

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

The archaeological features were identified and excavated within an area of 140m by 30m (illus 2). They represent the remains of three ring-ditch houses (Houses 1–3), two discrete groups of features that conceivably represent the heavily truncated remains of two other ring-ditch houses (Feature Groups 1–2), and two isolated pits (Pit 004, Pit 006). In each case the features were grouped together as they lay in close proximity to each other, and away from other excavated features.

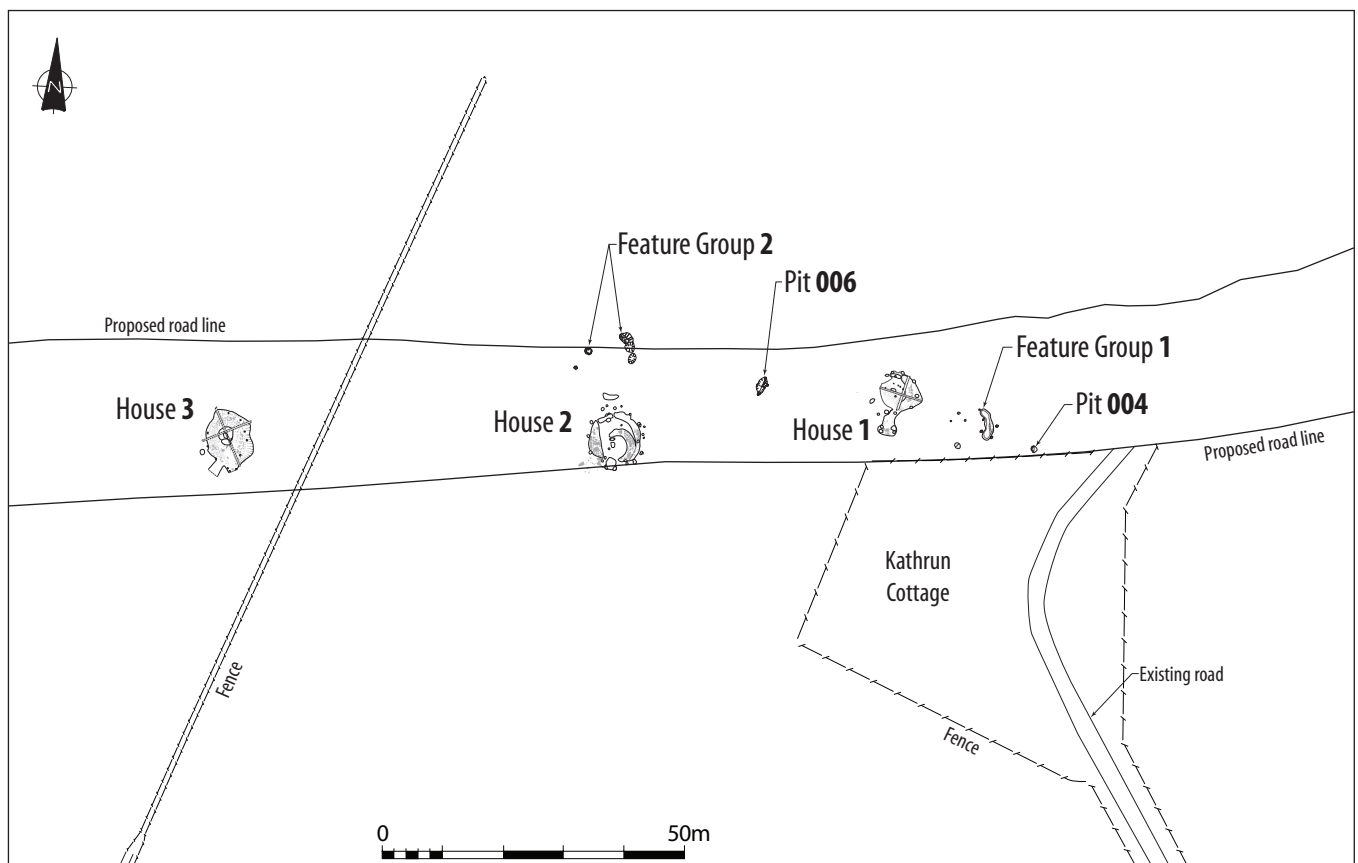
3.1 House 1

House 1 was a ring-ditch house with a porch entrance to the south (illus 3–4). To the west the ring-ditch was missing, or may never have been present, although a lack of post-holes in that area indicated that this side of the roundhouse had been more severely plough-truncated.

