compact group of cairns on a natural island of well-drained land; it is limited to the north, west and south by extensive bog and to the east by a sharp break of slope. The cairns are moderately defined and some are fairly prominent. The distribution is essentially random and it would appear to be a standard small cairnfield.



The possible field has irregularly defined boundaries; to the south it is edged by bank BF 518 which is fairly continuous, except where it runs over a sharp break of slope. The western boundary, however, comprises an alignment of very irregular banks (BF 521-523) and on the eastern side there is no more than an alignment of four cairns (BF 545, 549-551) running parallel to the western banks.

Within the possible field only two isolated cairns were identified together with a small rectilinear structure (BF 519) set into a substantial break of slope which runs through the middle of the 'field'. The structure has two elements; a small square-shaped hut and a partially enclosed courtyard area; the walls of the hut survive to a height of seven courses (1.7m) and, although there is a lot of collapse on the floor, it would appear to have been internally terraced. On the basis of the substantial amount of collapse within the hut and the present height of the walls, it is safe to assume that it was roofed. Its largest internal dimension is only 1.8m (1.8m x 1.7m) and so it would have been cramped for sleeping in. Although the entrance of the hut faces west, towards the prevailing winds, it would have been partly protected by the outer wall of the courtyard. The small size of the hut suggests that it served only temporary accommodation and it may have been a shieling or an elaborate shepherds bield. It is in the proximity of long bank BF 518 and there is a possibility that it was a related feature.

The northern cairnfield (B: BF 528-541) is small and compact and is located at the foot of a substantial break of slope. The cairns are generally slightly prominent, having regular rounded profiles and are consistent with stone clearance. Stone bank 541 defines the northern edge of the cairnfield and has no obvious relationship with any of the banks of the possible field.

#### **Bootle Fell VII**

**Component sites: BF 555-660**

**Plans: 8 & 6**

This comprises a series of diffuse groups of scattered cairns and occasional banks on a low gradient natural terrace that is sporadically edged by a break of slope at top and bottom (approximately between 230m and 270m contours). The terrace is most clearly defined at the northern end where there are two small, scattered groups of low-lying, clearance-type cairns (A: BF 555-563 & 564-581).

In the middle section (B; BF 582-637) the cairns are significantly larger and more prominent but are generally uniform in character and are consistent with a stone clearance function. The exception to this generalisation is site 637 which is located on the top of a low hillock. It is large, very prominent (0.5m high), and very well-defined; in terms of its size and prominent location it is likely to be a funerary monument. There are smaller cairns and a discontinuous bank around the base of the hillock, leaving an area around the central monument that is devoid of cairns. Such a distribution may reflect a deliberate intention to separate the funerary monument from the agricultural activities. Associated with the peripheral cairns there are two circular ring features, which appear to be internally terraced, and were probably hut-circles (cf. Bootle Fell discussion).

At the south-eastern edge of the terrace there is a pair of parallel banks and a ring feature (C: BF 645-650). The banks (BF 647/648) are orientated down-slope and they may define the edges

of an arable plot, however neither of them have lynchet-like profiles. The ring feature (BF 650) is approximately circular, with ill-defined edges and a wide entrance to the north. It appears to have been internally terraced and is potentially a hut circle.

To the west of the possible plot is a wall with an irregular enclosure at the northern end and a large round cairn at the other (D: BF 638-644) on a natural promontory, edged by a break of slope to the south and west. The wall (BF 640) is prominent, with substantial kerbing and it is uniform and continuous. Immediately to the north-east of the enclosure, however, there is a short section (c.4m) of low wall foundation, which possibly represents a limited continuation. The enclosure was formed by the butting of an enclosing wall onto the end of the straight wall; it would therefore seem probable that the enclosure was a later feature set into the middle of the wall and was built from stone material robbed from the redundant northern section of the wall. The enclosure has a slightly irregular shape and has an ill-defined entrance to the south; there is a substantial quantity of collapse within the enclosure and it was not possible to determine if it had been internally terraced. It is not particularly large (c.6.3m x 5.5m) and possibly represents a small shelter.

The southern end of wall BF 640 merges with a large, fairly prominent, round cairn, with a central depression, and adjacent to this is a similar, but much larger, centrally depressed round-cairn. Neither display any evidence of an entrance and it is not obvious as to their purpose or how they relate to the wall.

