

## Chapter 2: Castle Hill Geophysical Survey and Stratigraphic Narrative

### GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

*by Andy Payne*

A fluxgate magnetometer survey of the hillfort interior was carried out in June 2002 by the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology, assisted by volunteers and staff of the Northmoor Trust. The aim was to provide an indication of the character and density of former occupation and activity inside the hillfort, to inform the presentation of the monument and guide future management decisions. The geophysical results have also informed the positioning of the trenches subsequently excavated at the site. Details of the survey methodology can be found elsewhere (Payne 2002).

The results of the survey are presented in Figure 2.1, and an interpretation is provided in Figure 2.2. The magnetic variation across the hillfort is very limited (largely in the range of plus and minus 1 nT) and anomalies where detected are generally only of slight magnitude, many only ranging from 3-5 nT above background readings. Although generally weak the majority of anomalies detected in the hillfort are likely to be of archaeological significance and there is little sign of stronger disturbance from modern activity. Most obvious of the anomalies of likely archaeological origin is a wide positive anomaly - indicative of a substantial ditch - that can be seen curving around and thus enclosing the highest part of the hillfort interior. The enclosure ditch has been detected on the southern and eastern sides of the wooded clump, but its likely continuation to the north and west could not be resolved clearly where the circuit disappears into the area of tree cover. Two very limited areas of magnetometer survey in the wood where the density of trees was low enough to allow regular instrument traverses only provide limited evidence for the suggested course of the enclosure ditch in the beech clump. Because of the very limited survey coverage in the wooded area this evidence is only tentative. Apart from providing possible evidence of the course of the inner ditch circuit, the survey areas in the wooded clump were not otherwise very informative.

Where the enclosure circuit is visible, the width and shape of the anomaly is very variable. The ditch appears to swell and become more irregular at several points, suggesting re-cutting or quarrying of the original profile. There are also suggestions of causeways interrupting its course in several places, although the weakness of the magnetic response to the ditch makes identification of entrances particularly difficult. The possible entrance on the eastern side of the tree clump is in a similar position to the north-eastern entrance to the main hillfort suggesting some continuity of planning in the layout of the respective entrances.

A further possible ditch signified by a positive linear anomaly can be seen extending on a north easterly alignment from the possible eastern entrance of the inner enclosure. This feature could represent a linear boundary earthwork. A second possibility is that the extension of the inner enclosure represents the bed of a track-way or hollow-way approaching the possible entrance from the north east and subsequently in-filled by later ploughing.

Within the newly detected inner enclosure and immediately to the south-west of it, a series of large rectangular and more irregular positive magnetic anomalies have been detected. These are difficult to precisely interpret but are likely to represent former features quarried or cut into the ground and subsequently in-filled with

magnetically enriched soil. They may represent occupation sites, or quarry or pit complexes containing deposits of occupation material. Numerous smaller localised positive magnetic anomalies scattered across the hillfort interior are most likely to represent a moderate distribution of pits. Their density and pattern is similar to that known at the hillfort of Uffington Castle, Oxfordshire, from previous geophysical survey and excavation (Miles *et al.* 2003). The anomalies from two possible pits near the south-eastern side of the fort are particularly pronounced (12-15 nT) suggesting the incorporation of significant amounts of burnt material in their fills.

Within the eastern perimeter of the inner enclosure there are tentative suggestions of two narrow circular ring-gullies that may signify traces of roundhouse-type structures in this area. However, it is possible that these patterns could merely result from instrument noise, so this interpretation should be treated with extreme caution.

Around the periphery of the hillfort interior on the lower slopes of the enclosed area further very weakly defined positive anomalies have been detected. These may represent evidence of further phases of enclosure of the site or quarries for providing rampart construction material. Alternatively, they may relate to soil build-up against the inner hillfort rampart resulting from the long-term effects of cultivation.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE EXCAVATIONS**

The main excavations at Castle Hill took place between 13th July and 31st August 2003. Six trenches were excavated, generally 3-4 m wide (Fig. 2.2). Their positions were largely determined by the results of the geophysical survey carried out by English Heritage (Figs 2.1 and 2.2). The survey interpretation drawing had indicated an inner hilltop enclosure ditch, a few straight lengths of ditch to the north, a line of sub-rectangular large features on the south, a discontinuous lynchet, a scatter of pits and one or two possible circular gullies. Trenches 1 to 3 were parts of a single continuous intervention, running for 95 m from the edge of the beech clump at the top of the hill across the south-western interior and the rampart and ditch of the hillfort, ending partway across the counterscarp bank. It was positioned to include a pair of pits close to the clump, to section the hilltop enclosure ditch, and to cut across two of the line of large subrectangular features. Trench 4 was 30 m long, and was targeted upon the eastern side of the hilltop enclosure, several pits and one of the circular gullies. . Trenches 5 and 6 were placed within the beech plantation. Trench 6 was positioned in the only open area within the clump, where the geophysical survey had tentatively identified a continuation of the hilltop enclosure ditch. Trench 5 was positioned to locate the north side of the hilltop enclosure and across a significant change in level to determine whether this was of geological origin or was man-made. Trench 5 was initially 14.5 m long, but subsequently extended 12.5 m further to the north (Trench 5a) to locate the enclosure ditch. Trench 6 was 12 m long.

Further, smaller-scale excavation took place in November 2005, in advance of the construction of a deer-proof fence around the beech plantation. Three small trenches were required for the gates and gate-posts, and these were excavated archaeologically by hand. Trench 7 was located at the eastern gate, Trench 8 at the northern gate, and Trench 9 at the south-western gate. Each trench measured 2 m long, and was 0.30 m wide in its central part and 0.50 m wide at the terminal ends. Excavation proceeded no further than the depth required, which was 0.70-0.90 m.

A final phase of limited excavation occurred in May 2006, as part of work to improve the footpath running through the south-western entrance to the hillfort. The aim was to assist access and reduce erosion by cutting back the edges of the ramparts, and widening and levelling the existing path. An area just over 50 m long and 2.6 m wide at the base was excavated (Trench 10), partly by hand and partly by machine, with the sides battered back where the entrance passed between the ramparts of the hillfort. By agreement between English Heritage and the Northmoor Trust, excavation was limited to a depth of *c* 0.20 m, except where the edges of the path were cut back at 45°.

