

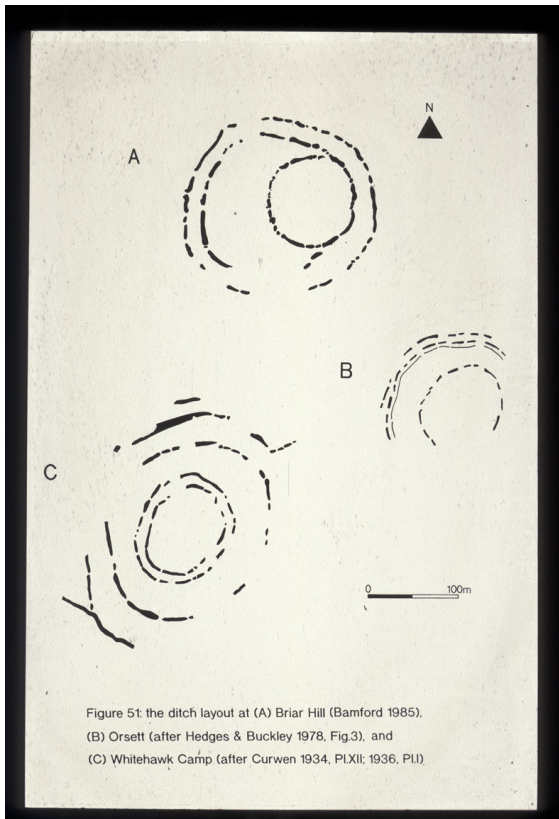
Author	Brian Albrecht
Author Status	Full time PhD, University of Newcastle upon Tyne
Nature of Paper	Research Outline
Journal Edition	<i>The School of Historical Studies Postgraduate Forum e-Journal, Edition One, 2002</i>

### The Effects of Structural Deposition: A Theoretical Research Project for the Social Uses of Causewayed Enclosures in the British Isles

The causewayed enclosure is one of the most elusive earthwork monuments in the British Isles. For decades now ideas have centered on a variety of theories, which have attempted to put them into a better social context. These have included enclosures as gathering places (Smith 1965) where a variety of activities took place. This ultimately entails at looking at the ditch deposits and any interior features such as pits and postholes, which contain a variety of cultural material that seems to have been placed within a particular part of the enclosure thus creating a specific social space or spaces. Pollard (2001) is one of the first people to publish a paper on this subject for causewayed enclosures and pits as well as later Neolithic monuments (1995). An example of this can be seen at Windmill Hill (Whittle et al 1999) where it appears that the enclosure has specific parts, which may have been used for domestic and ritual space as noted by the quantity of the animal bone, pottery and lithics. Chapman (2000) also notes structured deposition for the Neolithic and Copper Age on the main European continent, which have helped transcend ideas that were eventually put into practice during the British Neolithic. It is through these actions, which can show specific events, which may point to the day-to-day activities or an 'intimateness', which entailed portions of Neolithic life. Another idea by Palmer (1978) tried to show the differences in causewayed enclosure construction, but did not take into account that some enclosures were modified and in some cases extended through multiple phases of entire circuits extending the circumference of the enclosure, which can be seen at the Sussex site of Whitehawk (Russell and Rudling 1996). This is what Evans (1988) was referring in his paper on causewayed enclosures as 'monuments as projects'. This multiple phasing of adding and re-cutting of the ditches may help to point to specific activities happening at specific times within the ditch segments.

Another view may be that enclosures were used on a multiple basis, but that basis was governed by social codes. It may be possible to use the ditch deposits to see if there are any differences in the ways in which material was chosen from phase to phase. The material can then be looked at to see if there are any possible associations with other objects or the possibility that some objects at some sites were deposited on their own. If there is any difference than material being placed in particular sections of the enclosure in certain phases may have

implied an overarching social knowledge of the past in terms of what has been placed where. My current research is focusing on the ditch deposits in terms of not only the cultural material, which is contained with them, but also how the material is found in both a temporal and spatial sense. Although some data from causewayed enclosures is more limited than others an attempt will be made in detail to show differences in the way in which cultural material was purposefully placed at sites. This may in turn show that in fact causewayed enclosures may have had specific uses and cannot be pigeon-holed into the phrase of 'multiple uses'. It may be possible then to see how small-scattered mobile Neolithic groups were thinking about a particular part of their landscape and in turn create a bigger picture of Neolithic life within the British Isles during the early and Middle parts of the Neolithic.



**Above:** The ditch layout at (A) Briar Hill (Bamford 1985), (B) Orsett (after Hedges & Buckley 1978, Fig 3.) and (C) Whitehawk Camp (after Curwen 1934, PlXIII; 1936, PlI)

## References

Chapman, J. (2000) 'Pit-digging and structured deposition in the Neolithic and Copper Age' *Proceeding of the Prehistoric Society*, 66: 61-87.

Evans, C. (1988) 'Acts of enclosure: a consideration of concentrically-organised causewayed enclosures', in J. Barrett and I. Kinnes (eds.) *The Archaeology of Context in the Neolithic and Bronze Age: Recent Trends*. Sheffield: University of Sheffield: 85-96.

Palmer, R. (1976) 'Interrupted ditch enclosures in Britain: the use of aerial photography for comparative studies' *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 42: 161-86.

Smith, I. F. (1965) *Windmill Hill and Avebury: Excavations by Alexander Keiller 1925-1939*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Pollard, J. (1995) 'Inscribing space: formal deposition at the later Neolithic monument of Woodhenge, Wiltshire' *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 61: 137-56.

Pollard, J. (2001) 'The aesthetics of depositional practice' *World Archaeology*, 33(2): 315-33.

Russell, M. and Rudling, D. (1996) 'Excavations at Whitehawk Neolithic enclosure, Brighton, East Sussex: 1991-93' *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 134: 39-61.

Whittle, A., Pollard, J. and Grigson, C. (1999) *The Harmony of Symbols: The Windmill Hill Causewayed Enclosure, Wiltshire* (Cardiff Studies in Archaeology). Oxford: Oxford University Press.