

Arbor Low and Gib Hill

Conservation Plan 2008



Stella McGuire with Ken Smith



ENGLISH HERITAGE



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I Introduction

I.1 Background to the Conservation Plan

The national archaeological importance of the monument complex at Arbor Low and Gib Hill, near Monyash, has been recognised through scheduling. As a visually striking site, which offers long views across an attractive rural landscape, and lies close to the road in a major National Park, it attracts a regular flow of visitors, some of whom value the stone circle and henge as a modern spiritual resource. All elements of the monument complex lie in farmland, much of it used as pasture. Although access is easy (in contrast to more remote monuments) there is no public right of way to the site – an issue which has caused problems in the past.

Until very recently, both the major elements of the complex (the Arbor Low henge, stone circle and barrow and the Gib Hill double barrow) were designated by English Heritage as at ‘medium’ risk and in ‘declining’ condition. As a result of conservation work, their condition is now judged to be ‘improving’.

The challenge facing those with responsibility for management of these monuments is how best to protect and sustain what is most significant about this complex site, while enabling enjoyment of its diverse qualities, and heightening awareness of its importance.

This Conservation Plan, commissioned by English Heritage and drawn up by Stella McGuire for the Peak District National Park Authority, is intended to provide a long-term framework for conservation management of the site and its immediate setting. Its remit is firstly to assess the complex significance of Arbor Low and Gib Hill and any threats to the various qualities for which the monuments are valued, and secondly to use this assessment as a basis to propose policies which will enable the site’s significance to be sustained or heightened, and will attract maximum support from those involved in transforming policy into practice.

The conservation philosophy which provides a framework for this task is best expressed by the concept of sustainability: a concept which recognises that the physical survivals from our past form an irreplaceable record which contributes to our understanding of both the past and the present, and which enables us to plan appropriately for the future. Although we cannot preserve this environment completely unchanged, it is a non-renewable resource and it is important to identify sustainable modes of change “which preserve the essential character of the past and allow future generations to reinterpret their history” (English Heritage 1996:2.7).

The concept of inclusivity is also of fundamental importance. Cultural and natural environments are valued by different people in different ways. The Conservation Plan must identify ways to manage the site which meet the needs of sustainable conservation, while enabling a diverse range of engagements with the monuments and their local setting. The Plan also recognises the existence of ‘absent’ audiences – those affected by the range of physical, economic and cultural constraints which prevent some members of society from enjoying such places. It seeks to balance enjoyment of the site by a wide range of audiences (including the non-traditional) against the need to maintain its seemingly natural, peaceful character and archaeological significance.

I.2 Information sources and plan structure

The information on which the Conservation Plan is based has been drawn from the sources listed in the Bibliography (see Section 7), and through wide consultation with organisations, agencies and individuals. As indicated in the Acknowledgements, many people have provided valuable information and expertise on a range of issues relevant to the site.

The Plan is structured as follows. Sections 2 and 3 establish the overall significance of the monument group, including its important interrelationship with its setting. Section 4 addresses the monuments' vulnerability – i.e. the issues which affect, or have the potential to affect, their significance. Sections 5 and 6 set out policies to address these areas of vulnerability, a strategy for policy implementation and a timetable for review of the Conservation Plan itself. To enable easy reference, all maps and plans are at Appendix A.

For reasons of clarity, the Plan frequently addresses each element of the monument complex (Arbor Low, Gib Hill and the 'Avenue') separately. In addition, the fact that Arbor Low and Gib Hill lie in different fields, and that the 'Avenue' runs through a further set of discrete landholdings, tends to emphasise the 'separateness' of each element of the complex, rather than encouraging the sense that they should be seen (and analysed) as a group. It is important therefore to bear in mind that this apparent compartmentalisation is the product of conservation labelling and modern landscape boundaries: it should not mask our appreciation of the interrelationship between the major elements of the monument complex, an interrelationship which can be seen in chronological, functional, aesthetic and landscape terms.

2 Understanding the monuments and their setting

2.1 Chronology

2.1.1 Arbor Low circle and henge, and adjacent linear earthwork

Note No element of the monument complex at Arbor Low and Gib Hill can be dated with certainty, and the chronological sequence of the elements which make up each monument is also uncertain. These monuments are the cumulative result of episodes of use that may have continued for well over 1000 years, from the Early to Mid Neolithic (c. 4000 to 3000 BC) into the Early Bronze Age (c. 2000 to 1500 BC).

Later Mesolithic and Early Neolithic (c.7000 – 4000BC)

Worked flint, chert and other artefacts from these periods found in fields near to Arbor Low and Gib Hill show that people were present in this part of the limestone plateau. Rather than living here all year round, they may have visited the area seasonally, for grazing or hunting.

Early to Middle Neolithic (c. 4000 – 3000 BC)

First barrow at Gib Hill built about 250m SW of the future site of Arbor Low.

Within Later Neolithic (c. 3000 – 2000 BC): perhaps around 2500 BC

Creation of Arbor Low henge (i.e. the roughly circular bank and ditch). By analogy with other henges, it is possible that a timber circle or other timber settings were erected within the henge at this time, although no evidence for this has yet been found.

Relatively large quantities of worked flint from the Later Neolithic (including some artefacts of exceptional quality) in fields very close to Arbor Low and Gib Hill indicate the importance of the area to people at this time.

Towards the end of the Neolithic period: perhaps between 2500 and 2000 BC

Erection of stone circle and other stone settings within the space enclosed by the henge. These are likely to post-date the creation of the henge itself.

Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age (i.e. in the several hundred years either side of 2000 BC)

Bowl barrow superimposed on SE bank of henge. The henge bank was partly demolished to provide material for this barrow.

At around the same time, a circular barrow was also superimposed on the Gib Hill long barrow.

Between 1 and 3 small barrows were built very close to the henge and Gib Hill.

Date unknown, but possibly in the Late Prehistoric or Romano-British period.

Construction of linear bank and ditch abutting southern edge of henge, and curving round to the south of Gib Hill. Although sometimes referred to as the 'Avenue', this is now usually interpreted as an early property boundary of unknown date.

Romano-British period (c.70s AD to early 5th century AD)

Roman period pottery fragments found at Arbor Low show that people visited the circle and henge at this time.

c. 7th century AD

The rich Anglian barrow at Benty Grange (1.5km NW of Arbor Low) and possible evidence for an Anglian burial inserted into a prehistoric barrow on Middleton Moor, 0.75 km NW of the henge, show that, like a number of other areas across the limestone plateau, land here was significant at this period.

Metalwork found in the small barrow about 30m SE of Arbor Low may indicate Anglian re-use of an existing prehistoric structure here.

In 1849, an Anglo-Saxon glass bead was found 'near Arbor Low'.

Late prehistoric period to late 18th century

Land around Arbor Low and Gib Hill is likely to have been open heath, probably used as upland grazing. However, the presence of the linear earthwork known as the 'Avenue' suggests that some form of early land division took place here.

1700s

It is not known when the Arbor Low stones fell. The antiquary Pegge recorded in 1785 that a local man aged 60 remembered some of the stones still standing. In 1789, Pilkington recorded a similar account.

Prior to the monument plan made by Pegge in 1785 (see below) several stones had been removed, perhaps for use as gateposts.

c.1770 (and c.1812)

The large barrow on the SE bank of the henge may have been dug into in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by W. Normanshaw and B. Thornhill. However, records of this work are vague, and are more likely to refer to Gib Hill (see 2.4.2).

There is evidence for other unrecorded excavations at various points around the monument at unknown dates.

1782

The antiquarian Hayman Rooke, accompanied by James Mander of Bakewell, dug 4 trenches into the large barrow on the SE henge bank. He cleared the centre of the mound, but found very little.

1785

Publication of a description and plans of Arbor Low by the antiquary Pegge in the journal 'Archaeologia'.

1789

Publication of description and plan of monument by Pilkington.

Late 18th / early 19th century

Enclosure of the majority of upland heath around Arbor Low and Gib Hill.

By 1824	Although one or two fragments of stone were removed from the circle between 1785 and 1824, by the latter date the site was largely as it is today.
June 1824	Samuel Mitchell and William Bateman deepened Rooke's 1782 trench in the barrow on the SE henge bank, finding only a human tooth and animal bones.
1844	Thomas Bateman dug into the small barrow c. 30 metres SE of the henge. Though already disturbed, a piece of iron found in an empty rock-cut grave may indicate at least one Romano-British or Anglian burial here.
1845	<p>Thomas Bateman and the Rev. Stephen Isaacson dug into the large barrow on the SE bank of the henge and uncovered a limestone cist. It is now thought that pottery found in the cist may be Later Neolithic. If this is the case, it suggests that the barrow is of an earlier date than previously supposed, or that the cist pre-dates the barrow.</p> <p>At the same date, Bateman and Isaacson may have cut a number of trenches into the eastern bank of the henge, and excavated part of the area around the central cove, although these unrecorded excavations might be the work of others.</p>
Late 1830s / 1840s	The Primitive Methodists of Monyash held 'camp meetings' at Arbor Low – whole days of outdoor praying and preaching. 'Preaching stands' were set up within the stone circle.
1840, 1858, 1865, 1867 etc.	Various striking prehistoric artefacts found at or in the general vicinity of Arbor Low and Gib Hill by private collectors and others. Some of these may have been recovered during ploughing and other land improvement, following enclosure of the uplands.
1879	Sir John Lubbock delivered an outdoor lecture on Arbor Low to the British Association, standing 'upon the spot itself'.
1882	<p>The Ancient Monuments Protection Act became law in this year. Shortly afterwards, Arbor Low was included in the first group of archetypal monuments in England and Wales scheduled under the Act. It was given the number 'Derbyshire 1'.</p> <p>At around the same time, 10 small gritstone pillars, marked VR for Victoria Regina, were set to mark the boundary of the scheduled area.</p>
12 July 1884	Arbor Low henge, stone circle and bowl barrow were taken into State Guardianship, together with the neighbouring Gib Hill barrow.

1901 / 1902

Excavations by H. St George Gray. He dug a number of trenches through the henge bank and ditch and around the central cove, and a further trench at the foot of one of the eastern orthostats. He produced a measured survey of the henge, circle and cove, re-numbered the stones, and built a scale model of the monument for museum display. Gray also excavated the northern terminal of the 'Avenue', to assess its chronological relationship to the henge.

Between 1910 and 1952

Replacement of one of the Victorian boundary markers with a pillar inscribed GR (for George Rex).

1916

Arbor Low scheduling extended to include Gib Hill barrow.

1929

Journalists from the Times and Daily Chronicle came to Arbor Low to report on a ceremony held there by the 'Bardic Circle of the Imperishable Sacred Land' who were attempting to establish an English Eisteddfod. The bards robed at Upper Oldhams Farm.

1976

Peak Park Joint Planning Board (PPJPB) urged EH's predecessor, the Department of the Environment, to buy land at Arbor Low in order to improve public access. The Board drew up a scheme to create an embanked access route and concealed car park to the west of the existing track, and to build a 4.6m viewing platform (and sundial) just SE of the henge. The plans were not implemented.

Early 1980s

PPJPB file record shows public access to Arbor Low / Gib Hill presenting long-standing and continuing problems, relating to payment for access across private land, the nature and quality of access routes, parking, signage etc.

In 1982 Peak Park Conservation Volunteers put in a new concessionary path, avoiding the farmyard and cattle shed. The route was closed by the then landowner in 1983.

Concern was expressed that there was nothing to prevent the Arbor Low field being ploughed.

1986

Purchase by PPJPB of Blakemoor Pits area, adjacent to Arbor Low / Gib Hill, on grounds of ecological value: land sold shortly afterwards, subject to protective covenants.

Mid -1980s and 1996 – 2002

Fieldwalking programmes, funded initially by the Manpower Services Commission, and later run as a joint project by individuals from the University of Sheffield, PDNPA and Arteamus, revealed extensive multi-period flint etc. scatters in fields close to Arbor Low and Gib Hill.

1988	Creation of two hachured measured sketch plans of the barrow on SE bank of henge and small barrow SE of henge, by J. Barnatt as part of Peak District Barrow Survey carried out for the Derbyshire Archaeological Advisory Committee.
Late 1980s	National Park Authority file record indicates a general increase in numbers celebrating the Summer Solstice (and similar festivals) at stone circles in the Peak District. Changes in grassland management in Arbor Low and Gib Hill fields at around this date (or shortly after) led to a reduction in species present.
1990	Publication of an interpretive survey (based on that by Gray) and descriptive analysis of Arbor Low by J. Barnatt (PPJPB). Topographic survey of Arbor Low by Sterling Surveys Ltd. for English Heritage, including the establishment of permanent ground markers.
1993	Archaeological survey of Arbor Low and fields immediately adjacent, by J. Barnatt (PPJPB) for agricultural tenants. Production by PPJPB of Local Interpretive Plan for Arbor Low and Gib Hill.
April 1994	Arbor Low scheduling revised: from this date, the henge and circle were scheduled separately from Gib Hill. The Arbor Low scheduling was also revised to include the feature known as the 'Avenue' – the linear bank and ditch which extends southwards from the henge, runs through Gibhill Plantation and extends into the field to its west. Scheduling of small barrow about 30m SE of Arbor Low .
August 1994	Condition Survey of Arbor Low carried out by Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust for English Heritage, located to the permanent markers set out by Sterling Surveys in 1990 (see above).
February 1995	Management of Arbor Low and Gib Hill (but not the 'Avenue') undertaken by PPJPB (subsequently PDNPA), on behalf of English Heritage, under a ten-year Local Management Agreement.
1996	Publication by National Park Authority of guide book to Arbor Low and Gib Hill. Fieldwalking programme recommenced, now managed via partnership between Arteamus and others (see above).
1998 / 2000	Geophysical survey of Arbor Low and Gib Hill by Centre for Archaeology, English Heritage, in 1998. Further work done in 2000, following technical problems.

April 2003

Start of 25 year Licensed Access Agreement between English Heritage and Mr. and Mrs. B. Woolley, owners of the access route to the monument.

This Agreement is associated with an agreement (currently awaiting signature) between the same parties, relating to the sub-tenancy of grazing in the Arbor Low field.

September 2003

Start of 20 year lease of Arbor Low field, arranged between English Heritage and landowner, the Middleton Trust.

2005

Expiry of Local Management Agreement between EH and PDNPA (redrafted Agreement currently awaiting approval).

2007

Various improvements to access route to and between the monuments, including erection of finger post, replacement of stiles with pedestrian gates, improvements to path slopes and surfaces.

Erosion repairs at Arbor Low, and re-setting of Victorian boundary markers.

Erection of interpretive panels on plinths adjacent to Arbor Low and Gib Hill, and installation of visitor counter.

Full topographical survey of Arbor Low, Gib Hill and linear earthwork by S. Newsome and H. Riley for English Heritage.

March 2008

Removal of faded interpretive sign in informal car park (due to be replaced with English Heritage management sign).

2.1.2 Chronology: Gib Hill

Note No element of the monument complex at Arbor Low and Gib Hill can be dated with certainty, and the chronological sequence of the elements which make up each monument is also uncertain. These monuments are the cumulative result of episodes of use that may have continued for well over 1000 years, from the Early to Mid Neolithic (c. 4000 to 3000 BC) to the Early Bronze Age (c. 2000 to 1500 BC).

Later Mesolithic and Early Neolithic (c.7000 – 4000BC)

Worked flint, chert and other artefacts from these periods found in fields near to Arbor Low and Gib Hill show that people were present in this part of the limestone plateau. Rather than living here all year round, they may have visited the area seasonally, for grazing or hunting.

Early to Middle Neolithic (c. 4000 – 3000 BC)

Clay mound or mounds created on ground surface where Gib Hill long barrow now stands. (It is not known whether these were built immediately before the barrow was created, or whether the barrow followed some time later.)

Erection of long barrow above the clay mound(s).

Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age (i.e. in the several hundred years either side of 2000 BC)

Erection of round barrow (with cist) overlying western end of long barrow.

Relatively large quantities of worked flint and chert from the Later Neolithic (including some artefacts of exceptional quality), in fields very close to Arbor Low and Gib Hill indicate the importance of the area to people at this time. Early Bronze Age flintwork is also present.

Date unknown, but possibly in the Late Prehistoric or Romano-British period

Construction of linear bank and ditch abutting southern edge of Arbor Low henge, and curving round to the south of Gib Hill. Although sometimes referred to as the 'Avenue', this is now usually interpreted as an early property boundary of unknown date.

1st or 2nd century AD, and general Romano-British period (c. 70s – early 400s AD)

Possible construction of Roman road passing close to Gib Hill in 1st or 2nd century AD (its exact line has not been confirmed).

At some point in the Romano-British period an iron brooch was placed in the Gib Hill barrow. There is also an unconfirmed report of Roman coins being found here.

c. 7th century A.D.

The rich Anglian barrow at Benty Grange (1.5km NW of Gib Hill / Arbor Low) and evidence for a probable Anglian burial inserted into a prehistoric barrow on Middleton Moor, to the NW of Upper Oldhams Farm, show that, like a number of other areas across the limestone plateau, land here was significant at this period.

Late prehistoric period to late 18th century

Land around Gib Hill and Arbor Low is likely to have been open heath, probably used as upland grazing. However, the presence of the linear earthwork known as the 'Avenue' suggests that some form of early land division took place here, perhaps separating off open areas of pasture.

**Medieval or Early
Modern period**

The name 'Gib Hill' suggests the possible use of the barrow mound as base for a gibbet, although there is no documentary record of this. This form of punishment has a very long history.

**Late 18th / early
19th century**

Enclosure of majority of upland heath around Gib Hill and Arbor Low.

**Late 18th and early
19th century**

There were a number of poorly-recorded early excavations, but it is not certain which of these actually related to Gib Hill. The tenant, William Normanshaw, may have dug into the barrow around 1770. It was also said that the landowner, Bache Thornhill, had dug Gib Hill around 1812 and found coins – a claim that he vehemently denied.

June 1824

William Bateman and Samuel Mitchell excavated the centre of the barrow, and found a layer of stiff clay at ground level, containing what they interpreted as layers of burnt bones and charcoal.

January 1848

Thomas Bateman dug into the long barrow from the SE, re-exposing the mound (or mounds) of clay on the old ground surface. A cist, probably from the round barrow above, fell into the excavation tunnel. It was removed and re-erected at Bateman's home, Lomberdale Hall.

**1840, 1858, 1865,
1867 etc.**

Various striking artefacts found at or in the general vicinity of Arbor Low and Gib Hill by private collectors and others. Some of these may have been recovered during ploughing and other land improvement, following enclosure of the uplands.

July 1884

Gib Hill placed in State Guardianship, in tandem with Arbor Low.

At around the same date, 5 small gritstone pillars, inscribed VR, for Victoria Regina, were set to mark what was then thought to be the boundary of the monument. These are in fact set into the slope of the lower barrow.

August 1916

Gib Hill named for the first time in the Schedule of Monuments, as part of 'Derbyshire I: the earthen ring and stone circle known as Arbor Low and the tumulus of Gib Hill'.

The scheduled area was circular and did not include the north-eastern extent of the lower barrow.

1938

Cist replaced in upper barrow, possibly at too high a level.

1968

Publication by J. Radley of hachure plan of Gib Hill and section through supposed 'ring ditch' or 'proto-henge' adjacent to the barrow. Radley's article also seems to have been the first suggestion in print that there were in fact two barrows at Gib Hill – i.e. a round barrow superimposed on an earlier long mound.

Early 1980s	Peak Park Joint Planning Board (PPJPB) file record shows public access to Arbor Low / Gib Hill presenting long-standing and continuing problems, relating to payment for access across private land, the nature and quality of access routes, parking, signage etc.
1982	Peak Park Conservation Volunteers put in a new concessionary path, avoiding the farmyard and cattle shed. The route was closed by the then landowner in 1983.
1986	Purchase by PPJPB of Blakemoor Pits area, adjacent to Gib Hill, on grounds of ecological value: land sold shortly afterwards, subject to protective covenants.
Mid - 1980s and 1996 – 2002	Fieldwalking programmes funded initially by the Manpower Services Commission, and later run as a joint project by individuals from the University of Sheffield, PDNPA and Arteamus, revealed extensive multi-period flint etc. scatters in fields close to Arbor Low and Gib Hill.
1988	Creation of a hachured measured sketch plan of Gib Hill and surrounding quarry ditches by J. Barnatt, as part of the Peak District Barrow Survey for the Derbyshire Archaeological Advisory Committee.
1991	Archaeological survey of Upper Oldhams Farm for the farm's owners by J. Barnatt of PPJPB. This incorporated the 1988 survey of Gib Hill (above), and included a wider survey of the Gib Hill field and adjacent fields.
April 1994	Gib Hill scheduled as a separate monument. In addition, the scheduled area (which had previously been circular) was extended to include the whole of the oval barrow, and what the scheduling document describes as the construction ditches of this lower barrow.
August 1994	Condition Survey of Gib Hill by Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust, for English Heritage, located to permanent markers set out by Sterling Surveys Ltd. in 1990.
February 1995	Management of Gib Hill and Arbor Low undertaken by PPJPB (subsequently PDNPA), on behalf of English Heritage, under a ten-year Local Management Agreement.
1996	<p>March 1996: ploughing of Gib Hill field between barrow and Gibhill Plantation. Ploughing encroached on southern edge of scheduled area.</p> <p>Publication by National Park Authority of guide book to Arbor Low and Gib Hill.</p> <p>Fieldwalking programme recommences (see above).</p>
December 1997	Five-year Management Agreement in respect of Gib Hill, between owner, Mr B. Woolley and English Heritage, under Section 17 of Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas

Act 1979. As part of measures agreed, the barrow was enclosed within a temporary fence intended to demarcate the scheduled area, exclude cattle and enable eroded areas to recover. This fence is still in place.

1998 / 2000

Geophysical survey of Arbor Low and Gib Hill in 1998 by Centre for Archaeology, English Heritage. Further work done in 2000, following technical problems.

December 2002

Section 17 Agreement between English Heritage and landowners in respect of Gib Hill renewed for 5 years from 1st January 2003.

April 2003

Start of 25 year Licensed Access Agreement between English Heritage and Mr. and Mrs. B. Woolley, owners of the access route to Arbor Low and Gib Hill, and of the Gib Hill field.

2005

Expiry of Local Management Agreement between English Heritage and PDNPA. (Redrafted Agreement currently awaiting approval.)

2007

Various improvements to access route, including installation of new pedestrian gate to replace stile between Arbor Low and Gib Hill fields.

Re-setting of Victorian boundary marker on SSW side of barrow, and minor erosion repairs on SSW and NW slopes.

Erection of Gib Hill interpretive panel, on plinth adjacent to southern pedestrian gate between Arbor Low and Gib Hill fields.

Full topographical survey of Arbor Low, Gib Hill, linear earthwork and surrounding land by S. Newsome and H. Riley for English Heritage.

March 2008

Removal of faded interpretive sign in informal car park (due to be replaced with English Heritage management sign).

2.2 Location, topography, geology and soils

Arbor Low (centred on SK 16036355) is situated at 370m OD in the central uplands of the Derbyshire limestone plateau (Figure A1). Gib Hill (centred on SK 15836332) also at 370m OD, lies some 300m to the south-west. Analysis of the monuments' position has shown that the ridge on which they lie occupies an "important watershed position", of significance in relation to the way in which this limestone landscape appears to have been occupied and used in prehistory (Barnatt and Collis 1996:65).

Arbor Low was built on the false crest of the ridge. To its north and north-west the land drops away, giving long views across the limestone Monyash Basin and Lathkill Dale. To the south-east, the land continues to rise gently for a short distance, largely masking views in this direction. However, from the top of the henge bank, parts of the limestone plateau and the Neolithic 'great barrow' at Minninglow can be seen.

To the immediate west and south-west of Gib Hill, the land drops fairly steeply to lower ground crossed by the modern A515, before rising to the limestone hills east of the Dove Valley.

Geologically, the monuments lie at the south-western edge of a large area of Monsal Dale limestone, with Gib Hill built on a fairly narrow NW / SE band of dolomitised limestone (Ordnance Survey 1978 and Figure A2). Although the Geological Map shows Arbor Low lying just outside the (necessarily rather schematic) boundary of this band, Guilbert (1994a) observed that dolomitised limestone appeared to be exposed in the henge ditch. Pocket deposits of clay, sand and shale occur close by – giving rise to extraction of silica sand in areas such as Blakemoor Pits, to the immediate south and south-west of Gib Hill. Oakstone, a rare and beautiful stalactitic form of barytes, was once mined just south of Arbor Low (Sarjeant and Ford 1993) ¹.

A recent geophysical survey of both monuments (Martin 2001:1) noted that they lie on “well-drained silty soils of the Malham 2 association”. Such soils are not prone to erosion, as long as they remain under grass (Boardman 2002:7).

2.3. Arbor Low and the ‘Avenue’: monument description and investigation history

Note The monument description text at 2.3.1 largely reproduces information recorded in Barnatt (1990) and also draws on Gray (1903, 1904), English Heritage (1994a), Barnatt and Collis (1996) and Edmonds and Seaborne (2001).

Section 2.3 includes the linear earthwork known as the ‘Avenue’, which is scheduled with Arbor Low (although it may be of much later date).

2.3.1 Monument description

2.3.1.1 Arbor Low henge

The Arbor Low henge (Figures A3 – A6) lies c. 250m north-east of Gib Hill, and is thought to have been built in the Later Neolithic (perhaps around 2500 BC). It consists of a massive external bank and deep inner ditch. Two entrances, one to the NW and one to the SSE, lead to causeways across the ditch.

The oval central area within the henge may once have

contained timber posts or other wooden structures, but no trace of these has yet been identified. It now encloses impressive stone settings (see below) which probably post-date the construction of the henge itself.

Arbor Low from the air, looking SSW. The line of the ‘Avenue’ can be seen in the centre of the picture, running south from the henge across the Arbor Low field. Gib Hill barrow is at the top of the picture, to right of centre. (Photograph: PDNPA)



Arbor Low henge and circle, looking SE. The uneven outline of the barrow superimposed on the southern henge bank can be made out on the far side of the henge, at the mid-point of the near horizon. (Photograph: PDNPA)



¹ Examples of Oakstone, mined near the henge, are held by Derby Museum and Art Gallery (2.7.5).

When first built, the henge bank would have been about 3m high. Although now grassed over, this white limestone structure would have stood out clearly in the landscape. Today, the bank stands to an average height of 2.1m. Its external diameter measures 75m x 79m, and it varies between 8m and 10m in width.

Knowledge of the bank's structure is based on two early 20th century trenches dug by Gray (1903, 1904) either side of the north-western entrance (Figure A6). To the west of the entrance, the bank was built of limestone rubble, covering thin layers of broken chert and soil derived from de-turfing the ditch. East of the entrance, the bank was mainly built of limestone boulders.

The inner ditch is less regular than the bank, with a width varying from 7 - 9m in the west to 9 - 12m to the east. Where excavated by Gray (see below at 2.3.2.3), it was shown to have steep rock-cut sides and an uneven base; its original depth varied between 2m and 3m. To the immediate east of the NW causeway, Gray found what he thought may have been rock-cut steps leading down into the ditch. In the same area, he found marked traces of burning.

The two causeways across the ditch differ quite markedly in width: that to the NW is 9m wide, while the causeway to the SSE measures 6m.

Analogy with other circle-henges suggests that the henge entrances could have contained paired stones, although no excavations have been carried out to explore this possibility.

Within the SSE entrance is a low limestone stump, and nearby is what is presumed to be its top, which has broken and fallen across the entrance. However, no clear match can be made between the stump and the recumbent stone, and it is possible that the latter has been dragged from the central area. It is conceivable that a 2m diameter pit between the bank terminals in the NW entrance causeway indicates that both entrances may have contained a portal stone.



When the henge and circle were scheduled in the 1880s, ten small gritstone pillars, marked VR (Victoria Regina), were set at the edge of the scheduled area. One of the northern pillars must be a later replacement, as it is inscribed GR (for George Rex). All are now incorporated within the scheduling.

Gritstone pillar, inscribed VR for Victoria Regina, marking boundary of the Arbor Low monument, as scheduled in the 1880s. (Photograph: D. Angel).

2.3.1.2 Stone circle and cove

The oval area enclosed by the henge ditch contains the ruined remains of an impressive stone circle (Figure A4 and front cover). As indicated above, this feature is thought to post-date the henge, and may have been built around 2,500 BC (although the precise chronological relationship between the various elements which comprise Arbor Low has not been determined). Today there are 50 - 52 large limestone slabs and fragments of stone in a crude ring, together with two fragments which have tumbled into the ditch. Originally, however, there were probably only 41 - 43 stones in the circle, as some fragments can be shown to originate from the same orthostat.

All the slabs are now recumbent, with the exception of one which leans inwards, and four other stones which have one end slightly off the ground (Barnatt 1990). Although there has been some debate about whether the stones were ever upright, Barnatt notes that seven stumps which are still in-situ confirm that the stones once stood upright and help to determine the direction of fall of many of the adjacent stones.

Barnatt has calculated that the original diameter of the stone circle would have been c. 42 x 37m, with the orthostats approximately equally spaced around its circumference. There are indications that they would have increased in height around the SSE entrance, where it is estimated that four stones stood between 2.6m and 2.9m tall. Similarly, there were two tall slabs near the NW entrance. The majority of the remainder would have stood between 1.6m and 2.1m tall, and it has been calculated that, from a vantage point at the centre of the circle, only the largest stones would have protruded slightly above the original height of the bank. As the monument is situated on a crest, none of the orthostats would have been visible from outside, except through the entrances.

As Gray noted (1904:43), the stones “are of variable thickness, extremely irregular in form, decayed and somewhat fractured”. Their shape varies from pillar-like to the occasional wide slab, but no consistent pattern to their arrangement has been identified. They were quarried from limestone pavement and thus often have one surface which is particularly worn, sometimes with solution holes and cracks which go fully through the stone. Gray suggested that they had been brought from a distance, as their colour did not match the limestone in the ditch. However, no adequate experiments have been carried out on the stones to test the effects of exposure and weathering, to see if this accounts for the difference. It remains possible that they have been prised from the surface of the deturfed bedrock along the course of the ditch.

Barnatt has deduced that at least some of the stones must have been erected with their worn sides facing inwards, and notes that this arrangement is contrary to many stone circles where the stones have their smoothest sides facing the centre.

At the centre of the circle is a ruined group of stones known as the ‘cove’ (Figure A4). Originally, this may have formed a rectangle, measuring c. 3 - 4m across, and composed of at least 6 orthostats. The north-western and south-eastern cove stones (which have probably both fallen outwards) are two of the largest stones at Arbor Low. These two massive slabs would have stood about 3m and 2.9m high and Barnatt suggests that they would have blocked the view of the interior of the cove from outside the henge, given their position in relation to the entrances.

The south-western side of the cove is demarcated by three low stumps. These must have been part of stones which were much smaller than the two massive slabs to the NW and SE. The north-eastern half of the cove is difficult to reconstruct.

Close to the eastern edge of the cove, Gray excavated an extended male skeleton of unknown date (2.3.2.3). A few metres further east, he found what appeared to be a previously-disturbed pit, from which he recovered a fragment of a human ulna.

As summarised at 2.3.2.3, the 1901 / 1902 excavations also yielded some significant flint and chert implements, and various fragments of deer antler.

2.3.1.3 Barrow on henge bank

To the SE, the henge bank has been disturbed by the superimposition of a large barrow (Figures A4 and A5). This has a diameter of c. 21m and now has a maximum height of 2.3m. Craters on its summit indicate that it has been cut into several times – for example by Hayman Rooke in 1782 and Samuel Mitchell and William Bateman in 1824 (2.3.2.2).

Spoil from early excavations has been thrown into the henge ditch, and around the sides of the mound. To the north and south-west of the mound, the henge bank has been considerably reduced, strongly suggesting that material was removed from here to build the (later) barrow.

In 1845, Thomas Bateman cut deeper than previous excavators into the southern rim of the barrow and found a polygonal cist on what he described as “the natural soil” (Bateman 1848:66 and see 2.3.2.2), although quite what he meant by this is not clear. Two unusual pots found in the cist are atypical and have close affinities to Peterborough Ware, which suggests that the cist and its deposits may be Later Neolithic in date (Barnatt and Collis 1996). If this is the case, both the position of the cist and the possibly early date of the pottery within it raise complex questions about the chronological relationship between henge, cist and barrow (see Barnatt 1990:33).

2.3.1.4 Linear earthwork / the ‘Avenue’

The course of a low but broad bank and ditch can be traced from a point on the SSW bank of the henge (Figure A3). It runs SSW for about 150m, then reappears after a gap of about 70m, turning to the west and curving round to the south of Gib Hill, through Gibhill Plantation. Within the Plantation, the feature comprises a high lynchet, disturbed by quarry pits in parts: Barnatt notes that its relative sharpness here suggests a boundary enhanced by adjacent cultivation.

The November 2007 topographical survey for English Heritage, described below at 2.3.4 (Newsome and Riley, in prep.), shows the earthwork continuing into the improved pasture field to the west of the Plantation, before petering out about half way across. Newsome has noted the 'unusual curved western boundary' of two fields to the NW of Gib Hill (visible on the map at Figure A3) and suggests that "it is almost possible that it reflects a continuation of [the] curving linear bank as it seems conspicuous in the midst of very regular Enclosure field boundaries" (pers. comm. 21.2.08). A subsequent inspection of this curving field boundary, undertaken as part of research for this Conservation Plan, revealed no visible trace of an associated bank or ditch – although it should be borne in mind that three of the fields either side of this boundary have been subject to agricultural improvement.

It should be noted that John Barnatt (pers. comm.) thinks that there may be traces of a possible continuation of the earthwork to the north of the henge.

According to the scheduling document (English Heritage 1994a), in both the upstanding sections of the feature, the bank is 2 - 3m wide and less than 1m high. The ditch lies on the eastern / southern side of the bank (i.e. on the side furthest away from Arbor Low and Gib Hill). The document gives its width as 0.6m, but this seems to be far too narrow: for example, where cut by the field wall which lies along the southern boundary of the Arbor Low field, the ditch is approximately 2.5m wide. (The very recent topographical survey described at 2.3.4 will provide precise data.) Excavation of just over 2m of the bank and just under 6m of the ditch (Gray 1903, 1904) revealed a fairly substantial feature. He showed the ditch prior to silting to be 2.4m (8 feet) wide at the top, and cut into the limestone bedrock to an average depth of 0.9m (3 feet), with a maximum cut of about 1.2m (4 feet). The width of the excavated section of bank was about 3.7m (12 feet).

Gray put his trenches at and close to the junction between the bank and the henge and judged the bank to be later than or contemporary with the henge. Despite the fact that it is sometimes referred to as the 'Avenue', the feature is not thought to be a formal structure related to the henge, and is instead interpreted as a possibly ancient boundary. Barnatt suggests that, as it does not resemble any known medieval land division, it may well be Late Prehistoric or Romano-British.

As indicated at 3.1.3, both upstanding sections of this earthwork are scheduled (with Arbor Low). The c.70m gap between the two sections is not included in the scheduling (although it may contain the buried remains of a bank and ditch) as neither the extent nor the state of survival of the remains here are sufficiently understood.

2.3.2 Excavation history: Arbor Low and the 'Avenue'

2.3.2.1 Pre-20th century excavation of henge and stone circle

There are physical traces of pre-20th century digging at the henge and circle, but – unlike early work on the Arbor Low barrow (see below) – there are no known records of these excavations.

Seven trenches can be seen cutting the eastern half of the bank, all of which predate Gray's work in 1901 / 1902 (see below). Gray himself thought that these all resulted from unrecorded work by Thomas Bateman and the Rev. S. Isaacson in the mid-19th century, but this may not be the case.

Gray also found that two areas close to the ruined central setting known as 'the cove' had been disturbed – most probably by earlier excavators. The first of these lay immediately to the south-west of one of the large cove stones¹. Here, Gray noted signs of significant 'recent' disturbance. The second lay a few metres ENE of the cove, where there were surface indications that digging had taken place, and where a deep pit, examined by Gray, showed evidence that it had probably been excavated before (see below).

Again, there is no record of these early excavations, although Gray thought that they too were probably the work of Bateman and Isaacson.

¹ This stone is given the number 1 in Gray (1903) and the letter B in Barnatt (1990).

2.3.2.2 18th and 19th century excavation of Arbor Low barrow

The Arbor Low and Gib Hill barrows were a popular target for early excavators. At Arbor Low, the barrow's "badly cratered" summit (Barnatt 1990:33 and Figure A5) and the mounds of spoil around its sides and in the adjacent henge ditch indicate that it has been dug into several times.

Not all of these excavations were recorded. As discussed at 2.4.2, it is not clear whether the barrow at Arbor Low, or the barrow at Gib Hill, was the site of unrecorded excavations by Normanshaw and / or Thornhill in the late 18th or early 19th centuries.

In 1782, the antiquarian Hayman Rooke, accompanied by James Mander of Bakewell, dug four trenches into the Arbor Low barrow and "cleared away the whole centre of the mound" (Rooke, cited in Ward 1908:163). Marsden (1999:49) notes that the five days Rooke spent on the excavation represented "an almost unheard-of length of time for a barrow dig in the 18th century." Despite the effort involved, the only finds recorded (apart from rats' bones) were fragments of antler tine.

In 1824, Samuel Mitchell and William Bateman dug into the mound from the NW, and deepened Rooke's central trench – finding only a human tooth and animal bones (Bateman 1848, Ward 1908).

However, on 22nd and 23rd May 1845, Thomas Bateman and the Rev. Stephen Isaacson were more successful. This time they entered the barrow from the south (where they found an antler tine and deer bone) and worked towards the centre¹.

"[Bateman] found a polygonal cist just south of the centre, built on the old ground surface. It had a single large capstone, 10 limestone slabs formed the sides, and 3 formed a pavement. It was soil-free and contained burnt and scattered human bones, a flint (of unknown form), a bone pin, a piece of iron pyrites and an ornamented rim sherd (of unknown type). At the west end of the cist were 2 unusual pots. These have traditionally been classified as atypical food vessels, but they also have affinities with Later Neolithic wares of the Peterborough tradition (P. Beswick, pers. comm). On the 16th June 1845 the trench was extended, but only fragments of antler were found" (Barnatt 1990:33).

The possible implications of the location of the cist, and the date of the ceramics are discussed at 2.3.1.3. Photographs of the objects excavated from the cist, and mid-19th century illustrations of the barrow and cist are at www.idigsheffield.org.uk (see 2.15.4.4).

2.3.2.3 Excavation of henge and circle by Gray in 1901 and 1902

The only excavation of Arbor Low henge and circle to take place in the last hundred or so years was that by Harold St. George Gray in August 1901 and May and June 1902 (Gray 1903, 1904).

The dig was organised by the Anthropological Section of the British Association. Gray (1872 – 1963) had been General Pitt Rivers' assistant and in 1899 became chief assistant at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. By the time he dug at Arbor Low, he was curator at Taunton Museum. He went on to dig at other major prehistoric sites, including the Somerset Levels lake villages, Avebury and Windmill Hill.