## **SUMMARY OF EXCAVATION RESULTS**

As anticipated, preservation of the archaeology was best where sealed by colluvium behind the rampart. Upslope this gave way to a zone of truncation by ploughing. On the limited evidence recovered, preservation within the beech plantation was neither better nor worse than on the adjacent open hilltop, and archaeological features such as pits and ditches survived in both. No postholes were found, other than a few lying within ditch fills or the rampart core, possibly indicating that truncation was quite severe over much of the hillfort interior. An overall plan of features is shown in Figure 2.17.

No early prehistoric features were found, but a small number of flint artefacts were recovered from the topsoil or from later features. These included a Mesolithic obliquely blunted microlith from the topsoil in Trench 5, and an earlier Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead from Trench 2. In addition, single residual early Bronze Age pottery sherds were recovered from early Iron Age pit 3006 (Trench 3) and post-medieval ditch 5017 (Trench 5).

The inner enclosure ditch identified by the geophysical survey was uncovered in Trenches 3, 4, 5a and 6. Artefacts and radiocarbon determinations from the lower fills indicate a late Bronze Age date. No other contemporary features were found, although a possible pit broadly dated to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age was found in Trench 7.

Excavation of the rampart, ditch and counterscarp bank of the hillfort in Trenches 1-2 failed to produce conclusive evidence for the date of their construction. However, a few sherds of early Iron Age pottery from the lower fills of the ditch and from the core of the counterscarp bank suggest an early Iron Age date. The excavation at the south-western entrance of the hillfort was too shallow to reach the original rampart. Contemporary features within the hillfort were few, consisting of a pit with a very large finds assemblage at the northern end of Trench 3, and a possible smaller pit in Trench 4, although much early Iron Age material was recovered from the upper fills of the late Bronze Age enclosure ditch. There is evidence for more widespread occupation within the hillfort during the middle Iron Age, with thirteen pits belonging to this period found in Trench 3, and one in Trench 6. Six of the pits contained articulated, partially articulated or fragmentary human remains.

Activity was much reduced during the late Iron Age and early Roman period, the only material of this date coming from silting deposits within the hillfort ditch, suggesting that this feature was no longer being maintained. Occupation returned in the late Roman period, focussing on the late 4th century AD. Features included three large rectangular features of uncertain function from Trenches 3 and 4, an inhumation burial from Trench 3, and a small pit from Trench 7. Much midden material was

deposited at the back of the rampart, and a partial dog skeleton accompanied by burnt limestone, pottery, tile and disarticulated human bones was deposited in the hillfort ditch.

There was no evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity beyond two residual pottery sherds from Trench 3. Small-scale occupation on the hilltop took place at some time during the 11th-13th centuries, however, represented by one pit in each of Trenches 4 and 6, and material from colluvial layers that built up behind the hillfort rampart. In the later medieval period the hilltop appears to have been cultivated, as attested to by a plough soil over the pit in Trench 6. Surviving ridges within the woodland appear to relate to the 18th century planting of the clumps.

## **STRATIGRAPHIC NARRATIVE**

### **Trenches 1-3 (Figs 2.3-5)**

#### ***Natural geology and topography***

Chalk was the underlying geology throughout the length of Trenches 1-3. At the very top end of Trench 3 the chalk was overlain in places by patches of plateau gravel. Here the chalk was covered by only 0.25 m of soil, and ploughmarks were visible in its surface. Lower down the slope a thin horizontal band of clay was found within the chalk that reached the surface just uphill of the hilltop enclosure ditch. Further downslope the depth of overburden gradually increased, so that immediately inside the hillfort rampart the natural chalk bedrock (3000) was exposed at a depth of 1.30 m beneath the present ground surface. Beneath the rampart and counterscarp bank the chalk was sealed by a buried prehistoric soil, and under the counterscarp bank the surface of the chalk increased from 1.2 m to 2.3 m below the present ground surface. The slope of the hill appears to increase from only around 6° towards the top to around 12° below the counterscarp bank, although it is probable that the slope towards the top was originally steeper, and has been reduced by ploughing.

#### ***Late Bronze Age***

The inner enclosure ditch identified by the geophysical survey was exposed within Trench 3. The ditch (3017) was 3.9 m wide and 2.5 m deep, with steep sides and a flat base 2.1 m wide (Fig. 2.6; Pl. 2.1). The lower 0.85 m of the ditch contained fills dated to the late Bronze Age (contexts 3082, 3099, 3121, 3081, 3063 and 3118), with the subsequent infilling of the ditch occurring during the early Iron Age. The late Bronze Age fills give no indication of the existence of an upcast bank, although a subsequent very thick deposit from the northern side of the ditch probably indicates a bank on that side. While no *in situ* bank material was observed, and no trace of any features revetting a bank, two middle Iron Age pits immediately north of the ditch were shallower than other such pits to the south. This could possibly indicate the survival of a residual earthwork into the middle Iron Age, into which the pits on the north were dug.

The primary fill within the ditch (3082) was a thin silting deposit containing two sherds of late Bronze Age pottery and a small amount of animal bone. This was overlain by a thin lens of charcoal (3099) and a second silting deposit (3121), the

latter containing a further late Bronze Age sherd. This was then followed by probable erosion layers containing numerous large pieces of chalk and red-brown clay (3063, 3081 and 3118). The clay is probably derived from a band of natural clay (3065?) overlying the chalk on the north side of the ditch. Small amounts of pottery and a fragment of human bone (left radius) were recovered from fill 3081.

Three radiocarbon determinations indicate that the lower fills of the ditch were deposited during the 10th-9th centuries cal BC. Fill 3099 produced date ranges of 1000-820 cal BC from charcoal (Poz-14317: 2760±35BP) and 1010-840 cal BC from animal bone (Poz-12521: 2780 ± 30 BP). Fill 3081 meanwhile produced a determination of 1050-890 cal BC/880-840 cal BC from the human radius (Poz-12519: 2805 ± 35 BP). Bayesian modelling has suggested a slightly refined dating of 1010-870 cal BC for 3099 and 970-830 cal BC for 3081 (Chapter 4).

## *Early Iron Age*

### *Infilling of the late Bronze Age enclosure ditch*

The middle and upper fills of the late Bronze Age enclosure ditch (2.0 m deep) can be dated through ceramic associations to the early Iron Age. The first of these deposits (3050 and 3072) consisted of chalky silts, and probably represent episodes of erosion, largely deriving from the northern side of the ditch. This may indicate the presence of an earthwork bank on this side of the feature. The ditch then appears to have been filled by a series of silting deposits (3018, 3024, 3035, 3046, 3065 and 3080). Substantial quantities of finds were recovered from these fills, including over 3.8 kg of pottery and 2800 pieces of animal bone. A chalk spindle whorl was also recovered from fill 3024 (Fig. 3.13.1). A few fragments of Roman and medieval pottery and two iron nails from the uppermost fill of the ditch (3018) are regarded as intrusive. Mollusc evidence from fill 3024 suggests that open grassland conditions prevailed.

