

Possible Iron Age 'Banjo' Enclosures on the Lambourn Downs

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SUMMARY

Iron Age 'banjo' enclosures are a recognised and widespread site type, especially in the south of England. This paper examines a number of banjo enclosures which have been mapped, from cropmarks, on the Lambourn Downs, and discusses the possible function of this type of site. The enclosures on the Lambourn Downs have remarkably similar topographical situations which may have social or geographically determined origins. Many questions about the exact date and function of these sites will remain unanswered until further research is carried out but they certainly seem to have formed an important part of the Iron Age landscape on the Lambourn Downs.

The Iron Age banjo enclosures discussed here were mapped as part of the Lambourn Downs Mapping Project¹ which forms part of the English Heritage (formerly RCHME) National Mapping Programme (NMP).² The aim of NMP is to increase our understanding of past human land use and to create a map for the whole of England of all archaeological features, with a date range from the Neolithic to the 20th century, which appear on aerial photographs. This broad approach allows a wide variety of features to be systematically analysed and it is hoped it will provide information on archaeological sites and landscapes which can be used as a basis for research at a local, regional and national level.

A single class of site, the banjo enclosure, has been examined within the local context of the Lambourn Downs and in comparison to the excavated evidence of this type of site in the south of England. The main purpose of this article is to highlight the form, topographical location and landscape context of the sites. Interpretations based on aerial photographs have to be limited to these factors until further fieldwork, including excavation, reveals more about each site.

The Lambourn Downs survey covered a 30 km. by 20 km. area of the Berkshire Downs and part of the Vale of the White Horse. The northern third of the survey area lies within Oxfordshire, the remainder in Berkshire and a small part of Wiltshire. The majority of the survey area is dominated by gently rolling chalk upland with much of the land lying over 180 m. above OD, rising to a maximum height of just over 220 m. above OD. The two main rivers which rise on the Downs are the Lambourn, which flows south-eastwards to join the Kennet at Newbury, and the Pang which joins the Thames to the east (Plate 1).

IDENTIFICATION OF BANJO ENCLOSURES

The banjo enclosure is a common archaeological site type in the south of England and comprises a curvilinear enclosure with a protruding funnel-shaped entrance.³ Similarity of form is not necessarily an indication of similarities in the function, or even date, of a site, as

¹ F. Small, 'The Lambourn Downs, A Report for the National Mapping Programme' (English Heritage unpubl. survey report, 2002).

² R.H. Bewley, 'Understanding England's Historic Landscapes: An Aerial Perspective', *Landscapes*, 2 i (2001).

³ B. Cunliffe, *Iron Age Communities in Britain* (1991), 221 and Fig. 12.5.

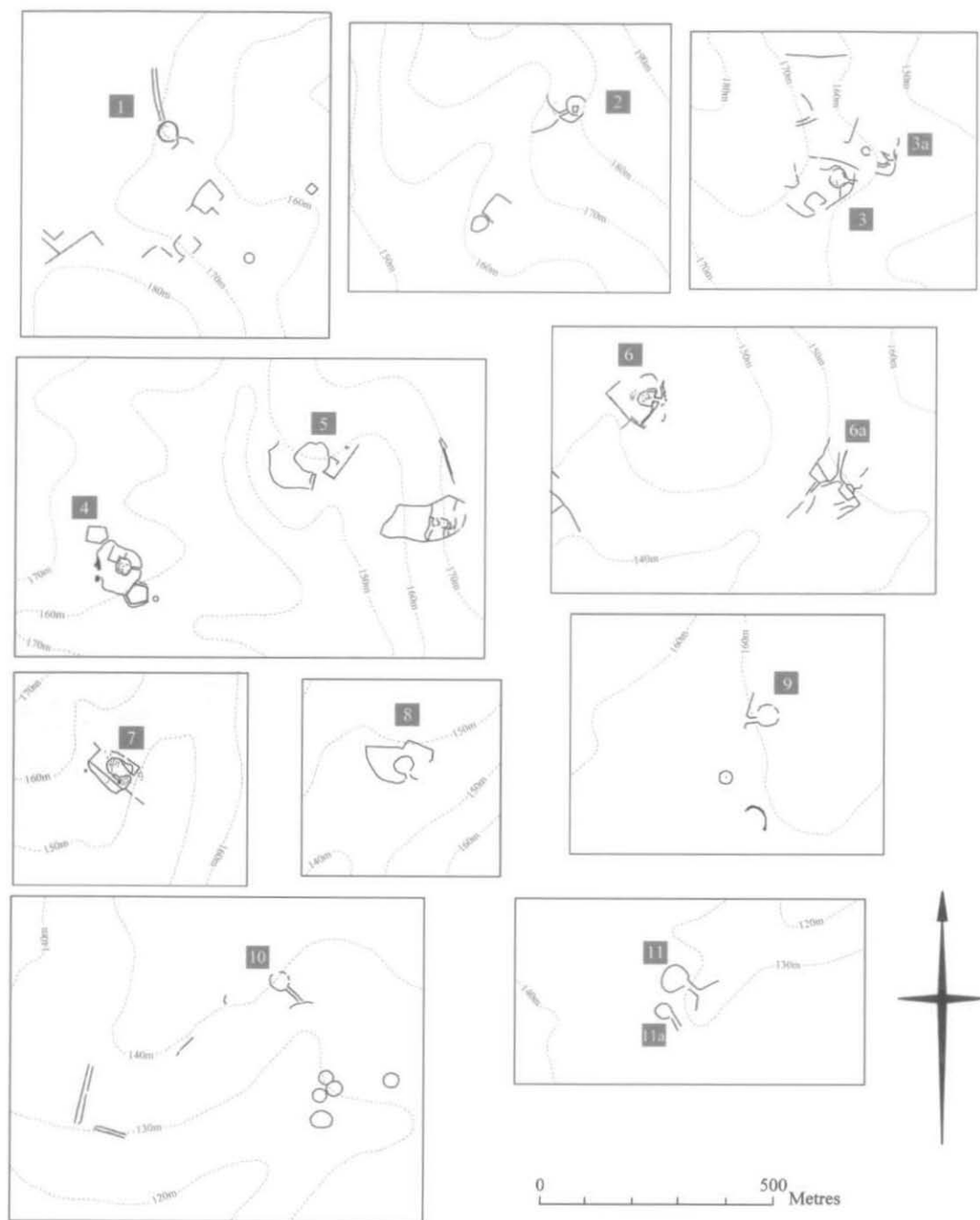


Fig. 1. Form of the banjo enclosures. Numbers refer to the gazetteer in the appendix.
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Fig. 2. A possible Romano-British field system and two banjo enclosures on opposite sides of a dry valley by Letcombe Bowers. NMR SU 3982/30 (4301/76) 15-APR-1989 © Crown copyright. NMR.

an examination of the diversity of Iron Age settlements in west Wessex has shown.⁴ Excavations of banjo enclosures have also suggested a number of different functions for this type of site, but the date range usually falls somewhere in the Middle to Late Iron Age.⁵

The Lambourn Downs survey has added considerably to the handful of banjo enclosures originally identified in the area by Richards.⁶ The majority of the banjo enclosures are not visible as clearly defined cropmarks and the more complex sites were mapped from a number of photographs taken over several years. Each of the sites has the common elements of a curvilinear enclosure and a funnel entrance (Figs. 1 and 2). A gazetteer of sites is listed in the appendix.