Over the 1901 and 1902 seasons Gray and his team:

- produced a measured survey of the henge, circle and the northern part of the 'Avenue', showing contours and orthostat positions;
- devised a numbering system for the orthostats;
- excavated a number of trenches in the henge bank and ditch, the area around the cove, and the northern end of the 'Avenue';

¹ Marsden (2007:115-117) gives an account of concerns expressed by the landowner's agent about the "serious injury" which Bateman and Isaacson were inflicting on the barrow.

- made a scale model of the monument from “a well-seasoned block of mahogany” and soapstone “modelled to scale ... during leisure moments at Arbor Low” (Gray 1903:Appx.V)¹.

An account of the work was published in *Archaeologia* (Gray 1903), and a somewhat edited account in the *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* published in the following year (Gray 1904). The location of Gray’s trenches is shown at Figure A6.

Work on the henge bank

The two trenches dug either side of the north-western entrance to the henge demonstrated differences in structure at these two points. To the west, the bank was made up limestone rubble, covering thin layers of broken chert and soil. However, to the east of the entrance, it was “largely composed of huge boulders of limestone, maximum length 4 feet (1.22m)” (Gray 1904:58). Gray records that neither trench yielded any ‘relics’.

The henge ditch

Six trenches were dug at various points across the henge ditch – covering about one sixth of its total length. Gray placed trenches at the ditch terminals either side of the NW causeway and at the western ditch terminal abutting the SSE causeway. He also dug two trenches across the western ditch, and one across the eastern ditch. These demonstrated that, as originally dug, it was between 2m and 3m deep, with steep, rock-cut sides and a generally uneven base (Gray 1904, Barnatt 1990).

Excavation of the ditch terminal to the east of the NW causeway produced some interesting results. Gray noted “considerable traces of fire” at the base of the ditch here, and he interpreted ledges in the limestone side of the ditch as possible steps. The ditch fill yielded a number of pieces of flint and chert (including three arrowheads) as well as a small red deer horn and part of an ox humerus. In the ditch terminal to the west of the NW causeway, he found six large flakes of black flint ‘placed’ on a rock ledge on the side of the causeway. The ditch fill also yielded six other flint or chert flakes and a scraper.

The trench dug through the western terminal of the SSE causeway yielded 13 ox teeth on the limestone base of the ditch, and various pieces of red deer antler, including one piece 15 inches (0.38m) long, which he described as resting against the rock side of the ditch.

Of the other three trenches dug through the ditch, only one produced any finds. These comprised three flints from the fill of one of the two trenches on the western side of the henge. He noted that finds may have been missed in the trench he cut through the eastern ditch, because of the need to cut the clay away in large chunks.

The circle and cove

The only part of the circle investigated by Gray was on the eastern side, where he dug a small trench in an attempt to identify whether the stones had once stood upright. He dug close to stone no. XXXVII (Barnatt’s stone no.13), but no evidence for a stone hole was found, although the trench yielded a flint scraper and a fragment of possibly Romano-British pottery.

He carried out more extensive work in and around the stones of the central setting known as the cove. Trenches were placed at the NW end of Gray’s stone no. II (Barnatt’s stone A) and along the western edge of Gray’s stone I (Barnatt’s stone B) – the latter in an area where ‘recent disturbance’ was identified. No evidence for stone holes was found. The stone I trench yielded a flint flake, and the disturbed area near to stone II was found to contain early modern material and a possibly Romano-British pottery sherd.

¹ The creation of this model echoes a suggestion made to Thomas Bateman by a friend, William Saull, in 1844. Saull advised him that “to make (Arbor Low) clear of comprehension a model is absolutely necessary”, adding that Bateman should construct a facsimile of the earthwork in clay or plaster of Paris “during some of these long winter evenings” (cited in Marsden 2007:100,101). A full description of Gray’s model appeared in the October 1903 edition of *Man* (now the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*), and see also Heathcote 1961:17.

On the eastern side of the cove, and very close to the southern end of stone III (Barnatt's stone F), Gray discovered an extended male skeleton, with its head to the SSE. It lay in an earth grave, with the skull, which was "much crushed and weathered", only 1.2 feet (0.37m) from the ground surface (Gray 1904:62). Various parts of the skeleton were missing, including the lower jaw, tibiae, fibulae, feet and hands. It was surrounded on its northern, western and southern sides by large blocks of stone, which Gray described as lying within a few inches of the surface.

A few metres ENE of the skeleton, Gray dug an area where there were surface indications of previous excavation. At the extreme east of his trench, he explored part of a disturbed pit, which he records as 7.9 ft (2.4m) deep. Here, lying only 6 inches (15 cms) from the surface, was a fragment of human ulna. He noted that it was "possible that a skeleton or skeletons may have been removed from here, and that this ulna was lost in the filling-in" (Gray 1904:61).

The scheduling document (English Heritage 1994a) notes that the position of Gray's trench east of the cove is marked by spoil visibly banked around its NE end.

2.3.2.4 Gray's excavation of the 'Avenue'

As part of his examination of Arbor Low in 1901 / 1902, Gray excavated a short stretch of the linear earthwork which abuts the henge to the south. His primary objective was to "ascertain whether the ditch of this small dyke continued under the rampart of Arbor Low itself, and if possible to prove its age by means of any relics which might be found" (Gray 1904:64).

He placed a 7 ft. (2.1m) wide trench across the bank and ditch, about 25 ft. (7.6m) south of the point at which the feature abuts the henge, subsequently extending part of this trench to the north, to take in more of the ditch. He put a second trench (8 ft. / 2.5m wide) across the ditch at the point where it joined the henge.

He showed that, in the area excavated, the earthwork comprised a rock-cut ditch, 3 ft. (0.9m) deep on average and 8 ft. (c.2.4m) wide at the top: i.e. rather deeper and wider than it appears in the modern landscape. The low bank has been much reduced by erosion: Gray (1904:64) described it as, on average, "only 1.5 foot (45.7 cm) above the level of the surrounding field". Where excavated, the bank was approximately 12 ft. (3.7m) wide.

Gray records that two flint (or in one case possibly chert) scrapers were found on what he judged to be the "old surface line" beneath the bank, and he felt that these were "undoubtedly" of the same date as its construction. Seven other lithic items were found at various depths in the ditch fill.

Gray was convinced that his second trench – the one designed to investigate the point at which the linear ditch met the henge bank – demonstrated that the small earthwork must be of the same, or a later, date than the henge (although he felt that the flint and chert found in the linear feature suggested that both it and the henge were roughly contemporary). His excavation drawing (Gray 1904:67) shows the limestone base of the ditch shelving up gradually to the limestone surface immediately beneath the material which makes up the henge bank.

Barnatt's view (1990: 38) is that the flint may be residual and cannot be used to date the feature. As noted at 2.3.1.4, he feels that it may be an early boundary dividing areas of pasture – possibly of late prehistoric or Romano-British date.

2.3.3 Geophysical survey 1998 / 2000

Geophysical investigation carried out by English Heritage in 1998 / 2000 included magnetometer and resistivity survey of the henge interior and entrances. However, "disappointingly little extra information" was generated by the magnetometry, which identified known features and evidence of former fencing. No new features (e.g. timber post settings) were identified. The resistivity survey of the henge interior mainly recorded the proximity of the bedrock to the surface (Martin 2001).

The survey was hampered by technical problems, and it is felt that, despite its disappointing results, it remains possible that future re-survey could yield useful data (J. Humble, pers. comm).

2.3.4 Topographical survey 2007

A full topographical survey of Arbor Low, Gib Hill and immediate environs was carried out by English Heritage in November 2007 (Newsome and Riley, in prep). The following information has kindly been provided by S. Newsome (pers. comm., 21.02.08), in advance of detailed analysis and publication of the survey. The work took the form of an analytical landscape survey which recorded the tops and bottoms of man-made slopes in order to demonstrate their extent and stratigraphic relationships, and the final product will be in the form of a hachured plan showing all the surface archaeological remains within the immediate environs of Arbor Low and Gib Hill. The digital data will also be used alongside OS contour data to show the profile of the monuments and their wider topographical setting.

Newsome points out that virtually all the features recorded in the survey had been noted in J. Barnatt's previous walk-over and sketch surveys of the monuments (Barnatt 1991, 1993). However, detailed analysis of the drawings has yet to be undertaken, and this may reveal hitherto unnoticed information about the nature and construction of the various monuments.

2.4 Gib Hill: monument description and investigation history

Note The monument description text at 2.4.1 largely reproduces information recorded in Barnatt (1991) and also draws on Gray (1903, 1904), English Heritage (1994b), and Edmonds and Seaborne (2001).

2.4.1 Monument description

The barrow that we see today (Figure A7) was built in at least two phases. Its upper level comprises a particularly large, high and steep-sided round barrow (also described as a bowl barrow), probably built in the Early Bronze Age. This is superimposed on the south-western end of a long¹ barrow of possibly Early Neolithic date.

The English Heritage scheduling document states that the long axis of the older barrow appears to be oriented on Arbor Low henge, although this is not in fact the case, nor does it tally with the monuments' chronological sequence.

The lower barrow measures about 46 x 28m in plan. Its height is given as about 1m by Barnatt (1991) and as 2m by English Heritage (1994b) – presumably reflecting a difference in base measurement point. Nineteenth century excavation showed that at least part of the structure was built of earth rather than stones.



The double barrow at Gib Hill, seen from the NE. (Photograph: D. Angel)

¹ This is sometimes described as an 'oval' barrow (e.g. English Heritage 1994b), but this Conservation Plan uses the description employed by Barnatt (1991) and also used in the interpretive signage erected at Arbor Low / Gib Hill by English Heritage and PDNPA in November 2007.

Work on the lower barrow in 1824 and 1848 (2.4.2) revealed several clay mounds (or more probably the disturbed remains of a single clay mound) on the old ground surface. The excavators described the clay as containing wood and charcoal, and beneath it the 1848 excavators found disarticulated ox bones and flints. This lower feature (or features) may be slightly earlier than the remainder of the long barrow, but as yet, the chronological relationship between them has not been determined.

The superimposed round barrow stands a further 2.5 to 3m above the level of the long barrow, and has a diameter of 24 x 27m. At its base, the 1848 excavation revealed a limestone cist, more or less square in shape, containing a food vessel and human cremation. The cist had probably been set on the summit of the long barrow when the round barrow was built above it (see below for the rather dramatic circumstances surrounding its discovery).

A narrow berm¹ surrounds the mound, and beyond this are shallow pits that may be silted quarry ditches, dug to provide material to build the barrows. Although the scheduling description (English Heritage 1994b) describes them as prehistoric, they are disturbed by later quarries to east and west, and the whole group of pits could alternatively be interpreted as a series of later quarries (Barnatt 1991). Barnatt's 1988 plan of the barrow and adjacent quarries drawn at a scale of 1:200 distinguishes between possible long barrow quarries, possible round barrow quarries and quarries / quarry upcast which definitely postdate the monuments (Barnatt 1991 and Figure A7).

When the barrow was taken into Guardianship in the 1880s, five small gritstone pillars, marked VR (for Victoria Regina) were set at the edge of what was then seen as the boundary of the monument. (They are in fact set into the slope of the lower barrow.) These boundary markers are incorporated within the scheduling.

2.4.2 Excavation history (Gib Hill)

Like the barrow on Arbor Low henge, the very prominent Gib Hill mound was a popular target for antiquarian excavation, although few records survive of these early attempts.

One account describes the tenant, Mr Normanshaw, digging into a barrow for stone (either Gib Hill itself or the barrow on Arbor Low henge), possibly in the late 18th century, and finding a human skull (Mitchell, cited in Ward 1908:170). In 1785, Pegge recorded that the mound had "a great hollow in the middle in the form of a basin" (Pegge 1785:141). In the early 19th century, Bache Thornhill of Stanton, the owner of the Arbor Low land, may have dug at Gib Hill (or the Arbor Low barrow), finding human hand bones and Roman coins (Mitchell, cited in Ward 1908:164,165; but see Marsden 2007:18,24). Thornhill emphatically denied that he had ever dug at Gib Hill, and Barnatt (1991) suggests that the Normanshaw and Thornhill stories may have got mixed up.

The first recorded excavation was that by William Bateman and Samuel Mitchell over two days in June 1824. (At that point the Gib Hill field was owned by Bateman's father.) The excavators dug a trench from the SE side of the barrow through to the centre. Mitchell recorded that the uppermost 'two yards' of the barrow was composed of loose stones and earth, then a thin layer of 'tuft stone' (which Barnatt translates as basalt), then a further yard and a half of stones and earth, with another thin layer of 'tuft stone' beneath this. Below this they noted "stiff reddish brown clay ... laid on the natural soil, about one and a half yards in thickness and 3 or 4 yards in diameter, and ... throughout its whole circumference full of burnt bones and charcoal, disposed apparently in layers" (Mitchell, cited in Ward 1908:163). Within the clay they found a flint arrowhead "two and half inches long" and "a fragment of a basaltic celt [an obsolete term for a prehistoric axe head]" (Bateman 1848:31). Higher up in the mound they found an iron fibula (part of a Roman-period brooch), now lost, and another piece of iron (ibid:32) – perhaps the "singular implement [Mitchell] described with some vagueness as a 'cow rake' " (Marsden 2007:24), which was later lost. Bateman (1848) records that many pieces of white burnt flint were also found in the interior of the barrow, but these too have been lost.

¹ A berm is a ledge or level space between a bank and its accompanying ditch or scarp.

In January 1848, Thomas Bateman (William's son) carried out more work at Gib Hill¹. He dug from the SE to the centre and beyond, opening up a deep, wide gash in the mound, and recording finds such as animal bones, burnt flint, a "neatly formed arrow head", the border of an "ornamented urn" and a "circular instrument" (Bateman 1861:17,18). After 3 days' work his excavators sank the trench down to the base of the barrow, exposing what he interpreted as four separate mounds of sticky clay on the old ground surface. Barnatt (1991: catalogue p.1) suggests that these were in fact the remains of the single layer of clay found (and disturbed) in 1824. This time, Bateman recorded that the clay contained wood and charcoal, and that "on the natural soil beneath the little mounds were flints as usual, one of them a round instrument, and large disconnected bones of oxen, very much decayed" (Bateman 1861:18).

Bateman then drove a tunnel into the barrow, starting from the west side of the first trench, and penetrating some 2.5 - 3.5m further into the mound, in the hope of finding a burial. Fearing the tunnel was unsafe, he told his men to abandon work. However, when they knocked away the supporting timbers, part of a cist (situated higher up in the mound) fell into the tunnel beneath. He described the whole structure as rectangular, composed of four massive blocks of limestone, covered by a fifth slab "averaging 4 feet square by 10 inches thick" (ibid:19). It had contained a food vessel (crushed in the fall but later restored) and cremated human remains. Bateman recorded that a horse molar and a piece of white flint were also recovered from "the rubbish that had fallen out of the cist".

Contemporary watercolour images of the food vessel and other finds, the reconstructed cist and Bateman's tunnel are held by Weston Park Museum, Sheffield (2.7.3) and can be seen there and at www.idigsheffield.org.uk. The site of Bateman's excavations can still be detected, owing to slight slumping of the backfill.

Bateman removed the cist and set it up in the grounds of his home, Lomberdale Hall at Middleton by Youlgrave, adding a lead plate inscribed "Cist Vaen from the Gib Hill Barrow near Middleton-by-Yolgrave, opened by Thomas Bateman, January 1848 – T. Bateman". In 1938, it was replaced near the summit of the barrow and a further bronze plaque was added to record its return. Both plaques were prised off in the 1960s (Marsden 2007:194). The cist's capstone remains visible on the surface of the upper mound.



Top stone of re-inserted cist, visible on the summit of the upper barrow at Gib Hill. Taken looking NE, with Arbor Low henge visible on the near horizon. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

2.4.3 Geophysical survey 1998 / 2000

As part of the Arbor Low geophysical survey carried out by English Heritage in 1998 / 2000, a resistivity survey was made of the rather limited area between the Gib Hill boundary stones and the temporary fence around the barrow. The report concluded that, without the benefit of wider survey, it was not possible to tell whether the amorphous variations in resistivity in this area were part of any recognisable pattern (Martin 2001:4). As indicated at 4.3.4, it is felt that there is scope for potentially useful data to be generated by future geophysical survey over a wider area, using up-to-date techniques.

2.4.4 Topographical survey 2007

For information on the full topographical survey of the monument complex carried out by English Heritage in 2007, see 2.3.4.

¹ Samuel Mitchell was again present at this later attempt, writing that "the season of the year is not very favourable for barrow excavations, but the bait of a full rummage into the Gib Hill tumulus is too tempting for me not to swallow" (cited in Marsden 2007:192).

2.5 Archaeological interest of Arbor Low field, Gib Hill field and adjacent land

2.5.1. Introduction

In addition to the major monuments which they contain, Arbor Low and Gib Hill fields are of actual and potential archaeological interest, as are the adjacent fields. A number of earthworks have been identified and / or investigated. Systematic fieldwalking in the last 25 years, earlier fieldwalking, and a number of impressive stray finds all combine to indicate a very long history of use of the immediate area around Arbor Low and Gib Hill, and perhaps something of the ways in which this area may have been important.

2.5.2 Features (or possible features) and their investigation history

2.5.2.1 Barrows / possible barrows in Arbor Low and Gib Hill fields

About 30m SE of the Arbor Low henge (and within the same modern field) is a low barrow, with a diameter of 10 x 11.5m (English Heritage 1994c and Figure A3). When Bateman excavated it in 1844, he found an empty rock-cut grave, which had already been disturbed. A fragment of iron retrieved from the grave indicated that at least one burial here may have been Romano-British or Anglian. It is thus not certain if the mound has prehistoric origins.

About 40m NNE of Gib Hill there is a symmetrical mound 9 x 8m in plan and 0.3m high, of similar size and appearance to that excavated by Bateman SE of Arbor Low (above). The mound is probably a barrow (Barnatt 1991 and Figure A8).

There is a similar low mound c. 60m NE of Gib Hill. However, it is somewhat smaller, at 7 x 5.5m in plan and 0.3m high, and is close to less regular ground. While it may also be a barrow it cannot be interpreted as such with the same level of confidence (Barnatt 1991 and Figure A8).

No other barrows were identified in these fields during Barnatt's surveys in 1991 and 1993. It is possible that small barrows or other slight features once existed here, but have been destroyed by ploughing, grazing (over a very long period), or quarrying (particularly in the Gib Hill Field). However, artefactual and other evidence may survive below ground level.

2.5.2.2 Radley's excavation of a suggested 'proto-henge' close to Gib Hill

In May 1968, J. Radley investigated what he thought could be the remains of a prehistoric circular earthwork "comprising a ditch and the vestiges of a very flattened external bank" (Radley 1968:103), surviving in quarried ground close to Gib Hill. He excavated a section of the feature at a point about 55m WNW of the barrow, and exposed what he interpreted as a steep-sided, rock-cut ditch, 20 feet (6.1m) wide. While acknowledging that the excavation results were inconclusive, he thought that the ditch might have formed part of a 'Type 1' henge. Radley went on to propose a sequence of monument building at Gib Hill and Arbor Low in which the newly-discovered henge – if that is what it was – was built after the long barrow at Gib Hill but before the Arbor Low henge: a hypothesis which "need[ed] testing by large-scale excavation" (1968:103).

Following a later survey of Gib Hill and adjacent ground, Barnatt rejected Radley's hypothesis. He concluded that "[t]he presence of surrounding quarry pits ... which are no different in character from those said to be a henge, and the relative lack of silting in the excavation trench, strongly suggest the feature is nothing more than 2 - 3 conjoined quarry pits" (Barnatt 1991:3).

Figure A8 (Barnatt 1991) shows the location of the 'proto-henge' and the extent and location of later quarry pits in the Gib Hill field.

2.5.3 Geophysical survey 1998 / 2000

Geophysical investigation carried out by English Heritage in 1998 / 2000 included magnetometer survey across much of the western and central part of the Arbor Low field, and resistivity survey of a much smaller area to the immediate south of the henge. The plot

generated by the magnetometer survey was characterised by linear patterning of uncertain origin, possibly generated by the local geology, or by ditches or field boundaries. There were also a number of discrete anomalies – including possible pits – which were equally hard to interpret (Martin 2001). As suggested at 4.3.4, despite the disappointing results of this survey, it is possible that future work could be more productive.

2.5.4 Topographical survey 2007

Information on the full topographical survey carried out in November 2007 (Newsome and Riley, in prep.) is given at 2.3.4. In addition to plotting various features (e.g. small barrows and quarry pits) previously identified by Barnatt, the survey tentatively identified the footings of a building within what was once a small square enclosure immediately NW of Gib Hill. The structure is assumed to be post-medieval, as it appears to relate to Enclosure boundaries (S. Newsome, pers. comm.).

2.5.5 Fieldwalking programme and stray finds

An extensive programme of fieldwalking was carried out across a selected area (or transect) of the Peak District between 1984 and 2002, with the intention of investigating and comparing the distribution and character of lithic material across different topographical and geological zones¹. As part of this programme, ploughed fields were walked a short distance west and south-west of Gib Hill, north, north-east and east of Arbor Low and east of Blakemoor Plantation (to the south of the monuments). Results are still undergoing evaluation. However analysis to date of the results from fields adjacent to Arbor Low and Gib Hill suggests the following (J. Barnatt, pers. comm.).

- The quantities of lithics per square metre are some of the highest in the whole Peak District ‘transect’.
- There is Mesolithic material as well as material from the Neolithic and Bronze Age. This implies that the area immediately adjacent to Arbor Low and Gib Hill was already well-known to people before the barrows, henge and circle were built. (Similar evidence for the Mesolithic use of sites on which later monuments were subsequently built has been noted elsewhere.)
- The lithics include a proportion of very well made artefacts. It should be stressed that these are not axes and maceheads (see below) but items such as arrowheads and scrapers, which are of good – and sometimes exceptional – quality.
- There is an impression of ‘conspicuous consumption’ – the relatively large size of the pieces which appear to have been discarded is unusual in the Peak District, where flint was a valuable imported resource. People seem to have been careless with it in the Arbor Low / Gib Hill area – as they were in other parts of the country where flint was easily available.

These initial results have been arrived at following analysis by Barnatt, Edmonds and others, and Barnatt emphasises that, at this stage, they constitute an ‘impression’, which needs further testing.

The fieldwalking programme was set up (in part) to test models of prehistoric settlement and land use developed by Hawke-Smith (1979) and Bradley and Hart (1983). One of the ideas proposed by the latter was that Arbor Low lay at the centre of what was then termed a ‘macehead complex’ – a small but distinct cluster of carefully-made stone objects such as edge-ground flint axes, maceheads and edge-polished knives. The programme results indicate

¹ The project area was defined by a transect approximately 22km long and 6km wide, running from the limestone hills in the west through lower ground in the Derwent and Wye valleys, up onto the gritstone East Moors, and terminating on Coal Measure soils to the east. The transect area was first identified in the 1980s by J. Barnatt and A. Myers, as part of a project funded by the Manpower Services Commission (Barnatt et al, in prep.). Fieldwalking resumed in the mid 1990s as a joint project between J. Barnatt at PDNPA, M. Edmonds of the University of Sheffield and Arteamus (a locally-based group of volunteer archaeologists). Analysis of data from the entire programme is currently in progress.

that this does not seem to be the case (J. Barnatt, pers. comm.): the material from fields close to Arbor Low and Gib Hill appears distinctive, but not in the way asserted by Bradley and Hart.

Other, less systematic collection of lithics has taken place in the area during the 20th century (and before). Twentieth century collectors include J.B. Titterton of Dale Farm, Middleton by Youlgrave (around 1906), the Dunn family, tenants of Upper Oldhams Farm, who collected between 1931 and 1967, and J. Radley (Middleton Moor, 1961). More information on some of this material is at 2.7.

In addition, museum collections house a small number of distinctive artefacts whose 19th and 20th century provenance is recorded as 'near' Arbor Low. Some of these are chance finds, others may be the product of excavation. They include many arrowheads, circular flint knives, stone and flint axes, two (perhaps three) maceheads and two chert balls (see 2.7).

2.5.6 Barrows on Middleton Moor

On 15th March 1848, Thomas Bateman excavated two barrows on Middleton Moor, 0.75km north-west of Arbor Low and Gib Hill. Both were Bronze Age round barrows, and both had been damaged by ploughing. In one he found an almost-destroyed skeleton overlying a cist (Bateman 1861, HER 10133). Within the cist, a woman had been buried in a crouched position, and a child had been buried near her shoulders. Round the woman's neck was a wonderfully elaborate jet and bone necklace, made up of around 420 separate pieces¹. This is now in Weston Park Museum, Sheffield (see 2.7.3 and images at www.idigsheffield.org.uk). The precise site of the barrow is no longer identifiable.

About 46m (50 yards) to the NW he re-opened another round barrow, which had already been opened by William Bateman in 1824 (Bateman 1848, 1861; HER 10135). Here, ploughing had damaged two burials and a cremation. William Bateman had recovered an "iron lance or arrowhead, three inches long" and a "piece of iron, resembling a nail" (Bateman 1848:32), probably indicating the presence of a later burial inserted during the Anglian period (c. 7th century AD).

2.6 Archaeological context

Note The following text is based very closely on work by Barnatt (1990 and 1999), Barnatt and Collis (1996) and Edmonds and Seaborne (2001).

The lower barrow at Gib Hill

Long barrows are among the oldest surviving field monuments in Britain. They vary greatly in structure and complexity but often consist of a rectangular or trapezoid earthen mound, accompanied by flanking or encircling ditches, and are frequently associated with human remains.

In the Peak District, there are between 6 and 11 documented examples, all on the limestone. As a group, they are relatively isolated, located midway between the long barrows of the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Wolds and chambered long cairns in the Severn / Cotswold area. The Peak District examples are thought likely to date from the 4th millennium BC, but dating and other evidence is largely based on small-scale, poorly-documented antiquarian excavations, and thus little is known of the structure, contents and chronological sequence of these monuments.

The site at Gib Hill appears to have been the earliest focus for ceremonial activity on this ridge – and 19th century excavators may have identified evidence that this spot was marked as significant, even before the lower barrow was built (2.4.2). The locations of chambered cairns and long barrows seem to have been carefully chosen, and were probably important

¹In his Journal, Bateman described this necklace as "a unique and matchless specimen of ancient British decorative art" (cited in Marsden 2007:195). Marsden (ibid.) also notes that the characteristics of the woman's skull were felt to indicate that she had been very beautiful. A description of an engraving of the skull in *Crania Britannica* stated that "its possessor must have enjoyed a large measure of the charms of the race to which she belonged" - an approach to the description of human remains which would now be seen as unusual.

to Neolithic communities in a number of ways. They tend to be situated on watersheds and ridges – places which may have served as important markers and routeways for communities using this landscape. The barrows probably served many purposes, emphasising ancestral links with land through which people and animals moved, according to the season. Some sites – like Gib Hill – provide vantage points, and (depending on surrounding vegetation) would also have been visible from a distance. Commonly, again as at Gib Hill, there is evidence for reworking and embellishment over time.

The building of the Arbor Low henge a short distance to the north-east appears to indicate a marked change in practice, which may both express and derive from major cultural change – although we do not know whether such change was sudden or incremental.

Arbor Low henge and stone circle

In the Later Neolithic, monuments such as henges and large stone circles seem to have replaced chambered tombs and long barrows as places to reaffirm communal behaviour and identity. Although there is a shortage of good evidence for when they were built, many may well date from the 3rd millennium BC, with sites continuing to be built through the Later Neolithic. Henges are found throughout much of Britain, and appear to be located in areas which could have supported relatively high prehistoric populations.

Arbor Low is one of two major henges in the region: both it and the Bull Ring (see below) are located on the limestone plateau and are on a much grander scale than the smaller stone circles found on the gritstone.

As outlined below, Barnatt (summarising or building on work done by a number of other authors¹) has demonstrated that all the architectural elements found at Arbor Low can be identified at henges and associated stone circles in a variety of regions from northern Scotland to Cornwall, thus suggesting that all these elements were part of a repertoire of forms which were current throughout much of Britain.

In a few cases, stone circles were built within henges. Such sites are found as far north as Brodgar and Stenness in Orkney and as far south as the Stripple Stones in Cornwall. Normally, the circles are built of tall, evenly-spaced stones. Timber circles also appear to have been relatively common, and it is likely that we underestimate the original extent of these given that archaeological evidence for their existence is harder to detect. It is possible that future work at Arbor Low and the Bull Ring might indicate their presence here (4.3.1).

Some circles and henges have central coves – as at Arbor Low (2.3.1.2). Their design varies, and they have no common orientation, but (in so far as it is possible to generalise from the few examples known) they normally appear to be sub-rectangular, with one open side. Examples occur at a number of sites, including Stonehenge, Avebury, Stanton Drew and Mount Pleasant in south-west England, possibly Mayburgh in Cumbria and Cairnpapple in Lothian, Scotland. At the latter site, three deep pits face the open side of the cove, with, beyond them, an arc of post or stone holes associated with cremations. Barnatt suggests that there may be some similarities here with the large, partially-excavated pit to the north-east of the Arbor Low cove.

As noted at 2.3.1.2, there is some evidence for the former existence of portal stones at Arbor Low. This is reflected in sites elsewhere (for example in southern Scotland, Cumbria and in south-west England) where such features usually flank the entrances.

It is possible that astronomical alignment – for example in relation to the setting of the full moon at midwinter and midsummer – may have played some role in the structural form and cultural significance of the Arbor Low henge and circle. However, most of the possible alignments (such as that between former portal stones and the setting moon) could be fortuitous.

The second of the major Peak District circle-henges, known as the Bull Ring, is at Dove Holes, north of Buxton. Although now damaged (and lacking orthostats) it is very similar

¹ See bibliography in Barnatt 1990.

to Arbor Low in dimensions and design. An additional shared characteristic is the (possibly double) barrow which lies to its immediate south-west.

Various factors suggest that these two sites reflect the original distribution of henges on the limestone plateau, and that they were built at the same date and functioned in similar ways. Their location suggests a division of the plateau into two, with the Wye Gorge acting as a natural boundary between two territorial areas. The two communities either side of this boundary may each have constructed their own henge to act as the major ceremonial centre for their territory – possibly used seasonally for communal gatherings.

Gib Hill and Arbor Low round barrows

Towards the end of the Neolithic, there seems to have been a change in emphasis – a move away from the few large tombs and henges towards the raising of large numbers of round barrows in the Bronze Age. In Britain as a whole, there are many thousands of these structures, which vary considerably in form, probably expressing a wide diversity of belief and social organisation.

In the Peak District, there are over 500 round barrows, the majority of which are likely to be prehistoric. They may have been built and used over a long period – perhaps more than 1000 years – through the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, and, unlike the long barrows, they are found in both limestone and gritstone contexts.

In probable contrast with the stone circles, barrows were obviously connected with burying the dead, although their construction may have been as much for the benefit of the living: grave goods and the treatment of the dead perhaps allowed people to make statements about beliefs, aspirations and relationships with other groups.

At both Arbor Low and Gib Hill, round barrows were superimposed on earlier monuments – and this may also have been the case at the barrow south-west of the Bull Ring. This characteristic is rarely found in Britain, and the Peak District examples provide an (as yet largely unexplored) opportunity to examine what such an apparently dramatic action may imply about cultural and religious change.

Linear earthwork / the ‘Avenue’

It is difficult to provide useful contextual information for this earthwork, given that its date and function remain a matter of conjecture (2.3.2.4). It is thought to be a property boundary of some sort and to postdate the henge: however, it could be prehistoric, Romano-British, early medieval (or even later).

If Romano-British, this would be in line with an apparent preference for the limestone by people within the Peak District at this period (Bevan 2000).

Very little is known of the immediate post-Roman history of the Peak, but the presence of many Anglian barrows (and burials inserted into prehistoric barrows) suggests that Anglian settlement was well-established by the second half of the 7th century, apparently centred on the limestone (Barnatt and Collis 1996). As indicated at 2.5.6 and 2.8, there is strong evidence for the use of the Middleton Moor area during the Anglian period.

The relationship between the ‘Avenue’ and the major prehistoric monuments is not known but is clearly of interest. As exemplified not only in the region but much more widely, this feature may reference and make use of monuments which had long lost their original purpose, but continued to be recognised as ancient places with powerful (sometimes spiritual) associations. More prosaically, such monuments would have acted as convenient markers in the landscape.

2.7 Collections and Archives

2.7.1 Overview

The principal holders of collections and archives relating to Arbor Low and Gib Hill are the British Museum and Weston Park Museum, Sheffield, with smaller collections at Derby Museum and Art Gallery, Buxton Museum and (possibly) a single item at Nottingham

University Museum. A particular characteristic of the collections is the large number of objects for which the general provenance is given as 'Arbor Low', but which may come from the general area around the monument, or even from other barrows on Middleton Moor.

2.7.2 British Museum

Holdings

The Museum's Arbor Low / Gib Hill material has three principal components: items from the Bateman Collection (Sturge Bequest)¹; items from the Lucas Collection donated in 1873 (all described as from Arbor Low, but whose exact provenance is not known); and flints and chert from Harold St. George Gray's excavation at Arbor Low in 1901 / 1902, together with the mahogany model of the henge and circle made by Gray's team, all donated by the British Association in 1907. There are a number of other donations, including a small number of flints donated in 1906 by J. B. Titterton, a farmer from Middleton by Youlgrave, and a few individual items donated in the early to mid 20th century.

The Bateman Collection 'Arbor Low' material comprises about 30 items (mainly flint but including 4 fragments from stone and flint axes). The flints include leaf-shaped and chisel arrowheads, a 'knife' and various scrapers, including one discoidal and three end and side scrapers. The 'Gib Hill' material consists of just under 30 flints, and includes leaf-shaped, 'barbed' and 'lozenge' arrowheads and a number of scrapers.

John Fossick Lucas was an associate of Thomas Bateman. The Arbor Low material from the Lucas Collection comprises a small number of flints and a stone axe and axe fragment. The flints include the impressive 'knife dagger' and two circular flint knives illustrated by Gray (1903: 485,486). These three items are currently not on the British Museum register, but have been tracked down in a cardboard box (marked Arbor Low) in the Museum's archaeological store at West Kensington (M. Harvey, pers. comm). As pointed out by Gray, it is not known exactly where the Lucas items were found, and they may be from other barrows in the general vicinity of Arbor Low.

The material from the Gray excavation comprises 34 pieces of flint and chert and the mahogany and soapstone model of the henge and circle. Gray's finds are listed and photographed in his published excavation reports (Gray 1903, 1904). In response to an information request made in the course of research for this Conservation Plan, M. Harvey of the British Museum kindly supplied a copy of the original register entries for these items, consisting of descriptive text and drawings and dated October 1907. This is now in the PDNPA archive.

Other material includes 5 flints donated by Mr J.B. Titterton in 1906, together with correspondence which describes the area close to Arbor Low where he found these – and many other – flints. (It should be noted that the record made by Vine [1982:155, 4a - 4e] is misleading, in that it incorporates Titterton's finds from adjacent fields within the record of material from the Gray excavation of Arbor Low.)

A very small number of other stray finds (including a polished stone axe) were donated between 1933 and 1951.

The Museum holds very little archive material associated with its Arbor Low / Gib Hill items. (However, photographs taken during the Gray excavations are held by Weston Park Museum Sheffield: see 2.7.3 below.)

Access

Students and members of the public can arrange to see objects by contacting the Museum's 'students' room' (0207 323 8629) or via email at Prehistory&Europe@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk. They can also use the same route to arrange to see Gray's model, which is in store in West Kensington, as are some of the items from the Lucas Collection.

¹ The Museum's bibliographical reference for all the Bateman / Sturge bequest items is Bateman 1855.

2.7.3 Weston Park Museum Sheffield (WPMS)

Holdings

The Museum holds a number of fieldbooks compiled by the 18th century antiquarian, Hayman Rooke. Included within them are Rooke's plan of Arbor Low, a section through the henge bank and ditch, and a view of the barrow on the SE bank of the henge.

Within the Museum's Bateman Collection are all surviving objects (including ceramics) from the following excavations:

Arbor Low barrow, S. Mitchell and W. Bateman, 1824;

Gib Hill barrow, S. Mitchell and W. Bateman, 1824;

Small barrow SE of Arbor Low, T. Bateman 1844;

Arbor Low barrow, T. Bateman and S. Isaacson, 1845;

Arbor Low barrow, T. Bateman and S. Isaacson, 1848.

WPMS also holds watercolours of Arbor Low and Gib Hill (including finds and excavation images) by both T. Bateman and L. Jewitt, and finds from a number of other digs nearby, including Bateman's excavation of a barrow on Middleton Moor in 1848.

Included in the holdings are Thomas Bateman's unpublished notebooks, containing entries relating to various excavations which are often more detailed than the published accounts (J. Barnatt, pers. comm.).

Also in the WPMS Bateman Collection are approximately 30 items from the vicinity of Arbor Low and Gib Hill, found by a range of people at different dates. These include axeheads, arrowheads, jet, bone, glass and ceramic items and two chert balls.

Although the finds from Gray's 1901 and 1902 excavations at Arbor Low are held at the British Museum (see above), WPMS holds 13 photographs taken during the work. These are dated, and have been annotated on the reverse with a description of what each image shows. Although the photographer is not named, they clearly form part of the formal excavation archive, as several (but by no means all) are reproduced in Gray's formal account of the work (Gray 1903, 1904).

WPMS also holds a replica of Gray's model of Arbor Low, showing the trenches dug in 1901 and 1902.

Other items include a stone axe found near Arbor Low (from the Leslie Armstrong Collection), and a number of items from the Gib Hill area found by Jeff Radley. The Museum's map index cards detail a number of other stray finds found in the general vicinity of the monuments.

Access

Access to the Arbor Low and Gib Hill material at WPMS can be achieved via various routes. The Museum's Bateman Collection is detailed in an illustrated volume, published by Sheffield City Museum in 1899 ('A Catalogue of the Bateman Collection of Antiquities, prepared by E. Howarth').

Images of many of the prehistoric artefacts described above, and several of the Bateman / Jewitt watercolours, accompanied by written information, can be seen on the WPMS website (www.idigsheffield.org.uk). In the future, WPMS aims to develop this website further, gradually putting more material online, and thus enabling people to engage with the Museum's collections without necessarily visiting the building.

Where more specialist access is concerned, the long-term aim is to develop the Museum's computerised record of its collections, including those which relate to Arbor Low and Gib Hill.

2.7.4 Buxton Museum and Art Gallery

Holdings

The Museum holds 100 items 'from Arbor Low', of which 97 are flints. The collection includes a large proportion of arrowheads and scrapers, and 3 'discoidal polished knives'. The remaining 3 items are listed as a 'ground axe-head', a pestle macehead and a pebble macehead. (It is not clear from a comparison of reference numbers whether one of these is the macehead fragment referred to by Vine [1982:154, 304].) There is nothing from Gib Hill.

Around 40 items were donated by the Rev. Storrs Fox, an amateur excavator and antiquarian who was active in Derbyshire in the early years of the 20th century. Quite a high proportion of other finds were donated by M. Salt and W.H. Salt¹.