### *The hillfort defences*

The upstanding hillfort defences consist of three main elements: a substantial ditch (Trench 1), a counterscarp bank on the outside edge of the ditch (Trench 1) and a rampart on the inside of the hillfort ditch (Trench 2). Excavation showed that the counterscarp bank and rampart were constructed above a buried ground surface, consisting of a clay silt soil up to 0.30 m deep, containing no datable finds (1009, 1015 and 1036 beneath the counterscarp; 2031 and 2036-9 beneath the inner rampart). No clear dating evidence was recovered from the inner rampart. However, very small amounts of early Iron Age pottery were recovered from within the counterscarp bank and from one of the lower fills of the ditch.

The ditch was constructed at a slight break of slope on the natural ground surface (Fig. 2.3; Pls 2.3 and 2.4). It was 16 m wide and a maximum of 7.5 m deep from the original ground surface. It had a 'V' shaped profile, with sides dipping at 35° to 45° to a 0.80 m-wide flat base. The ditch appears to have been kept clean during much of the Iron Age, as only 0.60 m of fills built up before the late Iron Age/early Roman period. These consisted of a primary, chalk-rich erosion deposit (1023), overlain by a layer of silty clay (1017). Although fill 1023 was sterile, fill 1017 produced two sherds of early Iron Age pottery and a small amount of animal bone.

Much of the material excavated from the ditch appears to have been used in the construction of the counterscarp bank. On the edge of the ditch the counterscarp bank survived c 1 m higher than the buried ground surface from which the ditch was

cut, and increased to more than 2 m high at the edge of the trench. The bank was over 5 m wide at its top, and it sloped down on the outer side at an angle of *c* 30° to the fields below. The core of the bank was formed of three layers, probably deposited during the initial construction of the earthwork. A lower layer of chalk (1012) was overlain by a deposit of clay (1008), which was in turn capped by a further deposit of chalk (1007/1032). One sherd of late Bronze Age pottery was recovered from layer 1012, and one early Iron Age sherd from layer 1008. Small amounts of animal bone were also found in all three layers. The upper layers of the counterscarp bank were made up of a series of thin deposits of chalk (1025, 1027 and 1033-1035) interleaved with bands of silt (1026, 1028 and 1029), possibly representing the formation of turf lines. These may indicate that the outer bank was repeatedly added to as the ditch was cleaned out.

Interpretation of the stratigraphy of the rampart is problematic, partly due to limited exposure (Fig. 2.4; Pl. 2.5). Although the upper layers of the rampart (to 1.30 m below present ground level) were excavated across the full 3.5 m width of the trench, the lower levels were only excavated in a 1 m wide slot along the centre of the trench. Problems were also caused by the fact that the stratigraphy of the rampart had suffered severely from disturbance by animal burrowing. A further issue is that the profile of the rampart and ditch may suggest that the original front of the rampart has been removed through erosion (see below). Given these factors, the interpretation of the structure and development of the rampart presented here must be regarded with caution.

A possible early stage of construction is represented by feature 2034, sealed beneath the main body of the rampart. This was recorded as a possible linear slot running parallel to the ditch, measuring 0.50 m wide and 0.24 m deep, although it is notable that it could not be discerned in the south-east facing section. It had a lower fill of chalky silt (2056) and an upper fill of chalk rubble (2035), indistinguishable from overlying rampart layer 2023. No finds were recovered. The interpretation of this feature is somewhat uncertain, and as it lay in an area of intense animal burrowing a non-archaeological origin is entirely possible.

The main body of the rampart survived 7 m wide and a maximum of 1.40 m high above the buried ground surface on which it was built. The rampart was made up of dumped deposits of chalk rubble (2023 and 2046) or chalky silt (2044, 2045, 2048, 2052, 2054, 2055, 2066 and 2073), with one layer of orange-brown clay also present (2047). The orientation of these layers, which dipped towards the hillfort interior even close to the edge of the ditch, shows that there was no room for a gap between the rampart and the existing edge of the ditch. This must indicate that either there was originally some form of revetment at the front of the rampart, or the ditch was originally much narrower, and has eroded back some distance. No trace of any timber or stone revetment could be seen at the front of the rampart; although this could have been removed by erosion, no collapsed stone facing was recovered from the ditch.

The rear of the rampart appears to have been marked by a linear slot, 2040, cut into the pre-rampart soil levels. This was 1.20 m wide and 0.50 m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. The chalky deposits making up the rampart (2028 and 2052-2054) extend no further than trench 2040, suggesting that the latter may have held some form of timber revetment or kerb. If so, it is uncertain whether layers 2028 and 2052-2054 butted up to a revetment set into the rear of trench 2040, or represent slumping from the original rampart core after a revetment placed more centrally within 2040 had decayed or been removed.

At a later stage, the rear of the rampart appears to have been remodelled through the construction of a second probable revetment slot (2032), cutting through rampart layers 2052 and 2054. This was 1.25 m wide and 1.00 m deep, with a U-shaped profile, and extended across the width of the trench. It contained a lower fill of mid grey clay silt (2033) and an upper fill of chalky silt (2063). A posthole (2065) was visible in the north-west facing section, extending below the main cut of the slot. This was 0.30 m in diameter and 0.36 m deep, and would appear to confirm the function of the slot as a setting for a timber revetment.

A single sherd of late Bronze Age or early Iron Age pottery was recovered from the lower fill (2033) of slot 2032. Aside from this, no datable artefacts were recovered from any contexts associated with the original rampart. Finds from the layers above the original rampart - which form the upper part of the earthwork as visible today - show that these were deposited during the late Roman period (see below).

### *Pit 3006*

The only contemporary internal feature uncovered within these trenches was a large sub-circular pit (3006) located 62 m to the north of the rampart. This was 3.50 m in diameter and 0.75 m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base (Fig. 2.6). It had probably suffered severely from agricultural truncation, due to its location near to the crest of the hill. The pit produced an extraordinary assemblage of finds, including over 11 kg of pottery and 12 kg of animal bone.

