

NINTH INTERIM REPORT ON EXCAVATIONS IN THE IRON AGE HILL-FORT AND ROMANO-BRITISH IRON-WORKING SETTLEMENT AT GARDEN HILL, HARTFIELD, EAST SUSSEX

1. INTRODUCTION

Owing to rising printing costs it is not possible this year to publish the usual interim report with an account of the historical sequence at Garden Hill, illustrated by photographs and line drawings.

The 1980 Season achieved significant results in elucidating the plan of hitherto unexplored areas of the settlement, but, apart from dates provided by recent archaeomagnetic tests (see below), the chronology already outlined remains substantially unaltered.

This report describes only the 1980 discoveries and should, therefore, be read in conjunction with the Eighth Interim Report, copies of which are still available and will be sent, if requested.

2. SUMMARY OF DISCOVERIES IN 1980

During the ninth season, lasting for four weeks in August, a workforce of between 25 and 40 a day, under a supervisor and site assistants, supported by a finds/conservation assistant and two planners, carried out the excavation programme, made detailed plans of the features and processed the portable finds. Most of the workforce lived in camp, where they were accommodated and fed free of charge. Reference is made to the gridded plan (Fig. 1) throughout the following account of the discoveries.

a) EAST END
G9, 10; H9, 10

Re-examination of the late Iron Age round-house (D) showed that it had been built on an artificially levelled surface. Its outer wall consisted of many small posts. There was an inner circle of fewer but larger posts, some of which were identified. No trace of an entrance was found. After its abandonment in the Romano-British period, parts of the NW half of the building were disturbed by shallow quarries similar to those which had destroyed part of the other round-house (G). These quarries, which may have been dug to obtain clay, were later infilled with a mixture of sandy soil, clay and fragments of sandstone and ironstone. New structures erected on the levelled area included a line of posts roughly across the middle of the abandoned house.

I2, 3, 4; J2, 3, 4, 5

At Easter 1980 the site-hut was moved from J2/J3 to a new position at the west end of the hill-fort, and in August the area formerly beneath it was excavated.

A number of post-holes of different periods were found on the rampart. Most of them were without stone-packing, but a few which were packed with stone are shown on the plan, and these may belong to Period V.

There were two small infilled pits in J3, and in J4 the filling of an early pit (possibly a small rampart quarry) was sealed by a floor and hearth, around which were the posts and timber-slot of a light structure. A few of the posts may be part of a fence running from I6 to K3.

Excavation of the smelting furnace in J5 was completed, and samples taken by Dr. A. J. Clark for archaeomagnetic tests in the Ancient Monuments Laboratory gave consistent results, although they were a long way off any relevant parts of the archaeomagnetic graph. Dr. Clark concluded that the furnace, which rested on natural clay, had tilted after the last firing, and that this had upset the archaeomagnetic calculations. He considers that the evidence points to an Iron Age rather than Romano-British date, because the magnetic declination is in an Iron Age direction, but excessively so. The furnace may thus be contemporary with the nearby forging hearth, which has an archaeomagnetic date in the latter half of the first century BC. This would imply that both these processes of iron-working were undertaken at Garden Hill during the late Iron Age.

In J4, the northern end of the large rampart quarry was defined, and the completed excavation of a rubbish pit in K4 (first discovered in 1975) produced pottery and more tiles from the demolished bath-house.

K1, 2

The section through the defences was finished, and traces of a weathered berm were found between the rampart and ditch. The up-hill side of the ditch, which contained many fallen revetting stones, was clear-cut; the downward side, however, was very slight and almost indistinguishable from the jumble of hill-wash and natural rock.

L4, 5, 6, 7 - O5, 6, 7

The remaining sides of the extensive Period V enclosure, already partly identified, were established and a careful examination made of their construction. On most of the north, south and west sides, narrow slots, presumably to hold the footings of fences, were sunk into the natural clay, and on the west side the slots were accompanied at intervals by additional major posts. The eastern side of the enclosure was lower down the hill and was set into the filling of shallow rampart quarries; here supporting stones were packed and wedged against the footings. The east end of the south side of the enclosure, which lay over the filling of an