The Museum does not hold archive material relating to Arbor Low or Gib Hill, and there is very little information on the provenance of the Arbor Low holdings. It is not clear from the information received so far whether it is possible to say that the collection is mainly composed of stray finds from the general vicinity of the monument, rather than being found on or within it. A small number of items are described as 'found at' Arbor Low, but this could refer to (e.g.) the Arbor Low field, or possibly to a much wider area around both monuments.

The Museum has a number of excellent lantern slides of Arbor Low, dating from the early years of the 20th century, several of them from photographs taken by the geologist and archaeologist, Sir William Boyd Dawkins. They include an image of three well-dressed men at Arbor Low in 1903 – the year after Gray's excavation. All the images can be seen at the Picture the Past website (www.picturethepast.org.uk).

Access

Basic data on the Arbor Low material is held on the Museum's database, with more information available on individual records, if needed. As at Spring 2008, much of the Arbor Low material is on public display. Access to the stored material is by appointment with the Museum.

2.7.5 Derby Museum and Art Gallery

Holdings

The Museum and Art Gallery holds the following material.

- Three pen and ink drawings by Hayman Rooke showing Arbor Low and Arbor Low / Gib Hill.
- Four flints (including a discoidal scraper and two arrowheads) all from different donors and presumed to be stray finds – either from Arbor Low itself or its vicinity.
- A copy of Harold St. George Gray's model of Arbor Low, made by the Museum's Assistant Curator in 1935.
- 'Pottery' associated with Arbor Low (no other information on this was available at the time of enquiry).
- A small collection of aerial photographs of Derbyshire acquired from Dr. J. K. St. Joseph in 1965, some of which show Arbor Low.
- Various notes, including a set of notes on Arbor Low by Leslie Armstrong, acquired in 1959;
- Three samples of oakstone, quarried near Arbor Low (see 2.2).

Access

The objects and images are all available to researchers / members of the public by appointment, and the Rooke drawings are digitised and available for purchase.

¹ The authors are grateful to Museum staff for the information provided, and recognise that, due to other commitments, it has not been possible for Buxton Museum to provide further information at this stage on the provenance of items in the collection (e.g. more precise data – if available – on find spots, and the date of donations).

2.7.6 Nottingham University Museum

The gazetteer compiled by Vine (1982: 155, 389) includes an illustration of a bronze spearhead from Arbor Low, held by the Museum. No specific provenance is given. The Museum has very recently appointed a new curator, who is kindly researching the current whereabouts of this item and any information on its provenance (C. Pickersgill, pers. comm.).

2.7.7 National Monuments Record / Gray Collection

The English Heritage 'Investigation History' for Arbor Low available online via the EH Pastscape link gives the Gray Collection / National Monuments Record Centre (NMR) as an archive source. However, in response to a recent enquiry, an NMR representative stated that he had checked through their Gray archive and found nothing on Arbor Low (G. Deacon, pers.comm).

2.7.8 Derbyshire HER (formerly SMR)

The Derbyshire Historic Environment Record (HER), formerly the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), summarises information on the location and investigation of the various elements of the monument complex at Arbor Low / Gib Hill, cross-referenced to bibliographical sources, museum collections and archives. As part of this record, it holds information (not otherwise available elsewhere) on items not in museum collections. These include a collection of flint and stone items made over 36 years (1931 – 1967) by the Dunn family whilst tenants of Upper Oldhams Farm. The exact provenance of most of the collection is not known but the Record provides a general indication.

2.7.9 Material from fieldwalking programme

Flint, chert and other artefacts collected during the course of the fieldwalking programme described at 2.5.5 are currently held at the offices of the Peak District National Park Authority. They will be deposited in an appropriate museum when analysis is complete.

2.8 Landscape setting

The setting of Arbor Low and Gib Hill within the wider landscape forms a vitally important part of their aesthetic, spiritual and intellectual appeal.

Set high up among pasture fields, on a site which feels remote, the monuments provide one of the finest viewpoints in the White Peak. To the north and north-west is high limestone farmland with its intricate pattern of drystone walls – particularly distinct around the village of Monyash. To the north-east there are distant views towards the East Moors, and to the west and south-west are the limestone hills above the Dove Valley.

These views provide an exhilarating sense of openness and space – only slightly marred by the distant sound of traffic on the A515. Industrial activity is either concealed by the lie of the land, or masked by trees. Close to Gib Hill, former silica quarries at Blakemoor Pits are now grassed over or water-filled, and have become an important habitat for wildlife.

Arbor Low in its landscape setting: taken looking NE across limestone plateau around Lathkill Dale. (Photograph: PDNPA)



Many visitors will not be aware that the landscape which can be seen from the monuments is also rich in prehistoric and historic interest. To the south-east, the chambered 'great barrow' at Minninglow can be seen (through winter trees) from Gib Hill and from the summit of the Arbor Low barrow. A number of other barrows lie on prominent hilltops, particularly to the west and south-west. Just three fields north-west of Upper Oldhams Farm is the site of a Bronze Age barrow, now ploughed away, but notable for the burial of a woman and child whose remains Bateman found there in 1848 – the woman wearing a beautiful, complex 420-piece jet and bone necklace (2.5.6). Just a field to the west of Gib Hill the straight route followed by what may be a 2000 year old Roman road is clearly visible in the landscape.

About 1.5km to the north-west of Arbor Low is the major late 7th century barrow of Benty Grange, where Bateman unearthed one of only four Anglo-Saxon helmets ever found in this country, a high-status object strikingly ornamented with both Christian and pagan symbols: a silver cross and wild boar.

There are features from more recent periods too. The varying patterns of field walls reveal the particular agricultural history of different parts of this landscape, from the elongated, curving patterns of the medieval field system around Monyash, fossilised by early enclosure, to the geometric outlines of 18th and 19th century enclosure of the higher moors and commons. Lead was mined very close to Arbor Low, and lead rakes and spoil heaps lie in fields to the north, east and south-east of the monuments. Visible from the northern approach to Arbor Low is the dramatic cutting south of Parsley Hay, part of the Cromford and High Peak Railway. The whole enterprise (which opened in 1830) has been described as one of the most extraordinary feats of 19th century railway engineering.

The beauty of the physical setting of Arbor Low and Gib Hill can be enjoyed by everyone who goes there, but more thought could be given to making visitors aware of the thousands of years of history – and the survival of some extraordinary objects – which enrich appreciation of the monuments' setting.

2.9 Ecology

2.9.1 Arbor Low and Gib Hill fields

The ecological value of the Arbor Low field has declined considerably in the last 20 years. When surveyed in the mid-1980s this and adjoining fields were identified as a 'key ecological area', with species-rich limestone turf. The field was probably 'improved' shortly after this, and when re-surveyed by PDNPA in 2004 there was no longer any ecological interest here – except perhaps on the banks of the henge. The limitation on use of chemicals and fertilisers under the Grazing Agreement for this field (see 2.10.1.3) should in time increase its botanical diversity.

Both the Arbor Low and Gib Hill fields are now categorised as improved species-poor grassland – although detailed survey may yet reveal some relic heath habitat.

2.9.2 Blakemoor Pits

An area of land known as Blakemoor Pits lies about 400m south and south-south-west of Gib Hill. The pits, created by silica sand extraction, are now water-filled, and they and their margins have become important habitats for wildlife in an otherwise improved landscape. The Blakemoor Pits fields were bought by the National Park Authority in 1986 and sold on with protective covenants.

Great Crested Newts (which have European Protected Species status) have been recorded here, and the extent of the associated protected species buffer zones is shown at Figure A9. The area immediately around the pits is acid grassland: a UK (lowland dry acid grassland) and Peak District (unimproved pastures) Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat, as defined at 3.1.6. There are also areas of remnant limestone hill and heath (UK lowland heath BAP and Peak District limestone heath BAP), a very rare habitat within the Peak District. A brief site visit undertaken in 2007 revealed that acid grassland and remnant limestone heath are also present within the fields themselves, particularly in the north-eastern half (H. Crowther, pers. comm.).

Very small numbers of Lapwing and Curlew, which are both priority UK and Peak District BAP species, have been recorded in the Blakemoor Pits fields. In the past, Little Ringed Plover (a species afforded additional protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) has also been recorded here, as have Snipe and Teal.

The land manager is currently preparing an application for Entry Level Stewardship for the landholding which includes Blakemoor Pits. As indicated at 2.10.3.1, such an agreement would also have cross-compliance implications for the fields immediately south-west of Gib Hill and north-east of Gibhill Plantation, which contain surviving sections of the scheduled linear earthwork known as the 'Avenue'.

The ecological value of the Blakemoor Pits area – particularly for rare limestone heath and acid grassland habitat, and for ground-nesting birds – is highly relevant to the question of whether there is potential to create a footpath link between the High Peak Trail and Gib Hill / Arbor Low (see 2.16.5).

Immediately to the west of Blakemoor Pits, part of the High Peak Trail is a Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Reserve, based on the limestone heath interest of the former railway banks here.

2.10 Tenure and management (agreements and structures)

2.10.1 Arbor Low

2.10.1.1 Ownership and Guardianship

Arbor Low henge and stone circle, and the field in which they lie, are in the freehold ownership of the Trustees of the Middleton Estate (Figure A10). The interests of the Estate are represented by the firm of Fisher German, from their Ashby de la Zouch office.

Since 1884, the Arbor Low stone circle and henge (but not the surrounding field) have been in the Guardianship of the relevant Secretary of State (currently that for Culture, Media and Sport). They are managed on his / her behalf by English Heritage. (For more detailed information on Guardianship see 3.1.)

2.10.1.2 Lease of Arbor Low field to English Heritage

In 2003, English Heritage leased the Arbor Low field from the Trustees of the Middleton Estate. The lease runs for 20 years from 2nd September 2003, and covers an area of 11.3 acres (4.57 hectares), as defined on the map at Figure A12. The field covered by the lease contains the Arbor Low henge and circle, an approximately 100m stretch of the linear bank and ditch known as the 'Avenue', and the small barrow about 30m SE of the henge. The whole extent of the field is also deemed to be of potential archaeological interest, given the visible monuments which it contains, and the many prehistoric artefacts recovered from surrounding fields (see 2.7).

Under the terms of the lease, the field continues to be used for agricultural purposes (see below) and the Arbor Low monument remains open to the public.

2.10.1.3 Grazing agreement for Arbor Low field (to be signed)

A grazing agreement relating to the Arbor Low field has been drawn up between English Heritage and Mr. B. Woolley of Moscar Farm, Ashbourne Road, Monyash. (Arrangements are now being made for this to be signed.)

The agreement relates to grazing with sheep (only) between dates to be agreed and subject to a maximum to be defined from time to time. A number of conditions cover:

- right of public access
- maintenance of gates and fences
- indemnification of English Heritage as appropriate
- use of fertilisers and chemicals
- control of weeds
- provision of water as required (see over**).

The grazing agreement is linked to a further agreement with Mr. and Mrs. Woolley which covers access rights to the monument along the farm track that leads from the public road, and through the relevant fields (see 2.16.1.4). The Arbor Low grazing rights are offered free of charge, subject to Mr. and Mrs. Woolley entering into this access agreement.

English Heritage may resume possession of all or any part of the area covered by the grazing agreement at any time, subject to one month's written notice. (This would not affect the continuation of the access agreement described at 2.16.1.4.)

** Until very recently, the lack of a water source for stock in the Arbor Low field has had an impact on the management of grazing and on monument condition (see 2.11.1.3). However, in April 2008, English Heritage agreed to fund a water bowser, to enable Mr. Woolley to fill a trough in the field when needed (A. Baker, pers. comm.).

2.10.1.4 Local Management Agreement / Maintained Property Agreement

In February 1995, the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission ('English Heritage') entered into a 10 year Local Management Agreement (LMA) with the Peak Park Joint Planning Board, now the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA). This Agreement gave the PDNPA responsibility for day to day management of the Arbor Low circle and henge¹, but – as noted below – did not cover any part of the linear bank and ditch (the 'Avenue') which abuts the henge (Figure A3).

The LMA has expired and is due to be replaced by a revised agreement, now known as a Maintained Property Agreement (MPA). The draft MPA is currently awaiting PDNPA approval (see below).

In summary, the 1995 LMA engaged the PDNPA to protect, conserve and where possible enhance the 'archaeological, historical and natural history resource' represented by the Arbor Low and Gib Hill monuments, particularly in the context of the surrounding area within the National Park, and to promote awareness and understanding of the monuments.

The Agreement specified a number of tasks, summarised below:

- to use the 1994 Condition Survey (2.11.1.2) as a guideline to bring the Property up to base level;
- to arrange regular inspections for site monitoring, litter clearance and the reporting of any serious damage;
- to maintain the grassed area to at least the condition recorded in the 1994 Condition Survey;
- to control shrub and sapling growth, using appropriate methods, and to control weeds and burrowing animals;
- to develop a strategy and programme for the provision of appropriate on- and off-site interpretive media;
- to maintain marker posts / bollards in good condition;
- to endeavour to prevent camping and fires on the Property, to advise EH of the presence of campers or unauthorised visitors, and to take reasonable steps (excluding legal proceedings) to secure their removal;
- to develop a specification and programme (after consulting the relevant landowner) for improvement of the car parking, visitor access and payment arrangements.

One of the principal changes in the draft version of the revised LMA (EH to PDNPA August 2007) is that, following the lease of the field by EH, the area covered by the Agreement now extends to the entire Arbor Low field, as opposed to the scheduled henge, circle and barrow only.

There are also a number of draft changes to the specified tasks. These include emphasis on the circumstances in which EH must be consulted, or its prior approval sought, and some clarification of responsibility for implementation and supervision of repairs.

¹ While the Arbor Low circle is referred to in the wording of the 1995 Agreement, the henge is not. However it is included within the demarcated area shown on the site plan attached to the LMA document.

PDNPA is to 'prepare proposals for' rather than 'to develop' strategies for interpretation, and these should 'include provision to maximise reasonable opportunities for physical and intellectual access'.

New provisions cover the promotion of the site through publicity material produced for the wider National Park; the preparation by PDNPA of Risk Assessments and Disability Discrimination Act audits, and the use of the latest version of any adopted Conservation Plan to inform decisions on the management of the Property.

The provision relating to the improvement of car parking, visitor access and payment arrangements has been dropped.

It should be noted that, during consultation for this Conservation Plan, Mr and Mrs Woolley (owners of the access route and of Gib Hill field) and Mr and Mrs Dick (owners of Upper Oldhams Farm, and with shared rights to the access route) emphasised that, in their view, agreements such as those described above should include a reference to the importance of consulting (or, where necessary, seeking the permission of) relevant landowners.

Action taken under LMA

Section 2.11.1.2 provides more detailed information on impacts on the condition of Arbor Low during the course of the LMA, and the current condition of the monument. As indicated at 2.11.1.3, a detailed topographical survey carried out by English Heritage in late 2007 will provide a baseline against which to measure future change.

2.10.1.5 Tenure of access routes

Information on tenure of access routes, and agreements relating to concessionary access to both monuments, are set out in detail at 2.16.1. In summary, in April 2003, English Heritage signed a 25 year Agreement with Mr and Mrs Woolley of Moscar Farm, Monyash, the owners of the route to the Arbor Low and Gib Hill monuments from the public road.

A concessionary right of access across the Arbor Low field is incorporated within the 20 year lease agreed between English Heritage and the owners of the field, the Trustees of the Middleton Estate, and also within the grazing agreement between English Heritage and Mr Woolley (see 2.10.1.3 above).

2.10.2 Gib Hill

2.10.2.1 Ownership and Guardianship

The monument itself and the field in which it lies are in the ownership of Mr B. and Mrs M. Woolley of Moscar Farm, Ashbourne Road, Monyash (Figure A10).

Since 1884, the Gib Hill barrow (but not the surrounding field) has been in the Guardianship of the relevant Secretary of State (currently that for Culture, Media and Sport). It is managed on his / her behalf by English Heritage (see 3.1.2).

2.10.2.2 Local Management Agreement / Maintained Property Agreement

As indicated above (2.10.1.4), in February 1995, English Heritage entered into a 10 year Local Management Agreement (LMA) with the Peak Park Joint Planning Board, now the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA), giving the PDNPA responsibility for day to day management of the Arbor Low circle and henge and Gib Hill barrow.

PDNPA tasks specified under the Agreement, and detailed above, applied equally to Gib Hill and to Arbor Low.

The LMA has now expired. Redrafted Maintained Property Agreement provisions summarised at 2.10.1.4 apply equally to Gib Hill and Arbor Low. As indicated, a final version of the text is awaiting approval by PDNPA.

2.10.2.3 Section 17 Management Agreement and its context

In Spring 1996, the monument and its immediate environs suffered various forms of damage (from a farm vehicle, cattle and ploughing). This damage and its impacts are described in more detail at 2.11.2.2.

In 1997 a temporary electric fence (with an access stile) was erected around Gib Hill, just outside the boundary of the scheduled area, to prevent further erosion. However, the fence posts were repeatedly broken, probably by visitors, and it was eventually removed.

In an attempt to resolve the problem, in late 1998 English Heritage entered into a management agreement with Mr Woolley of Moscar Farm, Monyash (the owner of Gib Hill barrow and the field in which it lies).

The Agreement was made under Section 17 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and initially ran for 5 years from 10th December 1997. It was renewed to run for 5 years from 1 January 2003, and has now expired. A decision on whether to renew it in 2008 is yet to be made.

Under the Agreement, Mr Woolley's obligations have been to:

- maintain a permanent grass cover on the monument;
- control weeds and burrowing animals;
- control stock levels to prevent the breakdown of grass cover if the site of the monument is periodically grazed;
- reseed any eroded patches;
- control scrub and sapling growth;
- obtain appropriate prior consent for any works which break the ground surface of the monument;
- ensure that any stockproof fencing is maintained in good condition.

Arrangements for access by English Heritage staff and the control of metal detector use were also specified.

In early 1998, at the beginning of the Agreement period, a post and wire fence (with two stiles and a field gate) was erected around the barrow, and is still in place (Figure A12 and photograph at 4.9). On a number of occasions (for example in 1998, 1999 and 2001) cattle continued to access the fenced area, with consequent impact on the monument. As described at 2.11.2.2, in 2002, PDNPA and EH discussed the need for repair of erosion scars, and the fact that repairs would need time to establish. By 2003, the eroded areas were reported to be grassing over, although repairs were still needed, and the Victorian boundary marker to the SSW of the barrow needed to be reset. The Section 17 Agreement was renewed for 5 years (until January 2008) to continue to protect the monument and to allow further work to take place.

As described more fully at 2.11.1.3 and 2.11.2.3, the SSW boundary marker was reset in November 2007 and minor erosion repairs were carried out. A decision on whether to renew the Section 17 Agreement is pending.

2.10.2.4 Possible Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) application

In May 2007, Mr Woolley asked for advice from PDNPA about ways in which his land might qualify for Entry Level Stewardship. (Such an agreement, if entered into, would be managed by Natural England for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.)

2.10.2.5 Impacts and condition

Section 2.11.2.2 provides more detailed information on variations in the condition of Gib Hill during the course of both the LMA and the Section 17 Agreement. As indicated at 2.3.4, a topographical survey of the monument carried out by English Heritage in late 2007 will provide a baseline against which to measure future change.

2.10.3 Linear bank and ditch / the 'Avenue'

Although this monument is not within the Guardianship of the Secretary of State, its entire visible length is scheduled in association with the Arbor Low henge and stone circle, it abuts the henge, and follows a curving course less than 100m to the south of Gib Hill. It is therefore considered appropriate to summarise its ownership and management in tandem with that of the two Guardianship monuments.

2.10.3.1 Tenure and management

The scheduled sections of the 'Avenue' are located in land covered by four different land ownerships / tenancies (Figure A11). For ease of reference these are discussed below under A to E.

A) The northernmost stretch of the earthwork lies in the Arbor Low field which, as indicated at 2.10.1.2, is owned by the Trustees of the Middleton Estate and leased to English Heritage. As indicated at 2.10.1.3, an agreement (to be signed) between English Heritage and Mr. B. Woolley of Moscar Farm, Monyash covers grazing rights in this field.

B) To the immediate south of the Arbor Low field, a short stretch of the earthwork lies in land also owned by the Middleton Trust but managed by Mr C. Percival of Calling Low Farm, Middleton by Youlgrave.

C) Further sections of the earthwork run along the north-eastern boundary of Gibhill Plantation. On the whole, these sections lie just outside the Plantation, and are situated within the field to its immediate NE. This field is owned by Mr. S. Kirkham of Brook Farm, Mayfield, and is managed by Mr. G. Kirkham of Newhaven Lodge Farm, Hartington. (Certain rather broken sections of earthwork here are not currently included within the scheduling.)

D) The earthwork then runs through Gibhill Plantation, formerly in the ownership of Mr. B. Woolley, but recently sold to Mr. S. Kirkham (see C).

E) Its westernmost scheduled section lies in a second field owned by Mr. S. Kirkham, and managed by Mr G. Kirkham (see C).

The earthwork's status as a scheduled monument gives all of these sections legal protection from disturbance or unlicensed metal detecting.

To date, there appears to have been only limited discussion with landowners / tenants about the management and conservation of sections A and B, and no discussion of sections C to E. (For example, neither the manager of Section B, Mr. Percival, nor the manager of sections C to E, Mr. Kirkham, were aware that a scheduled monument ran through this part of their land.)

Management of Section A

Although the now-expired Local Management Agreement between EH and the PDNPA (2.10.1.4) did not cover any of the linear earthwork, the draft Maintained Property Agreement which is due to replace it includes Section A (i.e. the section within the Arbor Low field).

Under the grazing agreement referred to above, the agricultural management of the field in which Section A lies becomes subject to the arrangements specified at 2.10.1.3.

Management of Section B

As indicated at 2.11.3.3, this part of the earthwork was subject to ploughing in the relatively recent past. However, as currently managed, no ploughing now takes place.

The land manager has entered into a National Park Authority Environmental Enhancement Scheme (EES) agreement relating to walling works, and an Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) agreement, managed by Natural England for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The EES runs from 1st January 2005 until 31st Dec. 2009, and the ELS is a 5 year scheme, beginning in 2007. Both schemes have cross-compliance implications for the field immediately south of the Arbor Low field.

Section B of the earthwork is not covered by the revised LMA (now MPA) Agreement.

Management of Sections C to E

Section C lies at the edge of a field used for grazing cattle.

Cattle gain regular access to the plantation in which Section D lies (see 2.11.3.3).

As indicated at 2.11.3.3, Section E was ploughed about 5 years ago. The field is used for silage and a little grazing, and the land manager does not intend to plough it again in the foreseeable future. He is currently considering an Entry Level Stewardship application and is very willing to talk to PDNPA / EH about the best way to manage the scheduled earthwork which runs through his land. As indicated above, until contacted as part of the research for this Conservation Plan, he was unaware of the monument's existence.

Sections C to E of the earthwork are not covered by the revised LMA Agreement, as currently drafted.

2.10.3.2 Condition and future management

The condition of different sections of the monument is described at 2.11.3. As indicated there, a detailed topographical survey of the entire length of the earthwork was carried out by English Heritage in late 2007. The implications of this survey for the future management of the linear earthwork are yet to be assessed.

2.10.4 Management liaison arrangements (all monuments)

LMA Review meetings

During the lifetime of the Local Management Agreement (1995 – 2005, extended to 2007), at least one meeting has taken place each year to review management progress. These day-long meetings aim to cover all of the four prehistoric Guardianship sites in the National Park¹, follow an agreed agenda, and are minuted. They deal with relevant issues such as public access, presentation, signage, interpretation and education, maintenance and repair, capital works and health and safety for the four sites.

The available file record shows that EH and PDNPA are always represented at these meetings, but that landowners / tenants (and other interested parties) are present only occasionally.

Interviews held with EH and PDNPA staff for this Conservation Plan indicate that time is always very short at these meetings. Not only do they cover several sites (including visits to as many sites as feasible) but agendas often require the presence of EH staff who have to travel from distant bases, thus placing a further constraint on time available for discussion and decision-taking.

Ranger liaison

The PDNPA Ranger Service makes regular visits to the site, and sends reports on monument condition and other issues as necessary, but a Ranger is not normally present at the LMA Review meetings described above. Ranger visits to the site enable informal contact between the PDNPA and the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm.

2.10.5 Former Solstice liaison meetings and current arrangements

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, liaison meetings were held to plan arrangements to cope with the relatively high numbers of visitors expected at the Summer Solstice. Participants included Arbor Low and Upper Oldhams Farm landowners / tenants, PDNPA staff (including the Ranger Service), and representatives of EH, the Police and the District Council.

These meetings have lapsed because Solstice celebrations are no longer seen as presenting any real problem, and numbers of Summer Solstice visitors are presently quite low.

Current arrangements are fairly low-key. The owners of Upper Oldhams Farm erect a height barrier at the end of the access track and make arrangements for additional parking if necessary. Campers (of which there have been very few in recent years) tend to camp well away from the monuments. The Ranger Service visits, provides litter bags if necessary and clears away inappropriate (e.g. non-natural) offerings from Arbor Low after the Solstice (L. Burrow, pers. comm).

¹ The prehistoric Guardianship sites comprise Arbor Low and Gib Hill, Nine Ladies stone circle (with Stanton Moor), Hob Hurst's House barrow and Wet Withens stone circle and barrow.

2.11 Monument condition

2.11.1 Arbor Low

2.11.1.1 At Risk status

In early 2007, English Heritage assessed the Arbor Low monument as at 'medium' risk, and in 'declining' condition. The principal threat was stated to be erosion by stock. In the light of repairs carried out for English Heritage in October / November 2007 (see 2.11.1.3) its status will be revised to 'medium risk / improving condition' (T.Allen, pers.comm).

2.11.1.2 Condition history: review of impacts and assessments, 1994 - 2006

Condition survey 1994

In August 1994, a condition survey of Arbor Low was carried out for English Heritage by the then Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust (Guilbert 1994a), followed by a similar survey of Gib Hill (Guilbert 1994b). The purpose of both surveys was to record the extent of erosion and any other damage and to provide a baseline for future conservation management under the impending Local Management Agreement between EH and PDNPA (described at 2.10.1.4).

The Arbor Low survey noted that erosion was limited to certain parts of the monument, with worn and bare patches concentrated largely on the barrow on the SE bank, and along the crest of the henge bank. On the barrow, foci for erosion were the hollows of old archaeological trenches (which people used as footpaths), and the bumpy summit, where visitors congregated. Along the top of the henge bank there was "a worn strip, with isolated bare eroding patches" and this was particularly evident on the eastern half. Erosion along the top of the western half of the henge was not so marked, but a worn footpath ascended its western bank on the approach from what was then a stile in the NW corner of the field.

In the henge ditch, there were only a few patches of erosion – principally on the inner scarp opposite the barrow (presumably because people used this as a route up onto the mound), and a smaller patch to the west of the causeway.

In the bottom of the eastern ditch of the henge was a modern fire-pit, about 1m x 0.5m in diameter.

In the central area enclosed by the henge, erosion was confined to two small patches at the inner end of the northern causeway, two narrow strips between stones close to the causeways, and an area adjacent to one the large cove stones. Guilbert noted largely grassed-over hollows adjacent to a number of other slabs.

He also recorded that turf had been cut away on the north side of one of the eastern orthostats. Guilbert replaced the pieces of turf, in the hope that they would re-establish.

He noted that erosion was developing around the EH information board positioned to the west of the northern entrance, probably caused by visitors and by stock (see 2.15.3.1).

Outside the southern bank of the henge, and close to its junction with the linear earthwork (the 'Avenue') he recorded a second modern fire-pit, approximately 1m in diameter.

Impacts and condition 1995 - 2006

Following the 1994 condition survey, erosion at Arbor Low presented increasing problems, principally as a result of grazing by cattle. In specific locations, visitors to the monument also continued to have some impact.

By 1999, erosion by cattle had been 'causing concern for some time', and discussions were held with the then tenant (Mr Warren) about a change in the stocking regime. Grant was not available to support this.

Damage by cattle was again reported in 2000 – in addition to damage by quad bikes¹. EH and PDNPA discussed the need for a contour and condition survey of both Arbor Low and Gib Hill, as a precursor to repairs.

¹The quad bikes were ridden by children from a landowner's farm, rather than by visitors to the monument.

In 2001 'very noticeable erosion' was reported by the PDNPA Ranger Service. (The need for ragwort control was also recorded, but by 2005 it was noted that this had been controlled by grazing sheep.)

In April 2002, PDNPA reported to EH that a series of erosion patches (probably sheep scrapes) were developing within Arbor Low, that there was continuing cattle-derived erosion (particularly on the inner face of the henge bank) and focal erosion adjacent to and between some of the circle stones (PDNPA to EH, 5.4.2002). The report also referred to the linear path (already recorded in 1994) which led from the stile NW of the monument, straight to and up over the henge bank. This had become more marked since the removal of the interpretive sign near the NW entrance.

Reports in 2002 referred to the loosening and uprooting of two of the Victorian boundary markers on the south side of the henge. The marker on the southern slope of the superimposed barrow had been replaced in its socket on a number of occasions, but continued to be moved, a second marker post (immediately west of the southern henge entrance) was chipped, and there was 'serious erosion' around some of the other boundary markers. This erosion – probably generated by stock – exposed the base of the posts and made them vulnerable to being pushed over or pulled out by people.

In September 2003, EH entered into a 20 year lease of the Arbor Low field, agreed with its owner, the Trustees of the Middleton Estate (see 2.10.1.2), thus enabling EH to exert more effective control. EH also drew up a grazing agreement for the same area with Mr B. Woolley (owner of the adjacent Gib Hill field), designed to reduce agricultural impact. As indicated at 2.10.1.3, EH is making arrangements with Mr Woolley for this agreement to be signed.

By April 2004, erosion at Arbor Low had worsened. A large area of erosion (about 3m x 2m) had developed on the NW-facing side of the barrow and on the henge bank below it, and there was "a considerable amount of material sliding down the slope" (PDNPA Ranger Service, 18.05.2004). It was reported that visitors were picking up loose stones and placing them at various points around the monument. In addition, the owner of Upper Oldhams Farm reported that an unnamed 'archaeologist' from the Buxton area had brought a group of students to the site and encouraged them to collect flints there – presumably from the loose material.

In December 2004, PDNPA produced a draft specification for recording, mitigation works and monitoring at Arbor Low and Gib Hill. This identified erosion on the ditch and bank sides as "the most serious damage to the fabric of the monument", with considerable depth of erosion on the NW face of the barrow and the henge bank below it (PDNPA 2004:3). Other high and medium priority areas were identified at various points on the inner face of the henge bank, and along the desire line over the western henge bank.



Ruined drystone wall along NE boundary of Arbor Low field, Summer 2008. (Photograph: D. Angel)

Four of the gritstone marker posts were identified as high priority for erosion repair / resetting, and a fifth as medium priority.

With a few exceptions, most of the erosion around the circuit of the henge bank was evaluated as minor and apparently stable, and therefore low priority.

Further plans included projected repair of the drystone walls around the Arbor Low field, in order to render them stockproof, and prevent cattle from entering. (The wall along the NE boundary of the field is in a particularly ruinous condition.) In 2002 / 2003, post and wire fencing was erected around the whole field as a temporary expedient. The possibility of grant aid towards rebuilding of the walls (phased if necessary) was discussed by EH and PDNPA in 2005 and 2006, but funding for these repairs has not yet been identified.

2.11.1.3 Work carried out in 2007 and current condition

As described at 2.16.7, in early 2007 ten metres of crushed limestone path were laid east of the NW gate into the Arbor Low field. This is intended to 'lead' visitors towards the entrance into the henge, and reduce the number of people who walk up and over the western henge bank. At the same time, crushed limestone was laid around the newly-installed pedestrian gates (2.16.9), to reduce erosion here.

Short length of crushed limestone path east of the NW gate into Arbor Low field: designed to lead visitors towards the NW entrance through the henge bank. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

In October and November 2007, repair works were carried out at Arbor Low by Derwent Treescapes Ltd. (for English Heritage). These followed the specification prepared by PDNPA in December 2004, and subsequently updated.

At Arbor Low itself, all eroded areas identified as 'high' and 'medium' priority were repaired. Four boundary markers were re-set: pins were set into the bottom of the posts with resin, and these were dropped into the natural clay with sufficient concrete to prevent tipping and to restore the correct height in relation to ground level. Lost soil was replaced and the ground re-turfed.

To enable re-turfing of eroded areas, turf was removed from outside the scheduled area, at locations set by English Heritage.

Prior to this work, rapid recording of erosion and other damage was undertaken by staff from EH and PDNPA, with the recording archive being retained by English Heritage.

Area of erosion close to one of the south-western orthostats, Arbor Low stone circle, November 2007. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

In November 2007, a full topographical survey of Arbor Low, Gib Hill, the Avenue and surrounding land was undertaken by English Heritage (see 2.3.4, and Newsome and Riley, in prep.). The survey will provide a baseline for measuring future change.

As at April 2008, the Arbor Low monument appears to be in good condition. A number of eroded areas have been repaired and other damage made good, as described above. In February 2008, EH's local grounds maintenance contractor began to make monthly visits to check on the progress of erosion repairs (R. Bain, pers.comm). The worn path along the top of the henge bank is largely greening over, although a few eroded areas remain here: in particular, an eroded patch beside the path on the inward-facing summit of the northern henge bank, and the steep eroded path down the northern side of the south-eastern barrow.



Patches of erosion persist close to certain orthostats (e.g. in the south-western area of the circle).

The lack of a water supply in the Arbor Low field has meant that the gate between this and the Gib Hill field has been left open to enable sheep to use the water supply at the lower end of the latter field. Cattle grazing in the Gib Hill field between May and November have thus been able to get access to Arbor Low, with consequent implications for monument condition, especially in wet weather. However, in April 2008, English Heritage agreed to fund a water bowser, to be filled by the tenant grazier and placed in the Arbor Low field, together with a trough. This will enable the gate between the two fields to be kept closed, and cattle to be excluded.

2.11.1.4 Impact of Solstice and other celebrations

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was some concern about the impact of Solstice visitors – particularly campers – on the monument, although little visible damage occurred. Ranger Service reports from recent years indicate that the site has been left clean and undisturbed. Offerings are left in the circle all through the year, particularly on or near the cove stones, but, as long as they are not buried in the ground (see below) have no physical impact. Ephemeral artwork (for example patterns made in flour) has a brief visual impact, but no lasting effect.

There are however, regular physical interventions which (although small-scale to date) have the potential to do more damage. For example, the regular use of a fire pit south of the henge (re-turfed in 2007, but replaced with a re-cut pit closer to the henge in early 2008), the loosening or removal of turf from around circle stones, the planting of bulbs near the cove, and the practice of using stones from eroded areas on the site to create patterns and symbols. It is hoped that the very recent erosion repairs may make loose stone less accessible – although



Newly-dug firepit south of henge bank, shortly after June 2008 Solstice. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

at February 2008, clusters of stones had been placed on and against orthostats opposite the NW and SSE henge entrances, and there is a large cache of such stones under one of the large western orthostats. In the near future, English Heritage is to place a small sign on the gate into the Arbor Low field, which will ask people to respect the monument, and not to move stones, disturb the earth or leave anything on the site. The practical impact of such a sign has yet to be established.

J. Barnatt (pers. comm.) notes that, over the course of numerous visits during the last 20 to 30 years, he has noticed a marked increase in offerings (e.g. crystals, coins and flowers) left on or near the stones or within the entrances. In some cases he has also noticed disturbance of the turf, and suggests that there may now be quite an accumulation of buried objects at the site.

2.11.2 Gib Hill

2.11.2.1 'At Risk' status

In early 2007, English Heritage described Gib Hill as at 'medium' risk, and in 'declining' condition. The principal threat was stated to be erosion by stock. In January 2008 an EH representative stated that its status will be revised to 'medium risk / improving condition' (T. Allen, pers. comm).

2.11.2.2 Condition history: impacts and assessments 1994 – 2006

Condition survey 1994

As noted above, Gib Hill was surveyed for English Heritage by Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust in August 1994 (Guilbert 1994b), prior to the start of the 1995 Local Management Agreement between EH and PDNPA (2.10.1.4).

The survey recorded that erosion was restricted to four localised patches on the southern side of the mound.

The northernmost of these patches lay some way up the flank of the mound, and appeared to Guilbert to be the result of 'human interference'. It measured just under 2m by 2m, and exposed what looked like stratified layers of material (dolomitised limestone and clay, some of it burnt). Steel nails were inserted at specified positions to facilitate more detailed recording prior to repair.

At the SSW foot of the mound Guilbert recorded a steep-sided, flat-bottomed hole, about 1m in diameter: this was the site of one of the Victorian boundary markers, which appeared to have been recently removed. (As noted below, it was later restored to the site.) Guilbert observed reddened clay among the earth revealed by the hole.

A further erosion patch was developing around the foot of an English Heritage information panel, which was propped against another of the Victorian boundary markers about 12m to the east.

A fourth area of erosion was recorded close to the NE corner of a large limestone slab at the southern foot of the mound.

Overall, Guilbert (1994b: 5) recorded "lush turf cover" and "remarkably little active erosion" at Gib Hill. However, he noted that the ground was broken by "many small divots" especially on the steeper slopes, which he assumed to be caused by cattle.

Impacts and condition 1995 – 2006

Eighteen months or so after the T&PAT survey, the condition of Gib Hill deteriorated. In Spring 1996, a tractor was driven up onto the mound from the northern side, possibly several times. The damage done by this was then exacerbated by young cattle congregating on top of the mound. In addition, the new landowner also ploughed the ground between the monument and the plantation to its south, and (unknowingly) encroached on the scheduled area, ploughing over the southern ditch almost to the base of the barrow.

At around the same time, the Victorian boundary marker, missing from the SSW foot of the monument, was relocated and returned to the hollow from which it had been removed.

As indicated at 2.10.2.3, in 1997, following discussion of remedial measures between PDNPA and the landowner, Mr Woolley, the latter erected a temporary electric fence (with an access stile) around the monument so that inappropriate stock could be excluded and erosion scars could heal. The fence was also used to define the scheduled area. For some reason, however, its posts were repeatedly broken and the fence was thus removed.

In January 1997, PDNPA reported that the barrow was becoming quite severely eroded in parts, and proposed a survey to map areas of erosion and stressed vegetation. They indicated that this should be accompanied by archaeological recording, including detailed plans of those areas where the stone body of the barrow was exposed. In addition, the Victorian boundary marker to the SSW of the monument should be re-set, and the boundary marker to the south (which had broken at ground level) should be repaired.

In December 1997, a five-year Management Agreement covering Gib Hill was agreed between the landowner and English Heritage. A fence (with two stiles and a gate) was erected around the monument, and it was agreed with Mr Woolley that a limited number of sheep would be allowed within the fence, to graze off the grass cover and prevent rank grass and scrub from developing. (For further details on this Agreement and its renewal in 2003, see 2.10.2.3.)

However, reports in 1998, August 1999 and August 2001 indicated that cattle continued to gain access to the monument.

In May 2000 a PDNPA Ranger noted that the erosion scar on the NW side of the barrow was still prominent and did not seem to be healing. In addition, the boundary post to the SSW was out of the ground, and the 'poaching scar' around it had deepened.

