INTRODUCTION

Cranborne Chase: the stunted aboriginal forest trees, scattered, not grouped in cultivations; anemones, bluebells, violets, all pale, sprinkled about, without colour, . . . for the sun hardly shone. Then [the] Vale; a vast air dome and the fields dropped to the bottom; the sun striking, there, there; a drench of rain falling, like a veil streaming from the sky, there and there; and the downs rising, very strongly scarped (if that is the word) so that they were ridged and ledged – and all the cleanliness of [the] village, its happiness and well-being, making me ask . . . still this is the right method, surely?

Virginia Woolf, *Diary*, 30 April, 1926

The title and subtitle of this book have been selected with special care, and this is the obvious point at which to explain why they were chosen. This volume presents the main results of a project which took its own authors by surprise. Our fieldwork in Cranborne Chase, on the edge of the southern English downland, began as a contribution to landscape archaeology, and also owed something to the tradition of culture history. The subtitle of this volume sums up the original intention of that research, but as the project developed, our work took a different course.

Although the title reflects this change in the character of our research, this work was never intended as a comprehensive regional study. The original nucleus was the excavation of a Bronze Age site at South Lodge Camp, which began in 1977. This site was selected, not because it was situated in Cranborne Chase, but because work in the 1890s had documented a large body of diagnostic material (*Excavations* IV, 1–41). This allowed us to approach the excavation with fairly clear objectives in mind, but no sooner had the project got under way than we realised that a full understanding of the South Lodge complex would involve analysis of other contemporary sites in the area. Our growing acquaintance with the archaeology of Cranborne Chase suggested that this would not be possible unless those sites were viewed in relation to a longer sequence of change. Having embarked on a modest programme of excavation and museum work, we realised that we were caught. Our research became steadily more ambitious, and when, in 1981, we published a provisional report (Barrett, Bradley, Green and Lewis 1981), we found it necessary to review the entire prehistoric sequence in the area. Since then our concern has been with the development of Cranborne Chase from the beginning of the Neolithic period to the end of the Iron Age.

Such changes in the scope of our research took place at a time that saw significant changes in the nature of archaeology itself, so that what had started as an investigation of landscape history almost inevitably extended into a study of social change. As this happened, our attention turned to the role of more spectacular field monuments in Cranborne Chase. Because of our existing work on landscape history in that area, an immediate objective was to consider their relationship to the contemporary pattern of settlement. This encouraged us to bring together parts of the archaeological record which normally were studied quite separately. The scale of the project widened once again.

Many projects must have gone through a similar development during those years, but few have been published at any length. By the 1970s prehistorians had become quite skilled at investigating the relationship between settlement and the natural environment. Specialists in soils, seeds, plant remains and animal bones had all developed new ways of looking at the archaeological record, and, not surprisingly, these played a major part in our fieldwork in Cranborne Chase. This was only right since some of these approaches were pioneered on General Pitt Rivers' excavations in the same region. On the other hand, as the project extended beyond South Lodge Camp and came to concern itself with earlier material, it became obvious that ecological features had not played a dominant role in the sequence that we were observing. They may have presented certain constraints, but from the outset the main influence over the changing configuration of the landscape was the existence of large, apparently non-utilitarian monuments. Their interpretation posed a major challenge to archaeological theory. Not only did these earthwork monuments exercise a decisive influence over the character of contemporary settlement; their very existence determined the way in which the landscape was used for a long time after their construction. Older monuments attracted new monuments around them, and the fabric of everyday life seems

to have been affected by their presence. In short, it became apparent that the *past* itself, and the features which represented it in the life of later generations, was a crucially important resource. For almost two millennia it exercised an influence over the ways in which the landscape of Cranborne Chase was used. By this point it was obvious that traditional economic explanations had little to do with the evidence that we were collecting, and we found ourselves obliged to think more clearly about the nature of prehistoric *society* in this area, and the role played by monuments in the overall pattern of change. This gave us an added flexibility, but the more integrated approach that we now adopted meant that those parts of the archaeological record which are studied by different specialists would now need to be united in the same interpretative framework. This book is an attempt to put that programme into practice.

At the risk of some simplification, the development of the Cranborne Chase Project can be divided into two stages. Between 1977 and 1981 it focused mainly on the Bronze Age enclosures at South Lodge Camp and Down Farm, together with their associated cemeteries. This work involved excavation by all three of the authors. Once it was complete, the emphasis shifted to the Neolithic period, and in particular to the largest and most mysterious monument of that date, the Dorset Cursus. This could hardly be interpreted in terms of economic or ecological factors and yet it provided the focus for a dense distribution of burial mounds and other earthworks. The Cursus therefore became the main subject of a second stage of fieldwork, which ran between 1982 and 1984. This also involved the excavation of several small monuments close to the Cursus and detailed analysis of material collected in field survey. Like most of the excavation, this survey was carried out by Martin Green, whilst Richard Bradley investigated the Cursus itself.