There are parallels in the form of some of the banjos on the Lambourn Downs with those found elsewhere on the chalk downs of Wessex. Banjo number 5 could be compared to the excavated Middle Iron Age site at Little Woodbury⁷ or to the Early and Middle Iron Age phases of the banjo at Gussage All Saints.⁸ Banjos 1-4 and 8-11 have more circular enclosures similar to unexcavated sites in Hampshire, a Middle Iron Age settlement at Bramdean⁹ and the Middle/Late Iron Age enclosure at Micheldever Wood.¹⁰

FORM AND FUNCTION

The funnel entrance of the banjo enclosure is often thought to indicate that stock control was a primary function of this type of site as the funnel could be used as a means of controlling and sorting animals. It has been suggested that internal boundaries, forming pens or more funnels for sorting animals, is further evidence that the main function of some of these sites was stock management.¹¹ Evidence for settlement or associated settlements has, however, been found at a number of sites.¹² It is also possible that some sites performed a more complex function than simply as farms or stock enclosures. The funnel could be interpreted as the remains of an impressive entrance to a high status enclosure as has been suggested at some sites in North Oxfordshire.¹³ The excavators of a site at Nettlebank Copse in Hampshire have suggested the banjo enclosure, which was characterised as a small farm in the context of other Iron Age settlements in the environs of Danebury hillfort,¹⁴ could

⁴ D. McOmish, 'Non-Hillfort Settlement and its Implications', in M. Bowden, D. Mackay and P. Topping, *From Cornwall to Caithness, Some Aspects of British Field Archaeology* (BAR 209, 1989), 99-110.

⁵ Cunliffe, *op. cit.* note 3, pp. 220-3; P.J. Fasham, *A Banjo Enclosure in Micheldever Wood* (Hants Field Club Monograph 5, 1987); R. Holgate, 'Excavations at the Late Prehistoric and Romano-British Enclosure at Carne's Seat, Goodwood, West Sussex 1984', *Sussex Archaeol. Collections*, 124 (1986), 35-50; B.T. Perry, 'Iron Age Enclosure and Settlements on the Hampshire Chalklands', *Archaeol. Jnl.* 126 (1970), 29-43; B.T. Perry, 'Excavations at Bramdean, Hampshire, 1983 and 1984, with some further discussion of the 'Banjo' Syndrome', *Proc. of Hants Field Club Archaeol. Soc.* 42 (1986), 35-42; G.J. Wainwright, *Gussage All Saints, An Iron Age Settlement in Dorset* (Dept. of Environment Archaeol. Rep. no. 10, 1979).

⁶ J.C. Richards, *The Archaeology of the Berkshire Downs: An Introductory Survey* (1978), 41-2 and Fig. 22.

⁷ Cunliffe, *op. cit.* note 3, p. 217 and Figs. 12.2-3.

⁸ Wainwright, *op. cit.* note 5, pp. 16-24 and Figs. 16-18.

⁹ Perry (1970 and 1986), *op. cit.* note 5.

¹⁰ Fasham, *op. cit.* note 5.

¹¹ R. Massey, 'The North Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch: Cult, Status and Polity in the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age' (Bristol Univ. unpubl. MA thesis, 1999), 67 and Fig. 34.

¹² R. Hingley, 'Towards Social Analysis in Archaeology: Celtic Society in the Iron Age of the Upper Thames Valley', in B. Cunliffe and D. Miles (eds.), *Aspects of the Iron Age in Central Southern Britain* (OUCA Monograph 2, 1984), 73.

¹³ Massey, *op. cit.* note 11, p. 67 and Fig. 33.

¹⁴ B. Cunliffe, *The Danebury Environs Programme. The Prehistory of a Wessex Landscape, 1: Introduction* (English Heritage and OUCA Monograph No. 48, 2000), 170.

have performed a ritual rather than practical function in its latter stages.¹⁵ If comparable to these excavated sites then the banjo enclosures on the Lambourn Downs could have performed a variety of functions and some probably served a number of different uses.

The majority of excavated banjo enclosures in southern England have produced at least some evidence for settlement within or outwith the central enclosure. Internal features, mainly pits, can be seen in half of the 12 banjos recorded on the Lambourn Downs and could be evidence of domestic activity at those sites. The lack of evidence of more substantial internal features, e.g. hut circles, could be due to poor preservation and/or poor cropmark formation. It is also possible that some of the banjo enclosures, perhaps numbers 6 and 7 as they have pits outside the central enclosure, may be associated with an adjacent open settlement (as at Wavendon Gate¹⁶), a type of site which requires exceptional conditions to show clearly as cropmarks. It is also possible that some of the banjo enclosures are showing as cropmarks in their entirety and that the lack of additional features is because they served a non-domestic function.

Hingley¹⁷ and Perry¹⁸ make a distinction between banjos where the banjo has a specialised pastoral function within a settlement complex and those where the settlement is located within the banjo enclosure itself. Banjos 3, 3a, 11 and 11a could represent the remains of settlements where the presence of more than one banjo element may indicate a number of different functional areas, perhaps similar to the sites at Hamshill, Wiltshire.¹⁹ However until the full extent of each of the cropmark sites on the Lambourn Downs is known, it is difficult to ascertain whether the banjos which seem to form part of a complex set of features (numbers 3-8, 11, 11a) served a different function from the apparently simpler sites (numbers 1, 2, 9, 10). Even where a relatively full plan is visible as cropmarks it will be difficult to ascertain the various functions of different parts of the sites, i.e. industrial, pastoral or arable areas, until they are excavated.

TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING AND FUNCTION

Although the entrances of the banjos recorded on the Lambourn Downs are orientated in varying directions they are all situated on slopes, between 150 m. and 180 m. above OD, overlooking valleys with their funnel entrance pointing down-slope, usually into a valley. It is possible that the ditches defining the entrances were used for drainage and/or that the entrances are deliberately facing down into the sheltered valley bottom. This contrasts with the findings in Hampshire where only four out of 17 sites studied had entrances pointing down-slope.²⁰ Hingley suggests that the entrance may be pointing towards a defined area of pasture, in his discussion of the Upper Thames Valley banjo enclosures as individual mixed-farming units.²¹ If this model can be applied to the sites recorded on the Lambourn Downs then perhaps this indicates that the lower slopes below the banjo enclosures were being used for pasture. The land up-slope, within and around the enclosure, could then be dedicated

¹⁵ B. Cunliffe and C. Poole, *The Danebury Environs Programme: The Prehistory of a Wessex Landscape*, 2 pt. 5: *Nettlebank Copse, Wherwell, Hants*, 1993 (English Heritage and OUCA Monograph No. 49, 2000), 135-6.

¹⁶ R.J. Williams, P.J. Hart and A.T.L. Williams, *Wavendon Gate: A Late Iron Age and Roman Settlement in Milton Keynes* (Bucks. Archaeol. Soc. Monograph Ser. No. 10, 1996), 23.

¹⁷ Hingley, op. cit. note 12, pp. 74, 80.

¹⁸ Perry (1986), op. cit. note 5, p. 41.

¹⁹ D.J. Bonney, 'Hamshill Ditches, Barford St. Martin', *Wilts. Archaeol. Magazine*, 62 (1967), 119 and Fig. 1.

²⁰ Fasham, op. cit. note 5, p. 63.

²¹ Hingley, op. cit. note 12, pp. 80-1, Fig. 5.9a.

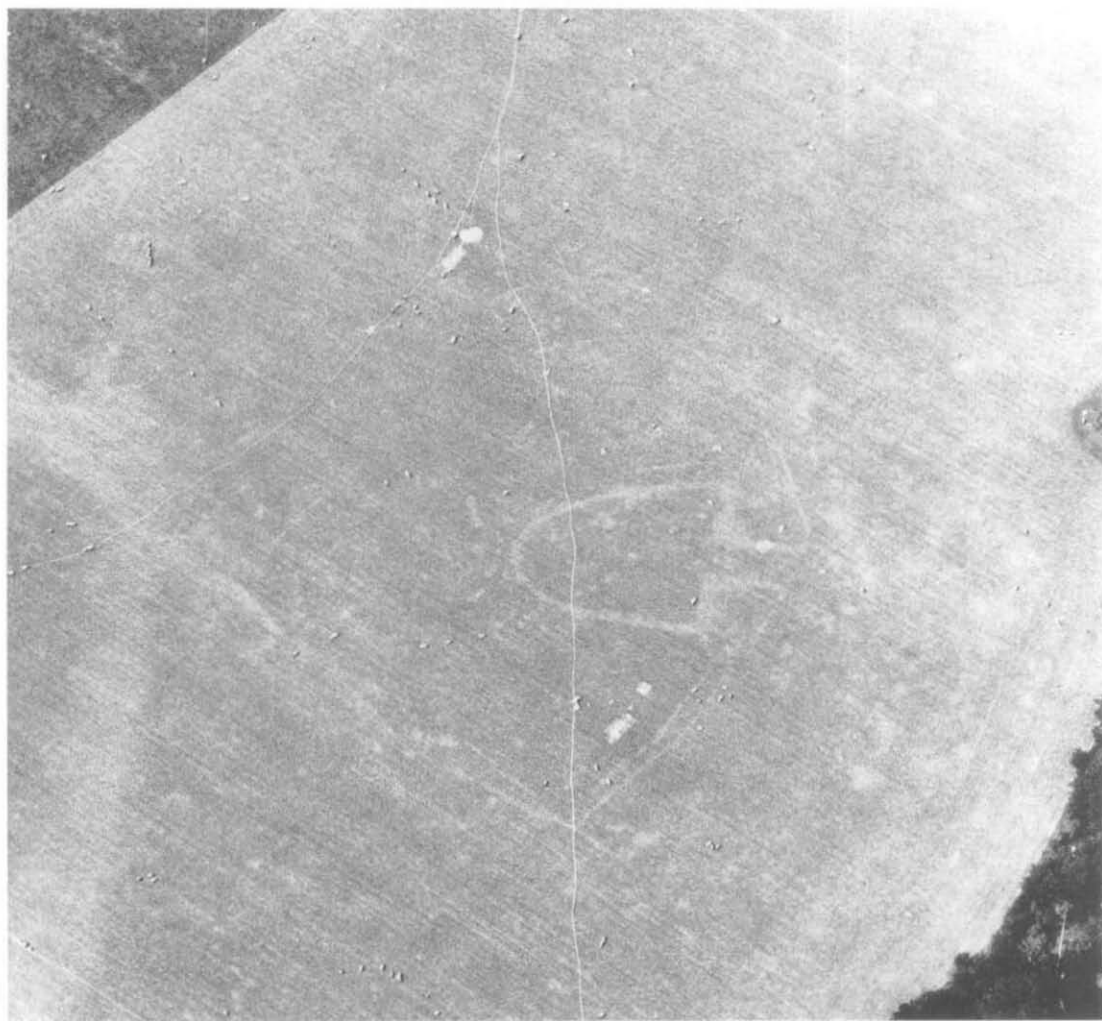


Fig. 3. Banjo enclosure by Sparrow's Copse. NMR SU 4082/14 (4654/16) 17-JUL-1990 © Crown copyright. NMR.

to settlement and/or arable. In particular, at banjos 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 it is possible that the smaller central enclosure was surrounded by an enclosed area of arable or pasture and that the apparently open land around the site was dedicated to the opposite of what happened within the enclosures.