By April 2002, PDNPA reported that the monument appeared to be recovering, but there remained areas which should be repaired with topsoil and turf (followed by pinning). This work should be preceded by recording and would need time to re-establish. In addition to the broad scar down the NW-facing side, a linear erosion scar was developing from the north-eastern stile up onto the top of the barrow, and there was focal erosion outside that stile and outside the gate.

In December 2004 PDNPA produced a draft specification for recording, mitigation works and monitoring at Arbor Low and Gib Hill. This stated that the extensive area of erosion on the NW side of the mound had begun to vegetate over, but bare ground was still visible and continued to be damaged by people descending from the top of the monument to the north-western stile. The document identified various eroded areas of medium priority for repair, including the NW-facing bank, and other west, south-west and south-facing zones. The SSW boundary marker was still out of the ground.

2.11.2.3 Work done in 2007, and current condition

In late 2007, the SSW boundary marker was re-set, as part of a programme of work undertaken by Derwent Treescapes Ltd. for English Heritage (see method described at 2.11.1.3). Although the specification to the contractor did not require any reinstatement of the area around the marker, vegetation is beginning to re-establish itself here.

No major erosion repairs were carried out on the NW side of the barrow, although a small part of the area appears to have been re-turfed. (It should be noted that PDNPA consider full reinstatement of the erosion scar here to be advisable.)

There is focal erosion on the outer side of both stiles and the field gate through the temporary fence, and this is particularly obvious at the NE stile. These areas become muddy in wet weather.

Desire lines are still evident between the stiles and the top of the barrow. In particular, the position of the north-western stile encourages the formation of a route from the barrow summit through the damaged ground on the north-western face of the monument.

As indicated at 2.10.2.3, no decision has yet been taken on whether to renew the Section 17 Management Agreement for Gib Hill, which lapsed in January 2008.



Gritstone boundary marker at SSW foot of Gib Hill. Taken February 2008, 3 months after pillar re-set. (Photograph: S. McGuire)



SSW boundary marker at Gib Hill, showing extent of re-vegetation in June 2008. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

Top left. Erosion around sheep creep through Gib Hill fence, January 2008. (Photograph: S. McGuire)



Top right. Erosion around outer side of NE stile through Gib Hill fence, and desire line from stile to top of barrow, October 2007. (Photograph: S. McGuire)



Bottom left. Erosion around outer side of NW stile through Gib Hill fence, February 2008. (Photograph: S. McGuire)



Bottom right. Desire line from summit of Gib Hill, down through eroded area on NW side of barrow, towards NW stile. February 2008. (Photograph: S. McGuire)



2.11.3 Linear earthwork (the 'Avenue')

2.11.3.1 Introduction

The linear earthwork known as the 'Avenue' passes through five different landholdings, designated A to E (summarised here and outlined in more detail at 2.10.3.1 and at Figure A11).

- A) The northernmost stretch of the earthwork lies in the Arbor Low field. As indicated at 2.10.1.3, an agreement covering grazing rights and specifying management conditions in this field has been drawn up between EH and the grazing tenant, Mr Woolley, and is due to be signed.
- B) To the immediate south of the Arbor Low field, a short stretch of the earthwork lies in land managed by Mr C. Percival of Calling Low Farm.
- C) Broken sections of the earthwork (not all of them currently scheduled) lie in the field to the immediate NE of Gibhill Plantation. This field is managed by Mr. G. Kirkham of Newhaven Lodge Farm.
- D) The earthwork then runs through Gibhill Plantation, now owned by Mr. Kirkham.
- E) Its westernmost scheduled section lies in a second field owned by Mr. Kirkham.

2.11.3.2 Condition survey 1994

No condition survey specifically dedicated to the 'Avenue' has taken place. However, in the course of the 1994 T&PAT condition survey of Arbor Low (2.11.1.2), Guilbert noted that the linear earthwork appeared to be suffering no erosion in the fields under grass "through which it passes to the south of Arbor Low and of Gib Hill" (Guilbert 1994a:5). This remark

would appear to refer not only to sections A and B of the earthwork in the pasture fields immediately south of Arbor Low (although see comments on section B below), but to section E in the Kirkhams' field immediately south of Gib Hill (and west of the Plantation), thus suggesting that the western stretch of the earthwork survived relatively uneroded until 1994, the year in which it was first scheduled (3.1.3).

Guilbert recorded that, where the earthwork lay within Gibhill Plantation (i.e. section D), a narrow band along the SE side of the Plantation's NW wall had been regularly churned up by cattle "to the point where the earthwork can scarcely be regarded as surviving ... and probably should not therefore be seen as still eroding" (ibid: 5,6). It is evident from inspection in February 2008 that stock still use this route through the bank (see below).

2.11.3.3 Impacts and condition 1995 – 2008

Section B

The contrasting condition of the grassland in the Arbor Low field compared with that in the Calling Low Farm field to its immediate south indicates that the latter has been 'improved' in the relatively recent past, and in 1996 PDNPA was told by the former tenant that the field was ploughed for re-seeding every 3 to 5 years. However, the current land manager, Mr. Percival, affirms that this land is no longer ploughed (see 2.10.3.1 for agri-environment schemes which apply to Mr. Percival's land). Section B of the earthwork is still visible in the field, but its contours are now far smoother than the remains which survive in the henge field to its north.

Section D

It is clear from freshly trampled areas close to the NW wall that cattle continue to gain access to Gibhill Plantation, taking the same route through the earthwork that Guilbert noted in 1994 – although the November 2007 topographical survey (Newsome and Riley, in prep.) shows that, despite Guilbert's fears, it has not been entirely destroyed here. A visual check from outside the Plantation boundary wall in February 2008 suggested that there is no recent cattle damage to other areas of the earthwork, although a fuller inspection is needed.

Section E

The 2007 EH survey shows that, despite being ploughed approximately 5 years ago (G. Kirkham, pers. comm.), this final western section of the earthwork still survives, extending to a point approximately half-way across the field.

2.11.4 Arbor Low field and Gib Hill field: impact of land use

The entire extent of these fields is considered to be of potential archaeological interest, given the visible monuments that they contain and the unusually high level of prehistoric material recovered from adjacent land. Both are currently grazed.

In the case of the Arbor Low field, there is nothing on the PDNPA file record which suggests that there has been any ploughing here since the mid 1970s. No research has been done into the ploughing regime prior to this date.

The 20th century photographic record (e.g. images at www.picturethepast.org.uk) shows that the field has been grazed by cattle since the very early 1900s – and presumably long before. This will have had a gradually erosive impact on any earthwork features within the field.

In the case of the Gib Hill field, the southern section between the monument and the Plantation was ploughed in Spring 1996 (see 2.11.2.2). The PDNPA file record does not refer to any other ploughing in this field between the mid 1970s and 1996, and there has been no subsequent ploughing.

It can be assumed that the field has been used to graze cattle for many years.

In April 1996, PDNPA discussed with the landowner (Mr. Woolley) the potential archaeological interest of the quarried area adjacent to Gib Hill, not all of which is scheduled (PDNPA file PR.3897, 3 May 1996). He agreed that, if his management of this area was likely to change, he would contact PDNPA to see what implications any such change would have for archaeological interest in that area.

2.12 Who visits Arbor Low and how do they respond to the site?



Visitors on Arbor Low henge bank, Summer 2008.
(Photograph: D. Angel)

2.12.1 Introduction

As some of the most significant, visually appealing and accessible prehistoric monuments in the National Park and the wider region, Arbor Low and Gib Hill receive a regular flow of general visitors, and form a popular destination for student field trips (not limited to archaeological study) and visits by archaeological / historical societies. Arbor Low, in particular, attracts visits from people who find a range of modern spiritual meanings in prehistoric stone circles. (It is worth bearing in mind that there is probably a great deal of overlap between these rather crudely-defined visitor categories.)

The visitor analysis in section 2.12.3 (below) is largely based on the only available visitor survey of the monuments (undertaken 12 years ago), and uses this to examine the general visitor profile, and people's responses to the site, while 2.12.4 summarises the views of the (necessarily small) group of people interviewed in the course of research for the 2008 Conservation Plan. Section 2.12.5 focuses on visitors who come for what can broadly be defined as spiritual reasons. The current range of educational visits – and the potential to expand the learning and outreach potential of the monuments – are analysed separately at 2.13. Community involvement is discussed at 2.14.

2.12.2 Visitor numbers

The number of visitors to Arbor Low and Gib Hill is not known, although the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm estimate that approximately 5000 people visit each year, and that this number remains fairly steady. A student visitor survey over a 25 day period in April 1996 (see below) logged visits by 749 people. However, it should be borne in mind that the survey took place over the Easter holidays, when higher than normal visitor numbers might be expected.

The busiest day (and night) of the year is usually the Summer Solstice on June 21st or 22nd, although visitor numbers are much lower than in the past. The owners of Upper Oldhams Farm estimate that in recent years there have been 50 – 200 people at Arbor Low over these two days, most of them being day visitors rather than campers. More generally, Sunday afternoons tend to be the most popular time (N. Dick, pers. comm).

An English Heritage representative expressed the view that the present number of visitors was well within the 'carrying capacity' of the monuments, but that it would be useful to know precise numbers (J. Humble, pers. comm). A visitor-counter was installed at the entrance to the Arbor Low field in November 2007. Following theft of one of its component parts, it is due for repair, but should eventually enable an assessment of visitor numbers (A. Baker, pers. comm.).

2.12.3 Visitor survey 1996

GNVQ¹ students from Buxton Community School conducted a very useful visitor survey at Arbor Low and Gib Hill from 2nd to 26th April 1996 (Booth et al 1996). Although this is now 12 years old, it remains the only detailed visitor analysis available for the site, and provides an interesting insight into why people come here and what they make of the experience.

The Buxton group analysed responses from a total of 749 visitors. The following summary of their findings emphasises those which are most relevant to this Conservation Plan.

Group composition

Most people visited in family groups (63%) and what the survey called 'friendship groups' (39%). The figures indicate that there was some overlap between these two categories. The authors point out that, as the survey was carried out over the Easter period, this probably accounts – at least in part – for the high proportion of family groups.

Age range

56% of visitors were between 25 and 59 years old (admittedly rather a broad category). 22% were under 16, and only 9% were over 60.

How did people hear about the site?

The most common way that people had found out about the site was from maps or road atlases (30% gave this as their answer). 21% said that their information came from 'books' (e.g. guides or walking books), while 17% had found out about it from other family members.

Was their visit to Arbor Low and Gib Hill the main purpose of their outing that day?

For a substantial proportion (77%) of visitors, this was not the case. People specified a very wide range of other places which they were seeing that day. No particular destinations really stand out, although 5% were also visiting the Nine Ladies stone circle on Stanton Moor, and for 7% the visit was just part of a 'general tour of the area' with no particular goal. 8% had included the site in a linear or circular walk.

First-time visitors?

A significant majority (70%) were visiting Arbor Low and Gib Hill for the first time.

Did visitors live in the Peak District or were they on holiday here?

The majority of people came from outside the Peak District, 44% visiting the area for the day, and about the same proportion spending a longer holiday there. Just over 11% were Peak District residents.

How did they reach the site?

The vast majority (87%) came by car, and a further 6% by coach. Only 6% came on foot. (This result does not tally with the 8% who said they were visiting the site as part of a linear or circular walk, but presumably the discrepancy results from how people interpret a question – or an answer.) It should be noted that the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm estimate that there are now approximately 10 to 15 coach visits to the site per year.

How long did they stay?

Quite a high proportion of people (60%) spent between 15 and 30 minutes at the site. A further 31% spent up to an hour there. 7% spent even longer – and only a handful of visitors admitted to spending less than 15 minutes.

Why did they come?

Unfortunately, it is impossible to get any real sense of the reasons why people came, as the questionnaire offered them a rather narrow choice between 'personal interest', 'children's wants' and 'other'. Most people (78%) chose the rather un-revealing 'personal interest'

¹ General National Vocational Qualification

option – which did not offer them much scope to say what had drawn them to the site. The ‘other’ category produced answers such as: ‘to see what it was like’; ‘nearby and saw it on a map’; ‘thought there might be a cup of tea’; ‘nice view, good for kites’; ‘to have a picnic’, and ‘to take photographs’.

However, the responses to the question below can perhaps be used to get a better idea of people’s motivation.

What did they like about the site?

There were a very wide range of answers to the open question, ‘What did you like about Arbor Low?’. The survey authors attempted to group more than 300 positive comments into categories: quite a tricky task.

39% of the responses related to what the survey group called ‘atmosphere’. Words and phrases used included ‘contemplative, solitude, seclusion, peace and tranquillity (these two terms were particularly emphasised by the response group), wildness, emptiness, bleakness, isolation, room to think and appreciate, mystery, wonder, sense of sacredness, spiritual feel, spiritual vibration, freedom for communion with Earth’s energy’.

19% of responses focused on ‘a sense of history / pre-history, antiquity, links with the past’.

14% referred to the way the site was managed and presented: ‘good information’ (n.b. this was 1996); ‘good car park’; natural (in the sense of no facilities); ‘unspoilt’, ‘uncommercialised’, ‘no tourist trappings’, ‘undeveloped’.

13% referred to what the survey authors termed the ‘environment’: ‘sun, fresh air, bracing winds, skylarks, first wheatear of the year, views (spectacular, beautiful, panoramic, commanding)’.

A further 10% focused on the physical structure of the henge: its ‘high state of preservation’ and ‘relative completeness’.

Other comments were about accessibility, space, and ‘being able to run about’.

What did they dislike?

The survey authors noted that 35% of the visitor group either said that there was nothing to complain about, or did not enter a response to this question.

Of those who replied, 20% focused on what they saw as desecration of the monument, specifying ‘symbols, defaced banks, New Age graffiti, crocus plants with paint circling them, boiled eggs with mystic symbols, signs of pagan worship, blacker rituals (sic), zodiac signs, mess of chalk drawings, senseless vandalism, witches’ nonsense, cut flowers on the bank’.

A further 6% of comments refer to other forms of behaviour which were seen as undesirable: ‘not showing the monument the respect it deserves, backpackers’ tents, campers with radio, campfire, snogging by stones for too long’.

22% specified a range of factors relating to the farm / farming, mess and weather. These are not divided any further by the study authors, so it is not possible to ‘weight’ them, but complaints included comments on the then state of the cowshed, tractor noise, the smell of the farmyard, cow dung, used condoms, litter, ploughing next to Gib Hill and cold, wind, lack of sun, gales and rain! In all, rather a mixed bag.

Very small numbers of people mentioned a wide range of other ‘dislikes’ including ‘dodgy signposting on a foggy day’, ‘disappointing when billed as Stonehenge of the North’ and ‘stones not upright’.

How could visitors’ experience of the site be improved?

Responses to this were again very wide-ranging, and the survey authors attempted to group them in broad categories.

They noted that “the most emphatic plea communicated to us was that the henge monument and the site it is on should remain untouched” (Booth et al 1996: 29). 50 people (i.e. a quarter of those in this comment group) expressed views such as ‘leave the site alone’,

'please no improvement – no wretched plastic history or theme approach, no toilet blocks, no snack bars, just fine as it is', 'please don't spoil it', 'there's enough commercial crap around as it is', 'best left in its virtually natural state', 'do not make it like the Cotswolds'.

The largest group of responses (72 in all, thus 36% of those in this comment group), referred to the need for more or better information (e.g. 'nominally-priced leaflet, 'where did the stones come from?', 'excavation history', 'similar sites in other areas: theories about why were they built').

Other responses ranged over a very wide spread of topics, with few (or just one) in each category. The included the need for a rubbish bin by the farm, 'tidy up derelict farm buildings', build toilets / don't build toilets, 'a high tower to view from', 'easier access for those with climbing difficulties', 'more warning that it is a hard walk with stiles', 'the access road could be smoother', better signage needed (from various directions), 'make the stones stand up', ban all games, 'improve the weather'.

2.12.4 Responses to the site by Conservation Plan consultation group

Funding and time constraints governing the production of this report ruled out a statistically viable survey of current responses to the monument. However, it is worth noting that PDNPA and EH staff, and others interviewed in the course of producing the Conservation Plan, expressed views which chime fairly well with much of what was said by the majority of those interviewed in 1996.

For example, consultees in 2007/2008 expressed the view that the lonely, quiet, 'remote', 'evocative' atmosphere of the monuments was a major part of their appeal: 'don't make the monuments too tidy', 'their rough-and-readiness is part of the attraction'. They felt that the open quality of the site was important: the monuments should be 'left uncluttered', 'almost wild'; 'they don't need over-management'.

One landowner expressed the view that a big increase in visitor numbers would spoil the monuments' atmosphere, and that there should not be 'too much advertising'.

Given the background of many of those interviewed, it is not surprising that their responses emphasised the archaeological and landscape interest of the monuments themselves.

Part of the site's overall impact was seen to derive from the combination of so many different elements in one monument complex. Some consultees felt that scale of the monuments was important too – especially the size of the henge banks when compared with other monuments in the Peak District. From an English Heritage perspective, the site was visually very impressive when compared with the majority of prehistoric earthworks visitors could see in the East Midlands.

People spoke of the appeal exerted by the 'astonishing longevity of respect for this location' and of what the earthworks expressed about past human behaviour and the relationship of people to landscape and sky. They observed that this feels like 'a special place'; it has 'a great sense of place'.

To many of the 2007/2008 interviewees, Arbor Low's 'subtlety of location' was fascinating: the way that the henge's position on a false crest allowed certain views but excluded others. They pointed out that even now, there was an 'anticipatory quality' to the approach to the monuments: you see them on the skyline, and they seem to get bigger as you approach.

More generally, the wide views which both monuments offered – and their open site – were very important, as was the view they offered of other prehistoric monuments on surrounding hilltops. From Gib Hill, 'every hill seemed to have a barrow on it'.

One major difference when compared to at least some of the 1996 visitor group was a 'live and let live' attitude towards various manifestations of modern spiritual interest in the monuments (and particularly Arbor Low). At least one of those interviewed said that the wide range of visitors – and their various views – were an important aspect of what made the site interesting. Others felt that, as long as offerings and simple ceremonies did not damage the monuments or their setting, or have a negative impact on other visitors'

experience of the site, then it did not matter what people chose to do there. (However, it is worth noting that, in 1996 at least, quite a high proportion of visitors did object to offerings, symbols and so on.)

In addition, most of the 2007/2008 consultee group seemed broadly happy with the approach through the farmyard (although silage run-off could be a problem). They felt that its rural, rough-and-ready quality was appropriate to the site.

Visitors at Arbor Low stone circle and cove, Summer 2008. (Photograph: D. Angel)



Comments from this group on issues like signage, access, interpretation and other aspects of site management have been incorporated into the main body of this report.

2.12.5 Modern spiritual engagement with Arbor Low

Many people visit prehistoric stone circles and henges because they feel a sense of spiritual engagement with these places. This engagement can take a very wide range of forms – analysed for example in various studies by Bender (see e.g. Bender 1998) and by Blain and Wallis (see www.sacredsites.org.uk), although the latter focus largely on consciously ‘pagan’ engagement with monuments.

This phenomenon is far from new. People have probably considered these sites to be sacred in some way ever since they were built. The placing of offerings and burials in prehistoric barrows in the Romano-British and Anglian periods is very well documented. Some of the legends (often featuring fairies, maidens, pagan gods and the devil) which still attach to stone circles, standing stones and barrows, may have a very ancient origin.

The modern belief that such sites continue to possess sacred or magic properties runs back through the 20th and into the 19th century – a belief reflected in the continuing interest in the writings of Alfred Watkins on ley lines and associated phenomena (see for example Watkins 1925)¹. At Arbor Low itself, a ceremony was held in 1929 by robed members of the ‘Bardic Circle of the Imperishable Sacred Land’, whose leader, Ralph de Tunstall Sneyd, had a close interest in Druidism and Arthurian legend.

There are echoes here of explicitly Christian gatherings and services held at the stone circle in the 1830s and 1840s. A new account of the life of the 19th century Primitive Methodist, Joseph Wood, records that the Primitive Methodists of Monyash “exploited [the monument’s] spiritual and eloquent associations in the name of their Lord Jesus Christ with their whole day of open air praying and preaching at Arbor Low. Other Primitive Methodists would flock there from miles around, together with people who went out of curiosity, ripe for religious conversion” (Pape 2008). Wood, who attended these meetings in the 1840s, later recalled the scene at Arbor Low: “the three preaching stands forming a triangle within the ring, a praying host in the centre to which penitents might be led from any of the stands, various conveyances at the outside with horses tied to the wheels and feeding from a bag of hay or grass” (Wood 1897:30)². (These ‘camp meetings’ were a hallmark of the Primitive Methodists: one of the very first such open-air meetings, in 1807, was held not far away, on the Staffordshire / Cheshire border at Mow Cop.)

¹ Powell’s ‘A Dance to the Music of Time’ provides a fictional reflection of the persistence of similar ways of thinking from well before the 1st World War (Powell 1951 - 1975).

² The heyday of such meetings was the first half of the 19th century (R. Pape, pers. comm.). Marsden (2007:57) refers to a Primitive Methodist meeting at Arbor Low on 23 June 1839, at which Thomas Bateman may have been present.

The most obvious modern manifestation of spiritual engagement with Arbor Low is the number of people who make a point of visiting at Solstices – particularly the Summer Solstice – and also at Equinoxes. PDNPA file records indicate that about 300 people came for the June Solstice in 1988. In 1989, there were about 500, half of whom camped at the site. Smaller numbers were recorded through the 1990s, although there were about 400 there in 1999. The most recent record which we have been able to find refers to 20 tents on site (but outside the monument) in 2003, and the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm estimate that there are now rarely more than 6 or 7 tents at Solstices. The PDNPA Ranger Service agrees that Solstice visitors have decreased in number over recent years.

It is clear to anyone who spends time at Arbor Low that people come here all through the year for contemplation, to leave offerings, cards, flowers and comments, and to carry out ceremonies which have special meaning – perhaps just to an individual or to a larger group. These include formal or quasi-formal ceremonies such as ‘handfasting’, and the spreading of ashes. The owners of Upper Oldhams Farm have noted the recent use of the circle by a Sikh wedding party, and a PDNPA file record from the 1980s refers – rather obscurely – to ‘Cypriot weddings’ being held there. It would be good to explore what Arbor Low signifies for participants in such celebrations and commemorations.

A number of individuals or groups come to the site to investigate what might be termed ‘physical mysteries’ – ley lines, buried water, energy lines etc. Other ‘regulars’ at the site include the Matlock branch of the UFO Society of Great Britain, who use the circle as a base from which to observe the position of objects in the sky. A costumed Arthurian group also visits regularly – perhaps continuing in the tradition of Ralph de Tunstall Sneyd.

2.13 Education and outreach: current site use and future potential

2.13.1 Introduction

Sections 2.13.2 to 2.13.4 below outline previous English Heritage and PDNPA education and outreach initiatives relating to Arbor Low and Gib Hill, and some current problems which hamper the development of future projects. Section 2.13.5 describes the range of ways in which schools, universities and others have made use of the site in recent years, and 2.13.6 and 2.13.7 look at the potential for enhancing students’ and others’ experience of the monuments.

2.13.2 English Heritage

In 1996, English Heritage (EH) produced an Arbor Low information sheet aimed at teachers. This gave a brief description of the circle and henge (but not Gib Hill) and guidance on the ways the site could be used – for example in History, Geography (including Conservation) and Maths.

However, EH’s education manager for the East and West Midlands (consulted as part of the research for this Conservation Plan) states that their education service does not now focus on Arbor Low and Gib Hill. Small sites such as this, for which there is no EH entrance fee, do not form part of their priority programme (K.Whitworth, pers. comm.) She also noted that, as there is no need for schools which do use the site to go via English Heritage to book a visit, she has few records concerning actual educational use.

2.13.3 PDNPA: National Park Learning Service

In the past, educational programmes offered by the National Park Authority’s educational base at Losehill Hall included material on archaeological sites such as Arbor Low and Gib Hill. Some years ago, both sites were included in Losehill Hall’s Environmental Education Newsletter, aimed at school staff. Until very recently, they also figured in a weekend course on ‘Archaeology in the Peak District’, delivered by staff from the PDNPA’s Cultural Heritage Team.

However, the sites are not now included in educational material or courses produced by the National Park Learning Service. The Education Visits Manager (consulted as part of the

research for this Conservation Plan) expressed the view that this was partly due to the difficulty schools have in building visits to archaeological sites into the school curriculum. She said that the main demand from teachers visiting the Park is for material relevant to topics difficult to study elsewhere (e.g. topics such as river studies and landscape management which fit within the Science and Geography curriculum). The Learning Service strategy is to “match customer demand against National Park messages” (L. Ballard, pers.comm.).

She was interested to learn that school groups were in fact visiting Arbor Low and Gib Hill, and would welcome information on these visits. She emphasised the important role played by enthusiastic teachers who make the most of what the National Park has to offer – including its rich and varied cultural heritage.

She observed that, if funding could be obtained, she would welcome the opportunity to produce innovative educational material, as part of a pilot scheme for future educational use of sites such as Arbor Low and Gib Hill.

2.13.4 PDNPA Ranger Service / Parsley Hay centre: potential for outreach initiatives

For the reasons discussed below, the Area Ranger with responsibility for Arbor Low and Gib Hill does not currently use the site for educational purposes. However, she has expressed the view that, if certain improvements could be funded (e.g. a wet weather shelter and toilets, as discussed at 2.13.6) it would be a ‘brilliant’ site for initiatives focused on both cultural heritage and the environment (L. Burrow, pers. comm).

Without a wet weather shelter, however, she feels that the site is too exposed for use by school groups. She also noted the problems involved in fitting prehistory into the curriculum – although it can be done, and she has achieved this with some of the groups with whom she is involved. (Also see, for example, work done with schools at Gardom’s Edge, described in Dymond 1998.)

She does not include the site in Ranger-led guided walks, as all routes to Arbor Low / Gib Hill involve a certain amount of road walking, and would be longer than 5 miles: a distance unsuitable for the kind of audiences she currently aims to attract.

In 2007, a ‘guided cycle ride’ was offered by the Parsley Hay centre, in liaison with the Ranger Service. There was insufficient take-up for this (perhaps partly to do with the way it was advertised), but the initiative may be tried again (C. Hardy, pers. comm.). As indicated at 2.15.3.2, the PDNPA guide to Arbor Low and Gib Hill is on sale at the Parsley Hay centre, and the centre manager feels that a leaflet would also be useful. The Area Ranger has suggested that there might be scope for a small permanent exhibition at Parsley Hay, focused on the monuments and their setting.

2.13.5 Current site use by schools, universities and others

2.13.5.1 Introduction

A list of schools, colleges and universities which have recently brought student groups to Arbor Low and Gib Hill (and have pre-notified Upper Oldhams Farm) was kindly provided by Mrs Nicola Dick.

As part of research for this Conservation Plan, contact has been made with staff at these institutions (and with other tutors who do not pre-notify the Farm), in order to find out about the ways in which they and their students use the site, and their ideas on future use.

It should be borne in mind that, as there is no requirement to notify PDNPA, English Heritage or the Farm, it is impossible to give an accurate picture of the number and nature of educational / outreach visits. These are clearly more numerous than indicated below.

2.13.5.2 Parking and other arrangements

Coaches park in the lay-by opposite the end of the access track, as there is no room for large vehicles to turn on the track itself. For those groups which have made advance contact with

the Farm, a variable charge is made as part of the overall arrangements covering charging for access along the private road (N. Dick, pers. comm). It is understood that leaders of other groups ask students to put money into the honesty box, as requested.

2.13.5.3 Primary

Youlgrave Primary School: 'Other Stones – Other Meanings'

In 2003 / 2004, pupils from Youlgrave Church of England Primary School visited Arbor Low and Gib Hill as part of an imaginative project called 'Other Stones – Other Meanings', an 'exploration of the ancient stones of Middleton and Smerrill'. This was supported by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, and formed a part of the community initiative 'Sites of Meaning', described at 2.14.

The children visited Arbor Low, Gib Hill and a range of more recent sites with PDNPA archaeologist Alice Ullathorne and writer David Fine. They took with them notepads, cameras and questions (the latter prompting thoughts about the sites they were visiting and what it might have been like to live in the past). Returning to school, they worked with David Fine to produce poems and other work inspired by what they had seen. Their poems formed the basis of a local exhibition, and some were used as part of an interpretive guide to the archaeology of the parish. A photographer (Chris Webb) produced a record of the project itself and a contemporary record of the stones. More information, photographs and poems can be found at www.sitesofmeaning.org.uk and at www.lhi.org.uk.

Monyash Primary School

It is understood that, approximately 10 years ago, Monyash Primary School used to take groups of pupils to visit Arbor Low and Gib Hill. It has not been possible to find out when or why this ceased, but contact with the school suggests that such visits do not take place at present.

Russell Scott Primary School, Denton, Stockport

This school has brought Year 4 pupils to Arbor Low for the last two years, as part of a history module on Romans and Celts. As part of this they are taught about the Druids, and use the stone circle and Gib Hill as a setting to re-enact a 'Roman / Celtic' battle between the Romans and Boudicca (a video of the re-enactment is at www.russellscott.tameside.sch.uk – follow the school video links to 'Year 4 at Arbor Low'). Pupils prepare the costumes for the battle, and have a whole day on site, also engaging in activities such as drawing the stones and writing poetry (B. Harkins, pers. comm). The group teacher seemed to be aware of some chronological and geographical inconsistencies, but felt that the site offered a good place to go, in a nice setting, and was very affordable.

2.13.5.4 Secondary

Swanwick Hall School, Alfreton

In October 2007, staff from this East Derbyshire comprehensive school brought the entire Year 7 (220 pupils) to Arbor Low as part of a two-year English and Humanities project. The children were ferried to the site in groups of 30 over two days. For many of them it was the first time they had visited the Peak District, and for all but two it was the first time they had been to Arbor Low. Information on this initiative has kindly been provided by Mr. David Beddow of Swanwick Hall School.

The visit formed part of a unit of work based on the concept of 'mystery'. Students were taught a little about henges and stone circles before they came, and took part in a creative writing workshop on site. To get 'a feeling of the place', they walked round the henge and circle, stood with arms extended 'looking in and out from the henge', thinking of words which could express what the site made them feel. On Gib Hill there were readings – for example from a text by Daphne du Maurier about ancient sites on Exmoor – and then the pupils scattered round the site to write.

Mr. Beddow said that the initiative had been really successful and will be repeated in 2008. There had been a really good reaction to the simple but 'amazing' trip, and students had got a great deal out of this 'magnificent', 'spiritual' place. There is a specific requirement in the national curriculum to introduce pupils to concepts of 'awe and wonder' – and Arbor Low and Gib Hill provided an excellent way to do this.

On the practical side, the group had managed to get one pupil in a wheelchair all round the site (friends and staff carrying the chair where necessary). Mr. Beddow felt that the provision of a wet weather shelter and toilets (adapted for use by the disabled) would be a very useful initiative (see 2.13.6).

Derby City Council initiative for 'gifted and talented children'

As part of a recent summer school for gifted and talented children from the Derby area, a PDNPA archaeologist took a group of secondary-age pupils to Arbor Low to sample various kinds of archaeology. Activities included off-set recording, thinking about what the site itself and the surrounding environment might have been like, and the production of reconstruction drawings (A. Ullathorne, pers. comm).

With their summer school tutor, the group had previously visited Derby Cathedral, and used comparisons between this and Arbor Low to consider the way in which very different kinds of spaces might be seen as 'theatres'.

2.13.5.5 Colleges and Universities (including Lifelong Learning initiatives)

Bath Spa

Every autumn, the University of Bath Spa brings first-year students taking a degree in Ceramics on a three-day drawing trip to Derbyshire. In the late afternoon of the first day they come to draw at Arbor Low – to catch the setting sun (given appropriate weather...). Students 'often produce the best drawings of the week there' (K. Harrison, pers. comm). They react to the site's remoteness, the long views, the 'top of the world feeling', stones, sky and landscape. Their tutor, Mr. Harrison, described the way in which the students respond to the strangeness of the henge and recumbent stones, producing drawings which reflect, for example, horizontal planes, and 'absence'.

Mr. Harrison raised the possibility of showing the drawings in Derbyshire.

University of Nottingham / Centre for Continuing Education

Undergraduates from the University's Department of Archaeology visit Arbor Low and Gib Hill (followed by Mam Tor or Stanton Moor) as part of a course on prehistoric Britain. Their tutor comments that the state of preservation of the monuments provides an ideal opportunity for discussing henges and Neolithic / Bronze Age funerary traditions and in particular for demonstrating the typological characteristics of henges (D. Knight, pers. comm).

Dr. Knight has also brought students from the University's Centre for Continuing Education to the site since 1989. These visits form part of field excursions for evening classes, or weekend study tours based at a centre in the Peak District.

University of Sheffield / Institute for Lifelong Learning

The University of Sheffield Department of Archaeology and Prehistory organises field trips to Arbor Low / Gib Hill two or three times a year, for both undergraduate and Masters level students – often combining the visit with a trip to Stanton Moor. On some occasions, the site is used to demonstrate and practice non-intrusive survey techniques (R. Johnston, C. Merrony, pers. comm).

The Department also includes the site in tours of the Peak District for visiting academics: for example, two groups of Eastern European visitors were taken there in 2007.

The University's Institute for Lifelong Learning (TILL) makes regular use of the monuments for modules such as 'Archaeology in the Landscape', 'Introduction to British Prehistory, and 'Archaeology of Death, Burial and Ritual'. Tutors commented that the site offers a great deal

of flexibility, enabling students to consider not only the monuments themselves but their archaeological setting (e.g. the many barrows visible from the site) and the characteristics of the enclosed limestone landscape (W. Kitchen, H. Ullathorne, pers.comm). It can also be used to illustrate the history of site management – manifested in the Victorian and later boundary markers, and signs of varying vintage (although the recent renewal of interpretive and management signs will remove a layer of this history).

2.13.5.6 Other groups

Students also visit from the University of Manchester, Sheffield College and Handsworth Grange School, Sheffield. As illustrated by 2.12, students from Buxton College have used the site as the basis for enquiry into the value of the site for recreation and tourism. Until recently, John Barnatt of PDNPA has brought a variety of groups (one to two parties a year). These visits are usually for people undertaking guided walks or extra-mural courses, but can range more widely – from the Neolithic Studies Group to the British Society of Dowsers.

2.13.6 Development of education and outreach potential

When consulted as part of the research for this Conservation Plan, Mrs Dick of Upper Oldhams Farm said that she would not be happy with a big expansion in educational use, partly because this would affect the peaceful, lonely atmosphere of the site, and partly because children tend to climb on walls, and some behave badly.

However, she would welcome some limited expansion, particularly if this was an increase in use by local schools. She feels that it is important for children to know something about the area in which they live.

She feels that the main problem for educational groups is the lack of a wet weather shelter and toilets. One possibility (discussed by her with one of the University groups) would be to seek grant to convert one of the stone outbuildings at the farm, which could be adapted for various income-generating purposes, and could incorporate (as one part of the venture) simple facilities to support some form of educational use. Visual material could also be developed and kept on site (and see the suggestion above that a small permanent exhibition might be sited at Parsley Hay). In discussion with Mrs Dick, Lynn Burrow (PDNPA Ranger Service) noted that money to develop educational access was available under Environmental Stewardship Schemes funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

It is clear from many comments made by those who do bring groups to the site that they and their students find it an excellent and inspiring resource.

2.13.7 ‘Exploring Arbor Low’: teaching package developed by G. McElearney

As part of his recent doctoral thesis (McElearney 2007), G. McElearney has developed a teaching package based on Arbor Low, aimed primarily at students in Higher Education. The package is a multimedia resource, which includes pictures of the monument (modern photographs and a range of plans and antiquarian images), video clips (including aerial video of Arbor Low, Gib Hill, Minninglow and the Nine Ladies stone circle on Stanton Moor), virtual tours of the Arbor Low henge and stone circle, and an interactive VR (Virtual Reality) reconstruction – enabling users to move around the henge and circle, make the stones upright etc. Although focussed on the henge (and to a lesser extent Gib Hill), the package sets both monuments in the context of other Neolithic structures in the Peak District, and asks students to think about issues such as overall distribution, interrelationships with landscape forms, and the implications of intervisibility.

McElearney, interviewed as part of the research for this Conservation Plan, states that, while the work is at ‘proof of concept’ level at present, he would be more than happy to discuss ways in which it might be made available and developed for use. He is also happy to be contacted about the provision of images from the work to illustrate future interpretive material relating to Arbor Low and Gib Hill.

2.14 Community involvement

The term 'community' can mean different things, but as used here, it refers to people living in the scattered farms in the Arbor Low area, and in local villages such as Middleton by Youlgrave, Youlgrave, Smerrill and Monyash.

The most obvious recent manifestation of community interaction with the monuments at Arbor Low and Gib Hill was linked to 'Sites of Meaning', a millennium project based on Middleton and Smerrill. The project, which described itself as 'a reaffirmation of our community and a development of our identity' (www.sitesofmeaning.co.uk), focused on marking the 17 entrances through the parish boundary with stones inscribed with text chosen by parish members. One of the central concepts underpinning the project was the complex role played by stone in the life and history of the community: in expressing this concept, the circle stones at Arbor Low

were explicitly singled out as 'reminding us of our ancestors', and the cover image on the project leaflet shows the circle and henge. A number of inscribed stones were placed on the Benty Grange / Youlgrave road which follows the parish boundary just north of Arbor Low, including one (the 'Gypsy Stone') in the lay-by west of the track up to Upper Oldhams Farm.

An important part of the project was 'Other Stones – Other Meanings'. A collaboration between the local community and the children of its primary school in Youlgrave, and funded by the Local Heritage Initiative, it was based on 'exploration of the ancient stones of Middleton and Smerrill'. This aspect of the project (and specifically its involvement with Arbor Low and Gib Hill) is described at 2.13.5.3.

We have not yet been able to establish any real evidence for links between the monuments and the community of Monyash (although the choice of Arbor Low for outdoor prayer and preaching by mid 19th century Primitive Methodists from the village, as described at 2.12.5, shows that such links used to exist). It is believed to be some years since Monyash Primary School incorporated the site in their teaching.

However, PDNPA staff who have been in close touch with people in Monyash are aware that there is real scope for community involvement in exploring the archaeology of the area. A few years ago, attempts by the Area Ranger and the National Park's Senior Survey Archaeologist to set up a community archaeological survey of the parish were greeted with interest and enthusiasm, although there was less enthusiasm for filling in grant forms, and the project did not get off the ground (L. Burrow, pers.comm).

2.15 Interpretation

2.15.1 Introduction

Although this Conservation Plan deals with the two topics separately, it is not possible to make a clear-cut distinction between 'interpretation' and 'education' when applied to the way people absorb information about, and respond both imaginatively and intellectually to monuments and landscape. Interpretation can involve a wide range of audiences and interpreters, employ very diverse media, and be a highly interactive, rather than a passive, experience. In many cases, both interpretation and education are less structured than the terms might imply, and can involve empowering people to discover for themselves and to form their own opinions.

Here we describe interpretation available both on-site and off, while Section 2.13 has summarised use by schools, universities and others.