The lower fills of the pit consisted of thin erosion layers, most of which had entered the pit from the north-east. Chalk-rich lenses (3060, 3090 and 3092) alternated with sandy silt or clay silt deposits (3038, 3086-3089, 3091, 3093, 3095). Only 164 g of pottery and 187 g of animal bone were recovered from these fills. The middle and upper fills of the pit mainly took the form of dumped deposits, containing large quantities of finds, including pottery that was often in a fresh, well-preserved condition. The first of these dumped layers consisted of a brown-grey clay silt (3061). In addition to 1.7 kg of pottery and 2.7 kg of animal bone, a fired clay sling-shot and a worked bone needle (Fig. 3.12.1) and gouge (Fig. 3.12.3) were recovered. The animal bone included a partially articulated raven skeleton, which could represent a 'placed' deposit. A sample from this layer produced a rich charred plant assemblage, including cereal grains, chaff, weed seeds, hazelnut shell and charcoal. Layer 3061 was overlain by a sterile lens of chalk (3094), which was followed by two further clay silt deposits (3036 and 3059), and then by a deposit of silty chalk (3039). Three silty clay back-fill deposits completed the sequence (3007, 3034 and 3040). The deposits from 3059 upwards contained 9.4 kg of pottery, 9.7 kg of animal bone. In addition, a worked bone gouge (Fig. 3.12.2) was recovered from layer 3039 and an antler object, possibly a handle (Fig. 3.12.4), from layer 3034. A sample from layer 3040 produced a modest charred plant assemblage, including some cereal grains and charcoal.

### *Middle Iron Age*

Thirteen pits in Trench 3 can be dated to the middle Iron Age, indicating a concentration of activity within this part of the hillfort interior (pits 3002, 3004, 3013, 3015, 3025, 3029, 3057, 3098, 3109, 3116, 3131, 3152 and 3155). These pits were all relatively shallow, and had probably suffered from a significant degree of truncation.

Human remains were recovered from five of the pits, a notably high frequency. The pits will be described in turn from south to north.

Feature 3116 was shallow, sub-circular pit, 0.10 m deep, with a flat base, and had been heavily truncated by later Romano-British activity. It had a single clay fill, largely taken up by a tightly crouched adult human skeleton (3113), lying on its right side and facing west (Fig. 2.8). This feature may have been a purpose-dug grave rather than a pit, due to its oval shape, small size and shallowness. The posture of the skeleton could indicate that the body had been bound. Three sherds of a middle Iron Age vessel and a few fragments of animal bone were also recovered. Staining on one of the animal bones suggests that there was formerly a copper alloy object in the grave (Chapter 4). A radiocarbon determination of 400-340 cal BC/300-200 cal BC (Poz-12522:  $2275 \pm 30$  BP) was obtained from the skeleton.

Pit 3155 was only partly uncovered at the western edge of excavation, and was cut away on the south by Roman feature 3157. It appeared to be sub-rectangular in form, measuring at least 1.30 m long and 0.30 m deep, with a bowl-shaped profile. Following a shallow initial deposit of sterile chalky silt (3165), the body of an adult female was interred within the pit (3183). The body appears to have been placed in a supine position, with its head to the west (Fig. 2.8). A radiocarbon determination of 360-270 cal BC/260-100 cal BC (Poz-12523:  $2160 \pm 30$  BP) was obtained from the skeleton. The body was overlain by a clay silt backfill deposit (3164), containing a few fragments of middle Iron Age pottery and animal bone.

Pit 3131 survived 1.46 m long and 0.23 m deep, the east side having been cut away by Roman feature 3067. The surviving part had sheer sides and a flat base, and was probably originally circular. It contained two lower, sterile, chalk-rich erosion deposits (3138 and 3139), and an upper fill of silty clay (3132). This upper fill produced 72 g of pottery and 16 g of animal bone.

Pit 3029 was a bowl-shaped feature, 0.50 m deep, truncated on its southern side by late Roman quarry 3067. It had two lower fills of sterile silty clay (3064 and 3104), and an upper clay silt fill containing pottery and animal bone (3030/3110). Most of the pottery dated to the middle Iron Age, with three Roman sherds and one Saxon sherd thought to be intrusive. The pit cut a similar, earlier feature, 3109. This measured 1.50 m in diameter and 0.50 m deep, with gently sloping sides and a fairly flat base. It contained four clay silt deposits that were devoid of finds. While the date of this pit is thus unclear, it has been tentatively ascribed to the middle Iron Age on the basis of its similarity to pit 3029.

Pit 3098 lay adjacent to the northern edge of pit 3109, although no clear stratigraphic relationship could be discerned. Its initial fill of sterile sandy clay (3097) was overlain by a chalky silt deposit containing a few sherds of middle Iron Age pottery (3101). This was followed by two clay silt deposits containing small amounts of animal bone (3054 and 3100). The upper fill of dark brown clay silt (3020) contained a human neonate skeleton (3048), placed close to the eastern edge of the pit. The body was crouched and lay on its right side, facing east (Fig. 2.8). Some 372 g of middle Iron Age pottery and 532 g of animal bone were also recovered. Say how much. A sample taken from this layer produced a sparse charred plant assemblage, including cereal grain, chaff, weed seeds and charcoal.

Pit 3152 lay immediately to the east of 3098. This was significantly deeper than the other contemporary features in the area, measuring 1.30 m in diameter and 0.85 m in depth, with vertical sides and a flat base. It contained a remarkable sequence of three human burials (Fig. 2.7). At the base of the pit lay the skeleton of an adult male (3160), crouched on its right side with its head to the south (Pl. 2.6). A

patch of charred material lay close to the feet (3166), and two small pieces of animal bone (a sheep/goat humerus and a rib) lay under the left arm. Radiocarbon determination of 370-160 cal BC (Poz-12525:  $2180 \pm 30$  BP) has been obtained from the skeleton. The burial was covered by a fairly clean back-fill deposit of silty clay (3159), containing small amounts of pottery and animal bone. This was overlain by a further deposit of silty clay (3145/3146) containing the partially articulated remains of an adult female (3143). Four sections of the skeleton were found: the left femur and pelvis, the left tibia, the sacrum and lower spine and a medial section of the spine and ribs (Pl. 2.7). Cut marks were present at the distal end of the femur and proximal end of the tibia, probably resulting from the dismemberment or defleshing of the body. A cattle skull was found close to the human remains, and a sheep/goat skull was present slightly higher in the backfill. The pit was then back-filled with two sterile layers of silty clay (3144 and 3153/3154). Subsequently, during the late Iron Age or early Roman period a neonatal human skeleton inserted, although it is unclear whether this was in a recut or in a hollow left as the bodies beneath decayed.