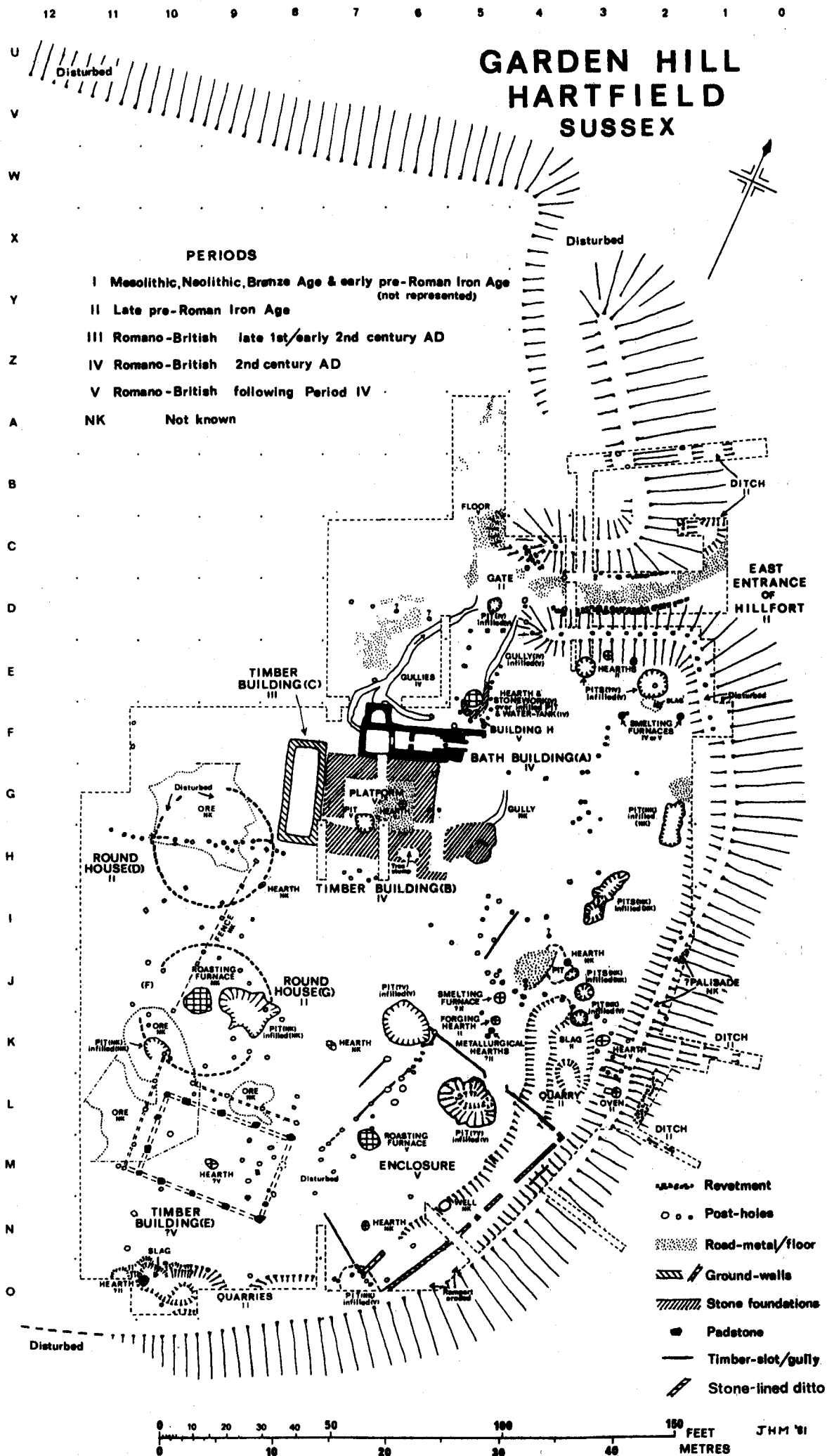


Fig. 1 Detailed plan of east end of Garden Hill

earlier pit, consisted of five closely positioned posts (07), and there may have been a small internal structure at this point. Entrances were visible on the north, east and west sides, and there may also have been an entrance in the disturbed area on the south side.

In the west corner of L6 the pits and packings of four substantial post-holes (discovered in 1974) were excavated. Two of these posts belonged to the west side of the Period V enclosure. The other two (larger) posts were part of another fence on a slightly different alignment. This excavation showed that one of the post-pits of the enclosure cut into a post-pit belonging to the fence, which must, therefore, be earlier. Furthermore, pieces of rotary quern, made of volcanic rock, imported from Mayen (Central Germany) probably in the first/second century AD, were found in the packing of the earlier post-pit which is, therefore, contemporary with, or later than, the quern.

