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Salmonsbury, Bourton on the Water

by H. E. O'Neil
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Salmonsbury, Bourton on the Water. Some aspects of Archaeology in Bourton Vale

By HELEN E. O'NEIL

SALMONSBURY is a large prehistoric earthwork situated on a gravel-spread between the rivers Windrush and Dikler in the vale of Bourton. It stands on the highest part of the spread at the north-east edge of the village of Bourton on the Water in the north Cotswolds. It has been suggested that a record of the circumstances attending the set-up of the Salmonsbury excavations in 1931 should not be lost with the passage of time, hence the short introduction here by the present author.

It had long been the wish of Mr A. S. Owen of Keble College, Oxford, who had for many years been in the habit of bringing undergraduates for quiet study in Bourton on the Water, to recover some evidence by excavation, for dating the old earthwork, usually spoken of as a Roman camp. On consultation with Mr O. G. S. Crawford, Mr Owen with the help of the rector of Bourton on the Water, Canon W. E. White, arranged a preliminary visit to the camp on 1 May 1931. Major-General Sir H. E. Stanton, Sir Walter Essex, Mr E. W. Kendall with Canon White and Mr Crawford were present, and in addition Mr G. C. Dunning, who was willing to undertake the excavation on the recommendation of Dr R. E. M. Wheeler, while Miss H. E. Donovan, who lived on the site, was therefore closely associated with it.

The visit was to explore the site with the view of the possibilities and advantages for an excavation. These were greatly enhanced by the find on this occasion of the jaw of a human skeleton, suspended on an ivy-spray under the hedgerow on the southern rampart of the camp. As a result of the visit it was decided to form a local committee¹ to organize and finance an excavation, with Mr Owen as Chairman, Mr Kendall as Hon. Treasurer and Miss H. E. Donovan (Mrs H. E. O'Neil) as Hon. Secretary. The direction of the excavation was to be carried out by Mr G. C. Dunning in conjunction with the Anthropological Society of University College, London.¹

An appeal for funds was launched locally with a generous lead from Mr Owen, Mr Crawford and Miss A. B. Moore, and £120 was raised the first year. Excavations thereafter were carried out for four summer seasons from 1931 to 1934. Paid workers were employed in each season while students from the Bedford College for Women, pupils from Harrow and many volunteers augmented the digging force. The total expense of the four seasons of operations amounted to about £350. Acknowledgement for the willing co-operation of the owners of the land on which the excavations took place was expressed with gratitude to Mrs H. A. Albino, Mr F. M. Lodge and Lt. Colonel C. Donovan.

The Cotswolds, with particular reference to the north Cotswolds to form a background to Salmonsbury
It seems fitting that a general survey of prehistoric camp sites forming a background for the siting of Salmonsbury would not be out of place before any description of the study of that site and the results which follow.

From an intimate knowledge of the countryside and over 40 years of archaeological fieldwork on the Cotswolds, a map has been made, based on simple natural features as altitudes, rivers, gravel deposits, with marsh and forest areas added, the latter being formulated by geological considerations.

1. The Excavation Committee consisted of Mr A. S. Owen, Major-General Sir H. E. Stanton, Sir Walter Essex, Mr W. H. Knowles, Canon W. E. White, Major J. W. Marling, Major E. F. B. Witts, Mr J. A. Fort, Dr C. J. Macalister, Mr R. F. Young, Mr J. G. Flowerdew-Lowson, Mr F. M. Lodge, Mr O. G. S. Crawford, Mr E. W. Kendall, Miss H. E. Donovan and Mr G. C. Dunning.

The map thus forms a background in helping to show the distribution of sites of past occupation. It presents also information of the probable entry of the different peoples into the Cotswolds. It must be stressed here that the distribution is shown by sites of occupation and is not concerned in showing the sites of casual finds of objects. It is hoped by this discriminating manner to prove solid facts of occupation and not speculative movements of people by mere casual objects dropped here and there.

The area shown on the map (FIG 1) embraces the whole of the Cotswolds proper, bordered by the Warwickshire Avon on the north, the river Evenlode on the east, the upper Thames valley (i.e. above Oxford) with the Bristol Avon on the south and the river Severn on the west. An extension of the map does, however, include the part of the upper Thames valley, the Faringdon ridge with the vale of the White Horse as well as the northern edge of the Berkshire downs and the area east of the river Evenlode as far as the river Cherwell. In mentioning the White Horse, the placing of that sign on the north-facing escarpment of the Berkshire downs has been questioned and calls for comment. It may be considered an emblem of Belgic domination and to show that the Cotswolds were so dominated, which has been proved by evidence from excavation in Salmonsbury. Moreover on occasions of fine weather, as seen by personal observation, the White Horse on its hill can be seen from the high ground just east of Salmonsbury as well as on the furthest high ground of Cutsdean hill, where the Cotswolds near their limit of just over 1,000 feet.

The Cotswolds are part of the Jurassic formation, a belt of high ground running in a north-east to south-west direction across England from Lincolnshire to Dorset and Devonshire. In Gloucestershire the geological formations consist of strata of the great and inferior oolites and lias clays. This formation rises gradually from the upper Thames valley of O.D. 200 feet to over 1,000 feet along its north and north-west edge, where the escarpment falls steeply to the vale of the river Severn and its tributary the Warwickshire Avon. This high ground forms a watershed, for rivers flowing south and south-east to the Thames, the chief of which are the Churn, Coln, Windrush and Evenlode, while to the west, rivers of a smaller nature run into the Severn, such as the Swill Brook, Chelt, Twyver and the Stroud Frome.

A special feature to be noted on the map is the area of gravel spreads.² These are of great significance, being sites chosen for human settlement. Until fairly recently such areas as the upper Thames valley, the Severn vale and the Evesham vale were dismissed as being unsuitable for occupation due to the heavy claylands considered to bear impenetrable forest, but it is now seen that vast areas of those places are of gravel formation and, as will be found, were occupied by pre-historic peoples. It should be noted particularly that gravel spreads are abundant on the north side of the Thames only. This was a direct result of the deposits of the softer rocks of the Cotswolds, while the gravel existing around the south-west tip of the head of the Thames valley, containing flint pebbles, indicates an influx from the chalk formation of the Berkshire downs.