A group of three intercutting pits lay to the north of the late Bronze Age enclosure ditch. The earliest of these pits (3015) was oval in form, measuring 2.90 m long and 0.20 m deep, with steep sides and a flat base (Fig. 2.6). It was filled by a pale, chalky silt deposit (3016), from which a small group of disarticulated human bone was recovered. The bone derived from an adult male, and comprised fragments of the left pelvis and of the left and right femurs. Small amounts of middle Iron Age pottery and animal bone and a small iron strip (SF 3017) were also recovered. Pit 3015 was subsequently cut by two further pits (3025 and 3057). Pit 3025 was a circular, bowl-shaped feature, measuring 0.90 m in diameter and 0.18 m deep. It was filled by a dark brown clay silt deposit, containing small amounts of middle Iron Age pottery and animal bone. Pit 3057, meanwhile, was only partially exposed at the edge of excavation. It was at least 1.50 m in diameter and 0.45 m deep, with a slightly irregular profile (Fig. 2.6). It contained a sequence of four silty fills. While the lower three fills were devoid of finds, the uppermost layer produced small amounts of Iron Age pottery and animal bone. A few sherds of Roman pottery and disarticulated fragments of human bone were recovered from pit 3057, but were probably introduced by ploughing from the adjacent Roman burial 3010.

Pit 3013 lay immediately to the north of 3015. It was circular in plan, measuring 1.10 m in diameter and 0.20 m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. It contained a single fill of dark grey sandy clay, which produced middle Iron Age pottery, burnt stone and animal bone, along with two small fragments of copper alloy (Fig. 3.11.1).

The two pits at the northern end of the trench, 3002 and 3004, appear to have suffered particularly severely from agricultural truncation. Pit 3002 was 1.40 m in diameter and 0.24 m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. It had two fills of sandy clay, which produced middle Iron Age pottery and animal bone, including a fish bone from the lower fill. A sample from the upper fill (3003) contained a fairly sparse charred plant assemblage, including cereal grain, weed seeds and charcoal. Pit 3004 was similar in size and form, measuring 1.43 m in diameter and 0.34 m deep. It contained a single fill of sandy clay, which again produced a few fragments of middle Iron Age pottery and animal bone. An iron nail fragment is thought to be intrusive.

### *Late Iron Age/Early Roman period*

The first significant accumulation of material in the hillfort ditch appears to have occurred during the 1st century AD. These deposits were up to 0.80 m thick, and comprised a layer of chalky clay (1006) overlain by a dark brown silt deposit (1016). 'Belgic' pottery and animal bone were recovered from both layers.

There was little evidence for contemporary activity within the hillfort. However, a neonatal human skeleton was inserted into the upper part of middle Iron Age pit 3152 during this period. The skeleton appeared to be contained within a bowl-shaped recut of the pit (3042), measuring 1.15 m in diameter and 0.29 m deep, although it is possible that this was actually a hollow produced by the settling of the pit fills below as the bodies within them decomposed. The recut or hollow had a very stony lower fill (3052), producing a few fragments of pottery and animal bone, and an upper fill of dark brown silty clay (3041) containing the neonate (3074). The body lay at the north-eastern edge of the pit, and appeared to be crouched, with its head to the north. A radiocarbon determination of 20 cal BC-130 cal AD (Poz-12518: 1945 ± 30 BP) was obtained from the skeleton, demonstrating that this burial had been interred over a century later than the adult burial at the base of pit 3152. Other finds from layer 3041 consisted of a few fragments of animal bone and 67 g of middle Iron Age pottery. The latter could be residual, although middle Iron Age-type pottery with associated radiocarbon dates spanning the later 1st century BC-early 1st century AD has been found locally at Mount Farm, Berinsfield (Lambrick forthcoming).

### *Late Roman period*

Further accumulation of deposits in the hillfort ditch occurred during the late Roman period, reaching up to 0.80 m thick. A layer of clay (1011) contained the articulated spine of a dog (1014) accompanied by a group of human disarticulated human bones (1013), probably deriving from a single adult individual (Pl. 2.8). The bones were also accompanied by a scatter of burnt limestone fragments and by 406 g of Roman pottery and fragments of fired clay. This deposit was overlain by a chalky clay erosion deposit (1004), which was followed by an episode of silting (1010). These latter deposits produced further pottery, tile, fired clay and animal bone.

A series of midden-like deposits were dumped at the rear of the hillfort rampart and extending over its top during this period, creating a false 'crest' to the earthwork. These dumped layers consisted of brown-grey clay silts, rich in occupation debris (2005, 2006, 2008 and 2017). They were up to 1 m thick in total, and extended 3 m back from the rear of the rampart. The lowest of the layers (2017) sealed a pair of small, undated, intercutting pits (2020 and 2064). Finds from these layers included large sherds of late Roman pottery, abundant animal bone, and iron nails. Layer 2017 additionally contained some fragments of vessel glass, an iron door stud, and an iron penannular brooch. In the south-east facing section, the dumped Roman layers were disturbed by a possible tree throw hole - clearly visible as a dark brown feature at the crest of the rampart on Plate 2.5 - which also produced Roman material.

An extensive layer of silty colluvial soil also formed behind the rampart during this period, butting up to dumped deposit 2017 and extending for 17 m to the north (3122/3123/3150). These layers appeared to fill a slight hollow within the natural chalk (Fig. 2.3), which corresponds to the 'lynchet' found in the geophysical survey. It is not certain whether this hollow was of natural or human origin. However, the fact that it contained no Iron Age deposits, and that the prehistoric buried soil beneath the hillfort rampart did not continue into this area, could suggest that it was

an artificial feature (such as a shallow quarry) created in the Roman period. At the base of the hollow, a small area of probable metallurgy was seen (3149), consisting of small pebbles set into a shallow lens of clay (Fig. 2.3). The late Roman colluvial layers above this and filling the hollow were up to 0.40 m thick, and contained pottery, animal bone, two worn 3rd-4th century coins, two fragments of late 4th-5th century vessel glass, a rotary quern fragment and a chalk spindle whorl (Fig. 3.13.2).

Further inside the hillfort, to the north of the colluvial deposits, were two large rectangular pits, interpreted as possible quarries (3067 and 3157). These were only partly exposed within the area of excavation, and neither was fully excavated. The geophysical survey data suggests that around half of each feature was uncovered within the trench.