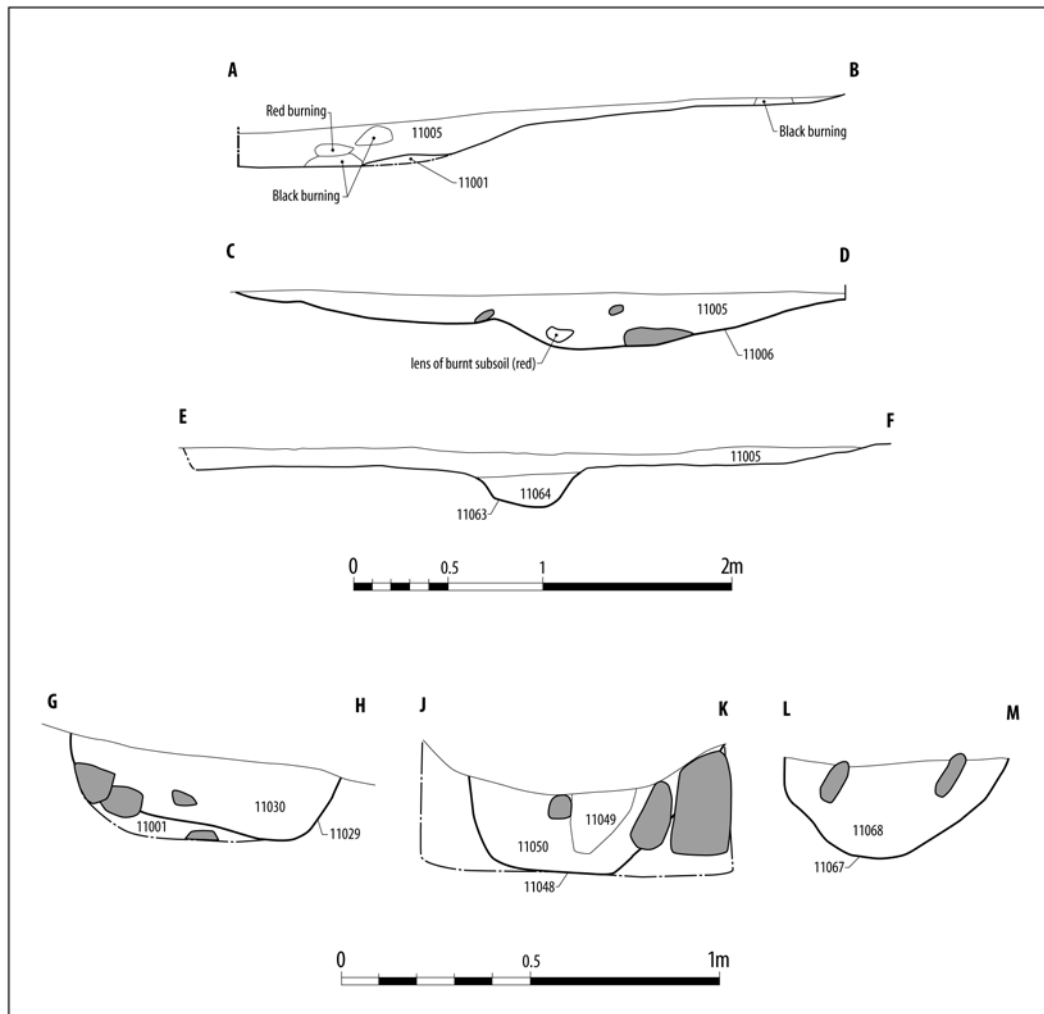
The ring-ditch (11006) on the eastern side of the roundhouse was sub-crescentic in plan and irregular in profile (illus 3; 4, C–D), and measured

up to c 3m broad and 0.35m deep. A stone surface, which comprised large cobbles and small boulders (11031), was identified in the base of the ditch. A single deposit of mid to dark greyish-brown silty sand (11005) covered this surface and filled the ring-ditch. Frequent lenses of burnt soil and sand were identified towards the base of the deposit, and sherds of prehistoric pottery, fragments of burnt bone and a small amount of vitrified material were also retrieved from it. Deposit 11005 extended beyond the ring-ditch across much of the interior of House 1 (illus 3; 4, E–F), and is therefore likely to have formed during the terminal use, or following the abandonment, of the structure.