The sudden termination of gravel deposits at the Horseshoe bend at Arlingham on the river Severn, the area connected with the Stroudwater valley and the river Frome, is accounted for by the outcrop of coal bearing measures, which here run in a north-south axis from the Bristol coalfield across the Severn at Arlingham into the Forest of Dean.

Of marsh lands, the largest area of impenetrable and unsuitable land for occupation was that bordering the east side of the lower reaches of the river Severn as far as Bristol, the lowest area shown on the map. It is known that reclamation has taken place in this area in comparatively modern times. A subsidiary ridge of limestone margins the marsh; this does not seem to have been enveloped with the neighbouring forest as human occupation has occurred here.

The chief forest areas appear to be at Kingswood, Chippenham and Braden, on the south of the Cotswolds, all on clay land, with Wychwood, also on clay on the south-east. All these forest areas existed throughout medieval times, remnants of which still remain though nearly exterminated at the present day. It will thus be seen that a great deal of the uplands of the Cotswolds were of the

2. No Geological Survey Drift maps existed for the upper reaches of the Thames, so personal visits were paid to this area when the writer had the good fortune to see the extent of the large gravel pits opened and used during the 1939-1945 War periods.

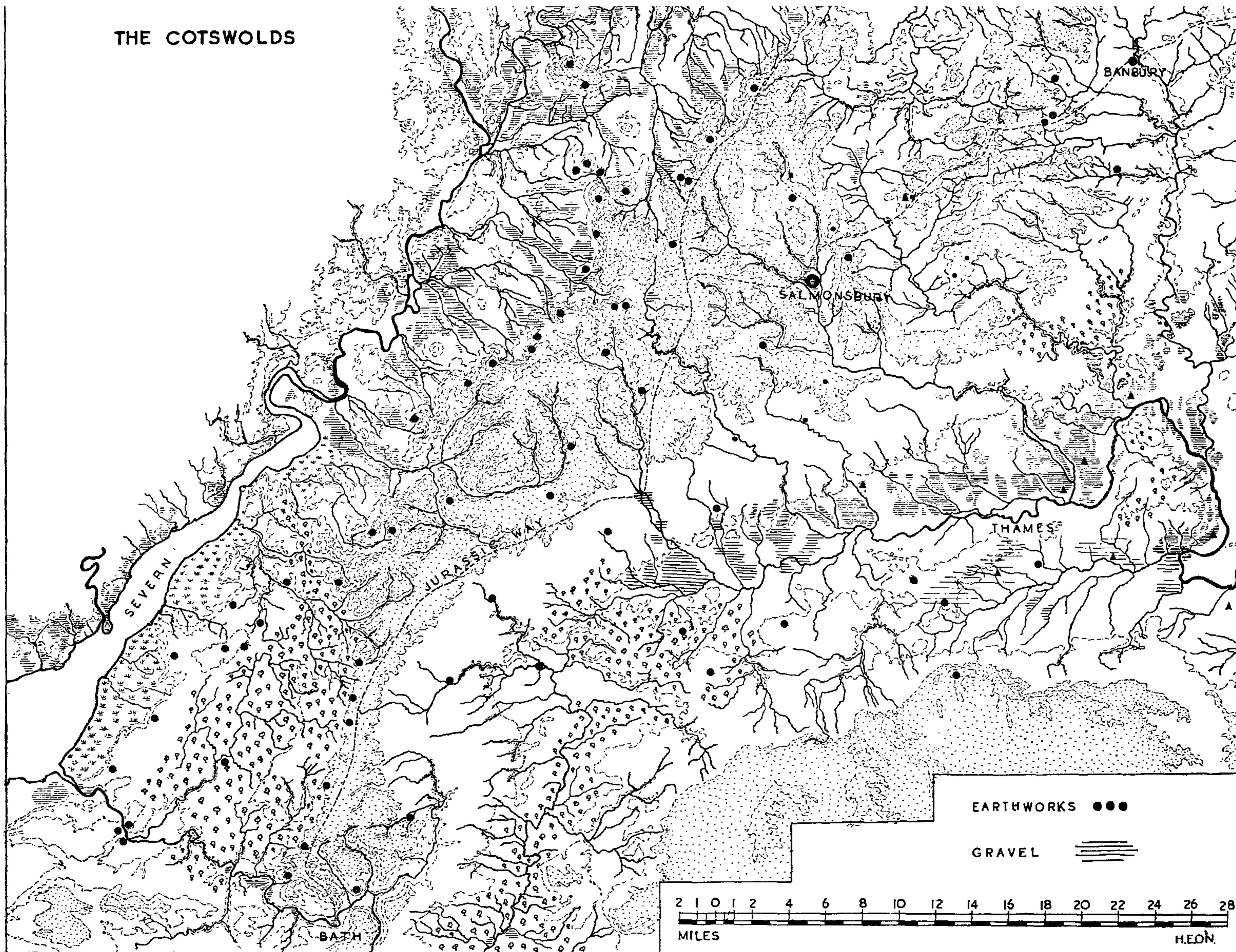


FIG. 1. Map of the Cotswolds showing distribution of earthworks and position of Salmonsbury Camp

nature of open downs or wolds, probably of coarse grass and shrubland growth, particularly on the area of the great oolite, while on the lower southern slopes the formation of cornbrash would favour a more forest type of tree. Afforestation since the last ice age in Britain would have taken many thousands of years to form, so it is quite feasible to suggest that the maximum extent of forest may be placed from Roman times to early medieval in the first millenium A.D. in Britain. It is certainly noticeable that so far as the Cotswolds are concerned, the surface of the countryside today cannot be very different from that of neolithic times. The appearance and condition of long and round barrows and other prehistoric sites seen today, and found covered only by a shallow accumulation of soil, could not have been erected if the countryside had been thickly afforested. Another factor against afforestation, particularly in the north Cotswolds, is wind erosion of the soil.³ Many areas, even to the present day, have a very thin soil-covering due to this natural action and would thus preclude forest-tree growth.⁴

It seems therefore fairly clear that large areas of the Cotswolds were of open well-drained wolds, highly suitable for flock raising and farming, and this is shown to a great extent by the number of sites of human activity seen on distribution maps from neolithic times onward. A special point to notice is the desirability of that area of countryside adjacent to and on which Salmonsbury is situated.