The wall contrasts sharply with the stone banks which form the ubiquitous linear features on Bootle Fell and there is a possibility that this and the associated features were not contemporary with the rest of BF VII.

### **Bootle Fell VIII**

**Component sites: BF 681-743**

**Plan 6 & 4**

The area of BF VIII is sharply defined and constrained by the natural topography; it is edged to the north by a stream and to the west by an area of bog. There are two sharp breaks of slope, orientated approximately north/south, which divide the area into three blocks of well-drained, moderately sloped land, upon each of which is a small cairnfield. The character of each cairnfield is markedly different, which may imply that they represent different episodes of stone clearance and, indeed, may have served different agricultural functions.

The easternmost cairnfield (A: BF 681-705) comprises a relatively large concentration of cairns within a small, sharply defined area, not obviously constrained by the present topography. The cairns of this group are small and relatively uniform and contrast markedly with the sites of the middle group (B: BF 706-732), which display a wide variety of type and scale, and are loosely scattered over the central, natural terrace.

At one extreme of both type and scale there are two large round cairns which would appear to have been funerary monuments (BF 731 & 717). Cairn 731 is in a prominent position on a small, low hillock; it is very large (diam. c.13.5m) and high (0.5m) with evidence for a kerb on the eastern side. Cairn BF 717 is similarly in a prominent position at the head of a low promontory and is also both large (diam. c.10m) and high (0.4m). At the

opposite extreme of scale there is a limited number of small, clearance-type cairns erratically distributed across the terrace. To the east of the group, in a relatively isolated location, there is a well-defined ring bank with a south-westerly facing entrance which may have been a hut circle (cf. Bootle Fell discussion)

The westernmost of the three groups comprises scattered cairns in an area defined to the west by a bog, to the north by a stream, and to the east by the break of slope (C: BF 733-743). The cairns are limited in number, and varied in size and form.

#### **Bootle Fell IX**

**Component sites: BF 752-794                      Plans: 8 & 7**

This is a series of small cairn groups within an extensive area of undulating moorland, which is erratically drained. The area is bordered to the south-west and north-east by extensive bogs and there are numerous small patches of bog within hollows scattered across the moor. The site groups generally coincide with areas that are well drained and have the least undulating terrain. The cairns are loosely scattered and are varied in size and form. There are also a number of short sections of stone bank, however, they do not appear to relate to each other and there is no evidence for even a simple field system in this area.

Three round cairns are located on the tops of low hillocks. They are distinctive in terms of size and prominence (BF 759, 774 & 775) and are probably funerary monuments. Cairn BF 759 has been disturbed by an old excavation trench on the southern side, but otherwise appears to have had a regular, circular, shape (diam. c.10m). The other two large cairns are relatively close together on a flat-topped hillock overlooking Crookley Beck. BF 774 has a raised flat top (height 0.5m) and a regular circular shape (diam.c.13m); it has a well-defined edge, particularly on the southern side, however, there is no evidence for a kerb. BF 775 is a much smaller cairn and is not as prominent (height c.0.35m). However, it also has a uniform flat top and a very regular, well-defined, edge which, together with its spatial association with BF 774, may be an indication that they served a similar function.

#### **Bootle Fell X**

**Component sites: BF 800-881 & 889                      Plans: 8, 9 & 10**

An extensive cairnfield was identified on a natural spur (Little Grassoms) formed by the confluence of Grassoms and Crookley becks. There is a uniform, but moderate gradient down the spur and the ground is well-drained throughout; however, there are areas with substantial amounts of surface brash which confuse the definition of some cairns.

Two cairnfields (A, B) were divided by a small beck which runs into Grassoms Beck;

The cairnfield south of the beck (B: 874-881) is small and comprises only eight cairns, although they are above average in size and prominence.

The main cairnfield (A) lies to the north of this division and appears to have been a product of two very distinct episodes of stone clearance, one represented by randomly distributed cairns (Ai) and the other by alignments of elongated cairns (Aii).

The group of randomly distributed cairns (Ai: BF 853-873 & 889)

is on a gently sloping, natural terrace edged to the east and west by breaks of slope and to the north by the edge of the Crookley Beck gully. An abundance of surface brash was present in the area and it forms quality agricultural land than that associated with the (Aii) group. The cairns display considerable variation in size and form; some are fairly large and well-defined (eg. BF 865 & 889), while others are small and associated with the surface brash. Although some of the cairns are elongated, there is no consistent orientation, and it would appear to be a standard, simple type of cairnfield.