The same twofold division is reflected in the structure of this book. Part I (Chapters 2 to 4), entitled 'The dead and the living', concerns the establishment of a social landscape dominated by the Dorset Cursus and the non-utilitarian field monuments which developed around it. As we shall see, even the character of domestic activity was influenced by the proximity of these sites. Part II (Chapters 5 to 6), entitled 'The living and the dead', concerns the dissolution of that structure and the very different system which took its place. It traces the development of first-millennium settlement and its growing concern with land and food production. It also documents the modification and destruction of the earlier monuments. Whilst parallel developments can be recognised in many other areas of Britain (Barrett and Bradley 1980; Bradley 1984), the peculiar richness of the archaeological record in Cranborne Chase makes it ideally suited to a study of social change on a local scale over more than three thousand years.

We have tried to show how this project developed under the influence of current debates in British archaeology, but the decisive factor was undoubtedly the quality of this archaeological record, which provided an almost unparalleled opportunity to put ideas to work. Its high quality raises certain problems, however, for whilst fieldwork and subsequent analysis have taken on a strongly thematic character, it would be unprofessional to confine our treatment of the primary data to those aspects of the work that we now find most informative. We should not forget that this project began as an exercise in landscape studies of a type which still enjoys a general currency. Our study area is also of some importance for traditional cultural archaeology, as it provides a particularly full and varied sequence of artefacts. It is not possible to cater for all tastes in a single monograph, and our attempts to give the same weight to every class of material proved to be quite indigestible. For this reason, the present volume is a selective account of our excavation and survey work, together with certain analyses of the artefacts and ecofacts. We make no apology for structuring it around what seem to be the most important issues. For an extended account of all the categories of excavated material, the reader is referred to a companion volume of essays, published by Oxbow Books (Barrett and Bradley in prep.). That volume does not duplicate the detailed site reports presented here, but considers each class of excavated material as it runs through the sequence as a whole, including pottery, worked flint, seeds and animal bones. This ancillary publication is intended to complete the definitive record of this project, leaving nothing hidden in microfiche. Meanwhile the present volume contains sufficient information on the nature, context and chronology of the finds to stand or fall on its own merits.

The component parts of our title, *Landscape, monuments and society*, are arranged in that particular order because they reflect the archaeologist's experience in dealing with them – landscape studies, for example, are better established than social archaeology. They do not represent any kind of 'hierarchy of inference'; nor are they successive steps in a single programme of research. They make up a unified whole, and their separation may tell us more about our own society than those that we are studying. 'Landscape' is an entirely subjective concept, and carries different connotations for different members of society (see Cosgrove 1984). Monuments may be one element in these views of the world, and

sometimes it seems as if their builders were trying to merge them into the natural order. On the other hand, the particular emphasis of this study is on the *social* rather than the natural landscape, and for this reason our discussion of monuments and their role in society takes up more space than is normal in a volume of this kind. This needs detailed justification before we can proceed. It is equally important to understand the changing character of our study area. Thus our first chapter has two main tasks to fulfil. First, we must explain in greater detail the theoretical framework within which our analysis was conducted; and, secondly, we have to describe the distinctive character of the landscape where those processes were played out.

The first part of the volume is concerned with the third and second millennia bc, in conventional terminology the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods. It is divided into four chapters. The first three describe the major developments in the study area, whilst the fourth also provides a more thematic overview of the sequence as a whole. Although the three chronological divisions happen to correspond to traditional archaeological periods, they are used here because they mark major changes in the occupation of Cranborne Chase. There is so much information to consider that it may be helpful to summarise the main outlines at this point.

After an initial chapter, setting out the main aims of the project and the character of the study area, *Chapter 2* considers the establishment of agricultural communities in the region. Earlier Neolithic activity may have started as little more than a seasonal extension to a settlement pattern with its emphasis in lowland areas. It was towards the end of this phase that complex monuments were built, and at much the same time there are indications of increased settlement of the Wessex downland. In Cranborne Chase, however, the Dorset Cursus and its accompanying long barrows dominate the archaeological record completely.

Chapter 3 continues the sequence into the Later Neolithic period when the intensity of upland settlement increased dramatically. Non-utilitarian monuments continued to be built, but now their locations were influenced by the prominent earthworks of the previous phase. Not only did newer monuments make reference to those already in existence; the whole character of contemporary settlement may have been structured by the presence and operation of those sites.

Chapter 4 completes the descriptive element in the first part of the book by tracing the sequence into a period in which again there is less evidence of domestic settlement in Cranborne Chase than there is in lowland parts of Wessex. On the other hand, the distinctive area around the earlier monuments retained its specialised character and includes one of the densest concentrations of barrows on the chalk. This remained important into the period of agricultural reorganisation considered in Part II.