Natural routes as prehistoric ways on the Cotswolds

Since there appears to have been little change in the contours of the land surface and the general topography of the region under discussion during at least the last few thousand years, it may be permissible to indicate routes and ways by which prehistoric peoples moved into and about the Cotswolds. Two fluctuating natural features that may have caused changes should be kept in mind; the growth and decline of forest, and the extension and reclamation of marshland.

A glance at the map immediately indicates the river Severn as a water-way into the west and south-west areas of the region. The Thames provides an entry on the south and south-east, although the head waters of this river may not have made easy navigation.

The main land route, the 'Jurassic Way', served an important area stretching across the Cotswolds from Banbury to Bath, a distance of 75 miles. Other suggestive routes across the Cotswolds from north to south are from the Evesham valley to Lechlade on the Thames, while a route from the Berkshire downs via the head of the upper Thames valley, across the narrowest point of the Cotswolds, would lead to the Arlingham bend of the Severn and so into Wales.

A detailed examination of the suggested line of track of the Jurassic Way shows the use of natural features in a striking form. It is not implied that an actual path or road surface is envisaged in this description, but it should be noted that the Jurassic Way does run on such narrow uplands between partings that the track could not have deviated much to right or left. This description of the Way is based entirely on personal exploration to examine the surface topography as well as the sites of the existing prehistoric monuments in its vicinity.⁵

Professor W. F. Grimes has written on the subject of the Jurassic Way but mostly of that part of it further to the north-east of the region here discussed, and although he does continue to trace the line into Gloucestershire he does so by the sites of chance finds rather than by natural features and suitability.⁶

For the purpose of this study a beginning will be made at Banbury. The Jurassic Way (to be called the Way hereafter) reaches Banbury from the Northampton uplands by a long decline; a modern road still retains the name of Banbury Lane to cross the river Cherwell at Banbury.

3. R. P. Beckinsale, *Proc. Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club*, XXXV, pt. IV, 194.

4. *Flora of Gloucestershire*, lxxviii.

5. H. E. O'Neil, 'The Jurassic Way in Northern Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds,' *Proc. Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club*, XXXV, pt. I (1966), 42.

6. W. F. Grimes, 'The Jurassic Way,' *Aspects of Archaeology in Britain and Beyond. (Essays presented to O. G. S. Crawford.)* (1951), 144-71.

Examination on the ground and information from local authorities at Banbury did not disclose the presence of a gravel bed for the crossing of the river, but high ground immediately west of the river, with the landmark of Crouch Hill dominating the scene there, would create a guide for a crossing.

Passing on the north side of Crouch Hill, on whose summit lies an earthwork, the Way proceeds on gentle sloping ground to cross the Sor Brook, then to rise up a gradual spur between Hobb Hill and Tadmarton House to Tadmarton and Wigginton Heath. It now runs on the summit of high ground at over 700 feet O.D. for some 10 miles, taking a more south-westerly course 4 miles after leaving Wigginton Heath. A gradual slope down follows, to cross the river Evenlode at Adlestrop, where a gravel bed exists, and the Way continues on the lower slopes by Mangersbury to the Bourton Vale. This is easily crossed on the gravel spreads and the Way runs westwards up a long gradual incline, past Notgrove to Hawling downs, the latter a wide open upland. Another possible route joins the Way in this area, coming from some of the highest ground along the escarpment edge of the north Cotswolds. This track is known as Campden Lane. The Way now turns southward continuing on high ground, and except for a crossing of the river Coln at Compton Cassey, reaches the southern lower slopes of the Cotswolds on the great gravel spreads of the river Churn at Cirencester. The Way proceeds by gentle undulating ground through the Park, past Coates and along the edge of higher ground to reach the summit of the southern extension of the Cotswolds, a narrow ridge some 15 miles in length, before reaching the river Avon at Bath.

A remarkable fact emerges that throughout the run of 75 miles the Way after leaving Banbury has only four rivers to cross before reaching Bath. In close proximity to this route lie long and round barrows and camps, while a neolithic dwelling site in Bourton Vale as well as the Rollright Stones are passed. Only iron age sites are marked on the accompanying map to form the background to Salmonsbury.

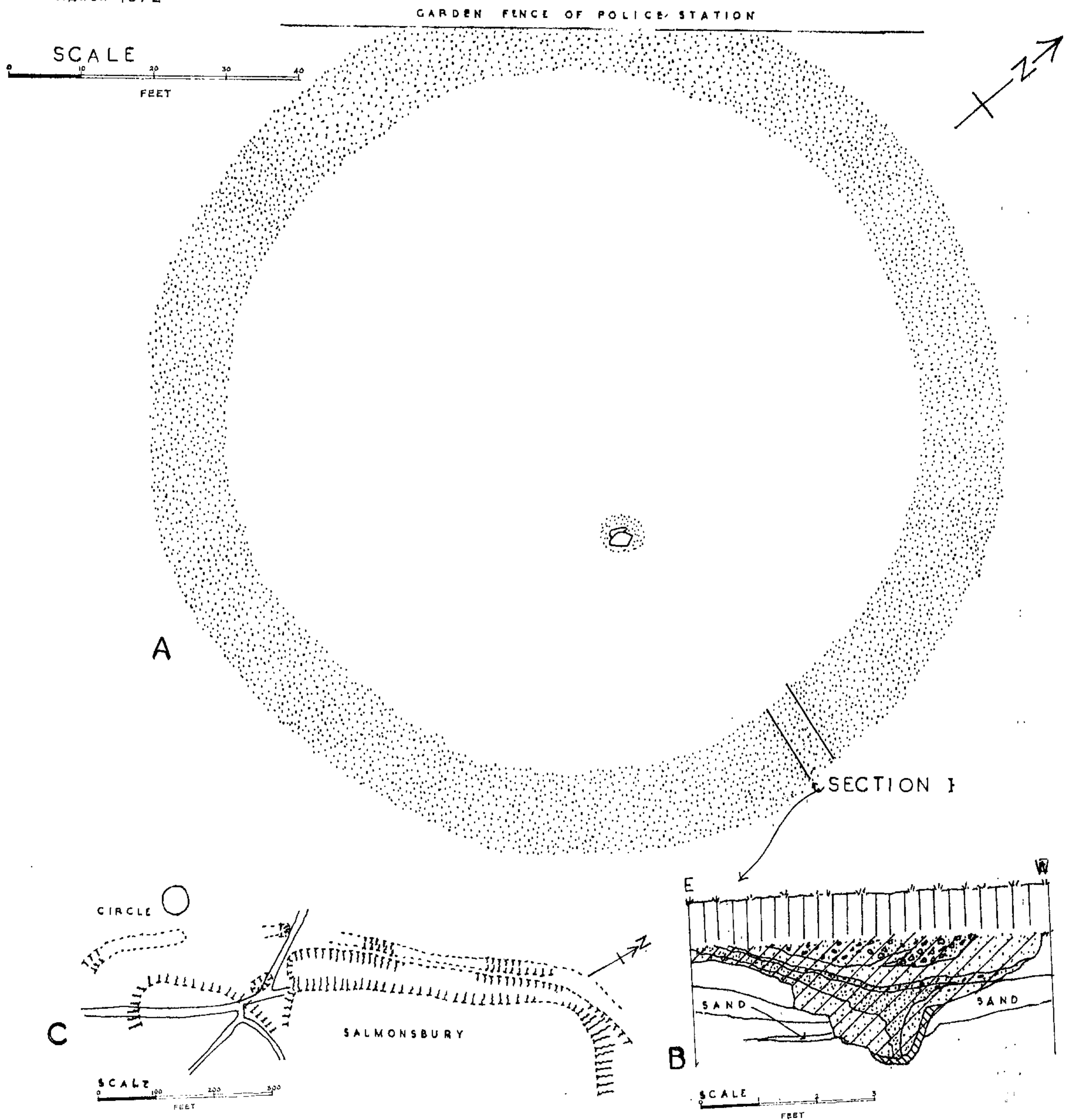
A bronze age ring-ditch at Bourton on the Water