The other group (Aii: BF 800-852) is on land with a steeper slope, but there is considerably less natural surface brash and it is better agricultural land. There are at least five, parallel alignments of cairns orientated down-slope:

- 1) BF 815-820
- 2) BF 824 & 825
- 3) BF 828-830
- 4) BF 834
- 5) BF 843, 844, 846 & 848

Many of the cairns are elongated and all are orientated in the direction of the cairn alignment; some of the alignments also have narrow, ill-defined banks, linking the cairns (eg BF 824 & 817). Bank 817 (alignment 1) turns by 90 degrees to the north, however there is also a continuation to the west of bank 817, represented by cairns BF 815 & 816. The northern section of BF 817 would therefore appear to be a limited off-shoot. A further cairn alignment (BF 826, 831, 832 and 837) runs across slope along the tops of the other alignments. In between the alignments there is a marked absence of cairns and also relatively little surface stone.

A relatively large number of possible funerary cairns (BF 802, 804, 813, 878 & 879) were also found in addition to the clearance-type cairns. Cairn BF 804 is very prominent, with a well-defined, regular, outline including traces of a kerb. The profile is fairly regular; however, there is a large central depression which resulted from antiquarian excavations. The 'excavation' has exposed two upright slabs, at right angles to each other, which are the remains of a cist; there can be little doubt that the cairn served a funerary function. Similarly there is little doubt that cairn 813 was a burial cairn which is both extremely large and very prominent (diam. 14.2m, height c.1m). It is well-defined, with traces of a kerb along the eastern side and has a regular profile. An outer bank is just discernible from the main fabric of the cairn, particularly around the eastern perimeter. This may be an indication that the monument was a filled in ring cairn, of which there are a number of examples from Cumbria (Stainton Fell, SF 338 (Plan SF4); Hardendale cairn (Williams, forthcoming) and Manor Farm cairn, nr. Borwick (Olivier 1987) and also other upland areas (Cairn GCRC II, Cefn Bryn (Ward 1988)).

Cairns BF 878 and 879 are immediately adjacent to each other and are similar in form and size (BF 878: diam. 6.6m, height 0.35m; BF 879: diam. 5.3m, height 0.3m). They are both prominent and well-defined, with regular circular shapes and profiles. They contrast with the stone clearance-type cairns in the area and are probably funerary monuments.

Unlike the other funerary-type monuments on Bootle Fell these cairns were not positioned on summits. However, their location on the ridge of a spur means that they were clearly visible from anywhere within the Crookley Beck valley, which may have been the intention.

#### **BF X: Further comment**

The parallel lines, defined by the irregular deposition of cleared stone, are probably divisions between plots of agricultural land and as such apparently define a simple field system; the alignment of four cairns along the top of the east-west alignments possibly defined the upper limit of these plots. The area within the plots was deliberately cleared of cairns and unwanted surface stone which would have enabled the unrestricted use of a plough and therefore there is a possibility that the plots were cultivated. However, none of the banks have lynchet-like profiles. The widths of the plots are not particularly regular (north to south: 18m, 10m, 29m & 30m); with the exception of the smallest (10m), they are comparable in size and shape to the narrow plots of Town Bank XIII, which have widths ranging between 20m and 30m.

#### **Bootle Fell XI**

**Component sites: BF 890-918**

**Plans: 8 & 11**

There are two distinct elements to the site group: a field system with two farmsteads, and a cairnfield. There is a possibility, despite their spatial association, that these diverse elements were not contemporary.

#### **Farmsteads and field systems (A & B: BF 890-900)**

Each farmstead relates to separate, discrete sections of the field system, such that the fields and farmstead (A) are entirely contained within the fields of (B).

##### **Farmstead A**

The main elements of the farmstead are a long-house (BF 897), an attached enclosure, a small field to the east of the house (Aii) and a large field to the west (Ai).

Building 897 is a three roomed long-house (Size: 18m x 7m) which has two external entrances into the northernmost cell; access to the other two cells is via the northern one. There is evidence of internal terracing only within the southernmost room, which may have been a sleeping area.