The banjos may have been established in positions to exploit the lighter soils on the higher land as well as the heavier soils and shelter further down the valleys. The banjos are all situated on the Upper Chalk and some are on the light soils of the ANDOVER 1 (banjos 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8) and COOMBE 1 (banjo 6) associations, while the remainder are on the clayey soils of the HORNBEAM 2 (banjos 9, 10, 11b), HORNBEAM 3 (banjos 3, 3a) and SONNING 1 (banjo 11a) associations. All have access to at least two different soil types in their immediate vicinity and so could have been engaged in mixed farming regimes. This seems to be a common feature in the topographical position of banjos in the south of England.²²

It has been suggested that, as they generally occupy higher and potentially more marginal land, the development of the banjo as a type of settlement formed part of an expansion of agrarian activity around the margins of already established patterns of Early Iron Age and Middle Iron Age settlement and land use.²³ If the banjo enclosures on the Lambourn Downs were a late addition to the Iron Age landscape on the Downs they may not have been permanently occupied because they served some other, possibly ritual, function as has been suggested for the site at Nettlebank Copse.²⁴ Alternatively, lack of a permanent water supply on the upper slopes of the chalk, compounded by possible lower water tables in the period 400 BC to 450 AD,²⁵ may mean that the banjos were established on marginal farming land and for this reason were only seasonally occupied. However, lack of running water may not have been a major problem as Field²⁶ suggests ponds could have been a feature of Iron Age sites on chalk downland and cites, among other examples, the possible dew pond at Micheldever Wood banjo enclosure. Possible evidence for water management was also found at Uffington hillfort²⁷ on higher land, 8 km. to the north-west of the concentration of banjo enclosures on the Downs. So far no evidence for ponds has been found at any of the Lambourn Downs banjo enclosures but this is mainly because cut features are difficult to categorise, especially when seen as cropmarks, as they may represent the remains of quarry, rubbish or storage pits, or ponds.

DISTRIBUTION OF BANJO ENCLOSURES

The banjos are relatively evenly spaced: banjos 1-3 are 1-1.3 km. apart, banjos 4 and 5 are 465 m. apart and banjos 5-8 are situated at 1.1-1.35 km. intervals. Banjos 8-10 are situated at 2-4 km. intervals. When the distribution is looked at as a whole there appear to be larger gaps between banjos 8, 9 and 10. This could be due to 'missing' banjo enclosures in the distribution because they have not been discovered due to denser tree cover and the poor potential for cropmark formation on the heavier soils in the southern part of the survey area.

²² Ibid. 80.

²³ B. Cunliffe, op. cit. note 3, p. 223.

²⁴ B. Cunliffe, op. cit. note 14, p. 189.

²⁵ D. Field, 'Ancient Water Management on Salisbury Plain', in P. Pattison, D. Field and S. Ainsworth (eds.), *Patterns of the Past: Essays in Landscape Archaeology for Christopher Taylor* (1999), 31.

²⁶ Ibid. 30.

²⁷ G. Lock and C. Gosden, 'Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project: Excavations on White Horse Hill 1995', *CBA Group 9, S. Midlands Group Newsletter*, 27 (1997), 66.

Most of the banjos (Plate 1) are situated at the head of, or in, lesser valleys which lead into two deeper valleys, both of which connect to the Lambourn valley. As the River Lambourn drains into the Kennet it is possible that the banjos are situated within a transport or communication system which links the higher ground on the Downs to the Kennet Valley, utilising the lesser valleys which lead down to the River Lambourn and ultimately to the River Kennet. This distribution appears to be comparable to that of the banjo enclosures in North Oxfordshire where the banjo enclosures appear to cluster on the well-drained soils on the higher ground above the main river valleys which cut through the limestone uplands.²⁸

The Lambourn Downs banjo enclosures could be comparable to Hingley's suggested idealised social model for Iron Age settlement in the Thames Valley.²⁹ Here Hingley describes a highly formalised settlement landscape with a widely dispersed distribution of enclosed settlements. Hingley also suggests that the relative isolation of each of the units, and the possible importance within the group, is demonstrated by the wide spatial boundaries between individual examples and the enclosed nature of the settlements.

Sites known only from aerial photographs will inevitably, due to the nature of the evidence, take the form of ditched and embanked enclosures and boundaries and represent the remains of only some aspects of former settlement and agriculture in the area. The aerial photographic evidence is, therefore, only one part of the overall distribution of Iron Age settlement on the Lambourn Downs. Until further work is carried out it may be impossible to ascertain if the distribution of the banjos represents contemporary features within a formalised system of land allotment or part of a complex pattern of shifting, open and enclosed, settlement which developed over a long period of time.

DISTRIBUTION OF BANJOS AND OTHER IRON AGE FEATURES

The banjo enclosures, although not isolated, do not seem to have any obvious relationship with other archaeological features within their immediate environs (Plate 2). For example the so called 'Celtic fields'³⁰ appear to overlie a number of the banjo enclosures. Few of the features recorded as part of the aerial survey of the Lambourn Downs have any evidence from excavation or finds which indicates an Iron Age phase. During the course of the survey a number of features have been identified which, on morphological grounds, could have an Iron Age date. 'D' shaped enclosures may have Iron Age origins as they are similar in shape to excavated examples³¹ although many simple rectilinear enclosures often have Iron Age dating evidence.³² A Romano-British date cannot be ruled out for many of these enclosures as the seemingly simple enclosures investigated as part of the Maddall Farm survey proved to be Romano-British settlements with possible Iron Age origins.³³ Without further dating evidence many of the enclosures can only be assigned a broad date range within the late

²⁸ R. Featherstone and R.H. Bewley, 'Recent Aerial Reconnaissance in North Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, lxxv (2000), 21-2 and plate 2.

²⁹ Hingley, op. cit. note 12, p. 80 and Fig. 5.7b.

³⁰ P.P. Rhodes, 'The Celtic Field-Systems on the Berkshire Downs', *Oxoniensia*, xv (1950), 1-28; see also S. Ford, M. Bowden, V. Gaffney and G. Mees, 'Dating Ancient Field Systems on the Berkshire Downs in England', *Expedition*, 32 no. 2 (1990), 44-51.

³¹ J. May, *Prehistoric Lincolnshire* (1976), 192 and Fig. 96; see also P. Clay, 'An Iron Age Farmstead at Grove Farm, Enderby, Leicestershire', *Trans. Leics. Archaeol. and Hist. Soc.* 61 (1992).

³² R. Hingley, *Rural Settlement in Roman Britain* (1989), Fig. 9.9.

³³ V. Gaffney and M. Tingle, *The Maddall Farm Project: An Integrated Survey of Prehistoric and Roman Landscapes on the Berkshire Downs* (BAR ix, 1989).

Prehistoric or Roman periods and there is a possibility that some may even be post-Roman. Therefore the banjo enclosures will only be looked at in relation to features interpreted as almost certainly Iron Age in date (Plate 3).