Before proceeding to discuss the iron age camp of Salmonsbury, the discovery of a bronze age ring-ditch in 1972 adjacent to the site of the camp added further knowledge to the prehistory of Bourton on the Water (FIG 2). However, during the earlier work of excavations in Salmonsbury in 1931-4 the remains of bronze age pits and shallow gullies full of a red clay were located beneath the eastern rampart of the camp, so bronze age finds were not unexpected. The bronze age ring-ditch seems to have been considered of value and perhaps venerated by the incoming later peoples, as the layout of Salmonsbury's main entrance from the west avoided any destruction of the earlier site. The area under discussion lies on the highest levels of the natural gravel spreads of Bourton Vale, which in the course of time afforded attractive sites for ancient peoples, from neolithic to the present-day village of Bourton on the Water.

In the upper part of disused allotments at Bourton on the Water, in a field formerly known as Marshall's Piece or The Piece (25 in. O.S. XXIX, no. 264), now off Moore Road and lying south of Moore Cottage Hospital, as well as by the newly-erected Old Peoples' Home, called Salmonsbury House, a new car park was to be laid out in 1973 as an extension to an existing one entered from Station Road. During the removal of the top soil by mechanical means down to gravel level, the outline of a large circular ditch was uncovered. The ditch, 11 feet wide at top, 4 feet 6 inches deep from gravel surface (6 feet from modern ground level), was thickly filled with a red clay. The circle was complete, well made and measured 96 feet in internal diameter. The ditch was of a V section, with a slope on its inner side, but cut back in two stages on the outer edge, to merge gradually with the surface, whereas the ditch on its inner edge cut abruptly into the gravel.

There was slight silting of fine gravel in the base of the ditch, otherwise the filling was of red loamy clay which at first appeared to be of a homogenous character, but on closer examination showed stratification by slight variations of colour and compactness. This indicated a gradual infilling on the disuse of the ditch. A special feature that appeared in the filling (and one that must have come later in its use when the ditch had begun to silt up) was a deposit of very compact darker red clay in the form of a post-hole driven into the centre of the filling already accumulated in the base of

RING DITCH
IN "THE PIECE"
BOURTON ON THE WATER
MARCH 1972



HEON
1972

FIG. 2. Plan of Bronze Age Ring Ditch

- A. Ring Ditch
- B. Section across Ditch
- C. Position of Ring Ditch at the Western entrance to Salmonsbury Camp

the ditch (FIG 2B). No finds were made in the various levels of the red clay filling except for one broken animal bone which came from the topmost level where the filling was of a mixture of gravel containing larger pebbles. The ditch had been dug into the natural oolitic gravel, and here it is of interest to note that the accumulation of the layers of the natural gravel were interspersed by thick and thin layers of sand. This may be taken to show alternate seasons of flood and drought controlling the deposition of the gravel in geological periods.

Time was not available to carry out more than the excavation of one section across the ditch, since it was considered necessary to remove all the clay in the ditch to prevent later subsidence for car parking. A machine was used for this purpose which gave the opportunity of watching the work but no finds came to light. There was no evidence of an entrance across the ditch into the interior which was found to be a complete circle. The clearing of the surface of the entire centre within the ring-ditch down to gravel level in one operation was of great value for observing any soil marks but none appeared except for one roughly circular patch about 3 feet in diameter, filled with red clay similar to that in the ditch. The shallow pit lay 16 feet east of the centre of the circle and contained some blocks of naturally-made gravel concrete, a feature which occurs sometimes in the local gravel deposits. One such slab lay in a sloping position resting on other smaller pieces lower down, the whole of the shallow pit being packed with red clay. Encrusted with the red clay were the remains of two skeletons of dogs. Amongst the bones recovered were the lower jaw, ribs and leg bones. The bones have been seen by Dr Juliet Jewell of the Natural History Museum, British Museum, who reports that one of the animals was about the size of a small sheepdog, adult and showing no signs of disease of the bone, while the other dog was of a larger size and fairly fine-limbed. It was difficult to be precise about the actual form of the burial in the grave as it was tampered with during a short absence from the site.

The upper Thames valley and the Oxford region have produced many examples of ring-ditches, some having ritual significance, but the find of such a site at Bourton on the Water is of particular interest as its position so close to the entrance into an iron age camp showed previous occupation of the area.

Salmonsbury, the geological position (FIG 3)

The geological formation of Bourton vale was one favourable for human occupation, consisting as it does of gravel spreads in a well-watered vale. Although at an altitude of 400 feet O.D. it was sheltered by the higher wolds all around, some of which rise to over 800 feet.⁷ It is therefore not surprising that this set of attractive circumstances was utilized to erect a large earthwork on the eastern half of the largest and highest spread of gravel, which lay some half mile above the confluence of the two rivers, the Windrush and the Dikler. The gravel lies on lower lias clay washed down from the surrounding valleys in glacial times. There are three deposits of gravel in Bourton vale, from each of which tusks and teeth of mammoth as well as teeth of woolly rhinoceros have been recovered.⁸

The position, then, of Salmonsbury can be seen to be unique, as no other earthwork of this period in the Cotswolds is so large. Defended by ramparts and ditches, though on an indefensible natural site, it was of importance from its sheltered position and situation on the line of the Jurassic Way.