To the north-west of the long-house there is a rectilinear enclosure (area 210 sqm) bordered by prominent well-defined banks. Access to the enclosure is only from the large field to the west (defined by BF 895). The down-slope bank has a lynchet like profile which is probably a result of soil slippage.

To the east of the long-house, there is an irregularly shaped 'field' (Aii) defined by regular, prominent stone banks. The land within the 'field' is undulating, with occasional surface stone and is poorly drained at the northern end. The boundaries are fairly continuous apart from a large gap at the southern end. There is a possibility that it served a pastoral function, rather than cultivation.

The larger 'field' to the west of longhouse 897 (Ai) is defined by a large bank and ditch which converges with stone bank (BF

896) of the eastern field. The ditch, as opposed to the bank, is on the outside of the field, implying a need to repel rather than contain. The terrain within the field has a uniform gradient and is well drained.

#### **Farmstead B**

This farmstead is similar in design to farmstead A except that both fields and the house are larger. The long-house (BF 892; size: 24m x 9m) has a single partition wall, creating two unequally sized rooms (west room: 6m x 5.5m; east room 12.5m x 6m). There is evidence of dry-stone construction within the outer walls, which stand to a height of 0.5m; however only limited quantities of collapse are present, which would suggest either that the stone had been robbed or this was a foundation for a timber super-structure.

Down-slope from the house, a small, approximately rectilinear enclosure (BF 891; area 160 sqm), which is reminiscent of the enclosure adjacent to hut 897. However, it utilises part of bank 890 as its eastern boundary, its down-slope bank does not have a lynchet-like profile and there is no evidence of an entrance.

Two large banks/ditches (BF 890 & 893) extend north and south-west from the house; these are very similar in form to bank 895 of farmstead A, the ditch being on the external side. Although there is at present no exposed stone facing to the bank, there was at the beginning of this century when it was visited by James Wilson (Wilson, 1915). Bank 893 extends across slope for c.250m then turns sharply downslope; after about 25m the down-slope section turns into a stream gully and the bank peters out. The stream gully is particularly straight and contrasts with other streams in the area which follow irregular courses. It probably originated as an artificial bank with a ditch that drained the adjacent land. Subsequently, water erosion removed the bank and enlarged the ditch.

Bank 893 forms the outer boundary of two large fields divided by wall 894. The easternmost of these fields (Bi) is edged to the north by the banks of farmstead A; however, there is apparently a very large gap (92m) between the end of bank 890 and 896 (of farmstead A). This field contains land that is well-drained and has a fairly uniform, low to moderate slope, whereas that of the western field is markedly steeper. The dividing boundary (BF 894) displays clear evidence of dry-stone construction and contrasts with the other bank/ditch boundaries.

Wall 894 apparently butts onto a large cairn which is probably an earlier pile of cleared stone. On the east side of the wall there is a small rectilinear hut (Size: 6m x 4m) with an entrance to the south. Two semi-circular platforms also butt onto the side of the wall; these have well-defined, regular edges and uniform flat tops.

#### **BF XI, Field system: Further comment**

The farmsteads are on steep, exposed and relatively high land and such terrain is traditionally associated with pastoral farming practices. There is, however, evidence that some of the 'fields' were used at some stage for cultivation. The small enclosure attached to hut 897 (farmstead A) has a lynchet at the bottom, which is likely to be a result of soil-disturbance (ploughing). The equivalent enclosure (BF 891) attached to hut 892 (farmstead B) has no evidence of a lynchet, but it would be

inappropriate for the containment of stock as it has no obvious entrance. Also it has an outer bank with an external ditch, which implies an intention to keep stock out rather than in.

The large fields of both farmstead A and B are defined by broad banks, which again have ditches on the external side. Similarly this is inappropriate for the containment of stock, but they are unlikely to have served a defensive function since hut 892 lies beyond the boundaries. The large field adjacent to hut 892 (Bi) has a very large gap to the north, which would be difficult to close using temporary fencing and again there is an implication that its purpose was not to contain stock.

By contrast, however, the field to the east of hut 897 (Aii) has stone bank/wall boundaries with relatively small gaps, which could be closed easily by temporary fencing. The ground contained is undulating, stony and in places boggy and is unsuitable for cultivation; its most probable purpose, therefore, was for stock control. On this subjective evidence there is an implication that these farmsteads had a mixed economy.