The second part of this book carries our analysis into the later prehistoric period, a time when the landscape became dominated by the remains of field systems and settlements, representing a distinct contrast with the earlier forms of monument.

Chapter 5 describes our own excavations on two Middle Bronze Age settlements and cemeteries, before reconsidering Pitt Rivers' earlier excavations on similar sites. In the light of this work, we are able to offer an explanation for the transformation of the settlement record at this time.

Chapter 6 then examines the apparently discontinuous sequence of settlement extending from the end of the Middle Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age. Drawing upon the considerable amount of field survey evidence now available, we describe the sequence in terms of a continuous history of settlement evolution, leading to the complex of enclosures around the Late Iron Age settlement on Gussage Hill.

Radiocarbon chronology[1]

A good chronological framework is essential for any regional analysis. It was with this in mind, and with the ready co-operation of the British Museum Research Laboratory, that a large number of radiocarbon dates was obtained for material recovered during our fieldwork. Problems have arisen with some of these data, however, and Dr Sheridan Bowman has provided the following commentary on the use of the Cranborne Chase (British Museum) date list.

The British Museum radiocarbon laboratory has now issued revised, and in some cases new, results for the great majority of samples which were originally measured between 1980 and 1984. This was necessary because of the identification of a systematic error in BM radiocarbon results issued during that period (Tite *et al.* 1987, 1988). In the absence of new results for all previously dated samples or the availability of new samples, the revised results for the Cranborne material must be taken as definitive, and the previously published dates in *Radiocarbon* should be ignored.

This is not the appropriate place to describe how the error was identified and the revisions evaluated; a full account of these is in preparation and will be published by the present author, together with Janet Ambers and Morven Leese. It is, however, worth briefly discussing

the cause of the problem. The British Museum employs liquid scintillation counting to evaluate the radiocarbon content in a sample and to facilitate this the sample is converted to benzene. Counting of the beta particles from the radioactive decay of the radiocarbon takes place quasi-simultaneously with counting of one or more reference standards, referred to as moderns, which have the radiocarbon activity of a zero-age sample. Similarly 'dead' samples (i.e. having no radiocarbon activity) are counted to measure the number of counts induced by sources of radioactivity other than radiocarbon (e.g. cosmic rays or natural radioactivity in the immediate environment of the counter). These moderns and backgrounds have a long residency time in the counter, whereas samples for dating are present for relatively short periods.

Benzene is a fairly volatile liquid and even apparently small levels of evaporation will give significant shifts in the radiocarbon result. Both modern and background evaporation losses contribute to give ages that are too young. A 1% loss of modern benzene is equivalent to an eighty-year reduction in age, and a 1% loss of background to a twenty-year reduction if the sample age is 5570 years (i.e. equal to the ^{14}C half-life). Such evaporation losses can therefore readily account for discrepancies of several hundred years. It is important to note that evaporation losses in the standards give rise to systematic errors, i.e. the results will be consistently biased relative to the true result, in this case too young. Biased results are inaccurate, though not necessarily imprecise. Precise, but inaccurate, data are those where repeated evaluations, under the same experimental conditions, will give very nearly the same value, but that value will not be close to the true one. In radiocarbon dating, a measure of reproducibility, i.e. precision, is experimentally evaluated and given as the error term. Since the true value is rarely known, a radiocarbon result with a small associated error term can give a false impression of validity. A difficulty can arise in attempting to evaluate biases. Assuming two independent results are available, one of which can be taken to be accurate, they will both have errors associated with measurement (i.e. precision errors). While the difference in the results should be a measure of the bias of the inaccurate one, it might not be possible to prove this bias differs from zero because of the poor precision of the individual results.

To investigate the scale of the problem, the BM counting system was first upgraded. The measures adopted are summarised in Bowman and Ambers (1988) and were designed to remove any biases, ensure that they do not recur, and to obtain a realistic measure of precision. In particular a sample of *accurately* and *precisely* known radiocarbon age is counted quasi-simultaneously with all samples to be dated. These reference samples are groups of ten or twenty rings of bog oak dated by Gordon Pearson's high-precision radiocarbon laboratory in Belfast. The samples were kindly supplied by Mike Baillie, who, together with Jon Pilcher, performed the dendrochronology for the Belfast high-precision calibration curve (Pearson *et al.* 1986). The first four samples, representing three different ages, that were run by the BM differed on average by fourteen years from the Belfast results (standard error of ± 9: Bowman and Ambers 1988). From these comparisons it is clear that no significant systematic errors exist in the upgraded BM counting system, and this has provided a firm basis from which to investigate the earlier problem. The precision on BM results for a full-sized sample is typically ± 40 to 50 years at the one sigma level (note that this is substantially less precise than the Belfast data, but part of this difference is due to sample size).