Salmonsbury, the name

The derivation of the name appears to be taken from the OE word '*sulh*', a plough, and in association with the OE word '*burg*' meaning a fortified place; Ekwall states that the name may indicate 'the *burg* of the ploughmen'.⁹ It therefore appears logical to suggest that as the fortified site already

7. O.S. Nat. Grid SP 174213.

8. 'Mammoth Remains in the North Cotswolds.' *Proc. Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club*, XXXVI (1973-4), 196-7.

9. E. Ekwall. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*. See under 'Bourton', p. 52 and 'Sulh', p. 431.

existed here in the form of the *burg*, occupying the only dry and arable area in the immediate neighbourhood, the term plough denoting agriculture was applied to the earthwork, hence Salmons-bury, 'the home of ploughmen'.

The first mention of the name Salmonsbury appears in the Saxon charter dated A.D. 779, in which Offa, king of Mercia granted 4 hides of land to the thegn Duddonus.¹⁰ The boundaries are set down and that part germane to our subject reads '*Est autem portio ruricoli illius attinens urbi illi qui nomenatur Sulmones Burg ex utraque parte torrentis qui vocatur Theodningc in occidentali plaga fluvia qui nuncupatur Uuenrisc*'. This has been translated by Dr G. B. Grundy as 'there is moreover a part of that land adjacent to the city (*urbi*) which is called *Sulmones Burg* on both sides of the stream which is called *Theodningc* on the west side of the river which is called *Uuenrisc*'.¹¹ The names of the two rivers, *Theodningc* and *Wenrisc*, still survive as the Dikler and the Windrush but in the course of time these rivers have exchanged names, the *Theodningc* becoming the modern river Windrush and the latter becoming the modern river Dikler. This is quite certain geographically, by the statement in the charter that the *Theodningc* is on the west side of the *Wenrisc*.

An earlier charter, dated A.D. 708,¹² of king Cenred records a gift of certain lands in Bourton to the newly-founded abbey of Evesham, while a later charter, A.D. 949,¹³ of king Eadred grants land at *Burhtun* to 'miles' Wulfric. There is then the name Bourton to be considered, as both names apply to the same area. The name Bourton contains two elements, '*burg*' and '*ton*' or '*tun*'; both are OE, the '*tun*' signifying a 'village' and '*burg*' a fortified place. The derivation is therefore the 'village by the fortified place'. This describes present-day Bourton exactly but it is interesting to note how this came about.

During the Roman period the population of Salmonsbury largely shifted, either by Imperial decree or in search of trade, towards the Fosse Way, a distance of half a mile to the west.¹⁴ The Fosse Way crossed the river Windrush here, at the extreme west end of the same gravel spread on which Salmonsbury was situated. Along the gradual rise of ground from the Fosse Way to Salmons-bury a large Romano-British settlement developed. On that part of it, where later the church and the manor were established, the centre of the village of Bourton on the Water remains to the present day.

The name of Salmonsbury was also attached to the Domesday hundred until the late 15th century when it was replaced by Slaughter, the alternative name which had been in use since 1169.¹⁵ However, in spite of the change of name hundred courts continued to meet at what was known as the Salmonsbury Stone. Mention is made by earlier Gloucestershire historians,¹⁶ that the hundred courts met at a gap in the ramparts of Salmonsbury¹⁷ and inquiries of old inhabitants of Bourton on the Water elicited the information that a court had met at a gap in the north rampart of the camp within living memory, and that the site¹⁸ of the Salmonsbury Stone had been seen at the beginning of the present century. From the valuable MS notebooks of the late Dr John Moore¹⁹ there is the information that 'In 1873 William Palmer aged 83 remembers the Stow Court being held at Salmonsbury Stone 40 years ago'. Dr Moore also mentions that the court of the hundred of Salmons-bury was nominally held at this Stone some years ago.²⁰ The whereabouts of the stone unfortunately

10. Birch, *Cart. Saxonum*, B.230. Kemble, *Codex*, K.137.

11. G. B. Grundy, 'Saxon Charters and Field Names of Gloucestershire'. *Trans. B.G.A.S.* (1936), 52.

12. H. Clifford, *History of Bourton on the Water* (1916), 35.

13. G. B. Grundy, *Saxon Charters of Glos.*, p. 49. B.882.k.426.

14. H. E. Donovan, *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, LVII (1935), 234-59. H. E. O'Neil, *ibid.*, LXXXVII (1969), 'Report on Romano-British Settlement at Bourton Bridge'.

15. *V.C.H. Glos.*, VI, 4.

16. Rudder, *New History of Gloucestershire* (1779).

17. Mrs Simpson Hayward, Mr George Meddlicote and others.

18. Information from Mr R. Stratford.

19. Housed in the Bristol and Glos. Archaeological Society's Library in Gloucester Public Library.

20. *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, VII (1882-3), 26.