Modern excavations of Iron Age features have tended to concentrate on the large earthwork enclosures on the chalk escarpment (Plate 3) and have shown that their development was varied. Of the recently excavated sites, Segsbury and Uffington Castle both had evidence of Early Iron Age and Middle Iron Age occupation.³⁴ Alfred's Castle has evidence of construction of the ramparts on an earlier Bronze Age site in the Early Iron Age and has evidence of Late Iron Age occupation.³⁵ At Rams Hill the Iron Age ramparts were built around the Bronze Age enclosure,³⁶ and Blewburton is believed to have Early Iron Age origins and re-occupation, after a period of abandonment, from the Late Iron Age until the late first century BC.³⁷

Although the hillforts were not all in use at the same time it is possible that the banjo enclosures, whether individually or collectively, may have existed within a territorial or social organisation based around the hillforts. Lock and Gosden³⁸ suggest the possibility of real or imagined connections of prehistoric peoples with the major relict monuments in their vicinity. Even if the hillforts were not occupied when the banjo enclosures were in use they may still have served as landscape markers to the inhabitants, perhaps associated with actual or mythical memories of a previous social organisation on the Lambourn Downs. Therefore they could be situated in the centre of an area between a ridgeway hillfort zone and the other hillforts around the southern and eastern fringes of the Downs.

Another group of major monuments which survive on the Lambourn Downs are the large ditched or embanked linear features which Ford concluded are probably of Late Bronze Age and/or Early Iron Age origin.³⁹ The banjo enclosures do not seem to have any direct relationship with these linear features and are all situated to the east of the main concentration of ditches which occurs in the western part of the Downs.⁴⁰ Ford concluded that the boundaries possibly defined large valley-based territories as they follow the ridges overlooking the highest ground.⁴¹ This could mean that the main cluster of banjo enclosures existed within a large territorial unit defined to the west by the East Garston Ditch and to the north-east by the Grim's Ditch (Plate 3). Re-use of earlier boundaries suggests that the territorial units they define can continue long after the origins of the boundary are forgotten, as is the case with some of the parish boundaries aligning on the Grim's Ditch.⁴² It is, therefore, not impossible that the banjos existed within territorial units defined in a much earlier period.

The medieval parish boundaries⁴³ and banjo enclosures 1-8, although not contemporary features, seem to cluster together in the same area. Although a tenuous connection, it may be that the same topographical conditions (perhaps that they are on the peripheries of

³⁴ Lock and Gosden, *op. cit.* note 27, pp. 64-9; see also G. Lock and C. Gosden, 'Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project: Excavations at Segsbury Camp 1997', *CBA Group 9, S. Midlands Group Newsletter*, 28 (1998), 54-63.

³⁵ G. Lock and C. Gosden, 'Hillforts of the Ridgeway Project: Excavations at Alfred's Castle 1999', *CBA Group 9, S. Midlands Group Newsletter*, 30 (2000), 82-90.

³⁶ R. Bradley and A. Ellison, *Rams Hill: A Bronze Age Defended Enclosure and its Landscape* (BAR xviii, 1975).

³⁷ D.W. Harding, *Hillforts: Later Prehistoric Earthworks in Britain and Ireland* (1976), 133-46.

³⁸ G. Lock and C. Gosden, 'Prehistoric Histories', *World Archaeology*, 30 (1998), 2-12.

³⁹ S. Ford, 'Linear Earthworks on the Berkshire Downs', *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* 71 (1982), 16.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Fig. 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 17.

⁴² *Ibid.* 17 and Fig. 8.

⁴³ As shown in J.C. Richards, *The Archaeology of the Berkshire Downs: An Introductory Survey* (1978), Fig. 29.

logical farming units) could have influenced both the Iron Age pattern of settlement and the formation of the medieval parish boundaries. The Romano-British fields appear to ignore the parish boundaries completely but the Roman period appears to have been a unique period of intense arable cultivation on the Lambourn Downs⁴⁴ and so perhaps inevitably resulted in a different form of land division.

Until there is a better understanding of the chronology of the various Iron Age monuments on the Downs and an understanding of the economies driving these societies it will be impossible to formulate theories of social structure within the hinterland of the Downs. Cunliffe⁴⁵ proposes various regional groupings based on pottery typologies and the sites on the Lambourn Downs may form part of a wider cultural group in a central southern zone. They also appear to be situated in an indeterminate zone between the conjectured Late Iron Age 'territories' of the *Dobunni* and the *Atrebates* tribes. With the evidence available at present it is therefore difficult to ascertain how the communities living on the Downs placed their allegiances, if any, within the wider context of any social structure in southern England during the Iron Age.

TRANSITION TO THE ROMAN PERIOD

Continuity of use, or at least re-use, in the Roman period, is relatively common on Iron Age settlement sites, e.g. at Bramdean,⁴⁶ however the Lambourn Downs survey did not record any possible examples of this; in fact quite the opposite, as some of the banjos (numbers 4-6) appear to have been overlain by Romano-British field systems (Plates 2 and 4). There is therefore the possibility that they were abandoned in the early Roman period, if not earlier. This would accord with the findings of research into the fields on the Downs⁴⁷ and the Maddall Farm survey,⁴⁸ which both suggest that a major change to arable production occurred in the early Roman period on the Lambourn Downs.

As the Maddall Farm Project publication points out, the intensification of agricultural activity could have been a response to supply the new markets created by the Roman expansion and may even have been led by the traditional elite of the Iron Age.⁴⁹ The Maddall Farm survey suggested that the villa there and its estate were probably associated with a number of lower status settlements of possible Late Iron Age origin.⁵⁰ It is possible that there is continuity of use into the Roman period at some of the banjo sites on the Lambourn Downs or alternatively a settlement shift to the newly established villas, for example the nearby villa at Stancombe Down,⁵¹ or their attendant settlements. Close to banjo 10 (Plate 1) there is a possible double-ditched enclosure, a feature common to Roman settlements, in particular villa sites. Similarly the enclosures adjacent to banjo 1 (Plate 1) could be part of a Roman settlement. There is therefore the possibility of some settlement shift between the Iron Age and Roman periods at some of the banjos on the Lambourn Downs.

⁴⁴ Ford et al., op. cit. note 30, p. 47.

⁴⁵ Cunliffe, op. cit. note 3, passim.

⁴⁶ B.T. Perry, 'Some Recent Discoveries in Hampshire', in C. Thomas (ed.), *Rural Settlement in Roman Britain* (CBA Res. Rep. 7, 1986), 35 and Fig. 1.

⁴⁷ M. Bowden, S. Ford and G. Mees, 'The Date of the Ancient Fields on the Berkshire Downs', *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* 74 (1993), 130.

⁴⁸ Gaffney and Tingle, op. cit. note 33, p. 93.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 240.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 239.

⁵¹ E. Scott, *A Gazetteer of Roman Villas in Britain* (Leicester Archaeol. Monographs 1, 1992), 23.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Systematic mapping of the Lambourn Downs from aerial photographs has provided new information about the distribution and form of the banjo enclosures in the area. It also allows this new information to be examined against the background of a multi-period landscape of features visible from the air. Further aerial reconnaissance, especially as the blanket of Romano-British fields is slowly eroded, is highly likely to discover more banjo enclosures and possible Iron Age settlements.