Excavation of the filling of the broad pit in L5 was completed, and a small hearth was found in N7. Finally, at the end of the season an infilled well was identified in N5/N6. Its filling was removed to a depth of six feet without finding the bottom, and work on it will continue in 1981.

Large quantities of pottery and the usual portable finds were recovered from the deposits and Romano-British rubbish-dumps behind the rampart; and pieces of sandstone mortars were found in the post-pits.

08, 9, 10

More of the filling of the rampart quarry was removed. Discoveries included quantities of Romano-British pottery and the post-holes of a fence running from 011 to 08, and possibly joining up with the corner of the Period V enclosure already described.

b) WEST END

In July, Dr. Clark kindly undertook a magnetometer survey of a broad area behind the western defences and detected anomalies, which he interpreted variously as furnaces, hearths, pits, occupation areas and pieces of iron. These will be investigated in 1981 and 1982.

During the latter half of August a trial area 4.0 by 19.5m was opened immediately behind the defences, without reference to the magnetometer survey. The most interesting discovery was a dense scatter of flints, which included a fine leaf-shaped arrowhead, scrapers and waste flakes overlying an irregular platform of pieces of sandstone. Investigation of this area will be completed at the beginning of the 1981 season.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Group is grateful to our Vice-President, Mr. A. R. Morriss (who purchased Garden Hill from the Ministry of Defence in 1980) for permission to excavate; to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest and their staff for various services; to the Hon. Simon Stuart for providing storage for equipment between seasons and for giving access through his property both to staff and for the supply of the camp; to Headquarters, South East District, and 44 Squadron RCT, for lending a water-bowser; to the Group Management Training Centre of Barclays Bank Ltd. at Ashdown Park, for allowing us to use hot showers, a swimming-bath and lecturing facilities; to Mr. P. Waghorn for transporting all the equipment to and from Garden Hill and for keeping the camp supplied with water by moving the bowser whenever needed; to Mrs. P. G. F. Dalton, who did much of our typing, and to Mrs. S. Stephenson for preparing the final typescript of this report.

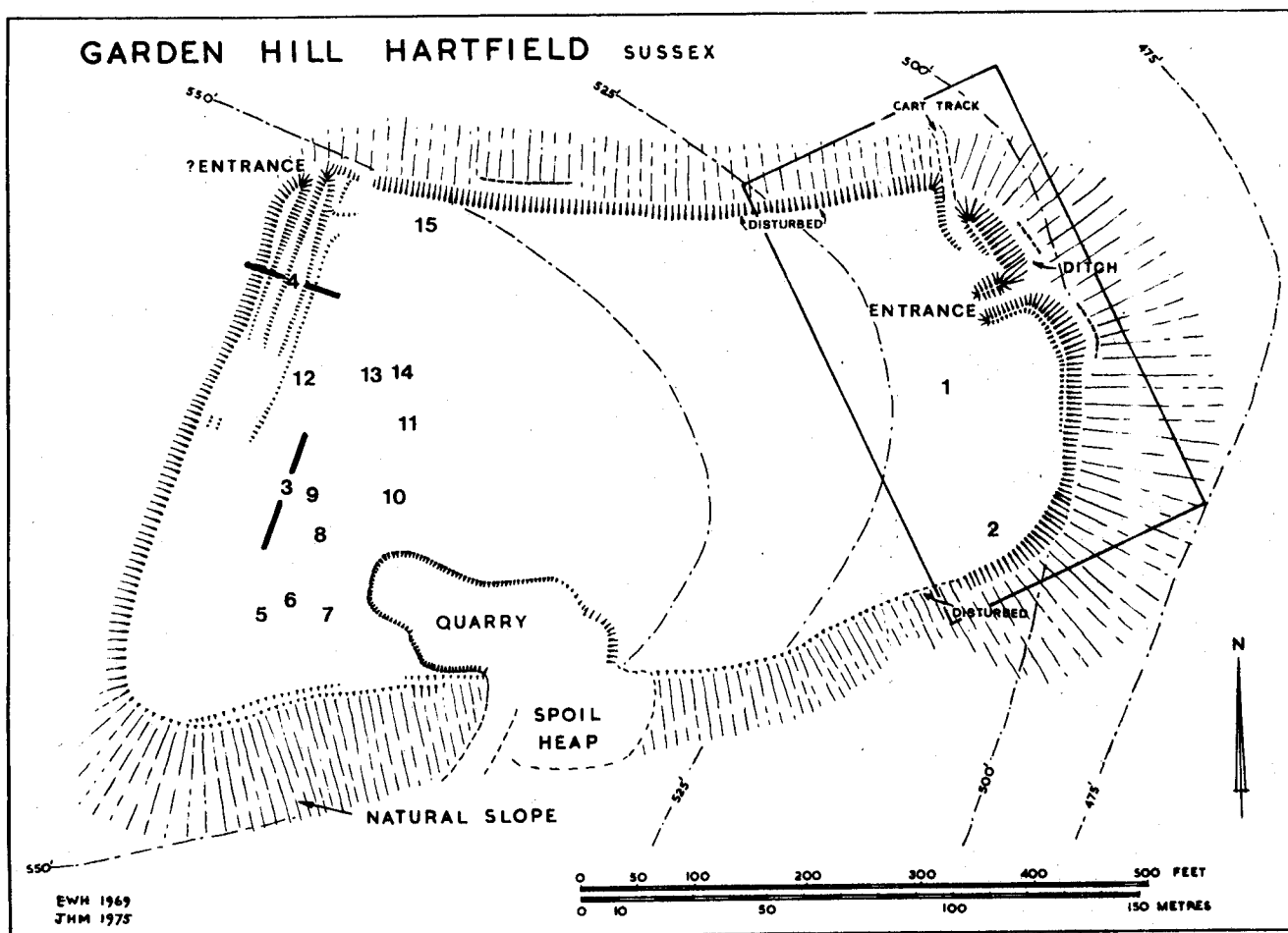
We express our warmest thanks to the institutions, trusts, charities, societies, firms and private individuals who contributed £3501 in 1980. Donations included: £500 by the Leverhulme Trust; £300 by the Strauss Charitable Trust; £200 each by the Metals Society and the Pilkington Glass Museum; and £100 each by Barclays Bank Ltd., the British Museum, Lord De La Warr, the Munro Charitable Trust, the Sarah d'Avigdor-Goldsamid Charitable Trust, Sotheby Parke Bernet & Company, and Whitbread & Company Ltd. A full list of contributors is published at the end of this report.