It will be noted that the Cranborne datelist contains two types of new BM reference number: those with the letter R appended and those with the letter N appended. These refer to revised and new results respectively. The latter are measurements on samples where enough material remained to enable them to be redated completely from scratch. Each revised date has been calculated from the original result using a combination of other data. Given that the evaporation losses were to some extent time dependent and that two counters were involved, the amount by which results are revised is not necessarily the same from sample to sample. The error terms associated with the revised results are larger than the original ones, since the corrections themselves have error terms and, in addition, the original errors were underestimated (the method now used to evaluate total precision on BM dates is outlined in Ambers *et al.* 1987). Clearly increased error terms affect the 'sensitivity' with which these revised results can be used, i.e. how different two radiocarbon dates need to be in order for them to be statistically distinguishable. For one site of the Cranborne series, Handley Barrow, only one new date was feasible and no revisions could be issued for the other results. These non-revised data must be used with caution.

It is perhaps appropriate to discuss at this stage two other forms of bias, leaving aside questions of residuality and inadequate contextual control, that can affect radiocarbon results and their interpretation. Contamination of sample material by carbon of a different age is an obvious source of bias. Pretreatment procedures are used by all radiocarbon laboratories, and are designed to eliminate carbon-containing materials that have entered a sample *post mortem*. Samples that have been stored for

long periods, in a museum for example, should not present any additional difficulties unless they have undergone certain types of conservation treatment. Impregnation, for example, introduces chemicals which, being difficult to remove, are unlikely to be entirely eliminated by pretreatment.

A second type of bias is inherent to the sample material itself. Samples of marine origin are an extreme example (see for example Olsson, 1983). Equally tree-rings cease to exchange carbon with the biosphere soon after they are laid down, and it is well known that long-lived species such as oak, and hence oak charcoal, give radiocarbon results that can be several centuries older than the event of usage. As part of the procedure of revising the discrepant BM results, it was necessary to redate a selection of samples. In many cases, the only material available was charcoal. The likelihood of bias entering the revision process therefore had to be investigated. Two samples were chosen which were sufficiently large to enable several dates to be measured from scratch. One was bone: the vertebrae of a single ox from Badshot (submitted by Jon Cotton; original reference BM-2273, Ambers *et al.* 1987). The other was charcoal from Down Farm (part of the Cranborne series submitted by Richard Bradley; original reference BM-1852, Burleigh *et al.* 1982). The results are shown below.

The N1, N2 . . . etc. appended to the original BM reference numbers indicate new results on different aliquots of sample, i.e. replications of the dating process from scratch. In the case of the Badshot bone it is accepted that a sub-sample of material of the same age is being selected in each case. For the Down Farm charcoal this is not necessarily the case. Four sub-samples were taken without any particular selection of size or type of charcoal fragments (BM-1852N1 to BM-1852N4). These data might appear rather more scattered than the bone results, but given the estimated precision it cannot be proven statistically that these charcoal samples are not of the same radiocarbon age. However, one further sub-sample was very carefully chosen. This has been given a different reference (BM-2577), since it was selected to represent young, i.e. 'twiggy', material. On a one-sided significance test, BM-2577 is statistically younger, at the 99% level of confidence, than the mean result for the non-selected material. The validity of taking a mean of these four results might be questionable since a charcoal sample, as discussed, is not necessarily all of the same age. However, a more conservative test of the youngest individual sample, 1852N3, against the 'twiggy' material also confirms the possibility of a difference, though at a lower level of confidence (significance tests have been based on the estimated precisions). From the point of view of the revision of the discrepant BM results, the reasonable reproducibility of the replicates on non-selected charcoal is encouraging and necessary for the success of the procedure adopted. For archaeological interpretation, however, the difference relative to 'twiggy' material is a bias that must be continually borne in mind in comparison of results.

Site	New reference	New result (years BP)
Down Farm	BM-1852N1	3120 ± 50
	BM-1852N2	3270 ± 50
	BM-1852N3	3100 ± 50
	BM-1852N4	3150 ± 60
	BM-2577	2980 ± 50
Badshot	BM-2273N1	4780 ± 40
	BM-2273N2	4710 ± 50
	BM-2273N3	4730 ± 50

Returning now to the Cranborne data as a whole, for the revised results, although the precision has decreased, the purpose of the revision was to increase accuracy, i.e. to reduce systematic bias. Overall, the results have consistently moved back in age by some 250 radiocarbon years or more. Calibration of these data (Pearson and Stuiver 1986; Pearson *et al.* 1986) should give age ranges which represent better the true dates of usage of the sites. In particular this affects the interpretation of the Wessex Deverel-Rimbury complex (see chapter 5), which was previously a chronological anomaly relative to other localities: this anomaly has now been removed. The Cranborne series serves to emphasise the point made in the opening paragraph of this discussion, that the previously published BM results (for samples measured between 1980 and 1984) should not be used.