Fieldwork and excavation could begin to answer some of the questions posed by the differences in the form of the banjos. Although a curvilinear enclosure with a funnel entrance is a common feature of all the sites it is unclear if subtle differences in form are an indication of different chronologies and/or different functions. The distribution of the banjo enclosures on the Lambourn Downs seems to be significant but it is unclear if this is socially and/or topographically determined. The similarity in their topographical locations is striking. They are all situated on slopes, within reach of two different soil types, with the funnel entrance pointing down slope. The majority appear to cluster around the coombes which lead into a valley which drains into the River Lambourn.

The relationship of these sites with nearby Segsbury hillfort certainly warrants further research. The hillfort appears to have had intense, but apparently short-lived, domestic occupation from the Middle Iron Age.⁵² Do the banjo enclosures represent a shift from a centralised, hillfort-based, community to a more devolved social model and a resultant dispersed settlement pattern? The excavators at Segsbury suggest the possibility that Segsbury and its environs may represent an agricultural and settlement zone as opposed to the non-domestic activity associated with Uffington Castle.⁵³ If we include the 'ritual' landscape of the Upper Lambourn Valley to the south of Rams Hill⁵⁴ it may be that by the Middle to Late Iron Age the broader landscape of the Lambourn Downs was divided into units based on function rather than social groupings. This could have been an influencing factor in the seemingly localised distribution of banjo enclosures to the east of the River Lambourn valley. Within this, apparently closely defined, area the banjo enclosures could be the remains of settlements dominating the resources of each small valley. The enclosed and complex nature of these settlements may be an indication of high status, or at least of a sophisticated agricultural regime. Groups or pairs of banjos facing each other across a valley could be examples of an expansion of family-based units within their own closely defined territory. The alternative is that there was a relatively sparse settlement pattern, perhaps of single farms within large territories, and the distribution of banjos represents the culmination of settlement shift across the lesser valleys of a larger unit of land.

Whether the banjo enclosures represent a contemporary settlement pattern or not, further investigation into these sites could reveal much about the social structure within the area in the Iron Age, especially when seen against the background of the Hillforts on the Ridgeway excavations.⁵⁵

⁵² Lock and Gosden, *op. cit.* note 27.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 76.

⁵⁴ Bradley and Ellison, *op. cit.* note 36, p. 195.

⁵⁵ Lock and Gosden (1997, 1998 and 2000), *op. cit.* notes 27, 34, 35.

APPENDIX: GAZETTEER OF BANJO ENCLOSURES ON THE LAMBOURN DOWNS

Number	Name	NMR number	Grid Reference
1	Old Warren	SU 38 SE 78	SU 3700 8077
2	Fawley	SU 38 SE 33	SU 3835 8104
3	South Fawley 1	SU 38 SE 61	SU 3913 8045
3a	South Fawley 2	SU 38 SE 36	SU 3835 8104
4	Letcombe Bowers 1	SU 38 SE 68	SU 3918 8278
5	Letcombe Bowers 2	SU 38 SE 69	SU 3958 8303
6	Sparrow's Copse 1	SU 48 SW 55	SU 4059 8263
6a	Sparrow's Copse 2	SU 48 SW 61	SU 4100 8245
7	Woolley Down 1	SU 48 SW 23	SU 4122 8143
8	Woolley Down 2	SU 48 SW 20	SU 4184 8039
9	Southend	SU 47 NW 53	SU 4208 7810
10	Welford	SU 47 SW 23	SU 4138 7418
11	Tullock Farm 1	SU 47 SW 19	SU 4066 7211
11a	Tullock Farm 2	SU 47 SW 19	SU 4063 7203

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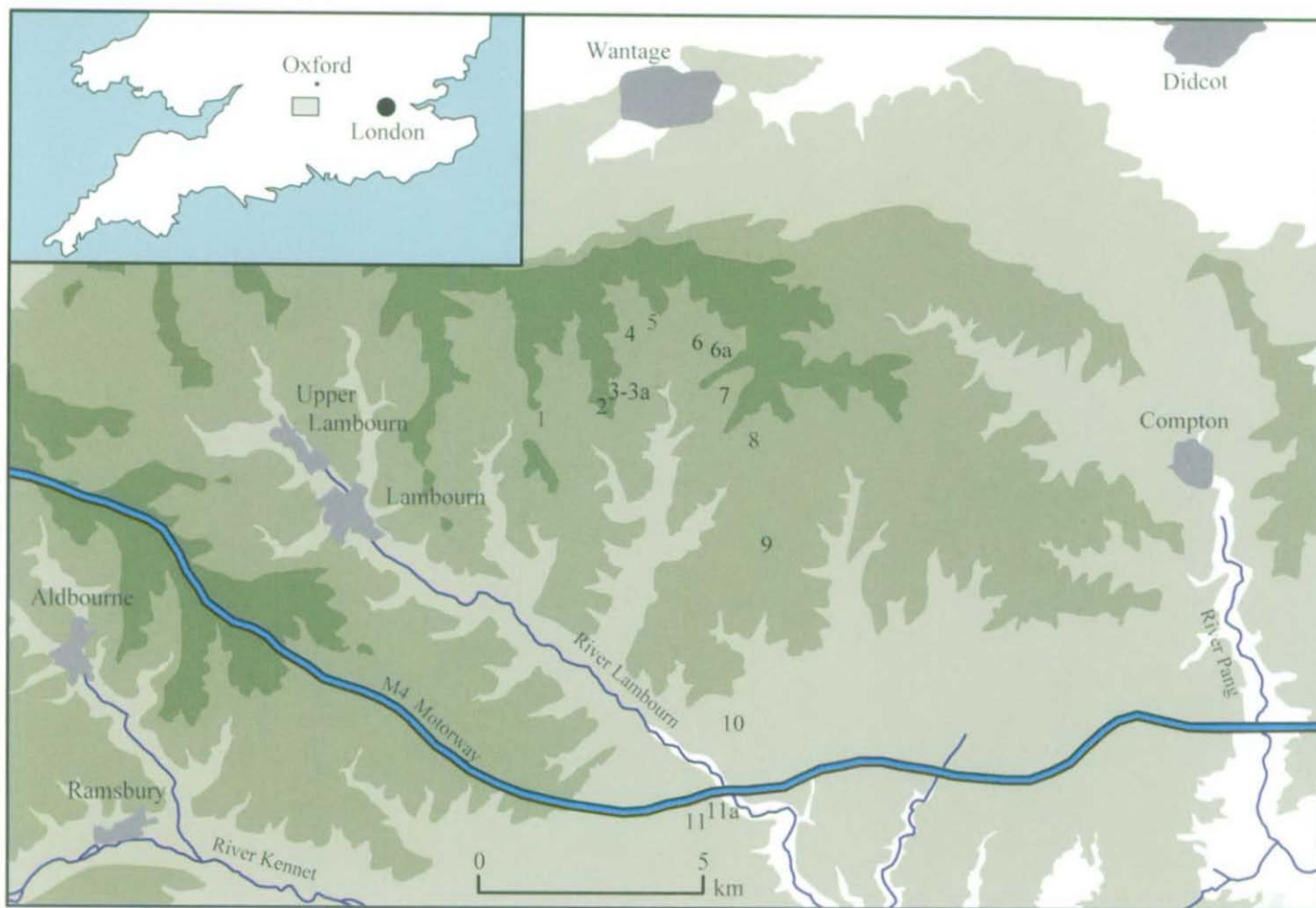