The main items of expenditure, which amounted to £3089, were the camp, where volunteers were accommodated and fed free of charge, and payments to staff. The usual sum of £100 was set aside towards eventual publication costs and £300 appropriated for 1981 expenses - leaving a surplus of £12 on the current account.

East Sussex County Council kindly lent us some excavation equipment. Marks & Spencer Ltd., Tunbridge Wells, again provided unsold food, and Cashmart, Tunbridge Wells, allowed us to use their facilities for wholesale purchase, all of which reduced the cost of catering.

A high standard of performance was maintained by the workforce. As directors we are grateful for the contribution of our assistant director, Mr. A. G. Webster, who also supervised for two weeks, and of other members of the staff: Miss A. Bailey, Mr. M. A. L. Bracegirdle, Mr. A. J. Brown, Mr. R. B. Daymond, Miss J. Geake, Mr. P. A. Green, Miss H. Quirr, Miss S. J. King, Miss A. McQuitty, Mr. A. Mundy, Mr. J. Pyke, Mr. M. Sque, Mr. J. Whitbourn and Mr. N. P. Wickenden.

Finally we thank the following for specialist reports, advice and services: Mr. C. Bonsall (flints), Dr. H. Chapman, FSA (querns and mortars), Dr. A. J. Clark, FSA and the staff of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory (archaeomagnetic dating), Mr. R. Clough (iron-working technology), Mr. D. F. Cutler (charcoal identifications), Dr. M. G. Fulford, FSA, and Mr. R. Pollard (pottery), Dr. D. B. Harden, CBE, FSA (glass), and Dr. E. R. Shephard-Thorn (geology).



In order to complete the project at Garden Hill the following areas and features will be excavated in 1981 and 1982.

East end

1. Earlier occupation known to exist under the second-century AD villa.
2. Well, discovered and partly excavated in 1980.

West end

3. Completion of area behind the defences, started in 1980.
4. 3 metre-wide section through the multiple defences (the main task of 1981).
- 5-15. Features detected by the 1980 magnetometer survey and interpreted as follows by Dr. Clark:

5. House (hearth and two pits)	11. Furnace
6. Iron	12. Occupation area
7. Pit	13. Iron
8. Iron	14. Occupation area
9. Pit	15. Camp fire
10. Furnace	

Fig. 2 General plan of Iron Age hill-fort on Garden Hill, and features to be explored in 1981 and 1982.