The exposed area of pit 3067 measured 8 m by c. 4 m wide, and was cut over 1 m into the natural chalk at the south end (Fig. 2.9). It had vertical sides at its southern end, but sloping upper sides at its northern end, probably from weathering over some time. Only a small area of the base of the feature was exposed, but this was flat and level. If the base throughout was level, the feature would have been at least 1.75 m deep at the north end. The fills consisted of naturally-deposited clay silt deposits (3049, 3070, 3085, 3119 and 3126-3129) interleaved with chalky erosion deposits (3055 and 3073). Modest amounts of late Roman pottery and animal bone were recovered, along with a small copper alloy ring from layer 3085 (SF 3039). Fragments of human bone were also recovered from layers 3049 and 3085, although these could have been incorporated from one of the adjacent truncated Iron Age pits.

The other rectangular pit (3157) lay alongside pit 3067, but was smaller, as indicated by the geophysical plot. This feature was not excavated to the bottom. The upper clay silt fill (3161) of the pit produced a few fragments of animal bone and a human cranium (SF 3072). The latter find could perhaps have derived from middle Iron Age pit 3155, which contained a partial human skeleton and was cut by 3157. As no datable finds were recovered, 3157 has been phased purely on the grounds of its similarity to 3067.

Further uphill, a shallow grave (3010) was cut into the upper fills of Iron Age pit 3015. It contained the supine skeleton of an adult male (3012), with its head to the south-west (Fig. 2.8). The grave was very shallow and had been truncated by ploughing, removing the skull and much of the lower mandible. The burial was accompanied by several large pottery sherds, one from an Oxford Ware colour-coated bowl found on the pelvis, and three from local Compton vessels, dating the burial to the 4th century.

### ***Roman/medieval period***

A series of colluvial layers overlying the late Roman deposits contained Roman, Saxon and medieval finds, presumably as a result of mixing through plough action (3027, 3028, 3062, 3096, 3105 and 3120). The layers were up to 0.50 m thick, and extended from the rear of the hillfort rampart for a distance of 28 m to the north.

The deposits overlie late Roman features and are sealed by medieval deposits of the late 11th-13th centuries, so fall broadly into the Saxon period. However, the mixed nature of the finds within them means that they can only be ascribed a broad 'Roman/medieval' date. Much of the pottery was of late Roman date, but an early to middle Saxon sherd was found in deposit 3028, and ten sherds of 11th-13th century pottery were also recovered. Disarticulated human bone was also recovered from

layer 3028, lying above late Roman quarry pit 3067 (Fig. 2.9), and had no doubt been redeposited from an earlier feature.

### ***Medieval period***

Above the 'Roman/medieval' deposits, a further group of colluvial layers can be more securely dated to the medieval period (1005, 1021, 3022, 3043-3045 and 3075-3077). These were up to 0.50 m thick, extending for 30 m to the north of the rampart, and also continuing over the crest of the rampart and into the northern edge of the hillfort ditch. Pottery, burnt stone and animal bone were recovered. Although a significant minority of the pottery consisted of residual prehistoric or Roman material, several large, refitting fragments of an 11th-13th century Wallingford Ware vessel were recovered from the deposits immediately behind the hillfort rampart (Fig. 3.9.1). A number of iron objects were also found, including nails, a decorative hinge or door strap (Fig. 3.11.2), a handle mount (Fig. 3.11.3) and two socketed points, possibly arrowheads (Fig. 3.11.4-.5).

### ***Post-medieval period***

The finds from the uppermost silting deposits within the hillfort ditch - up to 0.60 m thick - show that these were laid down during the post-medieval period (1001-1003 and 1018).

## **Trench 4 (Fig. 2.10)**

### ***Natural geology***

The natural geology in Trench 4 consisted of chalk, overlain by sand belonging to the Plateau Gravel at the western end of the trench. These deposits were encountered at a depth of 0.25 m beneath the present ground surface throughout the length of the trench, which sloped at an angle of only a few degrees down to the east.

### ***Late Bronze Age***

The late Bronze Age enclosure ditch was uncovered in the centre of the trench (4007). At this point the ditch was 4.3 m wide and ran on a north-south alignment. Only the upper 0.40 m of the ditch was excavated, showing that this part of the feature had fairly gently sloping sides. The material recovered from the excavated fills suggested that, as with intervention 3017, the final infilling of the ditch took place during the early Iron Age (see below)

### ***Early Iron Age***

The upper fills of late Bronze Age enclosure ditch 4007 consisted of a series of naturally-formed silting deposits. Two sherds of early Iron Age pottery and a single piece of animal bone were recovered from the lowest of the exposed fills (4013).

Further evidence for activity in this period was provided by a shallow, irregular pit or area of bioturbation (4005), immediately to the west of ditch 4007. This was 0.10 m deep with a silty fill, containing two sherds of early Iron Age pottery. The feature was cut by medieval pit 4003.

### ***Late Roman period***

Rectangular pit 4009 was located at the eastern end of the trench (Pl. 2.9). It had a sheer-sided, flat-based profile similar to contemporary pit 3067, although it was considerably smaller, measuring 2.9 m by 2.0 m in size and 1.00 m deep. The lower fills can be characterised as erosion deposits, consisting of clay or silt with a high proportion of degraded chalk inclusions (4012, 4015, 4016, 4046-4051 and 4056). Layers 4015 and 4047 in particular contained very large amounts of chalk and must represent major edge erosion episodes. This was followed by two clay layers, possibly deliberately dumped (4011 and 4042), before a further episode of erosion represented by chalk rich layers 4043 and 4045. The uppermost fills consisted of sandy clay deposits (4010 and 4052). Small quantities of pottery and animal bone (including a cock spur) were recovered from six of the fills (4010-4012, 4015, 4016 and 4042), with iron nails found in two fills (4016 and 4042) and a worn 3rd-4th century AD coin from fill 4011. Notably, all of the layers containing finds appear to have entered the pit from the west, perhaps indicating that the focus of contemporary activity lay in this direction.

### ***Medieval period***

Pit 4003 was located in the centre of the trench. It was square in plan, measuring 1.80 by 1.80 m in size and 1.00 m deep, with sheer sides and a flat base. The lowest fill (4037) was a silting deposit, containing only a small amount of animal bone. Above this, and occupying the central part of the pit, was a shallow lens of dark brown, organic-rich silty sand with some charcoal flecks (4040). This layer contained animal bone, large fragments of 11th-13th century Wallingford Ware pottery (Fig. 3.9.2), and an iron spoon-bit auger. A sample taken from this deposit produced a rich charred plant assemblage including wheat, barley and oat grains, hazelnut shell and beech charcoal. The subsequent fills of the pit were probably deposited through natural processes of silting and erosion. These included three erosion deposits containing significant amounts of chalk (4019, 4035 and 4039). Finds from the middle and upper layers of the pit were largely restricted to animal bone and small amounts of residual prehistoric and Roman pottery. An iron padlock bolt was also recovered from layer 4024, however.