An elongated oval scoop (11025) measuring 1.8m long by 0.5m wide by 0.06m deep, was identified immediately to the west of the ring-ditch, and may represent a continuation of that feature. This scoop also contained a circular pit (11051), measuring 0.37m in diameter and 0.07m deep, and filled with dark brown silty sand containing a high concentration of charcoal. The cut of this pit was not identified through the fill of the scoop and, indeed, the fills of



Illus 2 Feature location map



Illus 4 House 1 sections

two from post-hole 11048 (SUERC 12832 & 12836). These provided a maximum calibrated date range at 2σ of 1270–820 cal BC, within the Late Bronze Age.

3.2 House 2

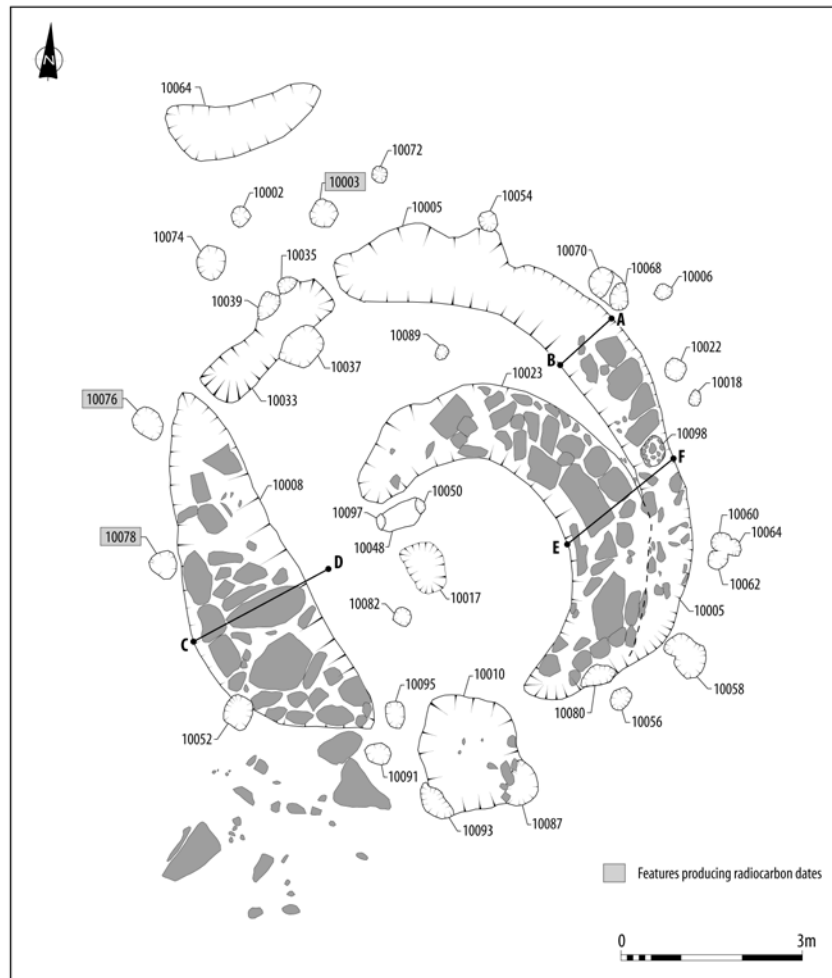
The remains of this roundhouse consisted primarily of a c 9.5m diameter post-ring, with an entranceway to the SE and the remains of a ring-ditch running around the inside of the post-ring (*illus 5*).

Sixteen separate post-holes were present around the post-ring circuit (clockwise from south: 10091, 10052, 10078, 10076, 10074, 10003, 10054, 10070, 10068, 10022, 10018, 10060, 10064, 10062, 10058 and 10056). However, there appear to have been twelve separate posts, as at two positions post-holes had been re-cut (10068/10070 and 10060/10062/10064), and at a third location the juxtaposition of post-holes suggests post replacement during the life of the building (10018/10022). The re-cutting of post-hole 10058, the juxtaposition of post-holes 10056

and 10080 (the latter not on the post-ring circuit), and the presence of three small post-holes lying just outside the arc described by the post ring (10002, 10072, 10006), may provide further evidence of structural modification.