Plate 1. Location and extent of the Lambourn Downs NMP project area. The location of each banjo enclosure is indicated by a number which refers to the gazetteer in the appendix.

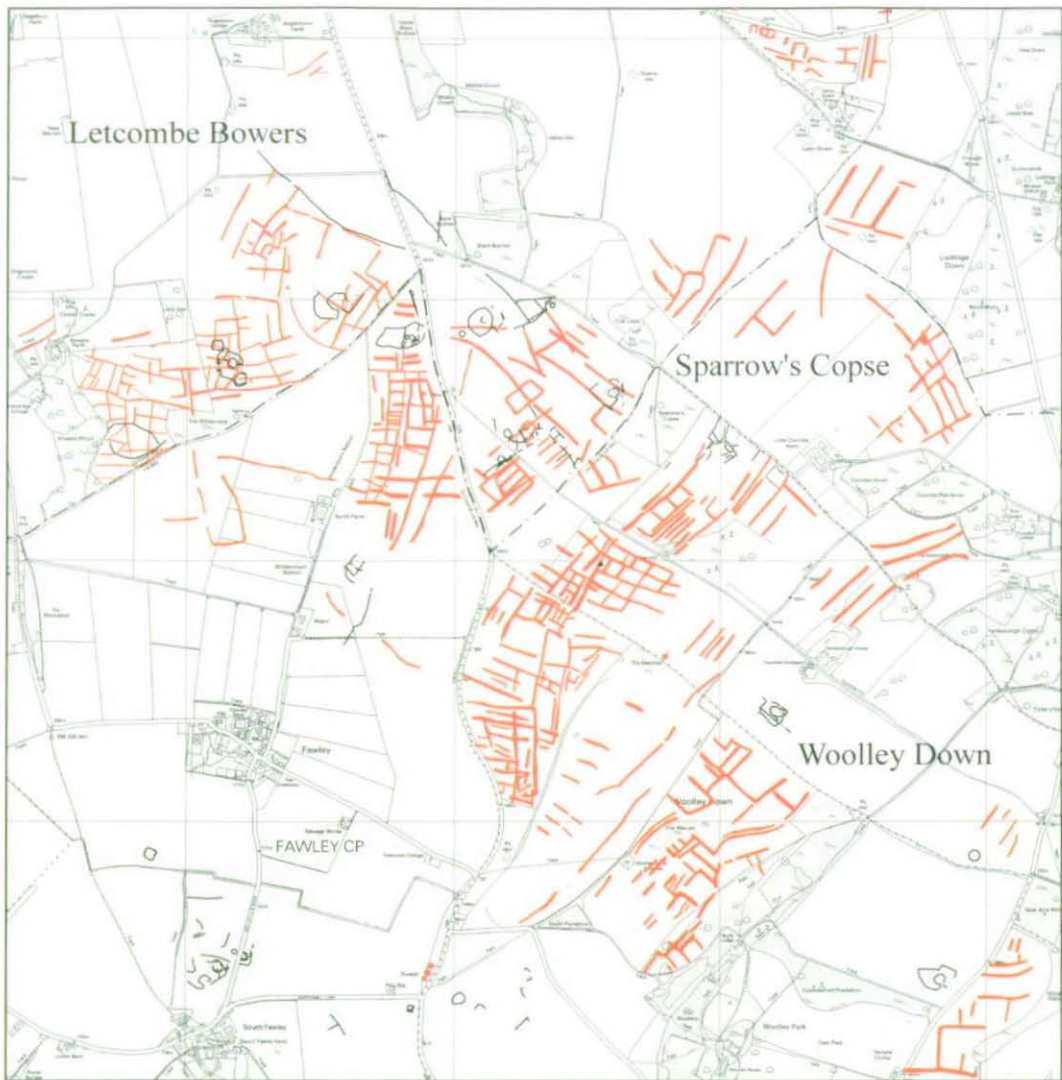


Plate 2. Banjo enclosures in relation to other archaeological features (banks in red, ditches in black). Romano-British fields appear to overlie 3, possibly 4 of the banjo enclosures, in the vicinity of Letcombe Bowers and Sparrow's Copse. © English Heritage. NMR. Map background reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 scale maps SU 38 SE and SU 48 SW, Crown copyright reserved.