In this section, the principal focus is on interpretive initiatives available to a fairly general audience. However, a brief indication of where to find more specialist interpretive material is given at 2.15.5.

The 'Gypsy Stone' at the parish boundary NW of Upper Oldhams Farm: part of the 'Sites of Meaning' millennium project based on Middleton and Smerrill Parish. (Photograph: S. McGuire)



2.15.2 Strategic and policy commitments

Background

English Heritage (EH) and the National Park Authority (PDNPA) have a number of strategic and policy commitments relevant to increasing public awareness of, and stimulating interest in, the historic environment. These are expressed, for example in the Authority's current Cultural Heritage Strategy (PDNPA 2006) and in 'Making the Past Part of our Future: English Heritage Strategy 2005 – 2010' (English Heritage 2005). PDNPA strategies on information provision and interpretation emphasise that one of the Authority's major objectives is to enable people from every part of society and from diverse cultural backgrounds to experience, understand, enjoy and benefit from the cultural and other opportunities which the Park offers.

In 1991, J. Barnatt produced recommendations on the interpretation of Arbor Low and Gib Hill, as part of an archaeological survey of land then belonging to Upper Oldhams Farm (Barnatt 1991). He stressed that, in terms of both research and presentation, the sites have to be considered together, as they are components of the same prehistoric monument complex. He proposed that, in addition to the planned guidebook (2.15.3.2) a much shorter publication should be made available. He also recommended that interpretation should "cover a wider area than ... Arbor Low and Gib Hill, to include other monuments and features of interest [so that] promotion could be enhanced in an integrated way" (Barnatt 1991:2). In material produced to date, neither of these recommendations seems to have been taken to heart.

A Local Interpretive Plan for both monuments was produced by the then Peak Park Joint Planning Board (now PDNPA) in 1993. This noted the regional and national archaeological importance of the monument complex, and the views which it affords of a range of other features from different periods – prehistoric barrows on surrounding hilltops, the course of the possible Roman Road, the nationally significant Anglo-Saxon site at Benty Grange and the enclosed farmland of the limestone plateau (2.8). It described Arbor Low /Gib Hill as one of the finest viewpoints in the White Peak.

Interpretation / education under the Local Management Agreement / Maintained Property Agreement

One of the principal aims of both the 1995 English Heritage / National Park Authority Local Management Agreement (LMA) for Arbor Low and Gib Hill and the draft version of the revised Maintained Property Agreement (see 2.10.1.4) is to "promote awareness and understanding" of the two Guardianship properties.

A specific provision of the 1995 – 2005 Agreement was that PDNPA would "develop a strategy and programme for the provision of appropriate on- and off-site interpretative media: e.g. leaflets, boards, directional signposting, guided walks, talks, events, educational study materials etc." (Schedule 2, para. 3.7).

The revised draft provisions (EH to PDNPA, August 2007) are less specific. As currently worded, the PDNPA is required:

- "subject to English Heritage's prior approval ... to provide information, interpretative and educational media ... appropriate to the Property and to the needs of visitors" (draft Schedule 1, para. 2.2);
- to prepare proposals for the provision of on- and off-site interpretation in consultation with English Heritage properties presentation team to include provision to maximise reasonable opportunities for physical and intellectual access" (draft Schedule 1, para. 3.7);
- to promote the site and encourage visitors through publicity material produced for the wider National Park" (draft Schedule 1, para. 3.8).

Whereas the 1995 – 2005 LMA specified that both parties would ensure that their promotion of the Property "would not be at a level which would attract visitors in numbers detrimental to its conservation" (para. 19), there is no similar caveat in the current redraft of the Agreement.

During the course of consultation for this Conservation Plan, Mr Dick of Upper Oldhams Farm stressed the importance of consulting landowners when preparing and acting on such agreements.

The final version of the revised text is currently awaiting approval by PDNPA.

2.15.3 On-site interpretation

2.15.3.1 Fixed signs and information panels

History

Since the monuments were scheduled in the late 19th century, there have been a number of formal signs and signposts at Arbor Low, and also at Gib Hill. Photographs from c.1900 and from the 1920s show a signpost set in the centre of the Arbor Low circle¹, while Gray's excavation plan shows a 'Government Notice Board' – presumably the same one – at the northern end of the cove. It is likely to have carried a formal Ministry of Works message, informing visitors that the site had been scheduled, but there would have been no interpretive information.

Until the early 1990s a cast iron Ministry of Works sign stood just outside (and to the west of) the NW entrance to the henge, giving basic information about the monument. A similar sign stood on the southern slope of Gib Hill. These were replaced by English Heritage information panels, which were designed to lean against the Victorian marker posts: one to the west of the NW entrance to the henge, and one on the SSE slope of Gib Hill. These were removed a few years later (in 1996) as part of a strategy to make the monuments less 'cluttered', and because they were generating significant focal erosion, caused by visitors and by stock.

At one time, the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm attached a large interpretive sign to an outbuilding (now demolished) close to the farm. This also advertised the presence of free leaflets.

In 1996 a large interpretive panel was erected at the southern end of the informal visitor car park (commissioned by English Heritage and produced by the then Peak Park Joint Planning Board). Unfortunately, the sign faded more rapidly than expected: by August 2000 it was described as 'fading', and by April 2002, although the wording remained legible, the illustration was 'almost completely gone'. Over subsequent years, the sign continued to deteriorate, and was described as 'a disgrace' in late 2007 (LMA Annual Review meeting, 18.09.07).

A new management sign has been designed by English Heritage and is due to be installed. As an English Heritage corporate management sign, it will include very little interpretive information, now available on the new on-site panels described below.

Installation of new interpretive panels at Arbor Low and Gib Hill, 2007

Very recently (November 2007) two interpretive panels were installed close to the monuments: an Arbor Low panel close to the northern pedestrian gate into the henge field and a Gib Hill panel at the southern gate into the barrow field. Both stand on fairly low

Left. Plinth and interpretive panel at the NW gate into the Arbor Low field. (Photograph: S. McGuire)



Right. Plinth and interpretive panel at the southern gate into the Gib Hill field. (Photograph: S. McGuire)



¹ See www.picturethepast.org.uk : images no. DCHQ000672, DCBM200754 and DCBM200749.

stone plinths close to a field wall, and are thus relatively unobtrusive. They were designed, produced and paid for by Peak Experience¹, with other input from both English Heritage and the PDNPA.

The Arbor Low panel provides a bird's eye view of the circle and henge as they may have looked when in use (repeating an image used in the current guidebook). It also carries short and (relatively) simply-worded texts covering 'the ceremonies of the first farmers', a physical description of the monument, and what has happened to it over time. A timeline places the building sequence at Arbor Low / Gib Hill within the British Neolithic and Bronze Age, and shows where they 'fit' in relation to Stonehenge and Durrington Walls. 'You are here' indicators enable visitors to locate themselves in relation to the monuments.

The Gib Hill panel features a large image showing the placing of cremated remains in the later cist on top of the oval barrow, as imagined (rather flamboyantly) by the artist. Various fur-clad figures carry out a range of tasks around the base of the barrow and on its summit. Text panels briefly describe the possible function and significance of such monuments for the communities who built them, explain Gib Hill's double structure, and refer briefly to Bateman's 1848 excavation



Gib Hill interpretive panel, installed November 2007. (Photograph: D. Angel)

(illustrated with a contemporary watercolour). As with the Arbor Low sign, the panel carries a timeline, and a 'You are here' indicator, based on an aerial image of the monuments.

In the course of consultation for this Conservation Plan, Mr Woolley (owner of the Gib Hill field and grazing tenant of the Arbor Low field) observed that, as currently sited, the plinths – and particularly the Arbor Low plinth – create a space in which stock might get trapped between the plinth and the adjacent field walls. He added that it might have been preferable to site the plinths either against, or further away from, the existing walls. Mr Dick (of Upper Oldhams Farm) pointed out that landowners should have been consulted when signs were being designed and their locations agreed, and that this should be the practice in future.

2.15.3.2 Printed information available on site

In the 1970s, the then Peak Park Joint Planning Board produced a free leaflet on Arbor Low and Gib Hill (now long out of print) and made it available from a dispenser on site, and from Tourist Information Centres (see 2.15.4.2).

Currently, copies of the National Park guidebook on Arbor Low and Gib Hill (Peak District National Park Authority 1996) can sometimes be bought on site from the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm (Mr and Mrs Dick). Mrs Dick obtains these in bulk from the PDNPA and sells them for £2 per copy, when she has been able to get supplies and when the weather is suitable to leave the books outside. A few hundred copies are sold annually in this way.

Mrs Dick thinks that it is important that visitors have information which they can take with them round the site. To fill this gap, she produced her own leaflets a few years ago, and sold them for 10p per copy. (She no longer does this.) She experimented with laminating the leaflets so that people could use them on their trip round the monuments, and return them to the access point. In practice, people tended not to return them. No leaflet is now available on-site.

¹ Peak Experience is a Peak District Interpretation Project funded by a range of bodies, including Derbyshire County Council, relevant District Councils, the National Trust, Natural England and PDNPA.

2.15.4 Off-site interpretation

2.15.4.1 English Heritage (EH)

Printed information

The official guide book to Arbor Low (written prior to the creation of English Heritage) was D.Thompson's 'Guide to Arbor Low, with notes on three other prehistoric sites' (Thompson 1963). This is out of print, but copies can be consulted at the library of the University of Sheffield, and other similar sources.

A relatively recent EH publication, 'Heritage Unlocked: guide to free sites in the Midlands' (English Heritage 2006), provides good, succinct information on the structure, excavation history and possible role of both monuments. The EH Members' Handbook offers a very brief description of Arbor Low, and a one-line reference to Gib Hill.

Website

A simple 'search' for Arbor Low or Gib Hill on the EH website (www.english-heritage.org.uk) leads to a page of visitor information. The descriptive text is the same as that in the Members' Handbook, and the PDNPA website (see below) is given as a source of further information.

There is no direct link from this basic visitor guidance to the rather more detailed information provided in the 'Pastscape' section of the EH website.

However, if website users experiment with the Pastscape link, they will reach a more detailed description of both monuments. They can also access an investigation history, a list of sources, maps and other material.

There is no link from Pastscape to external websites: for example the excellent archive images and good basic information provided by Weston Park Museum, Sheffield (2.15.4.4).

2.15.4.2 Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA)

Printed information / information outlets

As noted above, in 1976 the then PPJPB published a free A4 leaflet on Arbor Low and Gib Hill, written by Graeme Barker (then of the University of Sheffield) and entitled 'Stonehenge of the North'. This has long been out of print.

In 1996, the National Park Authority published a well-produced and informative guide to Arbor Low and Gib Hill (PDNPA 1996), designed in consultation with English Heritage. The information contained in the guide is still broadly up-to-date, but the author has suggested that the emphasis of the text could be changed to reflect current thinking on the general interpretation of British prehistory (J. Barnatt, pers.comm.). PDNPA holds enough stock to last for an estimated one to two years: about 550 remaining copies are held centrally, with a few copies at five Tourist Information Centres (Upper Derwent, Edale, Castleton, Bakewell and Parsley Hay) and other outlets, and additional stocks at Upper Oldhams Farm. The latter is said to be the main source of sales, amounting to a few hundred a year. PDNPA merchandising staff describe the guidebook as a 'steady seller', and one which they would automatically consider for reprinting.

Less detailed descriptive information on both monuments – and some excellent photographs – are also included in 'The Peak District: the Official National Park Guide' (Smith and Manley, 2000).

As indicated above, the Arbor Low guidebook is normally for sale at the Parsley Hay cycle hire centre, situated only 1km from the monuments. Centre users often enquire about Arbor Low (C. Hardy, pers. comm.), and the centre manager feels that it would be useful if a leaflet on the site were available here in addition to the guidebook (and see proposals at 2.13.4).

Website

The National Park Authority website (www.peakdistrict.gov.uk) contains fairly brief descriptions, images and contextual information on Arbor Low and Gib Hill. However, the information would be hard to find for those unused to the website. The 'search' facility gives over 200 largely unsorted results for Arbor Low – including brief mentions in Planning Committee reports etc. To reach archaeological information designed for visitors, website users need to follow a rather counter-intuitive route¹.

At present, this section of the website does not provide a link to material on other relevant websites: for example English Heritage (2.15.4.1), Weston Park Museum Sheffield (2.15.4.4) or Peak Experience (see above).

2.15.4.3 Peakland Heritage website

Very brief descriptive information about Arbor Low, Gib Hill and broadly similar monuments, can be found at www.peaklandheritage.org.uk. This website is a cooperative project between the British Library, Derbyshire County Council and the PDNPA.

The website's 'stone circle' page includes a link to the PDNPA website and contact details for the County Sites and Monuments Record (now the Historic Environment Record). There is a link to Buxton Museum (but no information on whether the Museum holds material specific to the sites referred to). There is no link to Weston Park Museum, Sheffield or to Derby Museum and Art Gallery, both of which have relevant collections.

2.15.4.4 Weston Park Museum Sheffield website

The Weston Park Museum Sheffield (WPMS) website, at www.idigsheffield.org.uk, provides some high-quality, easily-accessible images of Arbor Low and Gib Hill artefacts and excavations, and good, straightforward explanatory text, including summaries of the results of Gray's and Bateman's excavations. It also provides extensive links to information on related monuments and artefacts, and a good glossary.

Site images include 19th century watercolours of Arbor Low (including the monument seen in plan), various views of Bateman's 1848 excavation of Gib Hill, and images of the cists from both monuments. There are excellent photographs of a number of artefacts (pottery, flint, stone and bone) from the monuments themselves and the area around them – including a magnificent Bronze Age necklace from a barrow a few fields NW of Upper Oldhams Farm (2.5.6). There is also a photograph of the Museum's replica of the model which Gray made of Arbor Low, showing the position of each of his trenches (2.3.2.3). Further information on the Museum's collection is at 2.7.3.

2.15.4.5 Other sources of interpretive material

Websearches

Many visitors are likely to seek their information on Arbor Low and Gib Hill via Google (or another search engine) rather than via more formal methods.

A Google search for Arbor Low produces a high number of options: they varied between over 2 million in November 2007 and 600,000 in January 2008. Even acknowledging that many of these will be repetitions – or entirely irrelevant – these are much higher figures than for (say) Nine Ladies stone circle or Stanton Moor.

When a similar exercise was carried out for smaller Peak District Guardianship monuments at Hob Hurst's House and Wet Withens (see McGuire and Smith 2006 and 2007), websites such as the 'Megalithic Portal' and Julian Cope's 'Modern Antiquarian' came top of the list. In the main, the websites which currently lead the Arbor Low list are rather different. In January 2008 (and also when searched in November 2007), the first entry was the Buxton-based Peak District Information site 'Cressbrook Multimedia' (www.cressbrook.co.uk). This provides photographs, a 360 degree view of the henge and circle, straightforward site descriptions and access information. It also refers visitors to the PDNPA guide (with price and ISBN number).

¹ The website route is as follows: 'Learning About' → 'Time' → 'Ritual and Religion' → 'Henges and Stone Circles' (for Arbor Low) or → 'Barrows and Chambered Cairns' (for Gib Hill).

Third on the current list is the Upper Oldhams Farmhouse B & B, and fourth is English Heritage's basic visitor information (2.15.4.1). Not far behind is another 360 degree view of the circle and henge, provided (with brief text) by BBC Derby. An information link from here takes you to the Cressbrook Multimedia website discussed above.

Second on the list however is the 'Mysterious Britain' site. This website has a specific interest in hauntings and the paranormal – although its Arbor Low / Gib Hill information is relatively straightforward. A little further down is the Modern Antiquarian site (www.themodernantiquarian.com). This carries photographs (some of them very good), reproductions of antiquarian plans of Arbor Low, and posted comments by individuals on their personal response to the site – and to the weather, other visitors, dogs and so forth.

In summary, a quick web search will provide the visitor with a reasonable range of basic information on the two monuments (including access information) and some good photographs. In contrast to a similar exercise carried out for two smaller Peak District Guardianship monuments, the current list of most prominently available websites is not dominated by sites which rely on the particular interests and perspectives of whoever chooses to send in their views.

Books and pamphlets

There are a number of useful books, currently (or recently) in print that provide relatively detailed information on Arbor Low and Gib Hill, and are aimed at a fairly general audience. They include 'The Peak District: Landscapes through Time' (Barnatt and Smith 2004). Written by PDNPA Cultural Heritage Team staff, this includes well-illustrated information on the structure and archaeological context of both monuments. In 'Prehistory in the Peak', Edmonds and Seaborne (2001) consider how and why Arbor Low and Gib Hill were built, and what they may have signified to the communities which used them, while a new book by Bevan, 'Ancient Peakland' (2007), provides imaginative interpretive information and good photographs. 'Archaeology Walks in the Peak District' (Cooper 1999) includes Arbor Low and Gib Hill within a walk which also takes in Ringham Low, east of Monyash. The guide includes succinct description of the monuments and their excavation history.

2.15.5 Academic and specialist interpretation

A number of specialist publications and reports provide extensive analysis of the monuments at Arbor Low and Gib Hill, and of their archaeological context – see especially the publications by Barnatt, and Barnatt and Collis listed in the Bibliography at Section 6. For a more extensive list of analyses and primary sources (including antiquarian records of the sites) see for example the bibliographies in Barnatt 1990, 1991 and 1993.

2.16 Physical access, accessibility and signage

2.16.1 Concessionary access: ownership of access rights and current legal agreement

2.16.1.1 Introduction

The issue of public access to Arbor Low and Gib Hill raises rather complex problems, which stem from two principal causes. These are, firstly, the nature of the late 19th century Guardianship arrangements (see below and 3.1) which did not incorporate a right of public access, and, secondly, the fact that ownership and other rights applicable to the access track from the public road, and to the fields in which the structures lie, are split between a number of different landowners and tenants. The file record held by PDNPA illustrates a long history of access-related problems, and the varied solutions which have been discussed – and sometimes attempted – over many decades. An Agreement signed by English Heritage and the owners of the access route in April 2003 (2.16.1.4) seems to be operating with some success, although it remains vulnerable to potential future changes in land ownership.

2.16.1.2 Ownership of access rights

There is no public right of way to Arbor Low and Gib Hill. Although Section 19 of the

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 provides for public access to monuments whose ownership or Guardianship is secured under the Act, this does not apply to monuments – such as these two – which were taken into Guardianship under earlier provisions (3.1). For such sites, the right of public access remains at the discretion of the owner.

As noted above, in the case of Arbor Low and Gib Hill, the issue is complicated by the fact that visitors have to pass through a number of private landholdings, each of which is subject to different ownership / tenancy arrangements (see 2.10 and Figure A10). Currently, these are as follows.

- From the public road, a track leads past Upper Oldhams Farm to the Gib Hill field. This track, and the land occupied by the informal car park near the farm, are in the ownership of Mr and Mrs B. Woolley, of Moscar Farm, Monyash, who also own a number of the surrounding fields. However, Upper Oldhams farmhouse, garden and an adjoining field to the west constitute a separate landholding (currently in the ownership of Mr and Mrs Dick), whose owners have access rights up the track from the road to the farmhouse.
- The field in which Arbor Low lies is owned by the Trustees of the Middleton Estate (2.10.1.1). It is currently leased to English Heritage for 20 years from September 2003 (2.10.1.2). In turn, English Heritage has drawn up an agreement subletting grazing rights in the field to Mr B. Woolley of Moscar Farm (see 2.10.1.3).
- The field in which Gib Hill lies is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Woolley of Moscar Farm.
- The scheduled linear earthwork known as the 'Avenue' (which is not in Guardianship, but which some visitors certainly seek to see, at least in part, during a visit to Arbor Low and Gib Hill) runs through land owned / tenanted by the Trustees of the Middleton Estate, Mr. C. Percival of Calling Low Farm, Middleton by Youlgrave, Mr. and Mrs. Woolley of Moscar Farm, Monyash, and Mr. S. Kirkham of Brook Farm, Mayfield (see 2.10.3.1).

2.16.1.3 Improving public access to Arbor Low and Gib Hill: recent history

The list below summarises the principal proposals discussed since the mid-1970s, the majority of which were not taken forward.

- Establishment of a minor diversion to the access route – particularly to avoid passing the cattle shed close to the entrance to the Gib Hill field. (Such a diversion was put in place in 1982, on a 'gentleman's agreement' basis with the then landowner, but was closed by him the following year.)
- Creation of an entirely new access route from the minor road, bypassing the farmhouse and cattle shed, and possibly associated with a larger car park. (These proposals were thought very unlikely to gain planning approval. The view was also expressed by PDNPA in 2000 that such changes in provision would be both costly and unnecessary (PDNPA to EH, 29.8.2000).)
- Creation of new footpath access from the High Peak Trail, just south of Parsley Hay, where the trail runs to the east of the main road. (In the early 1990s, this proposal was criticised on the grounds that it would be detrimental to wildlife in the Blakemoor Pits area, and that visitors approaching by this route could not be seen from the farmhouse (see 2.16.5 and Figure A14).)
- The purchase of access rights by the monuments' Guardian (now English Heritage).

The current scheme is set out below, and (up until present) seems to have provided a partial resolution to at least some of the problems experienced in the past.

2.16.1.4 Licensed Access Agreement (2003 – 2028) and charging arrangements

In April 2003, English Heritage (EH) signed a 25 year Access Agreement with Mr B. and Mrs M. Woolley of Moscar Farm, Monyash. This gives EH a licence to enable public use of the access road and the routes to the Arbor Low field and to Gib Hill shown on Figure A13. It

also enables public use of the informal car park close to Upper Oldhams Farm.

This is a personal Agreement with Mr and Mrs Woolley, and would have to be renegotiated with subsequent owners if the land were to be sold.

Under the terms of the Agreement, Mr and Mrs Woolley receive an annual fee. The Agreement includes their first right to grazing on Arbor Low, without charge: this is covered by a separate, linked Agreement, to which a signature is pending (2.10.1.3).

It also stipulates that the private admission charge (see below) cannot be increased without the prior consent of English Heritage.

As indicated at 2.16.2, a small charge is collected from adult visitors via an 'honesty box' outside Upper Oldhams farmhouse. The proceeds are shared between the access route landowners (Mr. and Mrs. Woolley) and the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm (Mr. and Mrs. Dick) under a private arrangement. At present, a privately-produced sign in the car park refers explicitly to this charge, as does a second sign close to the farmhouse. It is understood that the former will probably be replaced in the near future with a sign produced by English Heritage which will refer to the access charge and various other issues (A. Baker, pers. comm.).

Left. Privately-produced sign at Arbor Low visitor car park, Upper Oldhams Farm, November 2007. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

Right: Privately-produced sign, leaflet holder and honesty box at Upper Oldhams Farm, November 2007. (Photograph: S. McGuire)



General access issues

2.16.2 Opening times and charges

Some years ago, English Heritage consulted the previous owners of Upper Oldhams Farm about opening times for the monuments, and, in accordance with their wishes, agreed to state that they were open from 10am to 6pm in Summer and 10am to 4pm in Winter, in order to deter people from visiting at night (A. Baker, pers. comm.). English Heritage has continued to reproduce this information on management signs and in printed and online visitor information, with the additional information that the site is closed between 24th and 26th December and on 1st January.

However, according to the present owners of Upper Oldhams Farm, Mr and Mrs Dick, in practice there are no days on which the monuments are 'closed', and there are no specific opening times. They appreciate the fact that most people who wish to visit during unsociable hours contact them first (N. Dick, pers. comm.).

In the light of Mr and Mrs Dick's preferences, English Heritage has agreed to remove references to Arbor Low / Gib Hill opening times from the management sign in the car park and from the EH handbook (C. Clemett, pers. comm.).

As indicated above, a small charge is made by the owners of the access route. This currently stands at £1 for adults. No charge is made for children. Charging arrangements for educational groups tend to vary (N. Dick, pers. comm.).

2.16.3 Road access and parking

By car / coach

The monuments lie just under 1km east of the A515, from which they can be reached via the minor road towards Youlgrave and Bakewell (Figure A1). Alternatively (for cars but not coaches) the site lies 10 - 12km from the market town / tourist centre of Bakewell via narrow minor roads through Monyash or over Conksbury Bridge.

Parking

From the access point on the public road, a farm track leads to an informal, privately-owned car park at Upper Oldhams Farm, capable of holding about 8 cars. There is also space to park several cars (or a coach or two) at the roadside opposite the track entrance. Parking arrangements are fairly flexible: the consensus expressed by those consulted during research for this document was that current provision seems to be adequate. As indicated at 2.10.5, at the Summer Solstice arrangements are made to extend space available for parking, if necessary.



Visitor car park alongside concessionary access track, Upper Oldhams Farm. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

NB: An electric fence alongside the car park carries small warning signs on fence posts. These could be obscured by parked cars.

2.16.4 Public transport and cycle routes

By bus

It is possible to travel to (or at least fairly close to) the monuments by bus – although a close study of the timetable and a reasonable degree of faith are both required. Currently, for example, the 171 Bakewell - Hartington bus passes the end of the Upper Oldhams farm track twice daily on weekdays and three times on a Sunday. The 181 follows a similar route – but only on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. Buses stop at the end of the farm track on request.

More frequent buses call at Middleton by Youlgrave and Monyash, which are both within 4 – 5 km walking distance of the monuments, on minor roads.

A number of other buses follow the A515 and call at Parsley Hay (just over 1 km west of the site: see Figure A14). These drop passengers on the far side of the A515.

By train

The nearest railway stations are at Buxton (approximately 16 km) and Matlock (approximately 20 km).

High Peak Trail cycle route

The Parsley Hay access point on the High Peak Trail lies just over 1 km to the west of the monuments (Figure A14). However, the road route from Parsley Hay to the site involves a potentially dangerous crossing of the A515, on a straight and very fast stretch of the road.

2.16.5 Public footpath access

No public footpaths give direct access to the monuments. However, a number of well-used routes pass fairly close to the site (see Figure A1).

The Parsley Hay access point on the High Peak Trail footpath / cycle route is just over 1 km to the west: however, as pointed out above, the only way to reach the monuments from here is by crossing the A515.

The Monyash to Youlgrave stretch of the waymarked route known as the Limestone Way passes about 2 km to the north of the site. A footpath route leading SE from the 'Way' takes the walker to a point approximately 0.5 km east of the Upper Oldhams Farm access route. Although the route to the site from here lies along a minor road, it is regularly used by lorries.

PDNPA staff express the view that, without the creation of new footpath links, it is difficult to link the monuments to the existing network of paths and trails (J. Barnatt, L. Burrow, pers. comm.).

As indicated above (2.16.1.3) the idea of creating a footpath link between the site and the High Peak Trail was floated in 1986 (and subsequently), but has not been taken forward. The potential impact of such a route on habitats and wildlife at Blakemoor Pits would need to be considered (R. Penny, pers. comm., and see 2.9 and Figures A9 and A14). In addition, the current owners of Upper Oldhams Farm (Mr and Mrs Dick) and of the access route (Mr and Mrs Woolley) feel that an additional access point would be detrimental to their interests (in that it would enable people to see the monuments without paying the private access charge) and could also have an impact on monument condition, as it would reduce awareness of who was on site.

2.16.6 Designated route through site

Figure A13 shows the concessionary access route which leads to and through the site from the public road. From this road, the route runs south along a pot-holed track, to reach the car park north of Upper Oldhams Farm. From here, visitors continue along the track, passing the 'honesty box' a few metres from the farmhouse.

From this point the track runs past a series of farm outbuildings, and passes between the cattle shed and a silage clamp south of the farmhouse. The track surface here is often fairly messy underfoot, particularly with leachate from the clamp. The path then slopes up to reach a pedestrian gate into the Gib Hill field.

From this point, as described more fully below, finger posts, interpretive signs and footpath surfacing (the majority of which have been recently installed or renewed) indicate a preferred route to and between the monuments. From the pedestrian gate south of the cattle shed, the route leads left (SE) alongside a field wall, and through a further pedestrian gate into the Arbor Low field. The preferred visitor route then 'flows' from Arbor Low, through a second pedestrian gate SW of Arbor Low which opens into the Gib Hill field, and SW across the Gib Hill field to the barrow itself. Currently, the presence of a stile on the NE side of the temporary fence surrounding Gib Hill (2.10.2.3) 'leads' the visitor across the field and up the least steeply-sloping (north-eastern) side of the barrow.

Part of concessionary access route to Arbor Low and Gib Hill, showing track between visitor car park and Upper Oldhams Farm (looking south), June 2008. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

Concessionary access route, Upper Oldhams Farm: looking south past cattle shed and clamp towards northern gate into Gib Hill field, June 2008. (Photograph: S. McGuire)



2.16.7 Directional signage and other route indicators

From the A515

Arbor Low is indicated by brown 'heritage' signs on the main A515 road (at the Monyash turn close to Parsley Hay, just south of Benty Grange), with a further sign at the point where the Youlgrave / Benty Grange road meets the Monyash road.

There is a similar sign at the northern end of the Upper Oldhams Farm access track, where it joins the Youlgrave / Benty Grange road. It has been suggested by some visitors that this sign would be more obvious if it was placed on the opposite (northern) side of the road. However, it might then be obscured by parked vehicles, especially coaches. (Mr Dick has noted that the sign originally stood on the far side of the road, but was demolished by a lorry.)



'Heritage' sign at northern end of Upper Oldhams Farm / Arbor Low access track. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

From Youlgrave and Bakewell

A visual check indicates that Arbor Low is not signed on routes from the Bakewell and Youlgrave direction.

At the car park

In March 2008, the faded interpretive / management sign in the informal car park north of Upper Oldhams Farm was removed, and it is due to be replaced with a new English Heritage corporate management sign. The new sign (designed to follow a standard EH model) will not include information on the route to follow to reach the monuments. However, a further sign is being designed by EH, which will carry additional information, and will include a plan showing how to reach the monuments from the car park (A. Baker, pers. comm.).

Route to the monuments from Upper Oldhams Farm

Once visitors reach the cattle shed, the route to the henge and circle is indicated by a fingerpost sited close to the first gate into the field to the immediate south. A short stretch of roughly-paved path reinforces the directional message. Visitor orientation information is included on the interpretive panel at the following gate into the Arbor Low field. The first few metres of the path on the eastern side of this gate have recently been laid with crushed limestone, in order to 'guide' visitors to the NW entrance into the henge, and to discourage them from climbing up over the western henge bank (see 2.11.1.3). In addition, there is a finger post (marked 'Entrance') about 7m south of the stile. Its rather obscure location means that it is probably less effective as a guide than the limestone path.



Section of concessionary access route, leading from northern gate into Gib Hill field towards Arbor Low. A pedestrian gate (installed in 2007) is on the left, and the access route runs east alongside the field wall. Arbor Low henge just visible on horizon. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

It is assumed that, having visited the henge and circle, visitors will then find it easy to spot the informal footpath across the field towards the pedestrian gate at the southern end of the wall between the Arbor Low and Gib Hill fields. Here, a second interpretive panel includes orientation information (see 2.15.3.1).

2.16.8 Access guidance for visitors

English Heritage and the Peak District National Park Authority both currently publish general guidance on how to get to Arbor Low / Gib Hill, as part of on-line and (in EH's case) hard copy information intended for the general public.

English Heritage (EH)

A basic 'search' of the English Heritage website (under either Arbor Low or Gib Hill) yields a page of basic visitor information. This includes opening times, the possibility of an unspecified charge being levied, and brief information on how to get there, either via car or public transport. It also provides a link to maps showing footpaths and the National Cycle Network.

All this is useful, although the entry is in need of some minor correction. For example, the site lies to the east of the A515, not to the west, and the specific information on buses could be misleading. There is no indication that the telephone number given is that of the PDNPA reception desk: a visitor unfamiliar with the nature of the monument would assume that it was an on-site phone.

EH's paper-format guide for members reproduces the information available on the website (but see below).

A recently-published guide 'Heritage Unlocked: Guide to Free Sites in the Midlands' (English Heritage 2006), described at 2.15.4.1, reproduces most of the access information from the EH website (including the east / west error and the PDNPA phone number) but omits public transport information.

Following consultation during the course of research for this Conservation Plan, information has been passed to appropriate EH staff to enable correction of the errors noted above (C. Clemett, pers. comm.). The question of which contact telephone number to include remains to be resolved.

Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA)

Guidance on access to Arbor Low / Gib Hill can be found on the PDNPA website, under 'Taking Part / Archaeology'. However, as discussed at 2.15.4.2, it is difficult for those not already familiar with the structure and content of this website to reach specific information on monuments, and associated guidance on access. The search facility is too general to be useful for this kind of purpose, and the route through the website to the cultural heritage information contained within it is not clear.

The access information given is as follows:

"(SK 160635) Approach from the Youlgreave to Parsley Hay road and park adjacent to Upper Oldhams Farm (SK 159637). A small access charge is made. A short walk from the farm to the henge, then on to the barrows in the adjacent field."

This assumes:

- an ability to understand grid references;
- a knowledge of local roads (i.e. there is no reference to the fact that the monuments are just off the A515);
- arrival by car.

Further information on access to Arbor Low is given on the Peak Experience website, a Peak District Interpretation Partnership project (see 2.15.3.1). This includes public transport information, and also informs the visitor that the site is 350m from a car park – although it does not actually say where it is.

2.16.9 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Assessment

A Disability Access Audit of the monuments was carried out for English Heritage in July 2003 (Baker 2003). A number of improvements (noted below and at 2.16.6) have been put in place since this date, and the Assessment is in need of revision.

As currently worded, the renewed Local Management Agreement for Arbor Low, Gib Hill and other Guardianship sites, currently under discussion between EH and PDNPA (see 2.10.1.4), will give PDNPA responsibility for the future preparation of Risk Assessments and Disability Discrimination Act audits.

The site does not feature in the English Heritage Access Guide, and no DDA guidance is provided in the EH Members' Handbook.

The principal DDA problems noted in 2003 were:

- the poor condition of the sign in the car park, and the fact that it did not give specific site access information;
- the slope and nature of the surfaces along the access route;
- stiles along the access route;
- site circulation via fields of medium to long grass, and steep and rough in places;
- no visitor facilities.

The Assessment concluded that there were no appropriate practical physical alterations to access and parking which would provide disabled access to the monuments.

However, it made a number of general recommendations. The following summary lists these, and notes (in italics) which of them have been taken forward, together with other recent improvements not included in the 2003 recommendations.

- The car park sign should be replaced, and should include access information.
As indicated above at 2.16.7, a new corporate management sign has been designed by EH and is due to be installed. EH is also in the process of designing an additional sign, which will include a site access plan and other information.
- Additional interpretation should be produced.
Two new interpretive panels were installed in 2007. See 2.15 for other points relevant to the development of site interpretation.
- A finger post should be installed to guide visitors to Gib Hill.
A new finger post was erected close to the pedestrian gate south of the Upper Oldhams Farm cattle shed in 2007 (see 2.16.7). This points the way to Arbor Low, and it is expected that the visitor route to Gib Hill will flow on from there.

In addition, three stiles on the visitor route around the site were replaced with 1.2 m (4 ft) wide pedestrian gates in 2007. These are located at the access point south of the Upper Oldhams Farm cattle shed, the entry point into the Arbor Low field and the southern entry point into the Gib Hill field.

Two stiles remain. These are the temporary stiles through the post and wire fence which currently surrounds the Gib Hill barrow. Both of these (and particularly the stile to the NE) present problems for the elderly, the less fit (e.g. people with back problems) and the not-so-tall. Visitors may not be aware that the field gate approximately 15m to the N of the stile is kept unlocked.

In 2007, the steeply sloping and uneven section of the access path between the cattle shed and the entry point into the Gib Hill field was regraded to make it more easily negotiable, although the surface is still fairly rough. A representative of the PDNPA Ranger service has expressed the view that the slope is still excessively steep, and a gentler gradient could be achieved via a minor re-routing of this final section of the path. However, Mr. Woolley (the landowner) has pointed out that it would not be possible to re-route the path through the small enclosure to the east, as this is used for various purposes, including the penning of cows with their calves.



Re-graded slope leading to northern pedestrian gate into Gib Hill field, February 2008. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

3 Assessment of significance

This section provides an assessment of the complex significance of the monuments at Arbor Low and Gib Hill, within their setting. At 3.1, it sets out statutory and other formal designations, while 3.2. – 3.13 summarise various forms of significance, drawing on the wide range of information which has been assembled in Section 2. Throughout, this assessment of significance is informed by the results of consultation with the organisations and individuals listed in the Acknowledgements.

3.1 Statutory and other formal designations

3.1.1 Arbor Low

Scheduling (National Monument no. I 1503 / 01)

Arbor Low was included in the Schedule of Monuments under the terms of the original Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1882, with the number ‘Derbyshire 1’ and the title ‘the tumulus known as Arborlow’.

In August 1916, the monument’s inclusion in the Schedule was amended to include Gib Hill. Its title was altered to ‘Derbyshire 1: the earthen ring and stone circle known as Arbor Low and the tumulus of Gib Hill.’ This remained the case until April 1994, when the Gib Hill barrow was scheduled separately (3.1.2).

At the same date (April 1994) the Arbor Low scheduling was extended to incorporate the entire known extent of the linear bank and ditch sometimes referred to as the ‘Avenue’ (see 3.1.3 below).

Scheduling now comes under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as amended. This is the highest form of protection afforded to such sites under English law. Under the present scheduling, the Arbor Low group of monuments is titled ‘Arbor Low henge, large irregular stone circle, linear bank and bowl barrow’.

Guardianship

On 12 July 1884, the Arbor Low monument, together with Gib Hill was placed in State Guardianship, a procedure introduced under the Ancient Monuments Protection Act 1882. Under this and successor legislation it is the responsibility of the Guardian – in this case English Heritage, on behalf of the Secretary of State – to maintain the monument. The Guardian is given full powers of control and management.

3.1.2 Gib Hill

Guardianship

In July 1884, Gib Hill, in tandem with Arbor Low (see above) was placed in State Guardianship (see above for powers conferred by this status).

Scheduling (National Monument no. I 1501)

In August 1916, Gib Hill was included in the Schedule of Monuments, as part of the Arbor Low scheduling (see 3.1.1 above). The monument group title was ‘Derbyshire 1: the earthen ring and stone circle known as Arbor Low and the tumulus of Gib Hill.’

The scheduled area was circular and did not include the north-eastern extent of the lower barrow.

In April 1994 Gib Hill was separately scheduled, with the title ‘Gib Hill oval barrow and bowl barrow’. At the same time, the scheduled area was extended to include the mound of the lower barrow, and what the scheduling document describes as its construction ditches.

Scheduling now comes under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as amended. This is the highest form of protection afforded to such sites under English law.

3.1.3 Linear earthwork known as the 'Avenue'

Scheduling (National Monument nos. I1503 / 01 and I1503 / 02)

As indicated above, both parts of this linear earthwork were included in the Schedule in April 1994, as an extension of the Arbor Low scheduling (Figure A3).

The eastern section (scheduled with Arbor Low as National Monument no. I1503 / 01) extends south from the Arbor Low henge. A second section (National Monument no. I1503 / 02) runs through Gibhill Plantation and into the field to its west. The c.70m gap between the two upstanding sections is not included in the scheduling (although it may contain the buried remains of a bank and ditch) as neither the extent nor the state of survival of the remains here are sufficiently understood.