The post-holes were generally circular in plan, ranging in size from 0.15m to 0.5m in diameter and with depths varying between 0.1m and 0.5m. The post-holes on the eastern side were generally smaller than those on the western side. The majority were filled with dark brown sandy silt and several contained flecks of charcoal.

A discontinuous ring-ditch ran around the inside of the post ring (10005, 10008 and 10033). Ditch 10005 formed the eastern side of the ring-ditch and was approximately 9m long axially, with a maximum width of c 1.2m (*illus 6*, A–B). A surface comprising large cobbles and small boulders was identified sitting on the thin basal fill of this ditch (10040; *illus 6*, E–F). Overlying this surface and filling the rest of the ditch was dark brown sandy silt (10007). A 0.4m by 0.55m oval spread of burnt cobbles (10098)



Illus 5 House 2 plan

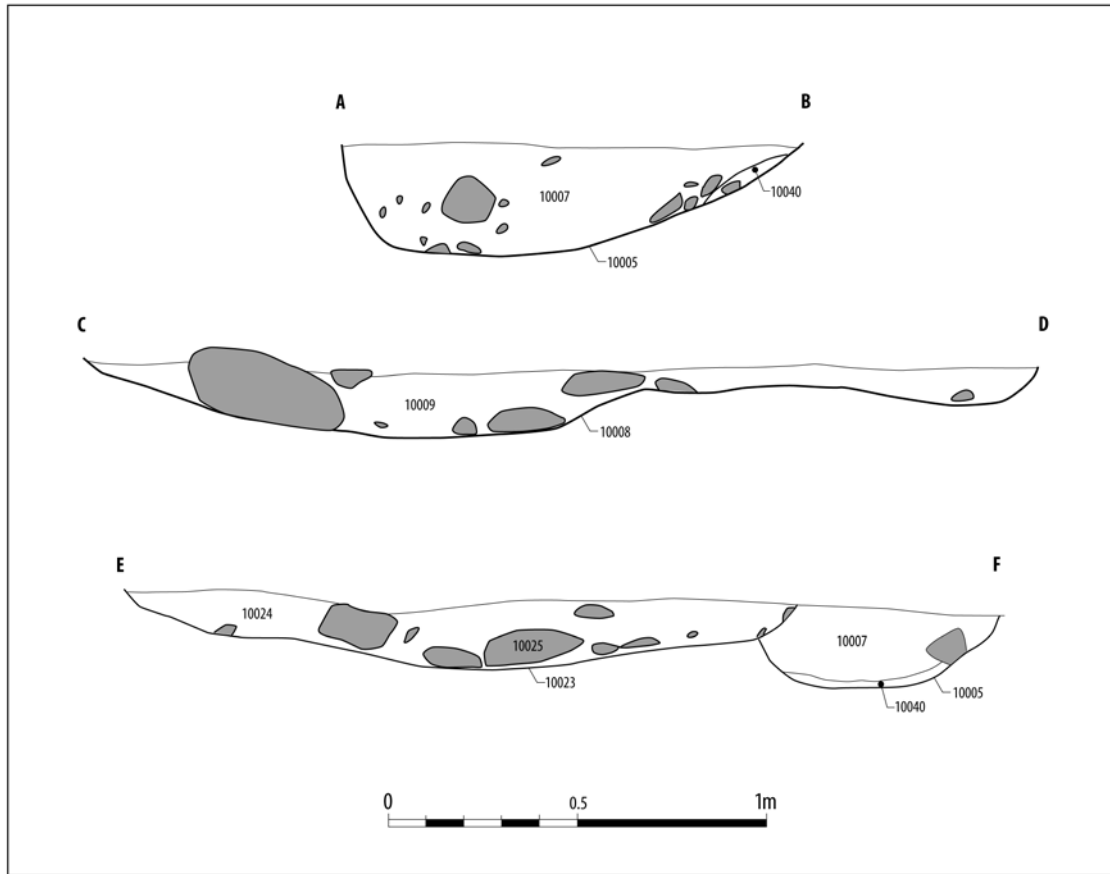
was identified at the base of 10005, its purpose unknown. Ditch 10008 formed the western side of the ring-ditch. It was 6.5m long with a maximum width of 2.1m and the sides were generally gently sloping, with a flat or slightly concave base (*illus 6*, C–D). It was filled with blackish-brown silty sand (10009), below which was a surface comprising large cobbles and small boulders. A post-hole (10052) belonging to the post-ring cut through the south-western outer edge of 10008, but it was not identified cutting through fill 10009. Ditch 10033 lay between the northern terminal ends of ditches 10005 and 10008. It measured 2.5m by 0.75m and contained a basal fill of blackish-brown sandy silt (10032) below a deposit of mid greyish-brown sandy silt (10031). Two post-holes, 10039 and 10035, cut this short ditch on its northern side and one post-hole (10037) cut its southern side.