The two farmsteads are very similar in type and were almost certainly of approximately similar date. Although they were probably not built at exactly the same time, it is not immediately obvious which is the earlier. A short section of stone bank links wall BF 894 to 895 (Farmstead A), but it appears to butt onto both. Wall BF 894 seems to butt onto a corner of bank 893, yet without the presence of the wall there would have been no clear purpose for bank BF 893 to form a corner at this point. Hence there is a possibility that despite their different forms they were part of an integral field system and were broadly contemporary.

#### **BF XI Cairnfield (C: BF 901-918)**

The cairnfield is located on a natural spur formed by the confluence of Grassgill and Crookley Becks; the ground has a relatively gentle slope and is well drained. The cairnfield comprises two very distinct types of cairns: small, ill-defined, low-lying mounds (eg. BF 899, 904, 905, 910, 911 & 915), and large, prominent, well-defined cairns (eg. BF 903, 906, 909 & 914). The extreme differences suggest that the two types were not constructed at the same time and may even be a result of different activities. The small cairns are typical stone clearance cairns whereas the large cairn (BF 903) has a possible kerb and is similar in size and prominence to funerary cairn BF 804 and possibly had a similar function.

The distribution of the cairns is spread on both sides of the field system B boundary (BF 893) and the majority of the cairns lie outside the field system. There is therefore an implication that the cairnfield and the field system were not contemporary.

#### **Bootle Fell Discussion**

There are two contrasting types of settlement on Bootle Fell; that typified by the cairnfields of BF I and BF II and the more sophisticated farmsteads at BF IV & BF XI.

The cairnfields are generally simple in type, however there are some variations in the pattern reflecting varying degrees of planning. Cairnfields such as BF II and BF VIII have essentially



random distributions of clearance-type cairns, whereas within cairnfield BF I there are alignments of cairns which appear to define the edge of the cairnfield (BF 39,42,48,50,51,54,56 & 58; BF 107-113,115,117,119 & 103). Although the distribution of cairns within the BF I boundary is also essentially random, this may imply a more organised approach to land clearance. At cairnfield BF X the organised approach has been taken a stage further; the cairn alignments define the edges of parallel plots which contain no cairns or surface stone.

There are a number of ring features scattered across the moor, although many of these do not appear to be domestic structures; the only probable hut circles are loosely grouped within the area of BF VII (BF 650, 660, 602, 635 & 714) and there is an implication that this was a settlement area. Four of these are orientated in an east-west line (BF 660, 602, 635 & 714) and they are fairly regularly spaced, between 140m and 190m apart. The other hut is associated with a pair of parallel banks, which may represent a simple plot and there is a possibility that all were integral elements of a small settlement. Three of the hut-circles have south-westerly facing entrances (BF 660, 635 & 714), while the other two have northerly entrances. They are all between 6.5m and 8.4m in diameter and three of them are either internally terraced or on flat ground. 'Huts' 660 & 714, however, have internal slopes similar to the ground surface outside, which casts an element of doubt over their interpretation as dwellings.

Many of the cairnfields are spatially associated with prehistoric funerary round cairns (eg cairns BF 813 & 804 within the BF X cairnfield and BF 837 within the BF VII settlement group) and there is a possibility that the cairnfields were of an approximately similar date. There was undoubtedly farming activity in the area during the latter part of the prehistoric period as demonstrated by a pollen section through Barfield Tarn, which is only about two kilometres away from the Bootle Fell survey area (Pennington 1970, 68-70). This section shows that in this area of the coastal plain there was possible cultivation in association with clearance and vegetation disturbance during the later part of the neolithic period and vigorous clearance and cultivation leading to total deforestation at the beginning of the bronze age.

The catchment area for this section may extend up to 15 or 20 km away from it, so this does not necessarily represent the vegetation from Bootle Fell and it is not a reliable indicator that the fells were cultivated. However the fact that there was total deforestation means that there must have been disturbance of the tree cover throughout the locality, including the adjacent fells during the bronze age.

### **Relative chronology**

The field systems of BF IV and BF XI clearly contrast with the cairnfields and appear to demonstrate a later phase of occupation. One of the main BF XI farmstead banks (BF 893) cuts through the BF XI cairnfield and would appear to be a later feature.