Note

1 S. G. E. Bowman

1. TIME AND PLACE

1.1 The archaeology of social reproduction[1]

The main themes of our title, *Landscape, monuments and society*, often appear to be specific areas of archaeological interest. Monuments, for instance, are analysed in terms of their form and structural history, and the landscape provides a context for the distribution of monuments, revealing their spatial organisation and ecological setting. But what of society? If anything, society appears as the ghost in the machine, whose archaeologically verifiable existence is still contested. Let us therefore look at the relationship between society, the landscape and the monument.

Since the work of Gordon Childe, archaeologists have tended to treat 'society' as a system of institutions which are mapped by their material remains. Cultural archaeologists defined the social realm as a relatively closed set of shared beliefs. It was the acceptance of those beliefs which established cohesion between a society's members and the practical application of belief systems which produced regular patterns of material association (Childe 1956). The application of this rather straightforward idea has led to the chronological and geographical ordering of artefacts and monuments. Such ordering has appeared to reflect the nature, history and extent of a given belief system; and the categorisation and mapping of archaeological material in these terms remains part of the conceptual framework of British archaeology.

By now there have been numerous criticisms of such an approach to archaeology. One of the more sustained critiques has been developed by Renfrew (1977). He notes that the definition of cultural types has depended upon norms, arbitrarily drawn from rich assemblages of material. An example relevant to our present work would be the vaguely defined 'Wessex Culture', based upon a group of poorly recorded but exotic Early Bronze Age grave assemblages.

Renfrew also accuses Childe of muddling questions of ethnicity with questions of social organisation. This seems another way of arguing that the organisation of any society is difficult to understand when all available data are interpreted in terms of the normative principles of a cultural tradition. An alternative approach is to seek the organisation of the various institutions which comprise the social system in the spatial organisation of sites and artefacts. A classic application of this approach is Renfrew's own model for the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age of Wessex (1973). Here the sequence of monuments, their spatial distribution and the labour demands estimated for their construction are used to deduce a sequence of increasingly centralised 'polities' (Renfrew 1973 and 1986). However, such models tell us little about the history of these social systems. Just as in cultural archaeology, where all available data are used to map cultural norms, all the information is now being used to expose the systemic and functional arrangement of social institutions. We have no information about the processes which generated those particular systems. Consequently their genesis seems entirely mysterious, arising either from some adaptive necessity, and therefore determined by ecological conditions, or the result of largely abstract processes inherent in earlier social relations. Ultimately such an archaeology has had to rely heavily upon models of social evolution to breathe life into static representations.

Social archaeology confronts several historical problems. It considers how people reproduce (1) their material conditions through their actions upon the environment; (2) the social system by maintaining the demands, and meeting the obligations, of social discourse; and (3) their knowledge and understanding of how to proceed in such practices. The emphasis here is upon *reproduction* in the sense of the routine maintenance of social practices, rather than upon discovering descriptive terminologies for entire social systems, such as band, tribe, chiefdom, state etc. These routines are daily and traditional practices, and historical analysis should reveal the means by which such practices were maintained or transformed. Archaeological evidence is not simply a material record of social processes: it is part of the material resources employed in past social practices.

Social practices are maintained by people's *practical knowledge* of the specific cultural and social conditions they experience. This is the practical competence of knowing how to proceed in daily and seasonal activities. It is how the world is comprehended in order to allow

action that is meaningful and effective. People have some control over the available cultural resources through which they respond to obligations, enter alliances or make demands. The way in which that control is exercised is part of the practical strategy of daily life, routines which draw upon available resources of authority and respond to demands and obligations. Thus social practices reproduce structures of authority. But alternative strategies are available and modes of authority may be transformed during the execution of such practices. Material conditions do not remain constant: they are worked and reworked, and history is made under these changing conditions.

Practical knowledge and *discursive knowledge* (the latter called to mind to explain the world) are likely to be created under different conditions. There has been considerable debate in the recent archaeological literature concerning the nature, role and origin of ideological systems (Miller and Tilley 1984). We take ideology in non-capitalist societies to have a quite specific role and specific means of reproduction. Ideologies are those forms of discursive knowledge which explain the world or its cultural values in a particular and functionally coherent way. Because ideologies preserve key sets of cultural values which recur in routine practices, they maintain social conditions rather than transform them. They therefore appear to serve the interests of dominant groups. Ideology is not a 'false consciousness' but a dominant discursive reading of key cultural values.

A discursive knowledge which gives this dominant reading to the elements of the symbolic system is reproduced through *ritual*. It is through ritual that particular conditions are given precise cultural definitions because ritual controls transitions between those conditions. Burial rituals enable the transition from life to death and by so doing they give an explicit cultural definition to the symbolism associated with this life:death opposition. Similarly rituals may be employed to deal with those moments when culturally defined categories appear to be transgressed as in cases of illness or infertility. Such a transgression can only be contemplated by employing the symbolism used to define 'normality'. This approach follows the work of Turner (1967) and Bloch (1985), and preserves ritual as a distinctive form of practice, reproducing a particular form of discursive knowledge. It is through the highly formalised drama of ritual that dominant readings of cultural symbols are constructed.