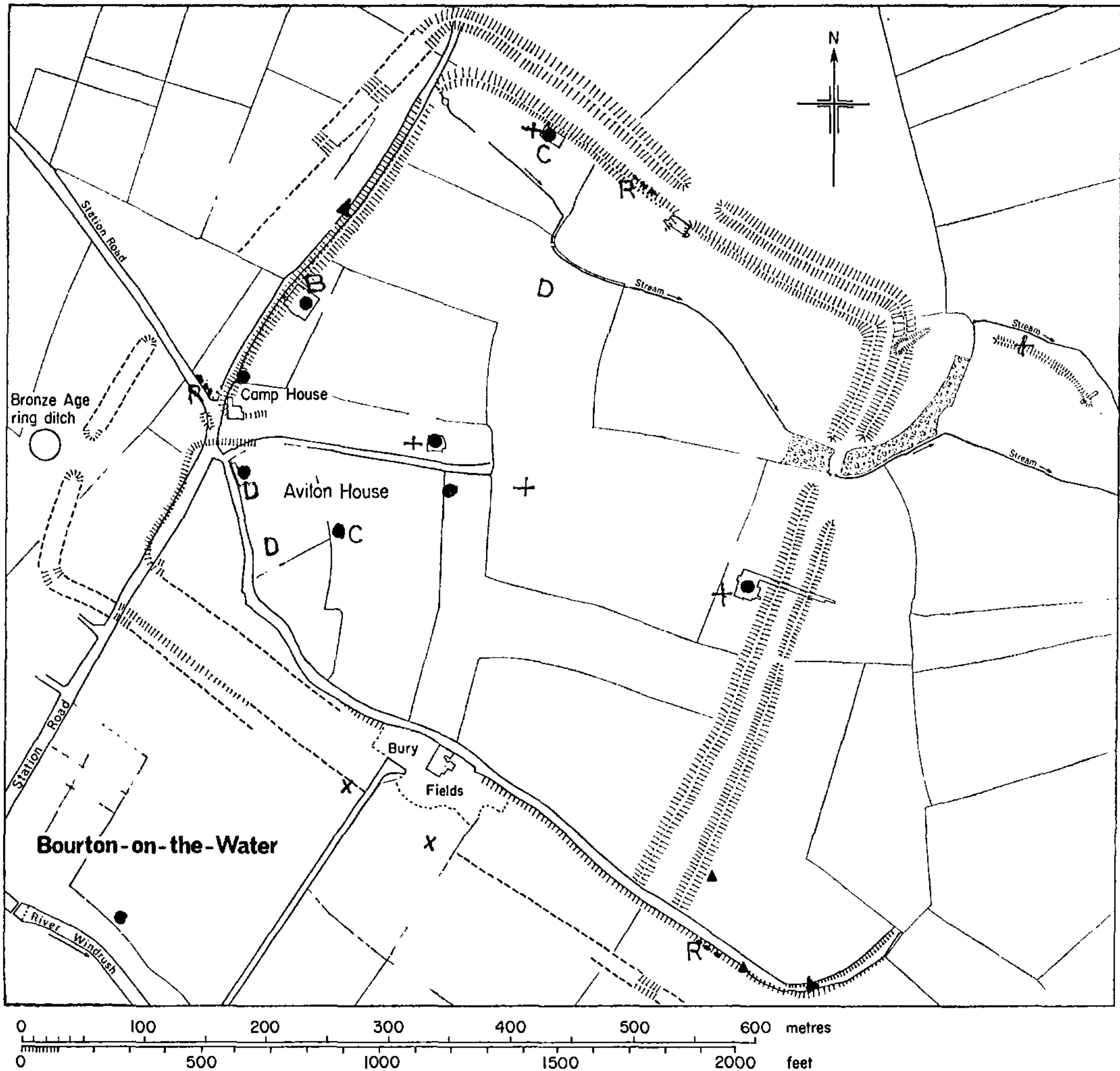


FIG. 3. Salmonsbury Camp, Bourton on the Water

Key

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| ○ Bronze Age Ring Ditch | B Belgic area |
| ● Iron Age foundations, hut sites | D Roman foundations |
| R Dry-stone revetment wall to gravel rampart | × Roman burials |
| C Site find of Currency Bars | ▲ Saxon burials |
| + Iron Age burials | |

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is not now known, but the interesting point remains that the site so specifically stated as at a gap in the northern ramparts, represents the northern entrance of the iron age camp. A stone was found and removed from the north rampart of the camp earlier this century with the carved initials SFCP above the date 1794. The stone was taken and built into the back wall of the cowshed of Greystones Farm, situated in the centre of the camp, but now (1974) plastered over at some time in the 1950s. The initials were recognized as those of 18th-century parish officers.

Salmonsbury (FIG 3)

The earthwork of Salmonsbury, rectangular in form and 56 acres in extent, lies on some of the highest levels of the gravel spread between the Windrush and Dikler. Although established in a wide open position it commanded good views of the surrounding high hills, but as it was on an unusual site to serve as a defensive camp it may perhaps be considered more as a market settlement.

Since the archaeological report on the work in Salmonsbury carried out by Dr G. C. Dunning is contained in *Iron Age Hillforts of the British Isles* (ed. Dr Dennis W. Harding), it seemed an appropriate time now to record the further discoveries that have taken place connected with Bourton Vale and in particular Salmonsbury. Dr Dunning's report contains the essential information as to the date of the site, the finds and the plans of the hut-sites within the camp.

For the purpose of forming a background to the present report, it may be stated that an iron age date preceded by some bronze age occupation has been established. There was a short occupation in part of the camp by the Belgic Dobunni followed by a long Roman domination, this again followed by Saxon infiltration. As Salmonsbury formed an important centre in Bourton Vale, the following report will be concentrated mostly on this site.

It is due to the many times that Station Road, lying on the eastern perimeter of Bourton on the Water, has been trenched for drainage, water, electricity, gas and telephone services, that the exact position of the main entrance into the prehistoric camp was located. This lay about midway along the line of the western rampart; incidently it may be of interest to state that the site of the actual causeway into the camp passes directly below Camp House, while Station Road, one of the main roads into Bourton from Stow on the Wold, still in parts follows the prehistoric track.

The western entrance was the main one into the camp. It was constructed with incurving inner ramparts with ditches, narrowing to a causeway of undisturbed natural gravel (FIG 4). A cross ditch between the ramparts guarded the narrowest part of the causeway dividing this into two paths. Roman sherds were found in the filling of the cross ditch, and a quantity of fallen stone suggested the collapse of a revetment wall. The termination of the northern incurving rampart could be faintly traced from below Camp House to cross the lawn eastwards, while the southern incurving rampart could be traced in the site of the shrubbery between Camp House and Camp Cottage, to peter out in the adjoining paddock. A length of 45 feet of the outer side of the north causeway was seen, when the end of the inner rampart with its ditch was exposed. Dislodged stones along here exposed masonry from a revetment wall about 4 feet thick. There was no opportunity to examine the other side of the causeway. The area bordering the southern causeway and the ground between the inner and outer ramparts here had been largely destroyed when the Cottage Hospital was built in 1879, now called 'The Red House'. The field stretching southwards from the latter house, called The Doctor's Piece, had also been disturbed due to its use as a gravel pit and later as a rubbish dump. The gravel working came to an end about 1925, when it was recollected that sand martins were seen nesting in the gravel quarry face. The ditch of the southern incurving rampart was exposed in the trenches dug for the erection of the bungalow 'Bury Bank' in 1962. There were faint signs of the line of the ditch continuing to the south-west of the camp just within the west wall of Station Road to the point called 'The Daffy' where there is a rise of ground which formed the base of the south-west return of the inner rampart. (The word 'Daffy' is a local word for a cutting through a bank.) A last remnant of the height of this part of the rampart was still existing in 1974, standing c. 4 feet above the present day road surface, and visible in the hedge bordering the footpath. The bus station of Messrs Pulham accommodated in a deep depression on the east side of Station Road just here, is situated in the remains of a gravel pit dating back at least to the 17th century. This is known by the dating of two cottages built in the gravel pit, presumably after the pit went out of use. From the Daffy eastwards the inner rampart has been largely destroyed till it reaches Buryfield House. The outer rampart, some 200 feet beyond the inner rampart at the western entrance, could not be traced as a bank but only by depressions in the ground which held water after rain; but a small length of ditch was opened up adjoining the south side of the north causeway. In the ground called The Piece, now used as an extension to the Station Road car park and where the bronze age ring-