### ***Medieval/post-medieval period?***

A shallow linear feature (4001) crossed the western end of the trench on a N-S alignment. This measured 3.10 m wide and 0.20 m deep, with a pale silty fill. It had been disturbed by a possible tree throw hole (4021) at its southern end. Three small sherds of early Iron Age pottery were the only finds recovered. The location of this feature approximately corresponds with a tentative curvilinear anomaly identified by

the geophysical survey, and on this evidence it could be suggested to represent a small, sub-circular early Iron Age enclosure. It seems more likely that the pottery is residual, however, as the feature has the overall appearance of a lynchet or boundary associated with the medieval to post-medieval agricultural use of the hilltop.

### **Trench 5 and 5a (Trench 2.10)**

#### ***Natural geology and topography.***

The natural geology as exposed within Trench 5 consisted of Plateau Gravel deposits of sand and gravel mixed with some chalk and clay. It was reached at a depth of 0.20-0.40 m below the present ground surface. There was an abrupt drop in level from south to north towards the south end of the trench, north of which the trench sloped gently downwards towards the north. The drop in level appeared to be of natural origin, being overlain only by a slightly greater depth of topsoil.

#### ***Late Bronze Age***

The southern edge of a large feature was exposed by machine at the very north end of Trench 5a. This feature (5018) is likely to be the late Bronze Age enclosure ditch although this feature could not be excavated for lack of time. The ditch was at least 3.40 m wide at this point; its full width was concealed on the north by an overlying subsoil deposit (5013). Finds recovered from the surface of the feature included early Iron Age pottery, corresponding with the dating evidence for the final infilling of the enclosure ditch in Trenches 3 and 4.

#### ***Early Iron Age***

Two silt fills were identified in the exposed surface of ditch 5018, with layer 5012 overlying layer 5011, although neither was investigated further. Layer 5011 produced three sherds of early Iron Age pottery, and a worked fragment of igneous stone, possibly part of a mould.

#### ***Post-medieval period***

Three parallel linear features on a NNW-SSE alignment probably represent planting trenches associated with the 18th century creation of the beech plantation. These trenches were placed 1.5-2.0 m apart, and were up to 1.00 m wide and 0.15 m deep, with gentle U-shaped profiles. They terminated just inside the boundary bank around the clump (5016), indicating that they are contemporary. No finds were recovered other than a few fragments of animal bone.

### **Trench 6 (Fig. 2.12)**

#### ***Natural geology and topography***

The natural geology revealed in Trench 6 consisted of Plateau Gravels and sandy clays, and was encountered at a depth of 0.30-0.45 m below the present ground surface. Chalk was found underlying the gravels at a depth of c. 1 m. The trench sloped gently downwards from east to west.

### ***Late Bronze Age***

The late Bronze Age enclosure ditch (6003) was uncovered in the western half of the trench (Pl. 2.2). At this point the ditch was 4.50 m wide and 2.00 m deep, with a U-shaped cut. The initial fill of the ditch (6036) consisted largely of redeposited chalk, containing moderate amounts of burnt stone (quartzite and quartzitic sandstone cobbles) and animal bone. This was overlain by four deposits of sandy clay (6027, 6034, 6035 and 6037), most of which appear to have entered the ditch from the east. Animal bone was recovered from these fills. In addition, six sherds of late Bronze Age pottery were recovered from fill 6037, and a discrete dump of late Bronze Age sherds (6031) was found within fill 6027. Most of the sherds from this latter context conjoined to form a semi-complete globular jar with an applied neck cordon (Fig. 3.2.9). A sample taken from this layer produced sparse quantities of charred wheat grain, providing a radiocarbon determination of 905-805 cal BC (Poz-14319: 2700±30 BP). The fills above 6027 appear to have been deposited during the early Iron Age, and are described below.

### ***Early Iron Age***

As in Trench 3, the upper fills of the late Bronze Age enclosure ditch (0.80 m deep) contained substantial quantities of finds, including 2.8 kg of pottery, 1.8 kg of animal bone, and some burnt stone. The first of these fills (6021) consisted of sandy silt with several chalk lenses indicating erosion from the western side of the ditch. This was followed by two further sandy silt deposits (6004 and 6017), which may represent episodes of silting.

Layer 6017 sealed two shallow postholes (6026 and 6028), placed 2 m apart and cut into the late Bronze Age deposits beneath (6027). These measured 0.28-0.38 m in diameter and 0.12-0.24 m deep, with sheer sides and a flat base. They could possibly represent a fence or post line redefining part of the enclosure, though no comparable postholes were found in Trench 3. A few sherds of early Iron Age pottery and some fragments of animal bone were recovered from both postholes.

### ***Middle Iron Age***

Pit 6022 lay at the eastern end of the trench, and had been truncated by medieval pit 6011. It was 0.60 m deep, with a bowl-shaped profile and a single fill of sandy silt. Iron Age pottery, animal bone and burnt stone were recovered. A group of disarticulated adult human bones were also found, including fragments of a femur, tibia, skull and finger bones. These may originally have belonged to an articulated burial, disturbed by the medieval pit, as the latter feature also produced numerous human bones, all of which could have belonged to this same individual. A

radiocarbon determination of 360-280 cal BC/260BC-50 cal BC was obtained from the human femur (Poz-12526: 2150 ± 30 BP).

### ***Medieval period***

Pit 6011 was a large sub-circular feature, at least 2.0 m in diameter and 1.35 m deep. Although the base of the feature was not reached, the lowest exposed fill (6039) consisted of sterile sand. This was overlain by a dump of ashy material (6024), containing animal bone, a sherd of 11th-13th century Wallingford Ware pottery, two iron knife blades and a horseshoe fragment. Disarticulated human bone was also recovered, almost certainly redeposited from middle Iron Age pit 6022. A sample from this layer contained a charred plant assemblage very similar to that from contemporary pit 4003, including wheat and oat grains, hazelnut shell and beech charcoal. Layer 6024 was overlain by three sandy clay deposits (6012, 6030 and 6033), containing animal bone, residual prehistoric and Roman pottery, burnt stone and further human remains.

### ***Later medieval/earlier post-medieval period***

After pit 6011 had been filled, it was overlain by a probable ploughsoil layer (6001). This was up to 0.40 m deep and extended the length of the trench.