Both field systems appear to belong to the medieval period; the boundaries of the BF IV field define an area of ridge and furrow, typical of medieval cultivation. There are two historical references (cf. History of Grassoms above) in AD 1252 and 1510



to land called Gresholmes (or Grassoms) and by the time of the later reference there was a shepherd resident on Grassoms. The BF XI structures are medieval in character (Ramm, 1970) and it is very probable that the BF XI settlement on Great Grassoms is that referred to by these medieval documents.

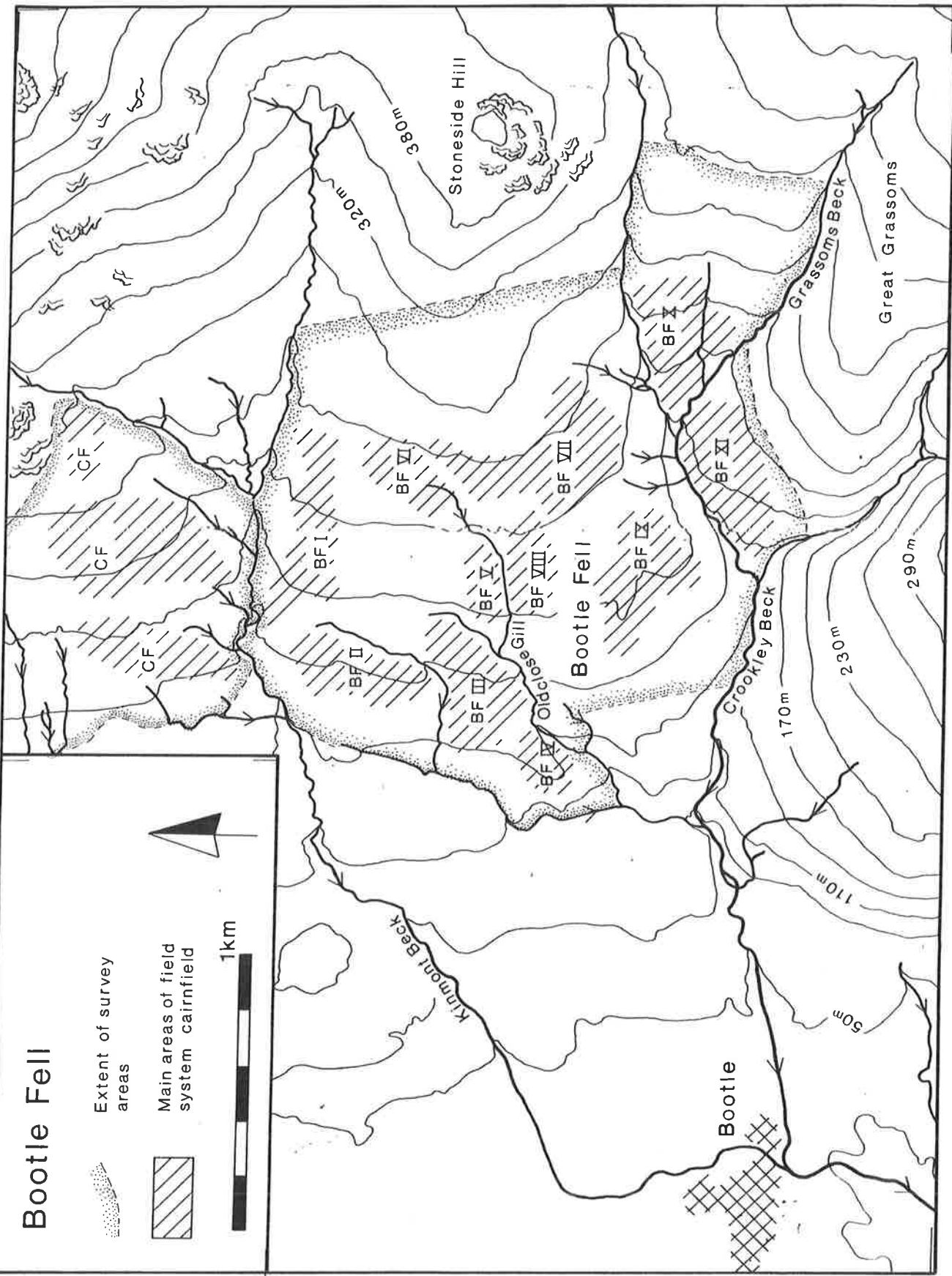
The implication is that there were two contrasting and widely separated phases of occupation on Bootle Fell.