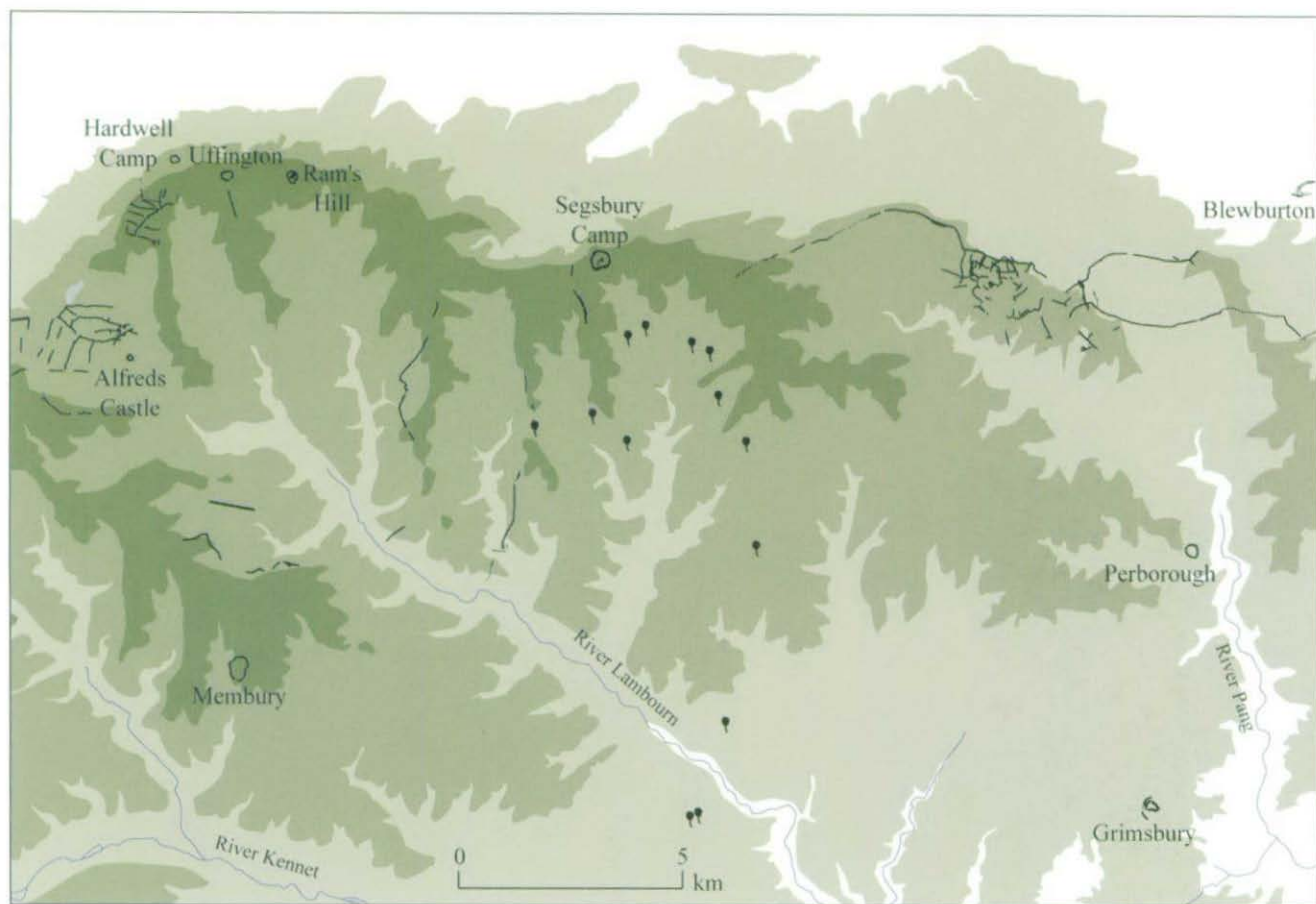
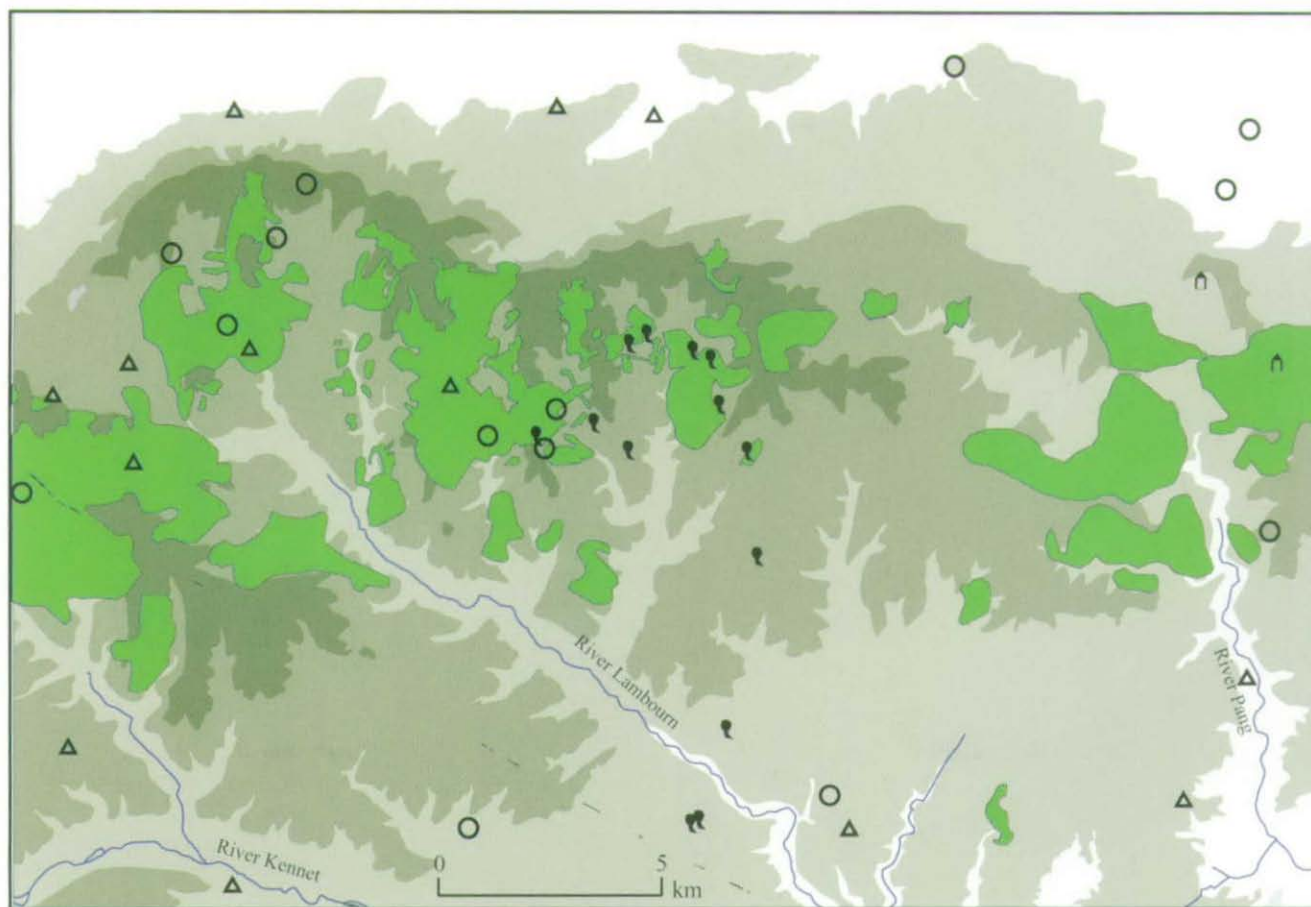


Plate 3. Banjo enclosures in relation to other probable Iron Age features. © English Heritage. NMR.



Banjo enclosures
 Extent of fields
 Villa
 Roman Settlement
 Temple
 Road

Plate 4. Banjo enclosures in relation to Roman features. © English Heritage, NMR.