As indicated at 2.10.3.1, it should be noted that research for this Conservation Plan shows that there may be a general lack of awareness of the existence, and scheduled status, of the second section of this monument (i.e. the stretch running into and through Gibhill Plantation and into the field to its west).

Scheduling now comes under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as amended. This is the highest form of protection afforded to such sites under English law. Under the present scheduling, the earthwork is given the title 'linear bank'.

3.1.4 Small barrow SE of Arbor Low

Scheduling (National Monument no. I2503)

This small barrow lies approximately 30m SE of the Arbor Low henge, and within the Arbor Low field. It was scheduled for the first time in April 1994.

3.1.5 National Park

Arbor Low and Gib Hill are located within the Peak District National Park, established in 1951 under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. National Parks constitute the UK's top tier of landscape designation.

3.1.6 Biodiversity Action Plan / Priority Habitat (Blakemoor Pits)

The ecology of the Blakemoor Pits area is relevant to Arbor Low and Gib Hill because it forms part of the local setting of the monuments, and because it has been suggested that the Blakemoor Pits fields might be an appropriate location for a footpath link to the scheduled monuments (see 2.9 and 2.16.5).

Two types of habitat here – acid grassland and limestone hill and heath – are considered to fall within the definition of National Priority Habitat, as specified within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan 1994. This committed the British Government and its agencies to programmes to conserve species and habitats, develop public awareness and understanding, and contribute to biodiversity work in the European and global context. A series of action plans were drawn up for species and habitats of conservation concern by the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group in 1995 (revised in 1998). A Peak District Biodiversity Action Plan has also been produced to reflect local interests and priorities: this is the primary nature conservation document for the Peak District and is shared with a wide range of partners. It includes a number of Habitat and Species Action Plans, and its aim is to set the agenda for Peak District wildlife conservation, both within and outside the National Park.

3.2 Cultural Heritage: archaeological and research significance

3.2.1 Arbor Low

- The complex of structures at Arbor Low is of high archaeological and research significance, both nationally and regionally. Its national significance is recognised by its scheduled status (3.1.1).
- Considered separately, both the Arbor Low henge and the large irregular stone circle which it encloses are nationally rare forms of monument.

- Even more significantly, this is one of very few (between 8 and 13) sites in Britain where a stone circle exists within a henge – sites with a very wide geographical range, from Orkney to Cornwall. Arbor Low thus plays a significant role in comparative analyses of this nationally-important group of structures and their complex functions within prehistoric societies across Britain.
- Within the Peak District, the Arbor Low stone circle is one of only six to have survived relatively intact. (The other five are smaller circles on Bamford Moor, at Barbrook, and on / close to Stanton Moor.)
- The presence of a central cove is a characteristic shared with only a few stone circles in Britain – again at a very widely spread range of locations.
- Considered in isolation, the barrow superimposed on the henge is one of perhaps 500 round barrows in the region, and about 10,000 nationally. In its specific context, however (which is as yet only very imperfectly understood) the placing of this barrow on the earlier henge constitutes an archaeologically rare form of evidence for change in cultural / political / religious practice in prehistory.
- Arbor Low is an architecturally and chronologically complex monument. Its known elements (henge, circle, cove and barrow) have enabled significant analyses of the roles such a structure might have played and of possible patterns of change in prehistoric society.
- It is highly likely that additional evidence for structural complexity, development and change at Arbor Low awaits discovery: possibilities include timber settings, phased ditch and bank construction, and features associated with entrances, with the central area, and with buried ground surfaces. The monument thus has the potential to enable a more detailed and subtle understanding of the beliefs and practices of the generations of people for whom this was an important focus.
- Most elements of the group of structures which constitute Arbor Low are well preserved and in a stable condition. Although parts of the monument (particularly the barrow and the area around the cove) have been excavated, and some areas may have been disturbed by the burial of modern offerings, extensive areas of the structure do not appear to have been disturbed, and, as indicated above, are likely to retain archaeological evidence of national significance. There is considerable potential for this to be explored using modern excavation techniques and the range of other investigative methods now available.
- As one of two major henges in the region which appear to have acted as the principal ceremonial foci here in the Late Neolithic, it underpins current understanding of the way in which different communities may have divided this territory, and of possible social and cultural interaction within and between communities.
- The henge and circle gain in significance from the interrelationship (spatial, chronological, functional) with Gib Hill and other elements of this monument complex.
- Land adjacent to Arbor Low and Gib Hill has been examined as part of an extensive regional fieldwalking programme, applying new approaches to collection practice and data analysis. Results so far indicate a significant time-depth to the use of the area close to these monuments, and the presence of material which is subtly different in character and quality from that collected elsewhere in the region.
- The monument (and the analysis of contextual monuments and landscape use) has made a significant contribution to our understanding of change and development in the ways prehistoric communities may have interacted with the regional and local landscape, and our appreciation of the potential social, cultural and spiritual importance of this area from the Later Mesolithic to the Early Bronze Age (and later). Regionally-based studies have in turn fed into UK-wide analyses of the role of similar monuments. Arbor Low retains significant and not yet fully-explored potential to enhance our understanding of these periods, at both regional and national level.

3.2.2 Gib Hill

- The complex Gib Hill barrow is of considerable archaeological and research significance, both nationally and regionally: a significance recognised by its scheduled status (3.1.2).
- Field evidence suggests that the Gib Hill / Arbor Low ridge may have been an important locale for prehistoric communities from the Early Mesolithic onwards. As current knowledge stands, the site of the barrow was the earliest focus for ceremonial activity on this ridge. The sequence of structures built here is likely to have played a significant role in relation to land tenure and community memory.
- Long barrows (and oval barrows – see below) are among the oldest field monuments which survive in the British landscape.
- A formal definition of the ‘rarity’ status of the lower barrow at Gib Hill depends on the category in which it is placed. If considered as a long barrow, as suggested by Barnatt and others¹, then it is one of several hundred such monuments found in widely scattered locations in Britain. Using English Heritage criteria², long barrows are one of very few classes of monument representative of the Middle Neolithic period. If classified as an ‘oval’ barrow, it becomes part of a ‘very rare’ group comprising less than 50 certain or probable examples, with a highly regional distribution.
- Within the Peak District, there are only a handful (6 - 11) of documented long barrows. (No oval barrows have been recognised here – unless Gib Hill is counted as such.)
- The monument at Gib Hill gains considerable archaeological and research significance from the fact that a later barrow has been built on top of the lower mound. This characteristic is rare nationally, but does occur occasionally in the Peak District. (Examples include the probable two-phased barrow SW of the Bull Ring henge. The superimposition of the barrow on the Arbor Low henge bank appears to be a linked phenomenon.)
- The upper barrow at Gib Hill – while one of the larger round barrows in the Peak District – is of a type fairly common in the region (and nationally). However, as with the Arbor Low barrow, in its specific context it provides significant (if as yet only partly understood) evidence for changes in prehistoric society which may have been political, cultural and / or religious.
- While certain areas of the monument have been extensively disturbed by early excavations (both recorded and unrecorded), it is likely to retain substantial archaeological evidence relating to all phases of use.
- The surrounding construction / quarry ditches are believed to be intact (English Heritage 1994b). Barnatt’s 1991 survey distinguishes between ditches which may perhaps be attributed to the building of the long barrow, those which may relate to the round barrow, and those which appear to be later (2.4.1). Few such quarry ditches have been excavated archaeologically, and (assuming they have survived damage through later quarrying, ploughing and grazing) they may retain significant archaeological information. This could relate not only to the time of construction of the barrows (when artefacts may have been placed here) but to ceremonies which may have taken place subsequently.
- To date, the region has seen very little excavation of Neolithic monuments to modern standards, and thus relatively little is known about structural and chronological sequences and the nature of contents and grave goods. As with Arbor Low, there is scope for exploration of the structural complexity and sequence of

¹ As indicated earlier, Barnatt and others take the view that the characteristics associated with the term ‘long barrow’ are more appropriate to the lower mound at Gib Hill than are those of a typical oval barrow.

² www.english-heritage.org.uk: Monument Class Descriptions. These are currently in the process of revision.

development at Gib Hill, using modern excavation techniques and the range of other investigative techniques which are now available.

- The barrow gains in significance from the interrelationship (spatial, chronological, functional) between the different elements of the monument complex of which it forms an intrinsic part.
- As indicated at 3.2.1, land adjacent to Gib Hill and Arbor Low has been examined as part of an extensive regional fieldwalking programme, applying new approaches to collection practice and data analysis. Results so far indicate a significant time-depth to the use of the area close to these monuments, and the presence of material which is subtly different in character and quality from that found elsewhere in the programme area.
- Analysis of the monument complex constituted by Gib Hill / Arbor Low (and contextual monuments and landscape use) has made a significant contribution to our understanding of change and development in the ways prehistoric communities may have interacted with the regional and local landscape, and our appreciation of the potential social, cultural and spiritual importance of this area from the Later Mesolithic to the Early Bronze Age (and later). Regionally-based studies have in turn fed into UK-wide analyses of the role of similar monuments. Gib Hill (both in its own right and as part of a major monument complex) retains significant and not yet fully-explored potential to enhance our understanding of these periods, at both regional and national level.

3.2.3 Linear earthwork known as the ‘Avenue’

- Although the prevailing view is that this monument is probably considerably later than the henge which it abuts, it forms an intrinsic component of the multi-phased archaeological landscape at Arbor Low / Gib Hill: a significance recognised by its scheduled status.
- As an undated feature of uncertain function, it is difficult to characterise and quantify its significance. However, if confirmed to be of late prehistoric or Romano-British date, it would be one of an important group of earthworks from these periods known to survive in the region.
- Although damaged in places by ploughing, quarrying and stock-related erosion, substantial stretches of the earthwork survive in reasonable condition, and only a short stretch has been disturbed by excavation, more than a century ago. There is thus potential for the analysis of archaeological and environmental evidence from the structure itself, and from buried ground surfaces, using modern investigative techniques. Such analysis could enhance understanding, not only of the earthwork, but of the way in which land close to the major monuments was regarded and used at a time (presumably) when Arbor Low and Gib Hill had lost their original significance.
- Recent topographical and landscape analysis suggests that there is further scope for assessment of the route which it followed, and thus for analysis of its possible function.

3.3 Group value

- From an archaeological perspective, the group of monuments at Arbor Low / Gib Hill gains much of its significance from the complex relationship between its constituent parts.
- Aggregations of monuments of different design are a relatively rare but vital part of the Neolithic / Early Bronze Age resource across much of Britain, and offer special opportunities for understanding.
- In so far as the different elements of this site are understood, cultural beliefs and practices (and changes in belief and practice) are expressed in the sequence of structures here: in their building, augmenting, rebuilding, slighting, and shifting of

location. This interplay between the different components of the monument group is what gives the site much of its meaning and thus its archaeological and research significance.

- The smaller barrows and the linear earthwork also form important, if less visually obvious, elements of the monument group, showing different forms of use (and re-use) of ground immediately outside the major structures.
- In landscape terms, the interrelationship between the two main monuments, and the difference in their topographical position, are highly important. Visually, there is a striking interplay between these two foci, in their related (but very different) positions in the landscape.
- From the closely linked perspectives of spiritual value, visitor significance and sense of place, the presence of two major monuments, each developed and changed over many hundreds of years, and situated very close to each other in the landscape, emphasises the impression that this has been a 'special place' over a very long period of time.

3.4 Modern significance of landscape setting



Arbor Low and its setting, taken looking NW towards limestone hills above the Dove Valley. (Photograph: PDNPA)

- Many of the qualities which give Arbor Low and Gib Hill their modern significance (qualities such as their aesthetic and spiritual appeal, and their status as a major regional visitor attraction) derive quite substantially from the monuments' location and landscape setting.
- They provide very long views over a highly varied, beautiful and largely unspoilt rural landscape – views described by visitors as 'spectacular, panoramic, commanding'.
- The quality and character of this landscape setting are major factors in making the site feel 'remote', 'wild', 'isolated', 'peaceful' – and yet exhilarating.
- In addition to views 'out', the subtlety of the monuments' locations in relation to the very local topography of the ridge top, adds to the character and quality of their landscape setting.
- According to a visitor survey, the visual and sensory appeal of the site and its setting are its principal attraction. (However, in many cases, this 'visual / sensory' reaction is inextricably linked with people's awareness of the nature and age of the monuments, and their sense that this has been a special place for a very long time.)
- The character and interest of the setting are enriched by a wealth of prehistoric and historic features – from hilltop barrows to the patterns of field walls. Even with no prior knowledge of what they are or how they have been formed, some of these features are visually striking; however, for many visitors, the richness of this landscape can be enhanced by information and interpretation.

3.5 Ecological significance

- The Arbor Low field has lost the majority of the ecological significance it retained until about 20 years ago, although remnants of species-rich limestone turf may survive on the henge banks.
- To the immediate south and SSW of Gib Hill, the Blakemoor Pits area provides important habitat in an otherwise largely improved agricultural landscape. The ecological importance of this area is recognised by national and local priority habitat designations (2.9, 3.1.6).

3.6 Agricultural significance

- Arbor Low and Gib Hill fields and adjoining land provide good pasture for stock (both cattle and sheep).

3.7 Significance of management (monument condition and visual presentation)

- Following recent management initiatives including erosion repairs, the re-setting of boundary markers, and (by and large) the exclusion of inappropriate stock, the monuments are generally in better condition than they have been for some years.
- The detailed topographical survey undertaken by English Heritage in November 2007 will provide a useful baseline for future monitoring of erosion and certain other forms of damage.
- The removal of obtrusive interpretive signs, and their recent replacement with lower-impact signs has enhanced the 'natural' appearance of the monuments and their immediate setting.
- Questionnaire / consultation responses (obtained in a 1996 survey and in the course of research for this Conservation Plan) indicate that the vast majority of visitors appreciate the existing 'low-key' approach to management. They emphasise the site's apparent 'naturalness', peace, emptiness, 'wildness', and its uncluttered state.
- Regular monitoring by the PDNPA Ranger Service has made a useful contribution to site management.
- Low-key management arrangements for Solstices have enabled visitors to enjoy these events, while mitigating their impact on the monument complex itself and on landowners.

3.8 Recreational value / significance for visitors and tourism

- Visitor information published by the National Park Authority, English Heritage and others consistently describes the monuments (and particularly Arbor Low) as a major regional visitor attraction, and often as the major archaeological attraction in Derbyshire / the Peak District. (On-site information has also described it as one of the most important prehistoric monuments in the country.) It seems hard for people to resist using the 'Stonehenge of the North' label, which must always act as a draw. Descriptions include:

"The region's most important prehistoric site ... sometimes referred to as the Stonehenge of the North". (English Heritage on-line visitor information.)

"Welcome to Arbor Low, one of the most important prehistoric monuments of Britain." (Opening text of the dilapidated sign in the Arbor Low car park, removed in March 2008.)

"The most famous Neolithic site in the Peak District...sometimes dubbed the Stonehenge of the North."(Official National Park Guide, Smith and Manley 2000.)

“The finest Stone Age ‘henge’ monument in the North of England, a site of unique archaeological and cultural interest.” (www.cressbrook.co.uk, the leading site currently generated by a web search for Arbor Low.)

“One of the most important prehistoric sites in Derbyshire.” (www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk, currently listed second in a web search for Arbor Low.)

“The best-known of the Peak District prehistoric monuments.” (‘Archaeology Walks in the Peak District’, Cooper 1999.)

- The site brings no direct income to the National Park (beyond the sale of guide books) or to English Heritage. However, visitors’ reactions to the site and the way in which it is presented (having been introduced to it as an ‘important’ place) may have a significant influence on the way in which they view the National Park and English Heritage.
- Visitor numbers are not known, but informal estimates based on takings in the site ‘honesty box’ are that there may be 5000 or so adult visitors a year. This will exclude children (who enter for free). The only specific visitor count (undertaken over the Easter holiday in 1996) recorded 749 visitors over 25 days.
- Results from the Easter 1996 visitor survey¹, summarised at 2.12 indicated that:
 - For a large majority of visitors (77%), Arbor Low was not the main focus of their journey to the area that day.
 - Most visitors (about 90%) were from outside the Peak District – either on holiday there, or visiting for the day.
 - A significant majority (70%) were visiting the site for the first time.
 - The aspects of the site most frequently cited as enjoyable were qualities such as ‘atmosphere’, ‘peace and tranquillity’, ‘solitude’, ‘wildness’, ‘emptiness’, ‘mystery’, wonder’, ‘spectacular views’, ‘undeveloped’, ‘unspoilt’.
 - There were fewer references to enjoyment of the historic value of the monuments themselves: for example, a ‘sense of history’, ‘links with the past’, the relative completeness of the henge.

These results – if applicable to 2008 – suggest that (perhaps particularly at holiday periods) many people visit the site ‘on spec’ because it sounds interesting, and maybe because it is very close to the A515. Having got there, however, they appreciate its semi-remote feel, its peace and spectacular views. There is insufficient information to gauge the extent to which people engage with the (pre)historic significance of the site. The available evidence suggests that, if many of those who come here are holiday visitors to the Peak District, and first-time visitors to the monuments, there is considerable scope for the site to generate good (or bad) impressions of the attitude of National Park Authority / English Heritage to prehistoric sites, and the care with which they are managed, interpreted and presented.

- A significant but unquantified proportion of visitors come specifically or partly because of the spiritual appeal of Arbor Low. This aspect of visitor significance is considered separately at 3.10.

3.9 Aesthetic value

- The qualities which contribute to the site’s aesthetic, spiritual and recreational value are closely linked.
- Many of these forms of significance draw on its landscape setting – not only the sense of ‘openness’, the big skylines and the long and beautiful views, but the subtlety of the monuments’ relationship to the local lie of the land.

¹ Booth et al 1996. This is the only known visitor survey. In using its conclusions, we are making the assumption that survey results were valid and that things have not changed too significantly over 12 years.

- Visitors speak of appreciating the site's 'wildness', 'naturalness' and lack of clutter: its 'unspoilt' quality.
- The contrast between the closed-off inner space within the henge and the sense of wide, open space outside it forms an essential part of its aesthetic appeal.
- The site is celebrated in many images (photographs, drawings and paintings). What is captured in many of these is the circle of white stones flat on the ground within the wider circle of the enclosing henge bank. In some senses, it is the implicit drama of the stones' position which is at the core of these images, raising questions about what happened here and why.



Arbor Low in winter.
(Photograph: PDNPA)

3.10 Modern spiritual value

- For many people who visit Arbor Low, the site has spiritual significance. For some, this is associated with specific beliefs, but for others it expresses itself through a sense that this is a 'special place', which once held deep meaning for the communities who built and used it. Visitors speak of its atmosphere of 'mystery' and 'sacredness', and of 'communion with Earth's energy'. An appreciation of the natural beauty of the site and its landscape setting is also, in many senses, spiritual.
- For some, the conviction that this place possesses a spiritual quality, or is sacred in some way, is expressed overtly through visiting at Solstices and other significant dates, and through formal or informal ceremonies and the leaving of offerings. For others, an appreciation of the spiritual significance of the monuments and their location in the landscape does not require overt expression.
- It is probably impossible to characterise a slippery, and very personal, concept like spiritual value, nor would it be easy to quantify the proportion of visitors for whom this aspect of the site is important. However, anecdotal evidence from regular visitors, several years of experience of the site by the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm, the results of the 1996 visitor survey, and the nature of many websites which give space to Arbor Low, all indicate that its spiritual value is what draws many to the site – or adds to its appeal when they are there.
- Gib Hill might not (on its own) exert the same modern spiritual 'pull' as Arbor Low. However, the fact that the sites lie so close to each other, and bear witness to the importance which this ridge top held over a very long period of time in prehistory, adds to the overall sense that this is a special place.

- Although there has been no opportunity to research this point, it is probable that the low-key nature of present arrangements for managing Summer Solstice visitors enhances their enjoyment of the site and its atmosphere.

3.1.1 Significance for interpretation, education and outreach

Overview of interpretive value

- From an archaeological perspective, the Arbor Low / Gib Hill monument complex is of national significance, and comprises several rare characteristics. It is often described as the region's most important prehistoric site. This level of significance, combined with its aesthetic and spiritual appeal, its highly attractive location, and easy accessibility from the road network, mean that the quality and accessibility of interpretation (both on- and off-site) are of prime importance.
- In contrast to many prehistoric sites, these are large, striking, well-preserved structures, which generate an immediate response, without any need for the 'eye of faith'.
- Their close association with little-understood ceremonies, with burial, and with an element of concealment (implied by the henge and cove) helps to stimulate visitors' interest and imagination.
- The long time-span during which the monuments were created, used and altered provides an excellent way to breathe life into prehistoric communities, by showing their complexity, and the fact that cultures and beliefs could change quite markedly over time.
- The interpretive value of the monuments themselves is extended and enriched by the quality and character of their setting, which is of considerable prehistoric, historic, ecological and geological interest.
- The ease of access of the monuments by car makes the site suitable for a wide range of visitors, including families with young children. No up-to-date visitor profile exists, but it seems likely that the site therefore offers an opportunity to engage with non-standard audiences (i.e. people who might not automatically relish a long trudge across wet moorland to reach some archaeology).
- The site already benefits from two large interpretive panels, installed in November 2007. (In keeping with the open, rural nature of the site, and many visitors' views that it should be left uncluttered, these lie at some distance from the monuments.)

Potential for learning and outreach

- Research carried out for this Conservation Plan has shown the varied and creative ways in which certain schools, universities and other bodies make use of the monument complex and its setting.
- Existing initiatives demonstrate the potential breadth of the site's value for learning and outreach – encompassing diverse forms of archaeological and historical appreciation, creative writing, drawing, and spatial and landscape analysis.
- Evidence from existing users shows that, as a rather mysterious, unusual site, in a striking setting, it has the potential to engage students who rarely, if ever, visit the Peak District or visit prehistoric monuments.

Staff from both the National Park Learning Service and the Ranger Service have expressed great interest in and enthusiasm for the site's learning and outreach potential. Although this potential is somewhat undeveloped (partly because of the lack of facilities and good footpath links) they feel that, if ways could be found to address these issues, the site presents exciting possibilities (although the need to minimise impacts on the monuments, their atmosphere and setting, and on landowners and tenants should be borne in mind).

- If funding were available, the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm have expressed interest in the refurbishment of an existing barn for various purposes, which might include use of part of the premises as a wet-weather centre for educational visits.

3.12 Community value

- The explicit inclusion of the monument complex (and particularly Arbor Low) as a significant element within a recent community project based on Middleton and Youlgrave indicates that, for some local people, the site's longevity and atmosphere, and its striking visual qualities make it a local symbol – as emphasised by the use of a photograph of the henge and circle as the main image on the project leaflet.
- Given that this accessible and striking monument complex constitutes one of Britain's most important archaeological sites, it offers potential for increased community engagement (while bearing in mind the need to minimise impacts on the monuments, their atmosphere and setting, and on landowners and tenants).

3.13 Access value

- Compared to many prehistoric sites, Arbor Low and Gib Hill are very easily accessible (for motorists), lying close to a major A road (which acts as a principal regional through-route), and a very short walk from a car park.
- The site lies close to good public footpath networks and cycle trails, although no footpath approaches closer than 0.5km.
- Access routes from nearest A road and from minor roads all pass through very attractive agricultural landscape, typical of the National Park's limestone plateau.
- On-site directional signage (and other route indicators such as discreet path surfacing) have all been very recently installed or renewed, and are thus in good condition.
- Although the site is not suitable for adaptation to enable full access for those with different abilities, pedestrian gates have been installed throughout the site (except at the temporary fence round Gib Hill), and a steep slope on the access route has been regraded and resurfaced.
- Notwithstanding various reservations, many visitors feel that the rural, ad-hoc character of the access route, which passes through a working farm, is appropriate to the site.
- Concessionary public access to both monuments has been ensured for a substantial period (20 and 25 years respectively) by two recent agreements between English Heritage and the respective owners of (a) the Arbor Low field and (b) the route from the public road to and through the Gib Hill field. (Both agreements are, however, subject to changes in land ownership.)
- Although the owners of the access route make a small charge for admission, the access agreement with English Heritage stipulates that this cannot be increased without consultation.
- The positive attitude of the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm (both towards the monuments themselves and to those who visit them) makes an important contribution to monument access.

4 Issues and vulnerability

4.1 Introduction

Drawing on the results of research and consultation set out in Section 2 and the analysis of significance in Section 3, this section summarises factors which detract from the significance of the monument complex at Arbor Low / Gib Hill or have the potential to do so. It summarises threats and areas of vulnerability in order to provide a basis for developing the policies that are needed to tackle them.

4.2 Cultural heritage: impacts on monument condition

4.2.1 Arbor Low

- Following recent (2007) erosion repairs and re-setting of boundary markers, the monument is in better condition than it has been for many years.
- There is a need to monitor whether the new turf and other repairs undertaken in 2007 bed in successfully.
- A draft grazing agreement between English Heritage and the agricultural tenant of the Arbor Low field remains unsigned (although it is understood that this situation will soon be remedied).
- The drystone wall around the Arbor Low field should be repaired, to exclude inappropriate stock (and improve the appearance of this boundary).
- The absence of a water supply in the the Arbor Low field has led to the field gate being left open to allow sheep to reach the water source in the Gib Hill field, thus enabling cattle (excluded under the terms of the grazing tenancy) to enter the Arbor Low field, with consequent impacts on monument condition. The recently-agreed provision of a water bowser by English Heritage should enable this problem to be rectified from 2008 onwards.
- Given the fairly constant flow of visitors, it will continue to be necessary to monitor and mitigate their impact on the monument, whether in terms of erosion or other forms of physical damage – for example the burying of offerings.
- While there has been little or no recent physical impact on the monument or surrounding land from gatherings of people at Solstices, it remains necessary to make advance provision for these (and similar) events, and to monitor their impact.
- While visitor numbers do not currently pose a threat to the monument, it should be borne in mind that a major increase would have a negative impact on monument condition (and on various other values: see 4.10 and 4.11).



Visitors explore the henge bank and orthostats, Arbor Low, Summer 2008. (Photograph: D. Angel)

- While the 20 year lease of the Arbor Low field provides a good medium-term basis for ensuring monument conservation and public access, it remains necessary to work towards a long-term solution.

4.2.2 Gib Hill

- The programme of repairs undertaken in 2007 did not include full reinstatement of the erosion scar on the NW side of the barrow. Although this has (largely) grassed over, in PDNPA's view there is a need for soil and turf reinstatement here, to protect vulnerable layers.
- Although – with some exceptions – the temporary fence around the monument has protected it from damage over recent years, it remains vulnerable to stock damage (particularly from cattle) if the Section 17 Agreement with the landowner is not renewed, and the fence is removed.
- The presence of the fence (and the two fixed stiles which cross it) has generated a certain amount of focal erosion around the foot of both stiles, on the side furthest away from the monument.
- Erosion also exists along the desire lines between the stiles and the barrow summit. The position of the NW stile (which many visitors use when leaving the barrow) encourages people to slither down the steep north-western slope, through the vulnerable eroded area referred to above.
- As with Arbor Low, while visitor numbers do not currently pose a threat to the monument, it should be borne in mind that a major increase would have a negative impact on monument condition, and on various other valued characteristics of the site.



Desire line leading down partly-eroded NW side of Gib Hill barrow towards NW stile, February 2008. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

4.2.3 Linear earthwork (the 'Avenue')

- No condition survey of the scheduled linear earthwork has ever been undertaken. However, as part of more general surveys, Barnatt (1991) and Guilbert (1994b) noted damage to one or two sections, caused by past quarrying and by cattle. A detailed topographical survey was undertaken in 2007 (Newsome and Riley, in prep.).
- Section B of the earthwork runs through land which, although no longer ploughed, was subject to fairly frequent ploughing in the recent past. Visual inspection indicates that this has had a significant impact on the monument, changing and smoothing its contours.
- Section D lies within a plantation to which cattle have access.
- Section E was ploughed about 5 years ago. (However, the land manager has no plans to plough it again and is happy to discuss how best to manage sections C to E of the earthwork.)

4.2.4 Impacts on archaeological value of adjacent land

- The known and potential interest of the Arbor Low and Gib Hill fields (e.g. the small barrows and other potential features and deposits) could be vulnerable to certain forms of agricultural land use, such as ploughing or grazing other than by sheep.

4.3 Cultural heritage: gaps in archaeological knowledge

4.3.1 Arbor Low

The last excavation of Arbor Low took place more than a century ago, and looked at limited aspects of the monument. There has thus been no opportunity to apply modern archaeological techniques (including environmental analysis) to this important and complex structure. The following indicative list of issues which could be addressed by future work is based on research targets suggested by John Barnatt (PDNPA) – and by Mark Edmonds (now at the University of York) and Jon Humble (EH) – and reflects questions identified within this Conservation Plan.

- Does evidence survive for previously unidentified features within the central area (for example timber settings and pits)?
- Is it possible to find firm evidence for the original position of the orthostats (i.e. were they upright or recumbent, and were they regularly spaced)?
- Were the orthostats quarried from what became the ditch, or did they originate elsewhere?
- What can be learned about the character of the entrances (e.g. are there post-holes, stone-holes or placed deposits)?
- What can be learned from re-investigation of Gray's sections through the bank and (especially) the ditch? Is there evidence for phasing and maintenance?
- Is it possible to obtain specific dating evidence and a better understanding of overall chronological sequence – both for Arbor Low itself and in terms of the chronological relationship of its different elements to the multi-phased monument at Gib Hill?
- Does environmental evidence survive which will tell us what was growing in surrounding land when the monument was built, and how open (or otherwise) the landscape was?
- What information is available from buried ground surfaces about the nature of any pre-henge activities?
- Although we know that the barrow on the henge bank is superimposed and that it contained a cist, we currently know nothing of the character of the barrow's construction and phasing, nor of any further burials or ritual deposits which it may contain.
- More generally, what can new evidence tell us about the ways in which architectural practice changed through time? To what degree was the monument's function redefined? How long did it stay in use?
- In what ways can it add to or alter our existing (and tentative) understanding of prehistoric communities in the region and the ways in which they interacted with each other, with their ancestors and gods and with their natural environment?
- How might new data from Arbor Low enrich (and possibly change) understanding of henges and stone circles within Britain?

4.3.2 Gib Hill

No excavation of Gib Hill has taken place since the mid 19th century, and the various elements of the monument are very poorly understood and in need of clarification. Issues which could be investigated by archaeological investigation to modern standards include those listed below. They are based on research suggestions made by John Barnatt at PDNPA, and reflect topics identified within this Conservation Plan.

- Is there a lower barrow (as indicated by the evidence so far)? If so, what form did it take?
- What is the nature of any deposits which it contains?
- Is there a chamber?

- Is it possible to obtain specific dating evidence and a better understanding of phasing and overall chronological sequence – both for Gib Hill itself, and in terms of its relationship to the sequence of structures at Arbor Low?
- What evidence can the quarry ditches around the monument provide e.g. in relation to chronological sequence and the nature of any deposits?
- What information is available from buried ground surfaces about the nature of any pre-barrow activities?
- As with Arbor Low, does environmental evidence survive which can tell us about the nature of the surrounding landscape when the structures were built?
- How might new data from Gib Hill enrich (and possibly change) our existing understanding of prehistoric communities within the region?

4.3.3 Linear earthwork / the ‘Avenue’

- Very little is known about the date and possible function of this feature.
- Its original extent is not known. Surveys in 1990 and 2007 indicate that there is scope for further investigation of evidence for surviving remains to the north of the henge, and of possible landscape evidence for its route elsewhere.
- The only known excavation of the feature took place over 100 years ago.
- Although some sections have been eroded by recent ploughing, there has been no investigation of these damaged areas – or other areas of the feature – in order to (a) seek archaeological evidence, including evidence from potential buried ground surfaces, and (b) inform future management.

4.3.4 Land adjacent to Arbor Low and Gib Hill

- Geophysical investigation in 1998 suffered various problems, not entirely resolved in 2000, and only covered part of the wider Arbor Low field and a very small part of the Gib Hill field. There remains potential for geophysical assessment of appropriate areas here and in adjacent fields, using up-to-date techniques.
- Since their identification by Barnatt (1991), there has been no archaeological investigation of a small barrow and a possible second barrow in the Gib Hill field. These have the potential to yield evidence for the way in which the area close to the major monuments was used and valued in prehistory, and perhaps in later periods. Such investigation would have the added benefit of informing management of this area.
- Fieldwalking, topographical survey and landscape analysis have all contributed to the (very tentative) picture of the way in which the zone around Arbor Low and Gib Hill was used and regarded in prehistory. Barnatt and Edmonds suggest that a programme of test-pitting across as wide an area as feasible around the monuments will help to characterise human use of this zone, and test the validity of artefact patterning identified via surface collection.

4.4 Improving access to collections and archives

- There is potential for specialist access to Arbor Low and Gib Hill material at Weston Park Museum Sheffield to be improved via expansion of the Museum’s computerised database to incorporate the artefactual and paper archive relevant to the monuments, including illustrated material.

4.5 Impacts on group value

- Visually, the temporary fence round Gib Hill tends to isolate the monument from its setting.
- Many of the gaps in archaeological knowledge highlighted at 4.3 have an impact on appreciation of the group significance of the monument complex – for example

the chronological and functional relationships between the various elements of the major monument groups, and the current lack of knowledge about the date and function of the 'Avenue'.

4.6 Impacts on landscape setting

- Currently, there appear to be no significant threats to the visual quality of the wider landscape setting of the monuments.
- As indicated at 4.12, improved interpretation of various aspects of monument setting (e.g. its prehistoric, historic, ecological and geological significance) could enhance visitors' appreciation of this landscape.

4.7 Impacts on ecological value

- Agricultural improvement since the mid 1980s has diminished the ecological value of the Arbor Low field, although remnants of species-rich limestone turf may survive on the henge banks.
- In assessing the feasibility of a new footpath link from the west, its potential impact on the ecological significance of the Blakemoor Pits area will need to be taken into account.

4.8 Impacts on agricultural value

- As indicated at 4.2.1, the lack of a water supply for stock grazing the Arbor Low field has meant that the field gate has had to be left open to allow access between this field and the water source in the Gib Hill field. A recent agreement on the provision of a water bowser by English Heritage should remedy this problem.

4.9 Issues relevant to tenure and management structures

- Overall, major steps have been taken in the last few years to resolve long-standing problems relating to control over the ways in which the monuments are managed, and concessionary access. However, as indicated below, the present solutions could be seen as relatively vulnerable, in that:
 - they are based on 20 and 25-year agreements rather than permanent changes in ownership;
 - in some cases, they rely on the maintenance of good will between the various parties (EH and landowners / tenants);
 - some agreements (and informal but effective arrangements) are vulnerable to changes in property ownership.

Thus, while (with some provisos) things seem to be working effectively at present, important elements of the current management structure are highly vulnerable to various forms of change. It remains important to reach more permanent solutions, and (with or without such solutions) to strengthen mechanisms and opportunities for fruitful liaison between EH, PDNPA, landowners and tenants.

Specific issues are listed below.

- A signature on the grazing agreement between EH and the agricultural tenant of Arbor Low field is pending.
- A revised Local Management Agreement (now Maintained Property Agreement) covering Arbor Low, Gib Hill, and the northern section of the linear earthwork, is still in draft, and is awaiting approval by PDNPA.
- A decision is pending on whether to renew the Section 17 Management Agreement for Gib Hill. There is a need for EH and PDNPA to resolve the question of whether erosion repairs should be carried out on the north-western side of the barrow. The issue of whether / when to remove the surrounding fence (in whole or in part) is closely linked to a decision on erosion repair, as new turf would need time to establish.



Gib Hill barrow enclosed within 'Section 17' fence. Taken looking west, Summer 2008. (Photograph: D. Angel)

- There has been very little discussion between EH / PDNPA and the various tenants / landowners on management and conservation of the 'Avenue'. This may be connected with a general lack of awareness of the full scheduled extent of this feature, and the variety of land ownerships along its route.
- The existing timetable and format of LMA Review meetings have a number of disadvantages:
 - there is little time to discuss management issues in the depth that they require;
 - site visits are often rushed;
 - meetings provide only limited opportunities to engage with landowners / tenants, and there is little or no opportunity for face-to-face contact with other interested parties (e.g. the PDNPA Ranger Service).
- Given that good liaison is essential to the successful maintenance of the complex management arrangements associated with Arbor Low / Gib Hill (which include existing and future arrangements for access, outreach, interpretation and presentation), there is scope for some formalisation of liaison. This would help to ensure that all parties have access to accurate information on land ownership, tenancy, access rights and current legal agreements. It would enable all appropriate parties to have an input into discussion (if they wish), and would assist the resolution of problems and misunderstandings which may arise.
- Following recent reorganisation within EH, responsibility for various aspects of the management and conservation of the Arbor Low / Gib Hill monument complex is split between staff at different bases. For PDNPA, this can result in uncertainty about which EH staff have responsibility for which issues.
- There is a need for improved two-way communication between PDNPA office-based staff and the Ranger Service.

4.10 Impacts on recreational value

- It is apparent from past survey and recent small-scale consultation that the majority of visitors appreciate the apparent 'naturalness' and 'wildness' of the monuments and their immediate setting, and would thus wish the visually low-key management and presentation of the site to be maintained. Many commented that over-tidiness, over-promotion or visual clutter would spoil their experience of the monuments.
- While visitor numbers do not currently pose a threat to the monuments, it should be borne in mind that a major increase would have a negative impact on the very qualities which most current visitors value.

- For some visitors (but not a majority) the approach past the cattle shed and silage clamp detracts from their visit.
- For several years, the dilapidated sign in the car park (removed in March 2008) has conveyed a very poor first impression of the site.
- There has been no recent visitor survey.
- For other impacts on recreational value, see 4.11 (aesthetic and spiritual significance), 4.12 (interpretation and signage) and 4.14 (physical access and accessibility).

4.11 Impacts on aesthetic and spiritual significance

- Any tendency to 'over-manage' the site (see 4.10 above) would have an impact on its perceived aesthetic and spiritual qualities.
- A new English Heritage sign, shortly to be installed on the Arbor Low field gate, will ask people not to leave anything on the site. It is possible that some visitors will interpret this as an attempt to curb the way in which they express the spiritual importance which the monument has for them.
- Conversely, some visitors experience offerings and ornaments as detracting from the value and atmosphere of the site.
- The temporary fence around Gib Hill is perceived by some as detracting from the appearance of the barrow and its immediate setting.
- As with the recreational value of the monuments (see above), a major increase in visitor numbers would have a negative impact on the aesthetic and spiritual significance of the site.