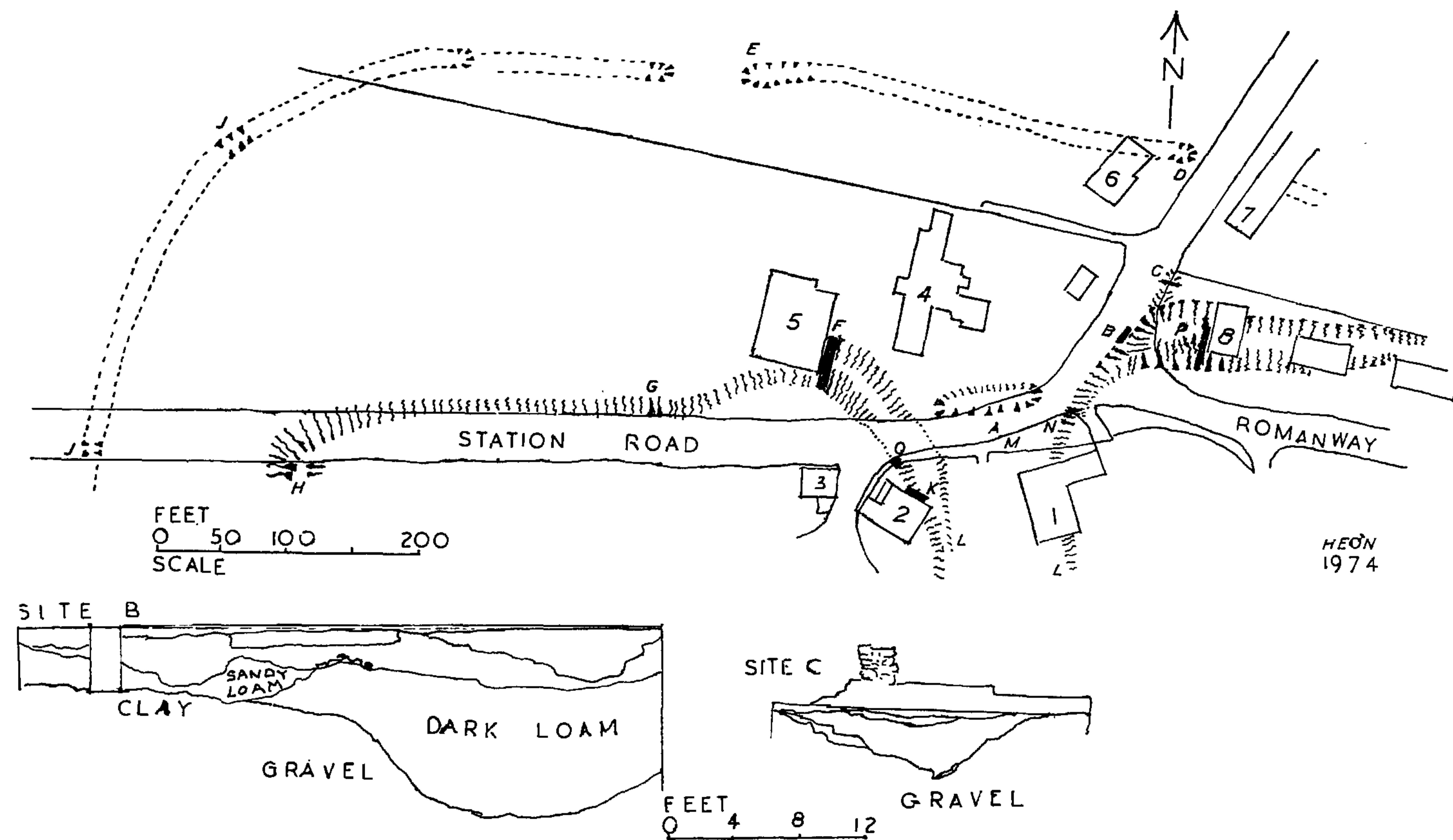


FIG. 4. Plan of main prehistoric entrance into Salmonsbury Camp. Modern buildings marked with numerals. 1 The Camp House. 2 Camp Cottage. 3 Yew Tree Cottage. 4 The Red House. 5 Bury Bank. 6 Clinic. 7 Salmons-bury Cottages. 8 Roman Way Houses.

Sites of Iron Age date exposed by modern developments from 1931-74. A Entrance to Camp with cross ditch. B Stone revetment Wall on north side of causeway into Camp. C Ditch from outer rampart. D Start of ditch on south side of causeway. E Water-logged depressions of outer ditch. F Ditch of southern rampart from entrance. Running below Bury Bank. A bungalow erected in a rubbish pit part of a former gravel pit. G Trench dug for entrance to Car Park. H Site of last remaining portion of rampart height at actual south-west corner of camp. J Two sites dug in footpaths for telephone cable, exposing ditch material. K Material for rampart on west side of Camp Cottage. L Slight raised areas in shrubbery of Camp House, also on lawn on east side of House. M Indications of presence of ditch under footpath by Camp House gate. N Ditto near back gate. O Indication of rampart under telephone post in footpath at turn into Cemetery Lane.

ditch occurred, it was possible to trace the ditch, and also the exit of the southern causeway of the main entrance. The line of the ditch was followed to its south-west return, where the ditch was partly excavated for an electricity trench. The line of the ditch was picked up again in the field, called Town Field, on the eastern side of Station Road, where a definite dip slope indicates the last vestige of rampart. In 1974 the same field was planted with barley, and nearing harvest the line of the ditch became visible due to the colour of the ripening crop leaving the line of the ditch still a bright green colour.