A smaller length of curvilinear ditch (10023) cut through the fill of the eastern segment of the ring-ditch (10005). This secondary ditch measured approximately 8.5m in axial length with a maximum width of 1.5m and was filled with a 0.2m deep deposit of mid-brown silty sand (10024). The sides of this

cut (*illus 6*, E–F) were shallow sloping and the base was flat and was also lined with flat slabs (10025). Since this secondary ditch was cut through the fill of the earlier ring-ditch, and because it described a tighter arc and occupied some of the central space of the House 2 floor, there must be some doubt as to whether it relates to House 2 as opposed to a separate structure that occupied the same location previously occupied by House 2 (see *Discussion* for further consideration).

Several features were identified within the central area of the structure, but formed no discernible pattern: five post-holes, one pit and a possible sub-square hearth pit (10017) measuring 0.8m by 0.65m and 0.2m deep and filled with a dark brown silty sand containing flecks of charcoal and lenses of burnt reddish soil. These pits and post-holes cannot be stratigraphically linked to any of the ditches.

The entrance to House 2 lay to the SE, although it was not as clearly defined as that in House 1. The entrance was defined by a *c.* 2.5m-wide break in the peripheral ring-ditch. Three post-holes (10087, 10093, 10095) may have been related to an entrance structure. Two of these (10087, 10093) were cut



Illus 6 House 2 sections

through a large sub-square pit (10010), which possibly served to hold paving in the entrance or represented a holloway, similar to that seen in the entranceway of House 1.

Five radiocarbon dates were obtained for this structure, all from the post-ring: two from post-hole 10003 (SUERC 12837-8), one from post-hole 10076 (SUERC 12839) and two from post-hole 10078 (SUERC 12840-1). These gave a maximum calibrated date range at 2σ of 1500–1080 cal BC, in the Middle to Late Bronze Age.

3.3 House 3

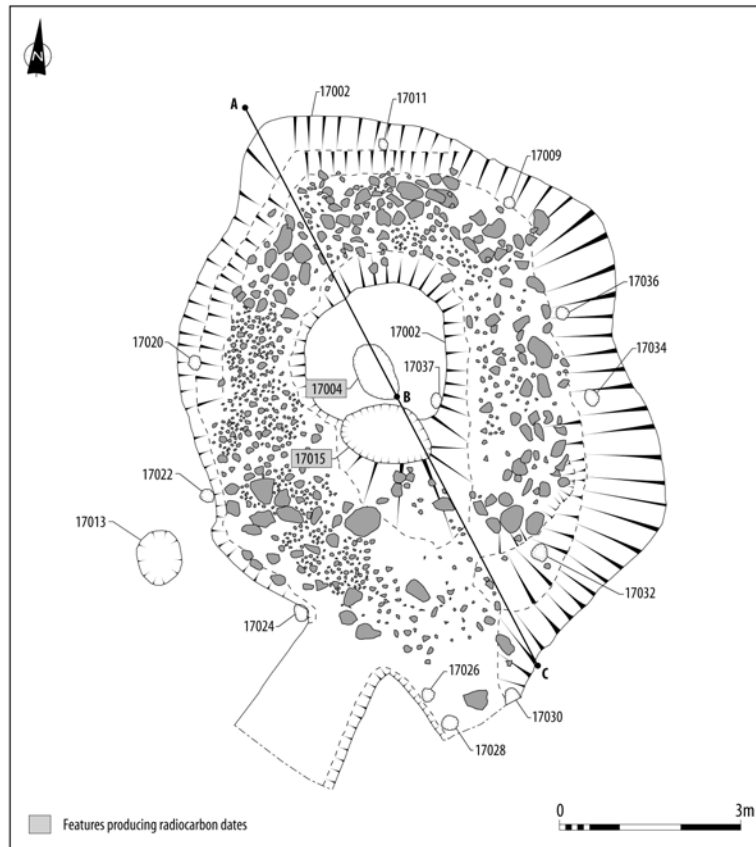
The remains of House 3 were defined by a wide ring-ditch enclosing a small central area. The horseshoe-shaped ring-ditch (17002) measured a maximum of 3.7m wide and up to 0.9m deep, and overall the whole structure measured *c* 7.5m NE–SW by 10.5m NW–SE (*illus 7*). A sub-oval post ring of eight post-holes was present (17024, 17022, 17020, 17011, 17009, 17036, 17034 and 17032), seven of which cut through the ring-ditch. The post-holes ranged in size from 0.21m to 0.42m in diameter, and varied in depth from 0.1m to 0.3m. The post-holes were spaced on average 2.3m apart and formed a ring 6.5m NE–SW by 7.5m NW–SE.