We can now confront the means of reproducing not only material conditions but also forms of knowledge. Both are necessary components of human action (Godelier 1986). We can recognise that different forms of knowledge will be created under specific cultural and historical conditions.

In archaeological terms these approaches raise two quite fundamental issues. Firstly, social systems are reproduced by people who are knowledgeable because of their ability to monitor the conditions under which they act. Different forms of knowledge are reproduced under different conditions. We cannot treat the social system as a machine with specific organisational properties which function in cross-culturally consistent ways. Instead the ecological or material conditions which people experience are given a specific cultural meaning by people's actions: such conditions constitute *resources* which both guide and result from those actions. Social systems are therefore reproduced by internalising material conditions in a culturally and historically specific manner.

Secondly, all social actions are culturally meaningful and find their expression in a symbolic medium. Ritual cannot be equated with symbolism without losing its analytical value (Goody 1961). This would mean equating ritual with all communicative action, rather than restricting it to the particular kinds of strategy discussed above. Consequently archaeologists cannot recognise ritual activity simply as having resulted in those deposits or monuments which they believe to be 'symbolic'. Routine activities are likely to preserve symbolic values of 'cleanliness' or 'order', or to be executed with a practical reference to gods or ancestors. This does not make them ritual actions.

As we have seen, in archaeology time and space are normally employed to describe sequences of sites and material, and their overall distribution. Time and space also become the matrix within which social practices take place. This forces us to consider the frequency with which certain actions are repeated or certain *locales* are occupied. It also allows us to recognise that locales have different roles, separated in time, in the reproduction of social conditions. No site is permanent, but sites and monuments are locales within a landscape at which people have congregated and through which they have passed. They were foci of human interaction, occupied for a matter of hours in daily or seasonal cycles. Only prisoners and the infirm occupy the same place twenty-four hours a day and for weeks or months at a time.

Landscape archaeology, as it is practised, involves the study of systematic relationships between sites. Sites are assigned one or more functions in the working of a regional system, primarily functions concerned with the extraction and redistribution of material forces, or as 'ritual sites'. A time–space perspective, on the other hand, is concerned with the routine movement of people through landscapes, constituted by the locales in which

they came into contact. Around and within these sites social practices routinely maintained the obligations and affinities which marked out people's position and status, and ritually controlled moments of social transition. Not only did the landscape provide the necessities of life: it was culturally defined, and people's practical experience of that world allowed them to monitor their own place within it. The monuments that archaeologists study within the landscape 'participated' actively in the structuring of social conditions.

Landscape is thus the entire surface over which people moved and within which they congregated. That surface was given meaning as people acted upon the world within the context of the various demands and obligations which acted upon them. Such actions took place within a certain *tempo* and at certain *locales*. Thus landscape, its form constructed from natural and artificial features, became a culturally meaningful resource through its routine occupancy. Scattered forests, ploughed fields, earthworks and hedges all contributed towards structuring the movement and communication of people.

Monuments therefore take on an ambiguity through time. They may be the locales of ritual observance, where models of social order may be made explicit, or, silent and almost unnoticed, encountered in the routines of daily life, but each time a new mark was made on the landscape, those who came after might accommodate that scar into their own understanding of the world.

In this book we shall make an attempt to convince the reader of the usefulness of this approach through a detailed study of such processes at work over three millennia in one of the most intensively studied landscapes in prehistoric Europe.

1.2 The study area[2]

Cranborne Chase is better known for its place in the development of archaeology than it is for its own prehistory. It owes its position in the archaeological literature to the happy accident that a large part of the region was once the property of General Pitt Rivers, for it was here that he established many of the ground rules of modern excavation and publication (see Barker 1977, 13–14). The existence of so much well-documented material from his excavation at South Lodge Camp was an obvious incentive to renew work on that site, but we must make it clear that the widening scope of the project did not grow out of any wish to review the General's achievement. His collection did provide an invaluable basis for some of our research, but its main importance lay in its sheer extent and variety. An equally strong inducement to extend our interests in Cranborne Chase was the extraordinary body of material already collected by Martin Green during a programme of solo fieldwork. It was when we decided to join forces on the publication of that material that the wider project really took shape.

There were, however, two aspects of Pitt Rivers' legacy that played a significant part in the planning of our research. There is the existence of a large body of well-recorded material from his excavations. Although this was familiar from published sources, the artefacts and those records that still survived had not been available since his private museum closed in the 1960s.

It was only when his archaeological collection was transferred to the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum that it could be studied again. Our work at South Lodge Camp soon showed that the General's published reports could not be interpreted to any effect without access to this material (cf. Barrett, Bradley, Bowden and Mead 1983).