### ***Post-medieval period***

A series of planting trenches (grouped as 6002) were cut into ploughsoil layer 6001. These extended across most of the excavated area, parallel to those in Trench 5, and were placed around 2 m apart. They were typically around 0.90 m wide and 0.15 m deep, with U- to V-shaped profiles. No finds were recovered.

### ***Undated features***

Two small bowl-shaped pits (6009 and 6015) lying close to late Bronze Age enclosure ditch 6003 produced no dating evidence. Both were 0.50 m in diameter, and had silty fills containing a few fragments of animal bone.

### **Trench 7 (Fig. 2.13)**

#### ***Natural geology***

Natural chalk was encountered at a depth of 0.35-0.45 m below the present ground level.

#### ***Prehistoric***

The natural was overlain by a buried soil layer (5062), 0.12 m thick, which produced two worked flint flakes. As no trace of a prehistoric buried soil was found in any of the other trenches at Castle Hill, this could perhaps have been caught in a localised hollow. It was cut by late Bronze Age or early Iron Age feature 5069.

### ***Late Bronze Age or early Iron Age***

Feature 5069 was partially uncovered at the eastern edge of the trench. It was probably a pit, although its dimensions are uncertain as it was not excavated beyond a depth of 0.40 m (Fig. 2.13). Of the three fills recorded within 5069, the uppermost (5066) was a mid brown-grey silt with occasional flint pebble inclusions. Below this, fill 5067 was a thin layer of re-deposited chalk. The lowest revealed fill was 5068, another mid brown-grey silt with occasional charcoal flecks. This fill contained a small group of pottery of late Bronze Age or early Iron Age character.

### ***Iron Age or Roman period***

A small pit or posthole, 5065, cut through feature 5069 and the buried soil layer. This was sub-circular in plan, with steep straight sides. It measured 0.36 m in diameter, and was again only excavated to a depth of 0.40 m. The excavated part of the feature contained a single fill of brown-grey clay silt (5064). Finds included a small group of early Iron Age pottery, one small sherd of Roman pottery, some animal bone and struck flint. A sample taken from the feature contained sparse amounts of charred cereal grain and chaff, along with some charcoal.

### ***Post-medieval period***

The earlier features were overlain by material forming the wood bank associated with the 18th century creation of the beech plantation (5061). This deposit varied from 0.08-0.21 m thick.

## **Trenches 8 and 9 (Figs 2.14 and 2.15)**

### ***Natural geology***

Natural chalk was encountered at a depth of 0.15-0.40 m below the present ground surface in Trenches 8 and 9.

### ***Undated deposits***

In both trenches, the natural was overlain by a layer of buried soil, 0.10-0.17 m thick (5051 and 5072). No finds were recovered. This soil is probably equivalent to the ploughsoil overlying the medieval pit in Trench 6.

### *Post-medieval period*

Wood bank material similar to that in Trench 7 overlay the buried soil in both trenches (5053 and 5071). This was overlain by the modern topsoil. The topsoil in Trench 8 (5050) contained five disarticulated human bones, all probably derived from a single individual. This suggests disturbance of earlier burials in the area.

### **Trench 10 (Fig. 2.16)**

#### *Natural geology and undated deposits*

The lowest deposit revealed, lying at a depth of 0.40 m below the present ground surface, was an extensive layer of chalk (22002). This was observed for 17 m along the base of the entrance where it passes between the hillfort ditches and banks. It is uncertain whether this represents the undisturbed bedrock or a substantial layer of 'clean' upcast. If the former, it would confirm that the entrance was original. If the latter, it indicates significant building up of the entranceway at some point, presumably with material quarried close by, most likely from the ditch.

The western end of the chalk layer appeared to be overlain by a 'tongue' of soil indistinguishable from the topsoil. This is interpreted as soil filling a hollow (cut 22006) formed in the chalk by wear along the centre of the entrance. The width of the hollow suggests that this was not caused by wheeled traffic but by animals or humans on foot.

#### *Post-Roman period*

To the east of 22006, the chalk was overlain by a clay deposit up to 0.25 m thick, containing some flint and quartzite pebbles (22001). The recovered finds included small amounts of later prehistoric and Roman pottery, along with one small post-medieval sherd. The mixed character of the layer, in which pebbles occur scattered through the deposit, suggests that it is likely to be a ploughsoil or colluvial deposit of post-Roman date.

In the middle of the entrance, patches of a more pebbly horizon (22005) were exposed. The pebbles were similar to those found in the plateau gravel that capped the chalk on Castle Hill and those found in the natural clay subsoil overlying the chalk and Greensand in places below the hill, although they were more restricted in size range (between 0.01 and 0.06 m), lacking the larger quartzite pebbles seen elsewhere. They may have been obtained locally, but do not appear to be occurring naturally due to the preferential selection for size. This pebble horizon could possibly have formed naturally by worm-sorting of pebbles in the overlying ploughsoil. However, given the patchiness and unevenness of this deposit it seems more likely to represent metalling to stabilise the entrance, with the pebbles subsequently worn away by trampling or natural weathering.

Layers 22001 and 22005 had a slightly ambiguous relationship to a narrow gully (22004) which cut through the chalk on an E-W alignment. This was thought likely to be a post-Roman drainage ditch, and was not excavated. The main fill of this feature (22003) was similar to 22001 but included charcoal flecks; a sherd of Early Iron Age pottery was recovered from its surface. A line of somewhat softer and

`greener' chalk visible on the north side of 22003 could possibly indicate a primary weathered chalk fill of the gully. To the east, where layer 22001 had not been removed, the gully became difficult to trace. However, a straight edge to pebble layer 22005 appeared to follow the line of the northern edge of gully fill 22003, suggesting that it continued eastwards. Three small slots (0.05 m deep) were dug to clarify this, identifying a change in layer probably corresponding to the southern edge of gully fill 22003. No trace of the gully could be identified to the east of the pebble horizon.

Stratigraphically it is clear that fill 22003 was later than pebble horizon 22005, but it is uncertain whether 22005 was cut by gully 22004 or overlay its edge, forming part of an earlier fill slumping into the open gully. It is similarly uncertain whether the gully was cut through layer 22001 on the south side, or whether this soil also developed later and slumped into the open gully.

### *Post-medieval period*

Layer 22001 was overlain by a clayey soil layer (22000), 0.30 m thick, interpreted as a lynchet derived from post-medieval ploughing. This deposit contained post-medieval pottery and bottle glass, a fragment of clay pipe stem, and residual late Bronze Age and Roman pottery. It was directly overlain by the modern topsoil.