4.12 Impacts on interpretive value (signage and published information)

On-site interpretation

- The quality of fixed interpretation on-site has been improved by the recent installation of two new information panels. Although these are generally very effective, some visitors have questioned the quality of the main illustration on the Gib Hill panel.
- The National Park guide book to the monuments can sometimes be bought at Upper Oldhams Farm. However, its availability is dependant on the owner of the farm being able to obtain supplies, and being there to sell them. (And see information below on the need for a reprint.)
- This is a further illustration of the way in which various aspects of visitors' experience of Arbor Low / Gib Hill are partly dependant on the good will of the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm. As indicated at 4.9, there is scope for improved liaison with Mr and Mrs Dick on a range of issues.
- No interpretive leaflet is available, either on-site or off. Given the complexity of the monuments and their regional and national importance (and the fact that the guidebook is not always available) visitors might benefit from a leaflet which was (a) always available, (b) cheap and (c) enabled them to locate themselves in relation to all the features on the site, and particularly in relation to the different elements of Arbor Low. This kind of information is available on the fixed panels, but (especially for the first-time visitor) is very hard to carry in one's head.
- On-site (and off-site) interpretation does not address the richness of the site's setting: for example its prehistoric, historic, ecological and geological interest.

Off-site interpretation

- The National Park guidebook to the monuments will soon need to be reprinted: at the current rate of sale, both on- and off-site, there is stock left for one to two years. In addition, while still broadly accurate, it would benefit from some minor updating by its author to bring it into line with current archaeological thinking.

- While monument interpretation is available on EH and PDNPA websites, access to appropriate sections of these websites is not straightforward (see 2.15.4.1, 2.15.4.2).
- Descriptions of Arbor Low and Gib Hill on the websites of EH, PDNPA and associated bodies (e.g. Peak Experience) rarely include links to each others' sites and to external sources of good information. For example, none of these sites contains a link to the excellent material on the monuments available on the Weston Park Museum Sheffield website.
- In addition to web links, more thought could be given to directing people to more detailed printed information designed for a general audience (for example Barnatt and Smith 2004).

Local Interpretive Plan

- The PDNPA Local Interpretive Plan for the monuments was produced 15 years ago. There is thus considerable scope for this to be re-written, in the light of change and development in interpretive strategies and available media since that time.
- As indicated above, any new strategy should address ways to interpret the site's setting as well as the monuments themselves.

4.13 Impacts on value for education and outreach

- PDNPA staff professionally involved in education and outreach feel that the monuments and their setting have considerable potential, which has yet to be properly explored.
- With the exception of material produced by McElearney (see 2.13.7), no recently-produced interpretive material is available which is specifically tailored to education and outreach. Although an English Heritage leaflet for schools was produced some years ago, as far as can be ascertained this is not actively promoted.
- The business strategy of the National Park Learning Service ensures a focus on the expressed needs of customers (principally schools and Environment professionals). Many teachers feel that it is difficult to find a place for 'archaeology' (which may be quite narrowly perceived) in the current curriculum. In practice, however, a range of initiatives undertaken by PDNPA, schools, universities, local communities and others indicate just how rich a contribution the region's cultural heritage (including Arbor Low and Gib Hill) can make to learning (see for example Section 2.13).
- Although a number of schools and universities do bring students to Arbor Low / Gib Hill for a range of purposes, the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm (who are sometimes contacted about coach bookings) are the only source of information on group visits. EH and PDNPA staff have little or no knowledge of existing educational users, and consequently – apart from the survey carried out for this Conservation Plan – there has been no analysis of who visits and why, and of how links with existing and new users could be developed.
- There has been no PDNPA or EH contact with groups who may visit the site for a range of social or cultural reasons outside formal education.
- In the absence of a facility such as a wet-weather shelter, the exposed nature of the site is seen as presenting problems for educational groups, and particularly for younger children.
- The lack of good links to local footpath networks means that it is not an ideal site for Ranger-led walks with a focus on cultural / environmental heritage.

4.14 Impacts on access and accessibility

Overview

- As identified at 2.16.1.4, recent agreements covering concessionary access represent a major step forward. However, there remains a need to identify a more permanent solution, particularly as the Licensed Access Agreement covering the route from the public road and through the Gib Hill field would have to be renegotiated if the land were sold.
- In addition, the successful working of day-to-day access arrangements benefits from the interest, co-operation and good will of the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm. It is important to ensure that arrangements are in place for effective liaison with Mr and Mrs Dick (or their successors if the farm was sold) and with Mr and Mrs Woolley, as owners of the access route. Good liaison arrangements will assist the development of any future proposals (e.g. in relation to outreach), and the resolution of any problems or misunderstandings which may arise from time to time.

Character and presentation of route to the site from the public road

- There appears to be fairly general acceptance that the character and quality of the first stretch of the access route (along the track from the road, and past the farmhouse and cattle shed) are in keeping with the rural nature of the site.
- Efforts should continue to be made to ensure that run-off from the silage clamp (and mess associated with the cattle shed) is kept to a minimum, to the extent compatible with a working farm.
- There is some concern that the route from the car park (past the farmhouse) is not clearly signed, and that first-time visitors may believe this to be a private route, possibly guarded by dogs.
- The faded sign in the car park has been described as a 'disgrace' for many years, and has given a poor first impression of the management of this important site. It was removed in March 2008, but it is regrettable that it was not removed well before this.
- At present (July 2008), a temporary A4 notice has been pinned up by Mr. and Mrs. Dick to indicate the route to the monuments, and a further A4 sheet tells visitors where to park



Left: Privately-produced signs at informal car park, Upper Oldhams Farm, June 2008. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

Right: Looking north along concessionary access track past cattle shed (on right). Leachate from clamp (out of picture to left) is visible on track surface. (Photograph: S. McGuire)

Access for those with different abilities

- Following recent improvements, a Disability Discrimination Act audit of the site carried out in 2003 is out of date.
- Although the site is not considered suitable for adaptation to allow full disabled access, there is scope for EH and PDNPA to publish clearer information on the nature of access to and through the site (stressing for example the proximity of the car park and the existence of pedestrian gates, counterbalanced by the steepness of some slopes, and the lack of hard surfacing on paths).
- The height of the stiles through the temporary fence around Gib Hill poses a problem for some visitors. If the fence is retained, it should be made clearer that the field gate is not locked, and can be used as an alternative.
- The re-graded slope up to the Gib Hill field, south of the cattle shed, is still fairly steep, with an uneven surface. It might be possible to achieve a gentler gradient via minor re-routing of this path (but see the caveat in the last paragraph of 2.16.9).

Access from footpath network

- Links between the existing public footpath network and the site are not good. The route from the Parsley Hay information centre on the High Peak Trail involves crossing a dangerous A road, followed by a 1km walk on minor (but quite busy) roads. Footpath routes from Monyash end with a 0.5km walk along a minor road used by lorries.
- There is unrealised potential to link the site to the High Peak Trail, and thus to the Tissington Trail, at a point east of the A515 (although see the issues listed at 2.16.5).
- In addition (or as an alternative), there may be potential for links with other adjacent footpath networks, but these have not been explored.

Published access information

- EH, PDNPA and associated bodies (e.g. Peak Experience) should review the access information which they provide in the light of problems identified in this Conservation Plan. For example:
 - is it accurate *?
 - is it easily accessible?
 - does it include public transport information?
 - does it give appropriate contact information?

* It should be noted that, following distribution of a draft version of this Conservation Plan, comments on the inaccuracy of certain aspects of access guidance for visitors have been passed to appropriate EH staff (C. Clemett, pers. comm.).

Opening times and charges

- As indicated at 2.16.2, recent discussions between EH and the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm have revealed that, unlike the previous owners, the current owners are happy for the site to be described as open throughout the year, and that opening and closing times should not be specified. EH is now in the process of amending signage and other visitor information to reflect this.
- Despite the information on charging given on the privately-produced sign in the car park, some visitors are uncertain about the basis for the access charge. (A replacement sign, currently being produced by EH, may help to clarify the situation.)

Parking / electric fence

- Parking arrangements are generally thought to be adequate. However, hazard warnings on the electric fence alongside the car park could easily be masked by parked cars.

5 Policies

The following policy proposals are designed to retain and, where possible, enhance the varied significance of the monuments within their setting (as identified in Sections 2 and 3) and to address the vulnerabilities and threats to the value of the monuments which have been identified in Section 4. The proposed policies provide a framework for making decisions about the future care and presentation of Arbor Low and Gib Hill, and their positive management¹. It is recognised that, in many cases, the realisation of policies will be dependent on the availability of funding and staff time, and / or on further consultation between the various parties involved, and the securing of any necessary permissions.

Monument condition

All monuments

- 5.1 Continue to monitor the success of erosion (and other) repairs carried out in 2007.
- 5.2 Continue to monitor the impact of people, stock and other factors on monuments and adjacent archaeological land, and take action to mitigate these impacts as necessary.
- 5.3 Investigate the potential for securing agri-environment agreements for the Gib Hill and 'Avenue' fields, where appropriate.
- 5.4 Ensure that relevant landowners / tenants / EH and PDNPA staff are aware of the location and significance of all known archaeological features associated with Arbor Low and Gib Hill (including the full scheduled extent of the 'Avenue'), and the archaeological potential of land adjacent to monuments.

Arbor Low and Arbor Low field

- 5.5 Secure a signature to the grazing agreement for the Arbor Low field.
- 5.6 Secure funding for repair of drystone walling around the Arbor Low field and carry out repairs (in stages if necessary).
- 5.7 Monitor the success of newly-agreed arrangements for an independent water supply in the Arbor Low field.

Gib Hill and Gib Hill field

- 5.8 Review the condition of the 1996 erosion scar on the north-western face of the barrow and the area around the re-set SSW boundary marker, and take action as necessary.
- 5.9 Review the need for renewal of the Section 17 management agreement, and retention of the temporary fence, in whole or in part.
- 5.10 Consider relocation of the stiles through the temporary fence to reduce erosion.

Linear earthwork / the 'Avenue'

- 5.11 Carry out a condition survey of this earthwork, and, in liaison with landowners / land managers along its route, take appropriate action to conserve surviving sections and mitigate future damage. (Such action could include small-scale archaeological investigation, to provide archaeological information and inform future management.)
- 5.12 Ensure that all landowners and land managers along the route of this monument are aware of its existence, its scheduled status and its conservation needs.

See also:

- Policies 5.18 and 5.19 on improved liaison arrangements.
- Policy 5.23 on the need to keep visitor numbers within the monuments' carrying capacity.

¹ The following abbreviations are used in Section 5: EH (English Heritage); PDNPA (Peak District National Park Authority); LMA (Local Management Agreement); MPA (Maintained Property Agreement).

Gaps in archaeological knowledge

- 5.13** Through consultation with interested parties, produce and resource a research agenda for the Arbor Low / Gib Hill / 'Avenue' monument complex, to address (for example) the questions and issues identified at 4.3.1 to 4.3.4, and seek appropriate consents to implement this programme of work.

Collections and archives

- 5.14** In partnership with appropriate organisations or individuals, promote improved access to artefactual and other archive material relevant to the Arbor Low / Gib Hill monument complex held at Weston Park Museum, Sheffield, possibly through the development of the Museum's existing collections database.
- 5.15** Encourage access to other archives and collections relevant to the Arbor Low / Gib Hill monument complex.

See also:

- Policy 5.44 on the need for interpretive material to incorporate information on Museum collections, where appropriate.

Tenure and management structures

- 5.16** English Heritage should seek to identify long-term solutions to ensure appropriate conservation management of, and public access to, the Arbor Low / Gib Hill monument complex, given that current leases and agreements provide a medium-term solution to long-standing problems, and would have to be renegotiated if the land were sold.
- 5.17** Agree and implement a Maintained Property Agreement (MPA) between EH and PDNPA, taking into account, as appropriate, issues raised in this Conservation Plan.
- 5.18** Subject to staff time and resources, seek to extend or increase the frequency of LMA (now MPA) Review meetings for Peak District Guardianship sites, in order to enable issues to be dealt with in the depth that they require; and identify ways to enable fuller participation in these meetings by relevant landowners, tenants, field staff and others as appropriate.
- 5.19** Identify ways to extend and improve external liaison arrangements (i.e. those between EH / PDNPA and landowners and tenants), given the importance of effective partnership and the benefits gained from good relationships between all parties involved. Subject to staff time and resources, this could be achieved (for example) via extended LMA (now MPA) Review meetings (see above), and / or the creation of a new liaison group, and through greater emphasis on regular informal liaison.
- 5.20** EH should ensure that PDNPA is fully aware of the revised distribution of EH staff responsibilities, and the identities of relevant staff, following recent re-organisation.
- 5.21** PDNPA should ensure better two-way communication between office-based and field staff and should ensure (for example) that field staff are aware of the nature and extent of grazing and other agreements negotiated between EH and landowners / tenants at Arbor Low / Gib Hill.

See also:

- Policy 5.5 on securing a signature to the Arbor Low grazing agreement.
- Policy 5.9 on potential renewal of the Section 17 agreement for Gib Hill.

Ecology

- 5.22** Ensure that the ecological interest of the Blakemoor Pits area is taken into account in discussion of the possible merits of a footpath link between Arbor Low / Gib Hill and the High Peak Trail.

Recreation and tourism

- 5.23** In identifying ways to promote appreciation of the scheduled monuments and their setting, avoid measures likely to increase visitor numbers beyond levels compatible with the conservation of the monuments (and adjacent areas of archaeological interest) and the aesthetic, spiritual, landscape and agricultural value of the site.
- 5.24** Through unobtrusive management and low-key presentation, maintain the 'naturalness' and peaceful, uncluttered quality of the site.
- 5.25** Carry out a visitor survey, to update and extend the information obtained by the 1996 student survey.
- 5.26** Monitor the data provided by the visitor counter installed at the site in 2007.

See also:

- Policies at 5.30 – 45 on interpretation.
- Policies at 5.52 – 63 on physical access.

Aesthetic and spiritual value

- 5.27** Continue to monitor and mitigate negative physical, visual and other impacts on the monuments and their setting, and seek to maintain the valued qualities of the monuments themselves, and their local and wider setting.
- 5.28** Remove the fence round Gib Hill, as soon as cattle are no longer judged to present a threat to monument condition (and see Policy 5.9).
- 5.29** Continue with (preferably low-key) management arrangements for the Summer Solstice and other celebrations, in order to balance peoples' enjoyment of these festivals with conservation of the monuments, and with impacts on other visitors and on landowners or tenants.

See also:

- Policy 5.23 on keeping visitor numbers within the carrying capacity of the site.
- Policy 5.24 on low-key management

Interpretation

Overall approach

- 5.30** In developing interpretation, keep in mind Policy 5.23 on the need to avoid measures likely to increase visitor numbers beyond a level compatible with monument conservation and other site values.
- 5.31** Develop a new Local Interpretation Plan for Arbor Low and Gib Hill, which reflects PDNPA and EH policy commitments to widening access, and developments in interpretive strategies and available media.
- 5.32** Ensure that, where appropriate, interpretive material reflects the varied significance and interest of the monuments' setting.
- 5.33** Ensure that interpretive material reflects the group significance of the monument complex at Arbor Low / Gib Hill – i.e. the interrelationship between the various elements of the complex, both archaeologically and in landscape terms.
- 5.34** Ensure that future replacements of interpretive material continue to be sensitively placed, and are not intrusive.
- 5.35** Whenever appropriate, invite landowners / land managers to take part in discussion of on-site interpretive initiatives (e.g. those in which they are likely to play a role, or which would have an impact on them).
- 5.36** Ensure that future interpretive and other signs are not sited in positions where they may trap or otherwise endanger stock.

Specific issues

- 5.37** Update the existing PDNPA guidebook on Arbor Low and Gib Hill, prior to its republication.
- 5.38** If no revision is possible, reprint the existing guidebook, to ensure that stocks are available for the next few years.
- 5.39** If the guidebook price is increased, make the new price a sum that is easy to collect from the (unstaffed) sales point at Upper Oldhams Farm.
- 5.40** As part of a review / reprint of the guidebook, make it available online in an appropriate format.
- 5.41** Consider the production of a leaflet on Arbor Low, Gib Hill and their setting, to be made available on-site, and at Tourist Information Centres (including Parsley Hay) and other outlets, in addition to the guidebook. In drafting such a leaflet, bear in mind the points made at 3.11 and 4.12.
- 5.42** In liaison with the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm, address ways to make the guidebook (and a new leaflet, if produced) available on-site at all reasonable times.
- 5.43** Develop proposals and seek funding for the creation of a small permanent display about Arbor Low, Gib Hill and their setting, to be located at the Parsley Hay Visitor Centre.
- 5.44** Wherever appropriate, ensure that interpretive material incorporates guidance on access to relevant museum collections and other sources of information, whether printed or online.
- 5.45** Review the accessibility of online interpretive material, bearing in mind the points made at 2.15.4.1 and 2.15.4.2.

See also:

- Policies at 5.46 – 51 on education and outreach.

Education / outreach / community involvement

- 5.46** In addressing ways to improve and extend opportunities for learning, outreach and community involvement, avoid measures likely to increase visitor numbers beyond levels compatible with the conservation of the monuments (and adjacent areas of archaeological interest) and the aesthetic, spiritual, landscape and agricultural significance of the site.
- 5.47** Identify ways to improve liaison between PDNPA / EH and schools, universities and other bodies which already bring students to Arbor Low / Gib Hill, in order to increase awareness of the broad range of ways in which groups benefit from and interact with the site, and (where necessary) to discuss ways to improve the experience of existing users.
- 5.48** In liaison with the owners of Upper Oldhams Farm, explore the possibility of grant-funded improvements to existing outbuildings at the farm, with the aim of creating a wet-weather shelter, accessible toilets, and possible interpretive provision, to support education / outreach initiatives.
- 5.49** Building on experience (within the region and elsewhere) of the imaginative incorporation of cultural heritage within the national curriculum, develop a pilot project (via, for example, the PDNPA's Centre for Environmental Learning) to explore and demonstrate the potential of Arbor Low, Gib Hill and their setting for education and learning.
- 5.50** Carry out research into ways in which the site is valued by groups other than those visiting within the standard educational structure, and consider how appreciation of the site might be varied and extended, in line with EH / PDNPA strategic commitments on widening access.

5.51 In line with PDNPA Ranger Service responsibility for delivering aspects of the Authority's Cultural Heritage, People and Communities, and Recreation strategies, identify ways to support PDNPA Ranger Service development of educational / outreach initiatives involving Arbor Low and Gib Hill.

See also:

- Policies 5.30 – 45 on interpretation.
- Policies 5.52 – 5.63 on physical access

Physical access and accessibility

Public access

5.52 Work towards identification of ways to safeguard permanent public access to Arbor Low / Gib Hill.

5.53 Ensure improved formal and informal liaison between EH / PDNPA and the owners of the access route (and of rights to the access route), in order to improve understanding of different perspectives, and to identify mutually-acceptable solutions to questions or problems which may arise.

5.54 Review the need for further explanation of the access charge, to make the situation clearer to visitors.

Character and presentation of access route

5.55 When signage is reviewed, consider inclusion of improved directions from informal car park.

5.56 Aim to keep silage run-off and slurry on the access route to a reasonable minimum (while bearing in mind that this is a working farm).

5.57 As a matter of future policy, ensure that dilapidated signs in prominent places such as the Arbor Low car park are removed with as little delay as possible.

Access for visitors with different abilities

5.58 Carry out an updated Disability Discrimination Act audit, which should include input from a local access group.

5.59 Publish fuller information in EH and PDNPA access guides on the nature of routes to and through the site, and (e.g.) the location of accessible toilets at Parsley Hay, to enable potential visitors to judge the level of accessibility.

Access from footpath network

5.60 Assess the potential for linking the site to the High Peak Trail and / or to other footpath networks, through the creation of a new footpath link or links. (In relation to a potential High Peak Trail link, there is a need to bear in mind the potential impacts on vulnerable wildlife habitats and species in the Blakemoor Pits area, and the need for full consultation with the owners (or land managers) of Upper Oldhams Farm, the Gib Hill field, the existing access route and the land along the potential Blakemoor Pits route, because of the various impacts on them of the creation of an additional access point.)

Access information

5.61 Review existing access guidance (printed and online) published by EH, PDNPA and associated bodies, in the light of issues identified in this Conservation Plan (see 2.16.8 and 4.14).

Opening times / heath and safety

5.62 Identify ways to improve two-way liaison between EH, landowners / tenants and the owners of the shared access route, in the light of misunderstandings which have arisen over issues such as opening times.

5.63 Assess the adequacy of existing hazard warnings on electrified fences on routes open to the public (particularly at the informal car park) and implement improvements if necessary.

See also:

- Policies 5.23 – 26 on recreation and tourism
- Policies 5.46 – 51 on education, outreach and community involvement.

6 Implementation, monitoring and review

6.1 Implementation framework

The successful long-term management of the Arbor Low / Gib Hill monument complex will be dependent on partnerships between the various people and organisations who have contributed to the drafting and development of this Conservation Plan.

It is proposed that the conservation policies proposed in Section 5 of this Plan will be promoted by English Heritage and the Peak District National Park Authority, principally through Maintained Property Agreement review meetings, with the support of landowners, land managers, tenants and others, as appropriate.

The policies set out in Section 5 have been developed as part of the Conservation Plan process. Some of the actions which will need to be addressed will be covered by policy or statute, while others will be voluntary and their success will depend on cooperation and good will. The extent to which certain policies can be implemented will be affected by a variety of constraints, including the availability of resources and the commitment of the various partners.

The implementation of specific policies will necessarily take place within a range of time-frames, depending on factors such as their complexity, the number of agencies involved, and the resources available.

6.2 Adoption, monitoring and review

It is proposed that those involved in Maintained Property Agreement review meetings described at 6.1 should be responsible for annual monitoring, assessment and minor amendment of strategy, as actions are completed and objectives achieved. They will also be responsible for five-yearly review of the Conservation Plan, in consultation with organisations and individuals involved in the implementation and promotion of the policies listed in Section 5.

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8 Abbreviations used in the text

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
EES	Environmental Enhancement Scheme
EH	English Heritage
ELS	Entry Level Stewardship
HER	Historic Environment Record
LMA	Local Management Agreement
MPA	Maintained Property Agreement
NMR	National Monuments Record
OS	Ordnance Survey
PDNPA	Peak District National Park Authority
pers.comm.	personal communication
PPJPB	Peak Park Joint Planning Board
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
WPMS	Weston Park Museum Sheffield

Appendix A

Maps and Plans

- Figure A1** Location of Arbor Low and Gib Hill in relation to nearby villages, road system and major footpaths
- Figure A2** Geology of the Arbor Low and Gib Hill area
- Figure A3** Scheduled areas at Arbor Low, Gib Hill and in immediate vicinity
- Figure A4** Plan of Arbor Low henge, stone circle and barrow
- Figure A5** Plan of Arbor Low barrow
- Figure A6** Location of trenches dug at Arbor Low in 1901 / 1902 by H. St George Gray
- Figure A7** Plan of the barrow and quarry ditches at Gib Hill
- Figure A8** Plan of archaeological features at Gib Hill and in adjacent fields
- Figure A9** Extent of buffer zones around Great Crested Newt sites at Blakemoor Pits
- Figure A10** Map showing selected land ownerships and tenancies in the Arbor Low / Gib Hill area
- Figure A11** Map showing land tenure along the route of the linear bank and ditch known as the 'Avenue'
- Figure A12** Map showing the Arbor Low field leased by English Heritage, and the area covered by the 'Section 17' Agreement at Gib Hill
- Figure A13** Concessionary access route covered by the 2003 Arbor Low Licensed Access Agreement between English Heritage and landowners
- Figure A14** Location of scheduled monuments and the Blakemoor Pits fields in relation to the High Peak and Tissington Trails and the Parsley Hay Visitor Centre

The maps and plans in this Appendix have been prepared for publication by Angela Johnson, PDNPA.

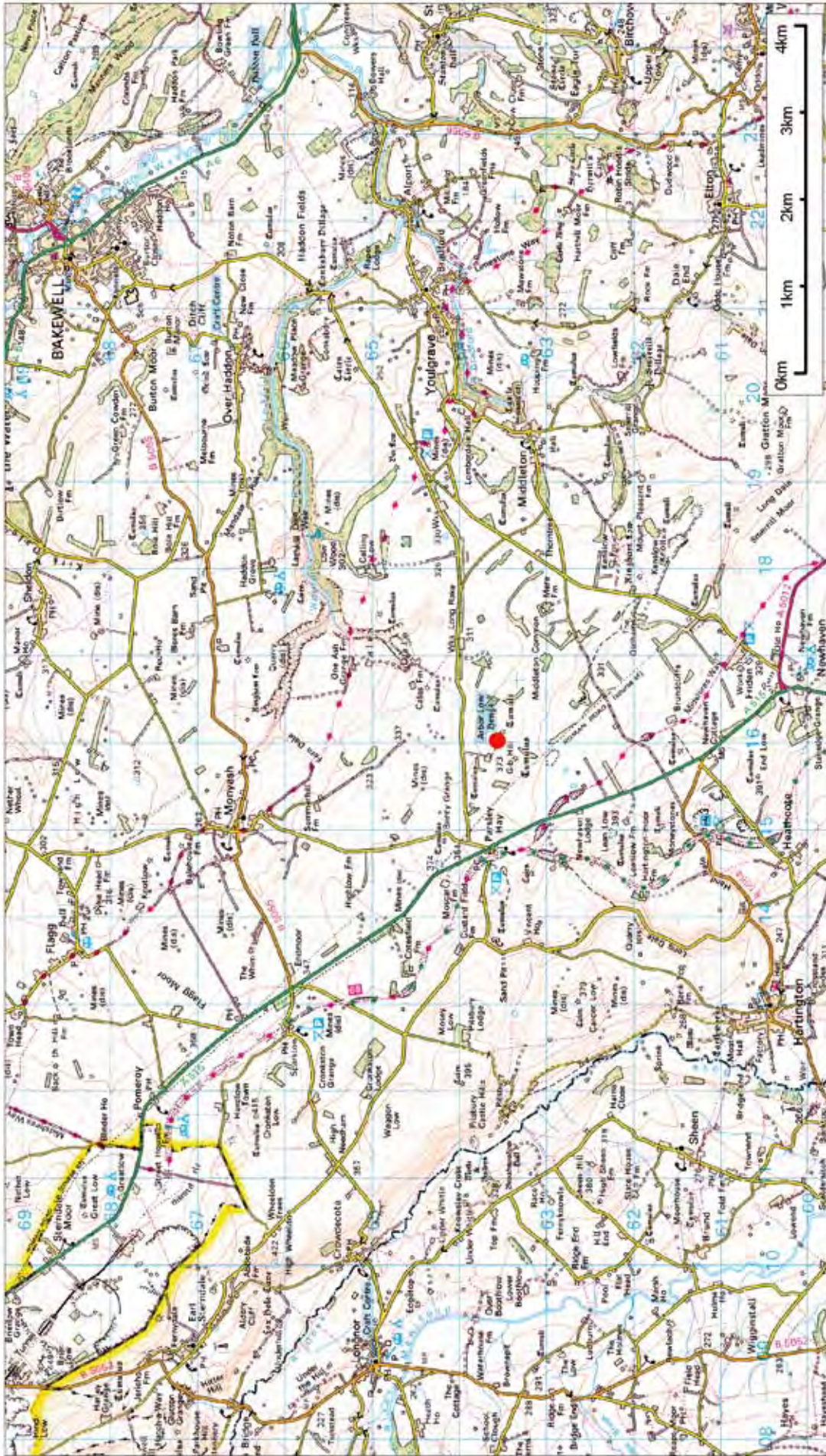
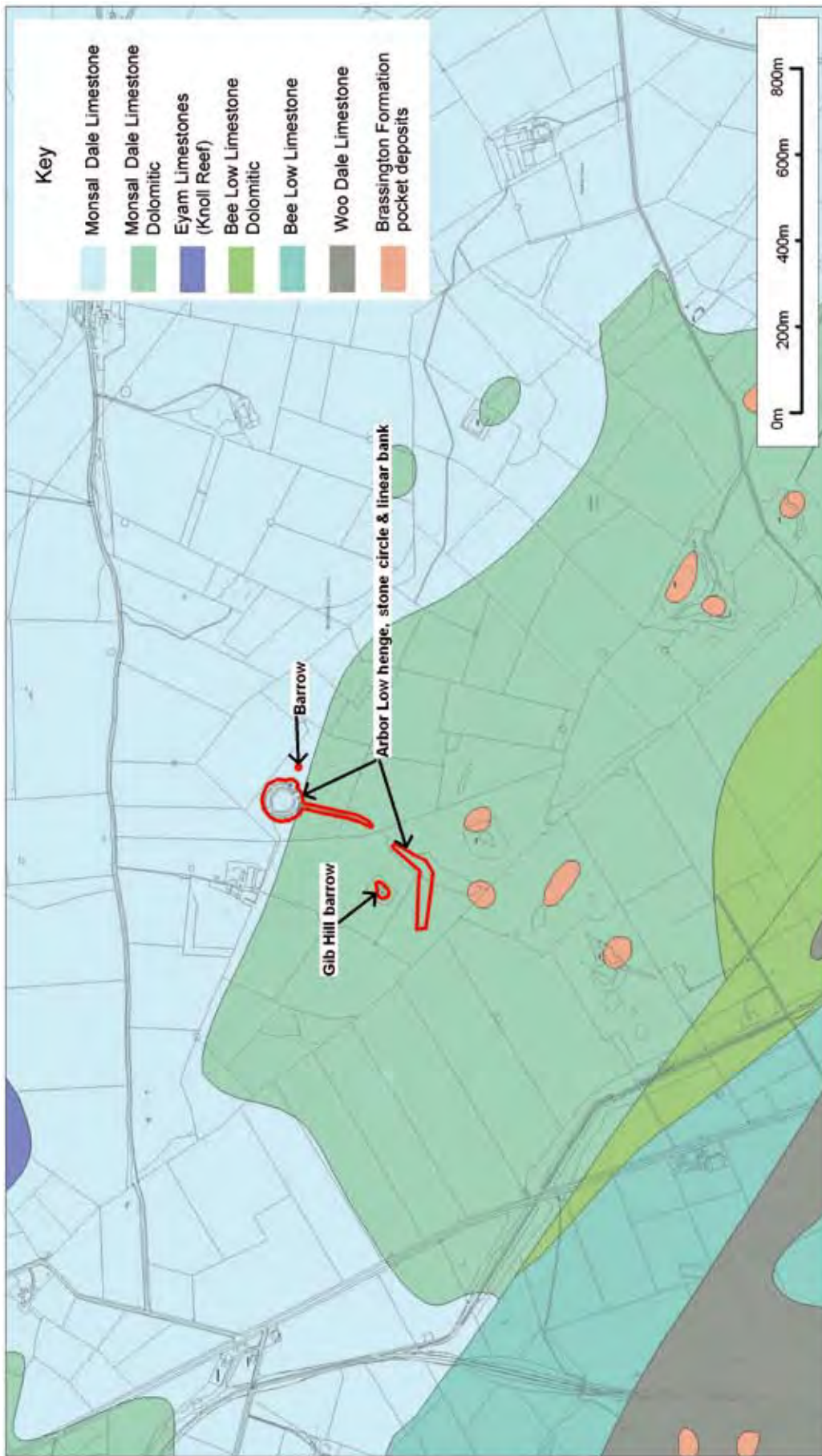
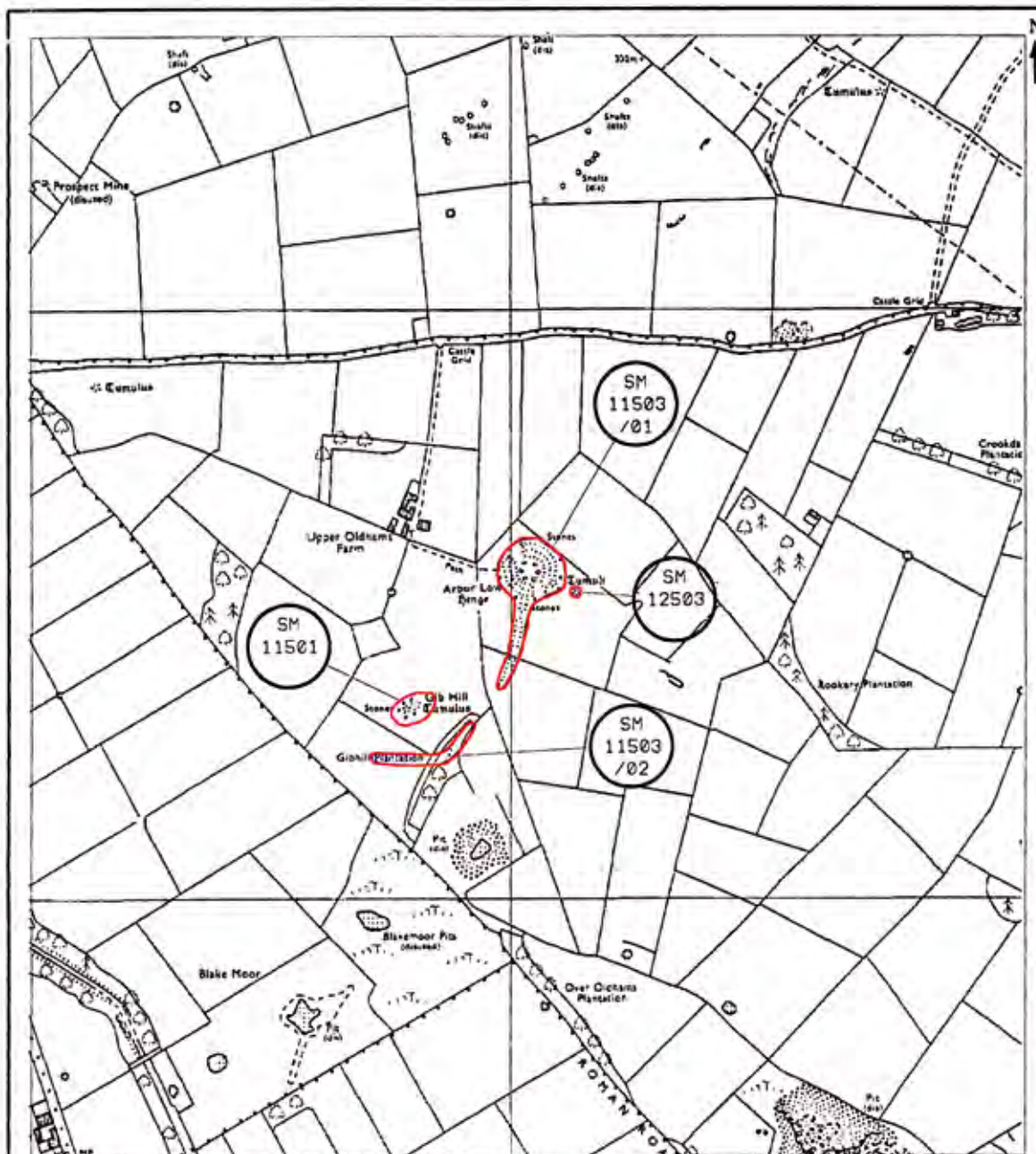


Figure A1
Location of Arbor Low in relation to nearby villages, road system and major footpaths

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For identification purposes only

Site Name: SM11503 Arbor Low henge, large irregular stone circle, linear bank & bowl barrow
 SM11501 Gib Hill oval barrow & bowl barrow
 SM12503 Bowl barrow E of Arbor Low

County: Derbyshire **District:** Derbyshire Dales **Parish:** Middleton & Smerrill

Notes: SM11503 consists of parts 1-2 For exclusions - see text record. Guardianship
 SM11501 Guardianship

Key: Monument No. Location/extent of site



Scale: 1:10000 **Derived from:** 1:10000

Extract from OS sheet: SK16SE

Date: 14.4.93 **Monument Nos:** SM11503/11501/12503

English Heritage

Forrester House 23 Saffron Row London W1X 1AB Telephone 071 973 3000 Fax 071 973 3001

Figure A3
 Scheduled areas at Arbor Low, Gib Hill and in immediate vicinity

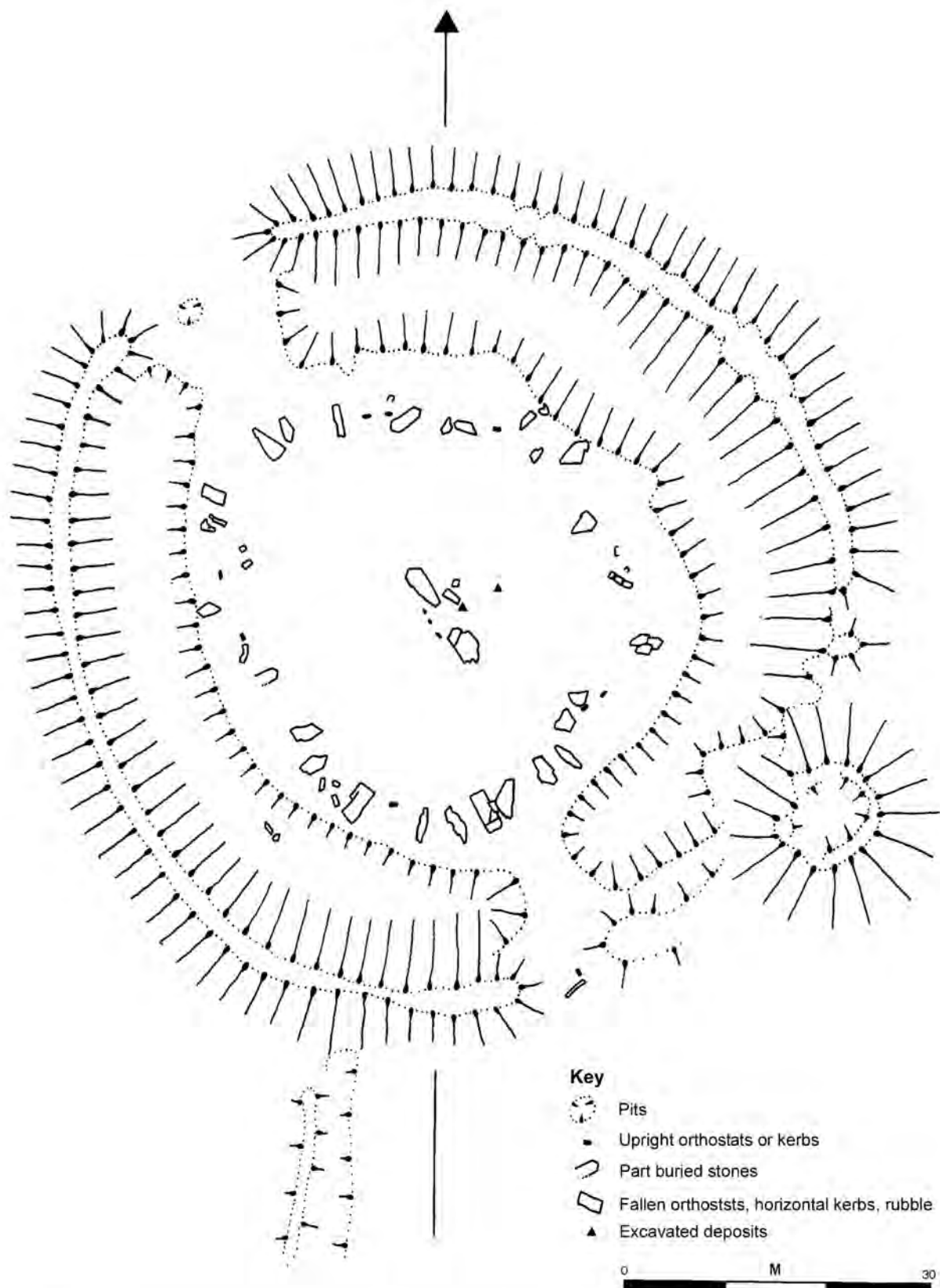


Figure A4
Plan of Arbor Low (after Gray, with modifications)