The General's legacy was important in another way, for large parts of his collection relate to periods and types of site which have not received enough attention from later generations of archaeologists. This was the reason for resuming work at South Lodge Camp. At the same time, much of the interest of Pitt Rivers' excavations arises from the fact that he was exploring an area which had largely escaped agricultural damage. The Chase had been medieval hunting forest, and it preserved a variety of prehistoric monuments of types which rarely survive above ground. If we were to obtain a balanced view of the prehistory of this region, it would be necessary to make some use of what was available already.

Pitt Rivers' inheritance was a stroke of good fortune because it gave him the resources with which to indulge his penchant for archaeology. He was still more fortunate in the location of his new property on the borders of Hampshire, Dorset and Wiltshire (Fig. 1.1). His estate occupied one edge of the great expanse of chalkland that contains so many of the most famous prehistoric sites in Wessex. Such dramatic monuments as Stonehenge and Durrington Walls are only 22 km to the north of our study area (Atkinson 1956; Wainwright and Longworth 1971). Thirty-five km to the south, rivers rising in Cranborne Chase discharge into the English Channel in another area with a rich archaeological record. The Pitt Rivers estate bridged the uplands and lowlands of Wessex and was flanked by two of the rivers that communicated between these different areas. The eastern limit of the Chase was marked by the Hampshire Avon, which ran past Durrington Walls. To the west its boundary was marked by the River Stour, which gave access to the equally important Neolithic site of Hambledon Hill

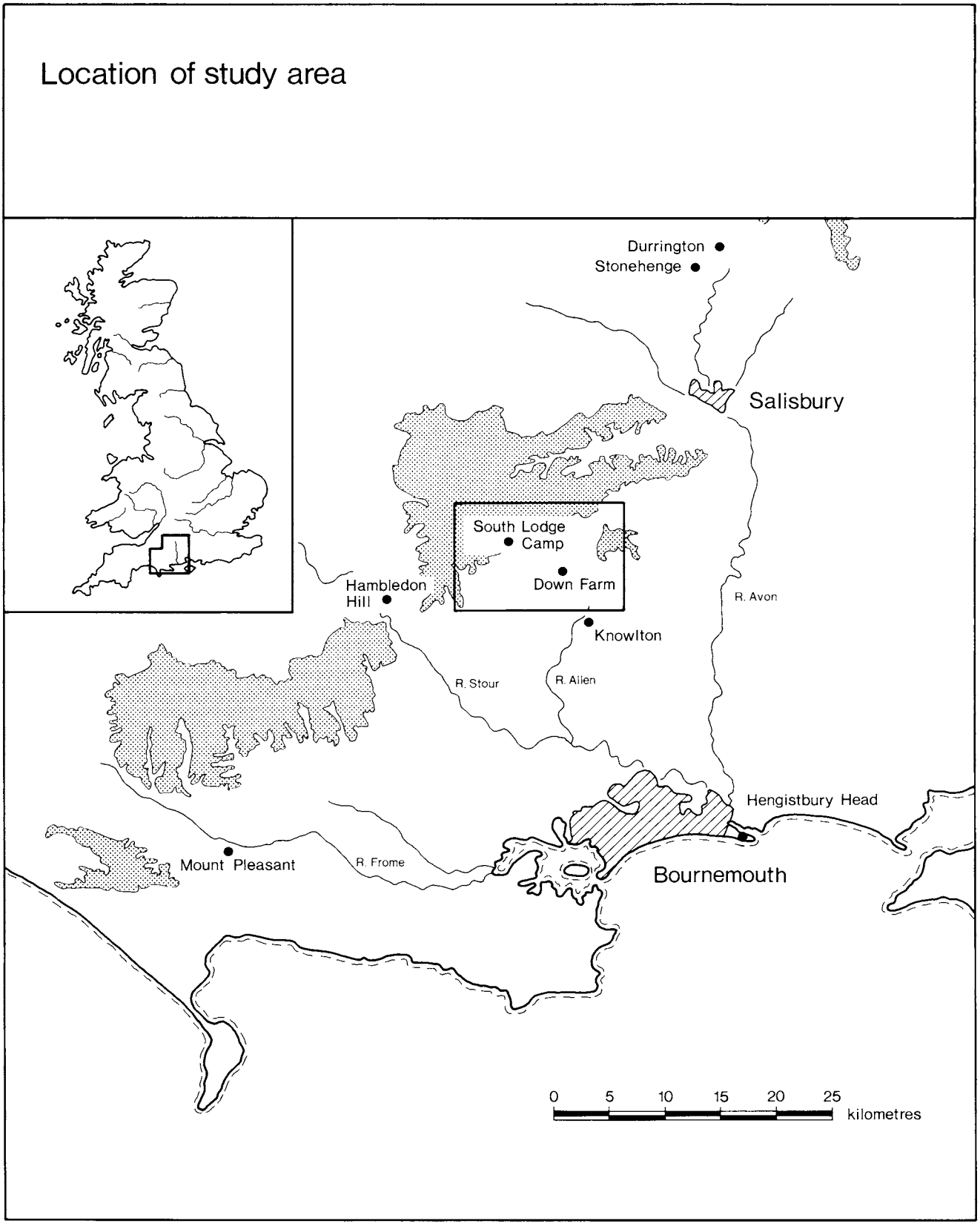

Fig. 1.1 The location of the study area in relation to major sites mentioned in the text

(Mercer 1980). Tributaries of both these rivers rise in the study area.