# Bootle Fell

Extent of survey areas

Main areas of field system cairnfield

1km



# Bootle Fell II & III

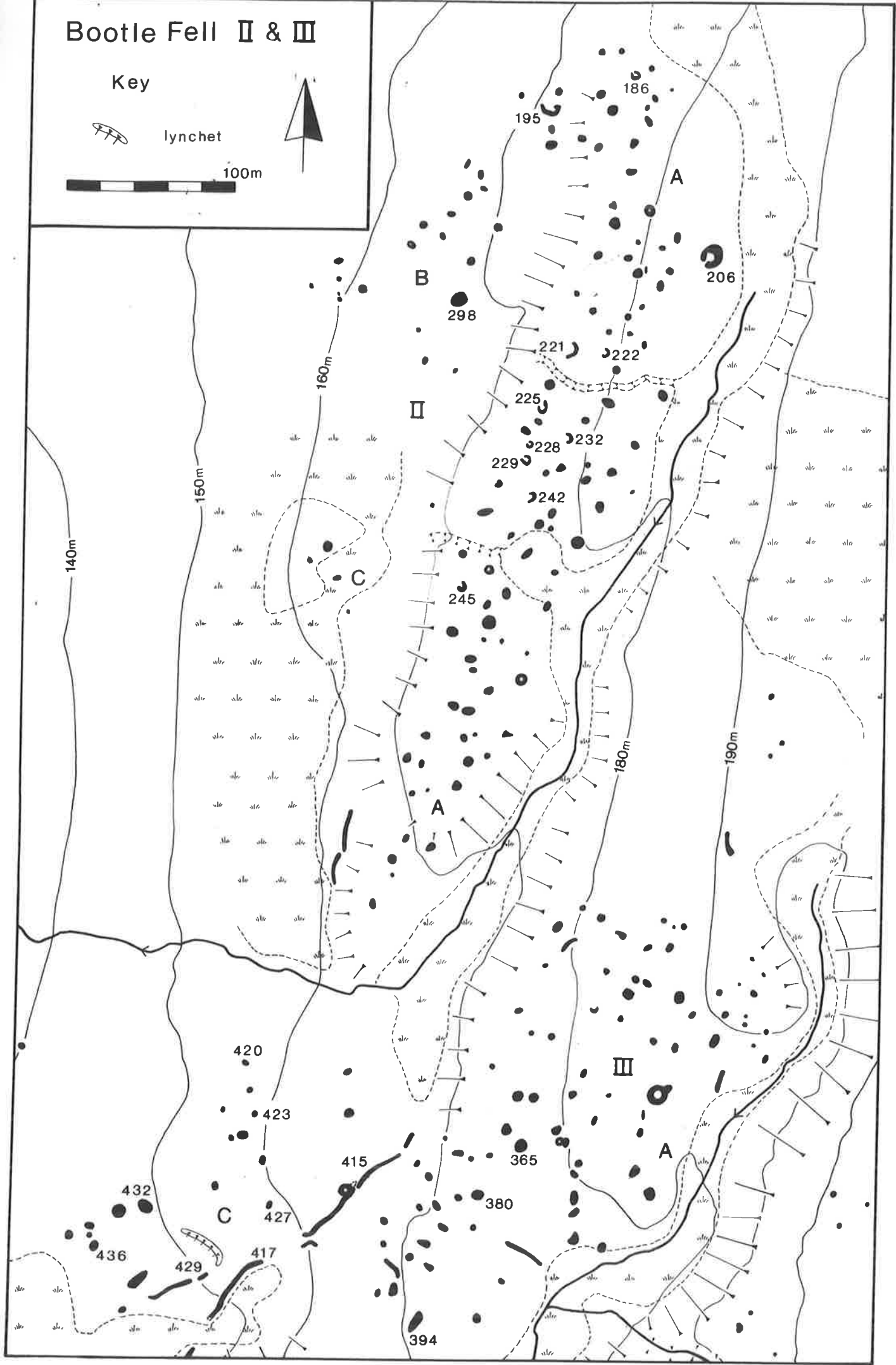
Key



lynchet



100m



# Bootle Fell $\Sigma$

Key



100 m