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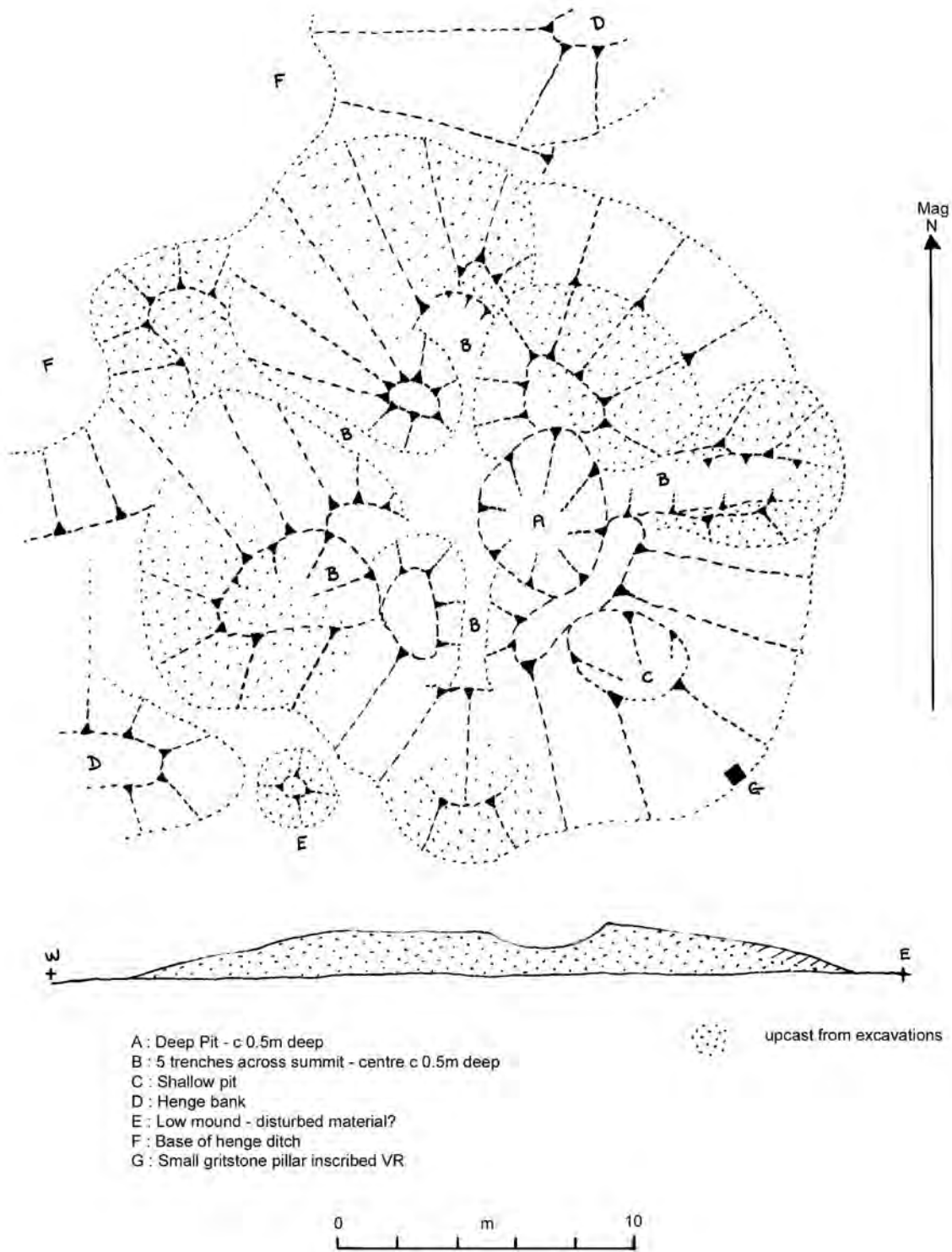


Figure A5
 Plan of Arbor Low barrow

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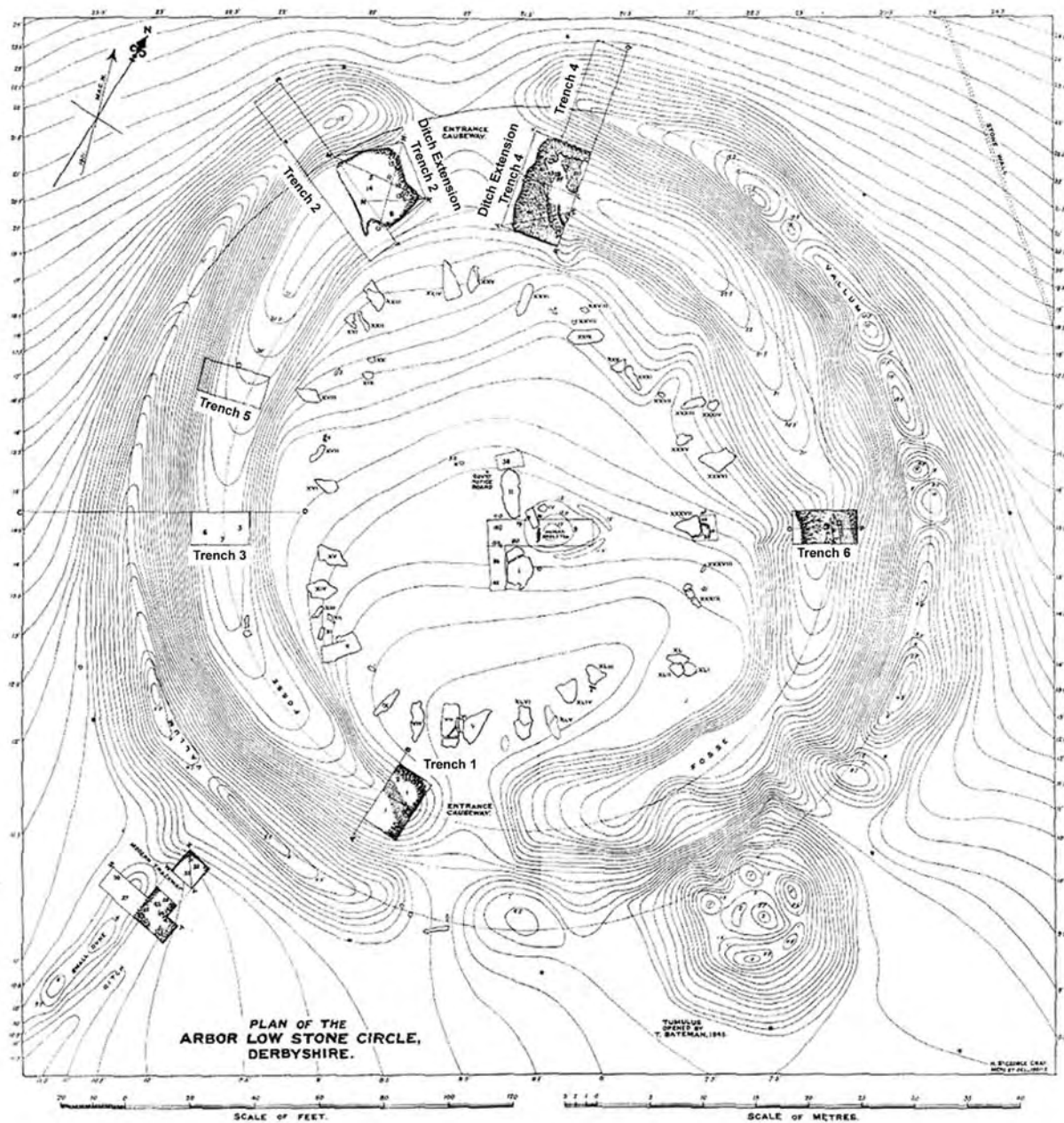


Figure A6
Location of trenches dug at Arbor Low in 1901 / 1902 by H. St. George Gray
Reproduced by courtesy of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society from DAJ volume 26, 1904 (with minor amendments)

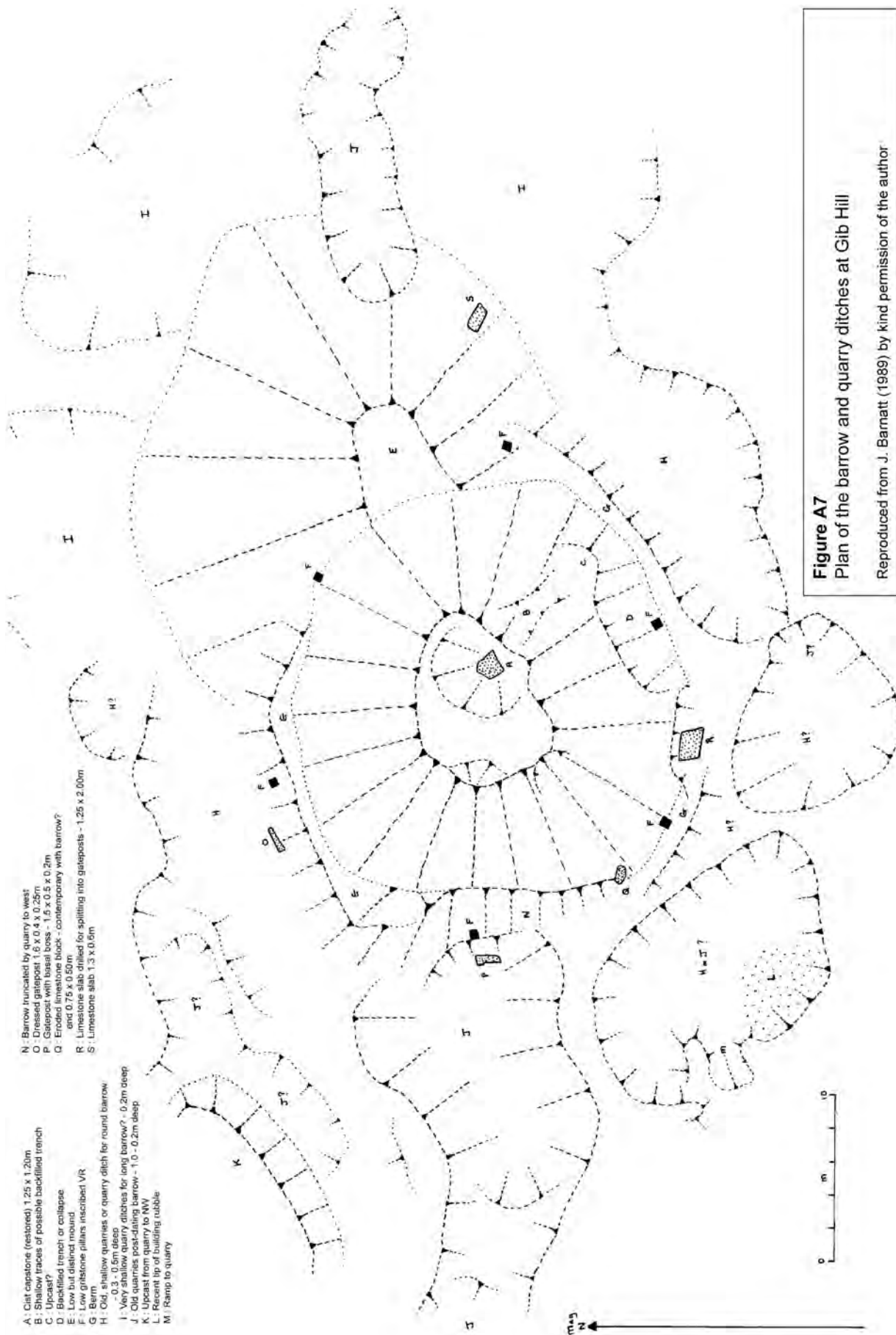


Figure A7
 Plan of the barrow and quarry ditches at Gib Hill
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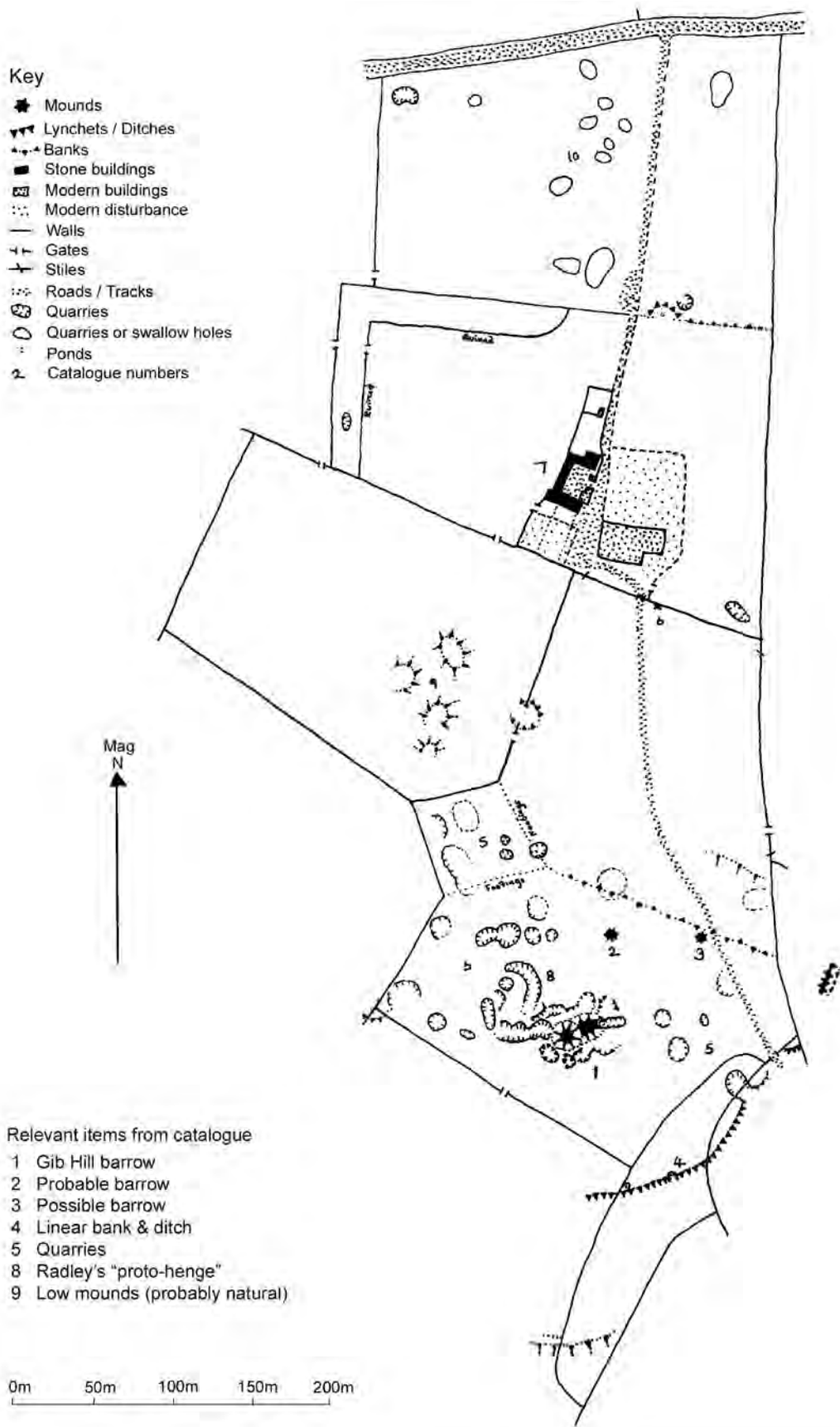


Figure A8
 Plan of archaeological features at Gib Hill and in adjacent fields
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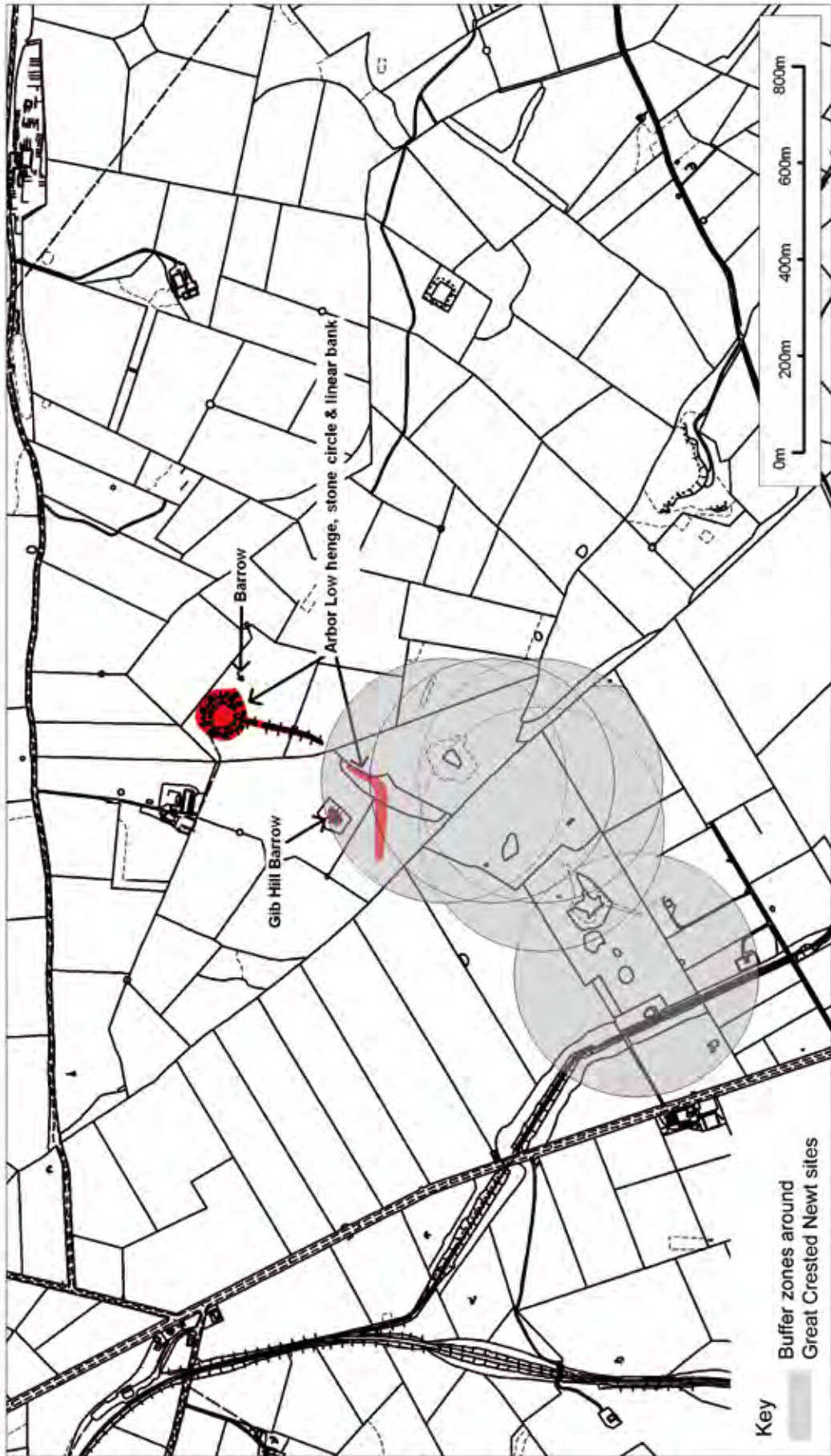
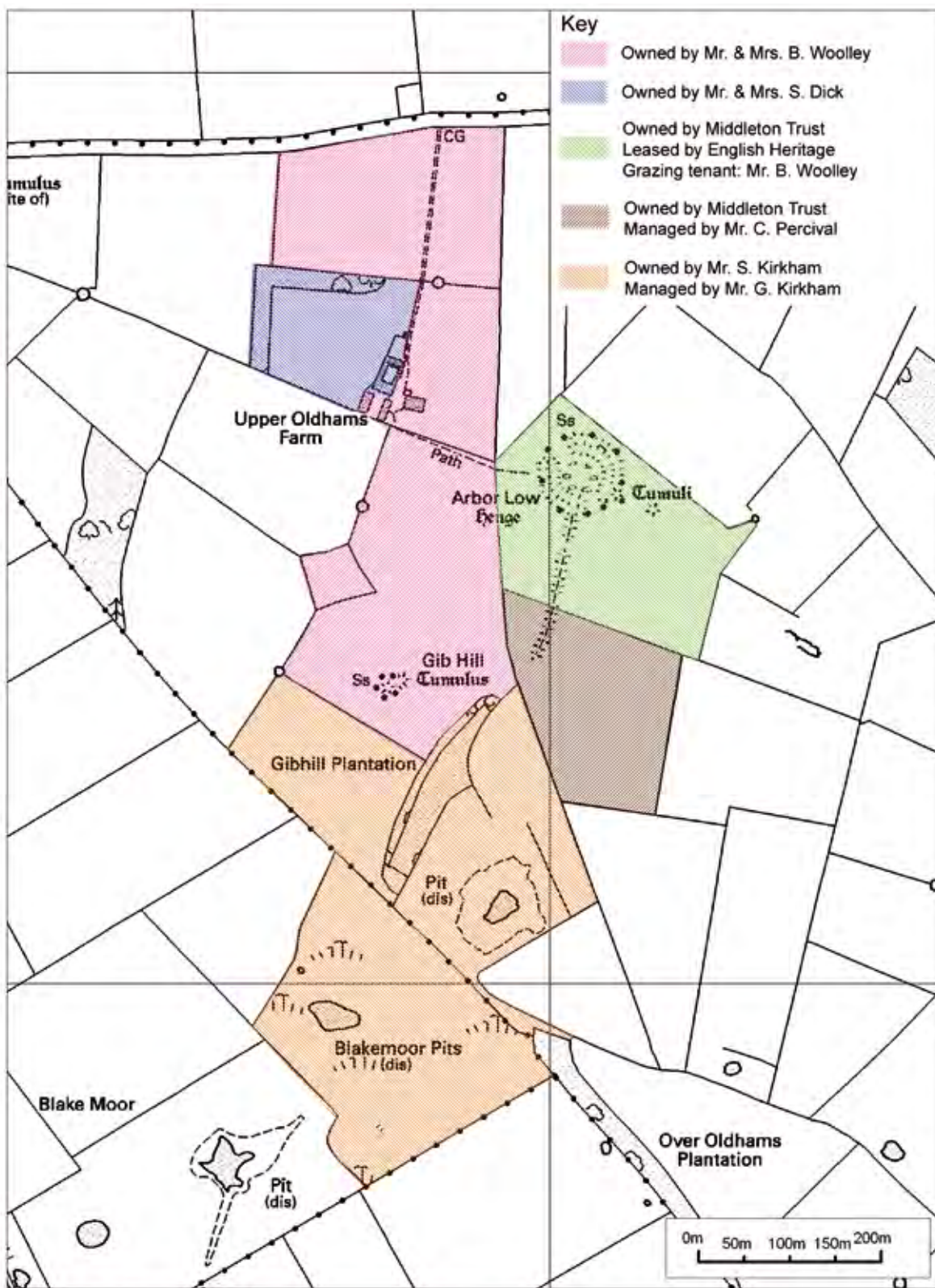


Figure A9
Plan showing extent of buffer zones around Great Crested Newt sites in the Blakemoor Pits area

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Figure A10
Map showing selected land ownerships and tenancies in the Arbor Low / Gib Hill area

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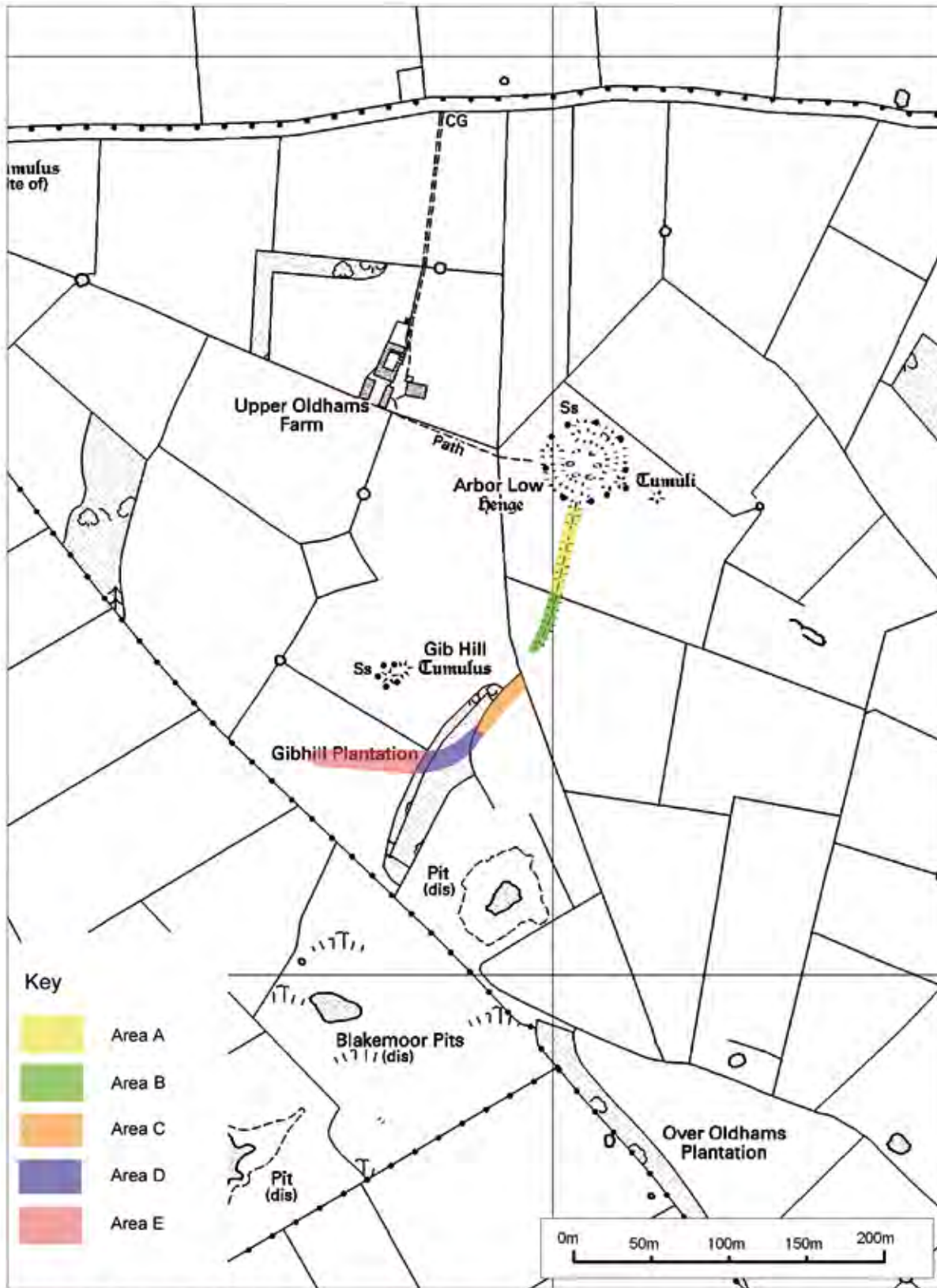


Figure A11

Map showing land tenure along the route of the scheduled linear bank and ditch known as the 'Avenue'

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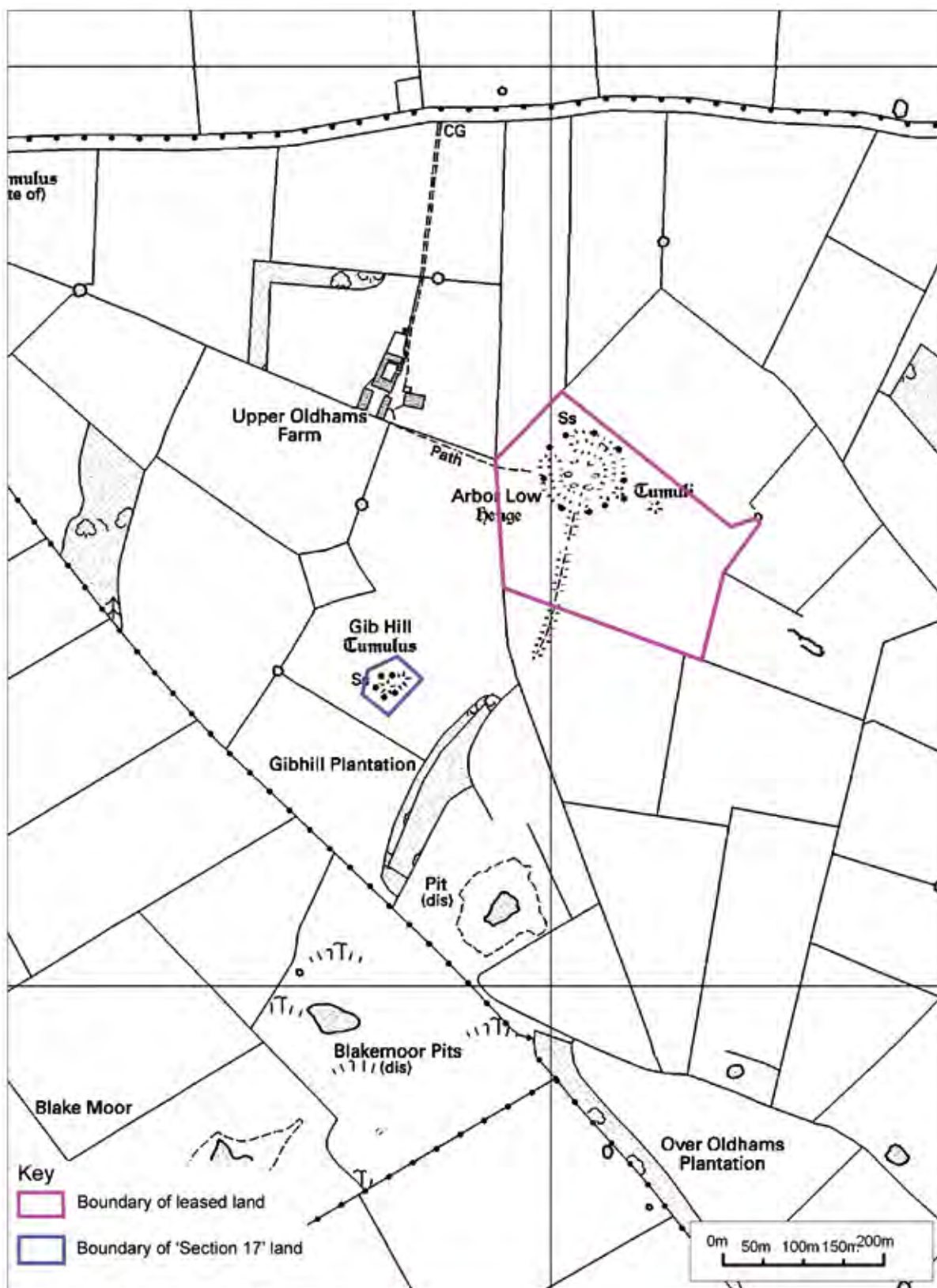
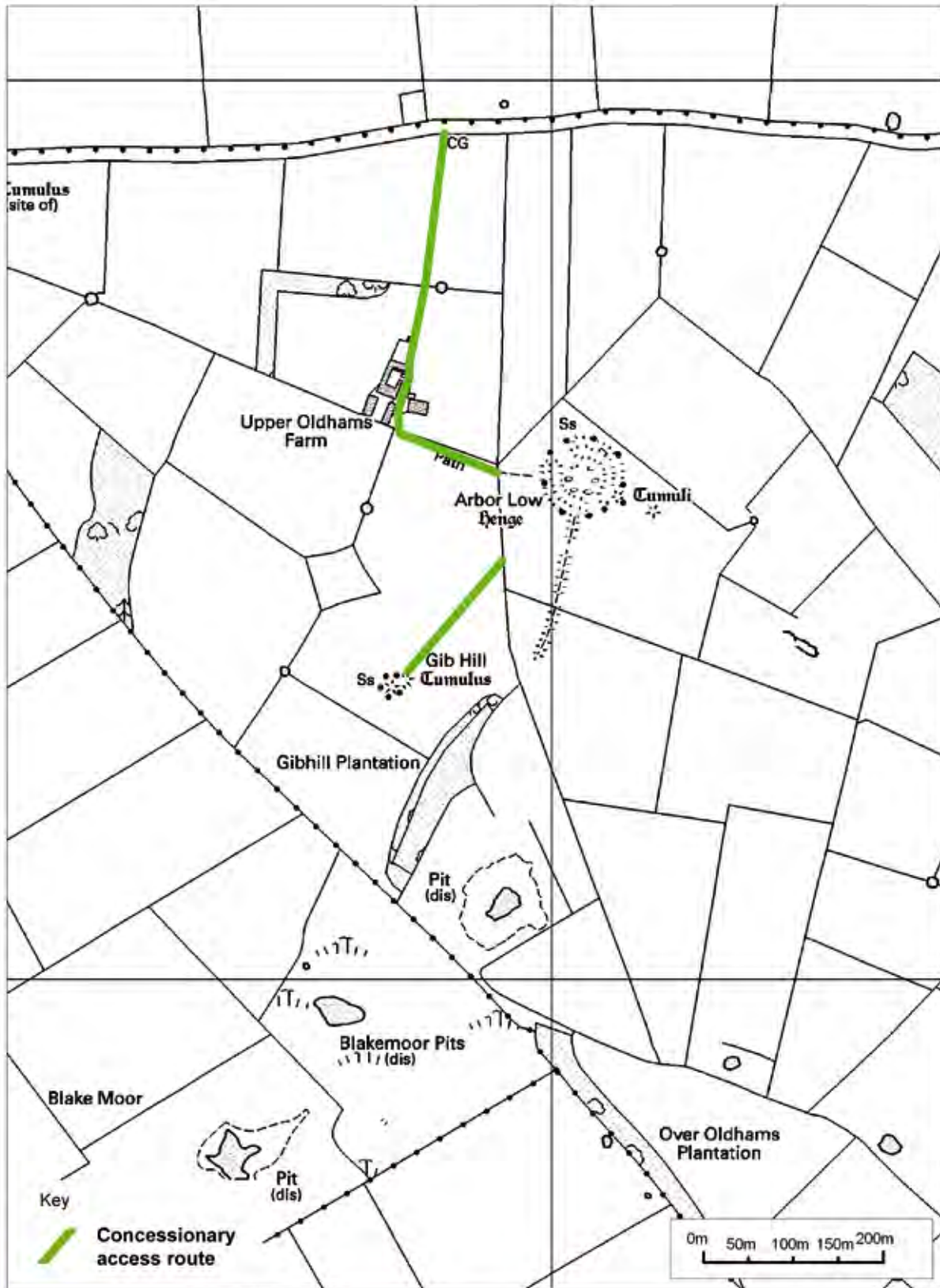


Figure A12
Map showing the Arbor Low field leased by English Heritage and the 'Section 17' area at Gib Hill

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Figure A13
Concessionary access route covered by the 2003 Licensed Access Agreement between English Heritage and landowners

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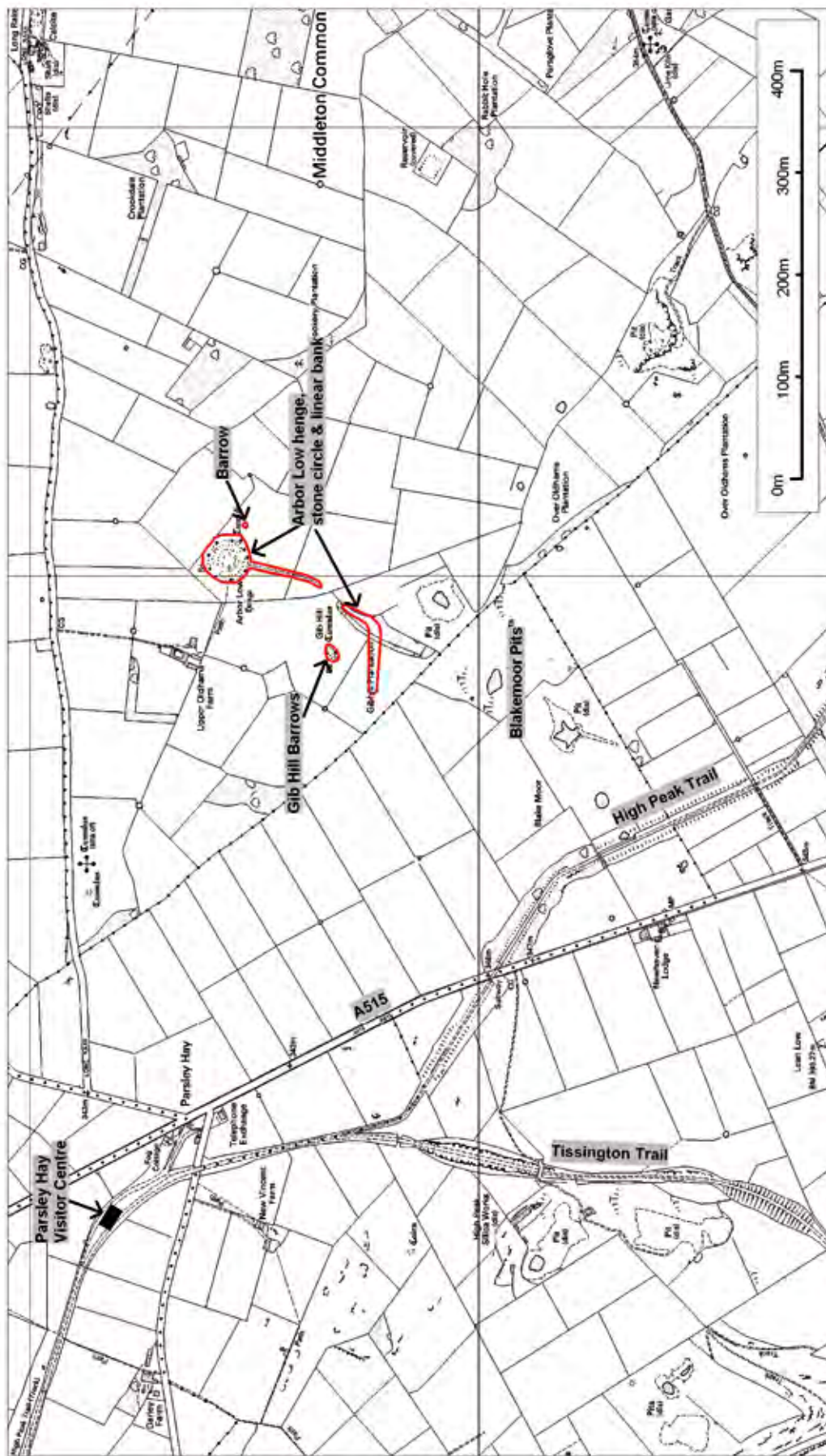


Figure A14
 Map showing location of scheduled monuments and Blakemoor Pits fields in relation to the High Peak and Tissington Trails and the Parsley Hay Centre

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