At a more detailed level, the essential features of this area are summarised in the epigraph to this chapter. The topography of the Chase itself has four main elements (Fig. 1.2), three of which are referred to in Virginia Woolf's brief description. As she noted, the most striking feature is the surviving remnant of the hunting forest which gave the region its name. A large area of Cranborne Chase is still wooded, with Pitt Rivers' estate at Rushmore towards its centre. It was here that the General undertook so much of his fieldwork. The topography is relatively even and most of the wooded area is capped by deposits of clay with flints, overlying chalk (Fig. 1.3). To the north, these superficial deposits are absent, and the ground rises to a maximum of 275 m. Here an open chalk ridge overlooks the valley of the River Ebble, one of the tributaries of the Avon that separate the Chase from the rim of Salisbury Plain. At the north-western edge of the study area, the same expanse of downland gives way to the Vale of Wardour, which has a more mixed geology, dominated by deposits of greensand. Apart from the higher ground, all three of these regions are heavily cultivated today. To the south of the clay with flints, at an elevation of between 50 and 150 m, there is a further expanse of chalk downland, broken by a series of valleys running towards the south-east. Again this area is largely free of superficial deposits and is under the plough. The springline is at 75 m and feeds a number of streams and rivers, the most important of which, the River Allen, is a tributary of the Stour. Their valleys contain quite extensive deposits of gravel. Some of these areas are in permanent pasture today, although others have recently been ploughed for the first time. The streams and rivers rising in this part of the study area run southwards into the Hampshire Basin, where the chalk gives way to a more varied series of clays and sandy soils.

The area selected for detailed study covers about 80 square km, centred on Pitt Rivers' Rushmore Estate, but extending south-eastwards along the valley of the River Allen towards the famous henge monuments at Knowlton (Royal Commission on Historical Monuments 1975, 113–15). In the opposite direction it reaches to the edge of the Vale of Wardour, where a recent field survey has already been published (Gingell and Harding 1983). Apart from the topographical features already mentioned, we should note the position of the Dorset Cursus, which follows the springline for almost 10 km and crosses the full extent of the study area (Fig. 1.2).

In other respects, the limits of the study area have been chosen on pragmatic grounds. They enclose all the major sites excavated by Pitt Rivers and the principal concentrations of field monuments in the area. This is also the part of the region which has seen extensive field-walking. The details of this work will be considered in due course, but the extent of the areas which it has been possible to examine on the ground are mapped in Figure 1.3. They cover practically all the cultivated land to which we could gain access. The same area has also been examined from the air.

1.3 The development of fieldwork in the study area[2]

We must now turn to the work of our predecessors, which did so much to influence our choice of study area. We need to consider the development of archaeological research in Cranborne Chase, and the excavated material that was available for analysis when this project started. Earlier fieldwork was of three main kinds: research excavation of monuments surviving above ground; rescue excavation of sites levelled by the plough; and analytical field survey undertaken on standing earthworks. Our one innovation is the sample excavation of a lithic scatter whose contents were confined to the ploughsoil.

The research excavations are probably the best known. These were mainly concerned with earthwork monuments surviving above ground in the areas of medieval forest. Contrary to general opinion, this development did not start with Pitt Rivers, for a number of barrows in the well-preserved cemetery on Oakley Down were investigated by Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1812, 236–44). The General did not conceal his low opinion of this work, but some details can still be rescued from the published account. His own work was entirely confined to the period between 1880, when he inherited the Rushmore Estate, and his death in 1900, by which time the results of all but one of his excavations were in print (*Excavations* I–IV). It is hard to comprehend the scale of this work, but the basic statistics are daunting. In those twenty years Pitt Rivers investigated thirty barrows, an urnfield, three Bronze Age enclosures, two Iron Age settlements and a hill fort, as well as other, minor features of the pre-Roman landscape. Not all of these sites have the same importance for modern archaeology, and in this book we shall pay special attention to only a dozen (Table 1.1). In the Neolithic period our main concern will be with the Wor Barrow complex and with the nearby pits on Handley Hill. In the following period, we shall be concerned with a small number of the General's barrow excavations, together with a group of Beaker pits at Martin Down. Our main interest, however, is in the large-scale excavations that he carried out on the Middle Bronze Age enclosures at South Lodge Camp, Martin