A great deal of the inner and outer defences on the southern sides of the camp had been destroyed, but at two points human burials were found in the filling of the outer-ditch. The burials in the orchard in front of Buryfield House came from a Romano-British cemetery. Here the burials were by various methods, some in stone and others in wooden coffins, the latter identified by a scatter of iron nails. The inner rampart is seen again east of Buryfield House, where it stands some 10 feet high, and a section was dug across the ditch at its foot. The rampart continues as a high bank to pass its junction with the eastern rampart, running on and forming a curved arm down to the lower ground of the river Dikler levels. The outer ditch also ran to accompany the inner one and although their position was not visible on the ground surface they were located by trenching in 1974.

Vast areas of the gravel had been removed on the lower levels between Salmonsbury and the river Dikler. In one area, formerly a small field, outside but close to the south-east end of the incurving arm of the inner rampart, there remained a pattern in the gravel surface of some form of earlier cultivation, wide shallow trenches divided by baulks. These may have been the site of seed beds. The outer face of the inner rampart on its incurving arm still contained lengths of its original dry-stone walling in 1974. Although so much destruction of the land outside the eastern side of the camp has taken place, it was surprising that so few ancient finds came to light. Of particular interest were a complete snake-headed bronze bracelet from the cultivation plot, mentioned above, and a worn but complete stone altar, 2 feet high, of local oolite but without an inscription. This object was retrieved from the field called Culpitts.

The eastern inner rampart of the camp, though worn down in parts, can be traced almost all its full length to its north-east return, where it stands some 10 feet high. Its accompanying outer rampart was not visible on the ground surface but was proved by excavation. At one point near its north-eastern corner a small intermittent stream, which runs through the camp, flows on to the marshy river levels, passing through the two ramparts. Another incurving extension of the inner rampart, like the similar one at the south-east corner, also runs into marshy ground. The land thus partially enclosed suggests an area possibly used as a cattle enclosure.

Sporadic burials were found hereabouts, a small cemetery probably, in the filling of the outer ditch near the south-east corner, and others from the incurving bank, while a Saxon burial accompanied by an iron knife was found under the present hedge on the southern incurving inner rampart. Burials of uncertain date but probably Saxon, were also found in the line of the rampart near the north-east corner of the camp. The northern inner rampart can be traced for all its length, as quite a formidable bank from its northern corner to the camp's northern entrance; this length of bank was well known for badger setts. The entrance here was on a simple plan, with walls of stone, while a few yards away there remained a good length of dry-stone walling as revetment to the gravel bank. The outer ditch was traced by excavation. The site of the Salmonsbury Stone, which marked the spot of the meeting of the hundred court, discussed earlier in this paper, is considered to have been at this entrance into the camp. The field adjoining this entrance, and lying within the north-west corner of the camp, called Seven Lands, was the site of the find of 147 currency bars in 1880. Iron age burials and pits were found nearby at a later excavation. The line of the north-west return of the inner rampart can be faintly seen but due to various clearing operations of the stream which enters the camp at this point, as well as modern building development, the evidence for the camp defences have been obliterated. The stream emerges from heavy clay land, some of the fields here being named Dead Lands.

From the north-west corner the line of the ramparts was only traced after various trenches dug for other purposes, by the discovery of their ditches. The ditch of the inner rampart, however, can be seen in the siting of Harp Farm and its farmyard and vegetable garden which are at the lower level of the ditch bottom. From here the line of the ramparts runs to the western entrance, from which position this description started. However, the line of the inner rampart, which had been mostly levelled, became a bridle-way, continuing as the ancient track from Stow on the Wold to Bourton on the Water. At one point on the edge of the inner ditch an establishment was erected which served as an inn called 'The Harp', now Harp Farm. The inner ditch could be traced to its termination at the modern road, the latter running on the line of the original north causeway into the western entrance. The ditch here has been filled in, being 10 feet deep and developed as part of the new housing estate of 'Roman Way'. Earlier building development has also removed all signs of the end of the outer ditch (FIG 4, site B).

Having traced the defences of Salmonsbury, a brief reference will now be made to the additional archaeological sites and finds made within the camp during the last 40 years.

The erection of a house 'Avalon' in 1956 in an area within the incurving southern inner rampart of the western entrance, uncovered the site of a round hut enclosed by a shallow gully dug in the natural gravel. The hut had an internal measurement of 24 feet, a rough stone-paved floor in which were embedded fragments of five saddle-back querns. Iron age sherds were present and the foundations of a clay-built oven, while two post holes ten feet apart in the central area of the floor indicated the position of roof support. Later occupation levels were seen by debris containing Roman sherds, while the northern edge of the hut site was cut through by the construction of a well shaft. The full depth of the well could not be examined but 10 feet was excavated, when a great deal of Roman pottery was recovered amongst which Samian dishes, red and black burnished ware were conspicuous objects as well as iron knives, choppers and (of special interest) an iron rod twisted in a form of decoration. These finds from the well suggest belongings thrown out by a prosperous household such as a villa close by, and such foundations as walls and the remains of a hypocaust floor were found in the adjoining Bourton cemetery, some 50 yards to the south. Of particular interest was a small oval decorated stone object evidently designed for some votive use found outside the northern edge of the hut.

Other graves in the cemetery have exposed remains of broken walls, shallow trenches and pottery of iron age, Belgic and Roman date, while coins and bronze brooches of the latter date were recovered, and a currency bar of iron age date was found in a shallow trench just within the eastern hedge of the cemetery. A crouched burial of a woman also dating from the iron age was found during building operations for the Graystones Farm, situated in the centre of the camp, where remains of hut sites, rubbish pits and shallow gullies were also found.

It seems evident that occupation within Salmonsbury continued throughout most of the Romano-British period, although there was the attraction of trade of the new settlement along the Fosse Way. However, by the end of the 4th century occupation within the camp may have become much less, thus leaving the land open and suitable for agriculture which attracted use by the later Saxon occupation of the district, hence the meaning of the word Salmonsbury 'the homestead of the ploughmen'.

December 1974