The ring-ditch (17002) had gently sloping sides and was filled with moderately compacted, dark brown to black silty sand (17003; *illus 8*). In the north of the ditch a thin band of firm, sticky, black silty sand (17008) which contained frequent flecks and chunks of charcoal was identified at the base of the ditch. Lying on the base of the ring-ditch, and also overlying 17008, was a surface of cobbles and pebbles. This surface was confined within the post-ring, although sloping outer edges of the ring-ditch extended beyond the post-ring.

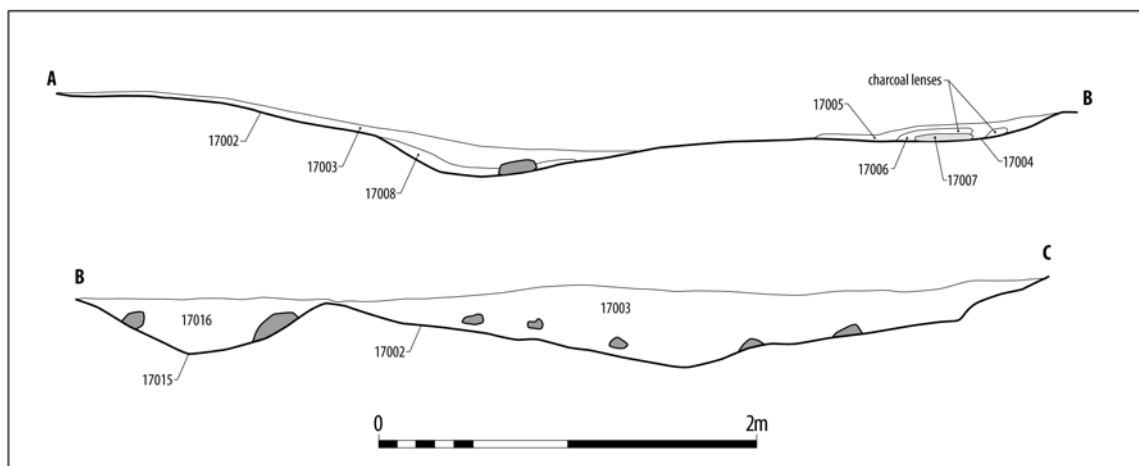
What may have been an entrance structure lay to the SE, consisting of three post-holes (17026, 17028 and 17030) and a shallow linear scoop. The majority of the post-holes in the post-ring were filled with mid brown silty sand, whereas the three post-holes in the entranceway were filled with dark brown or black silty sand and contained flecks of charcoal.

No evidence of re-cutting or realignment of ring-ditch or post-holes was identified, indicating only one structural phase to House 3.

In the centre of the roundhouse a small, raised tear-drop shaped area was defined by the ring-ditch, measuring 2.9m north to south by 2.4m east to west. This central area contained a sub-circular hearth pit (17004) with gently sloping sides and a flat base measuring approximately 1m long and 0.1m deep (*illus 8*). The base of the hearth-pit was lined with



Illus 7 House 3 plan

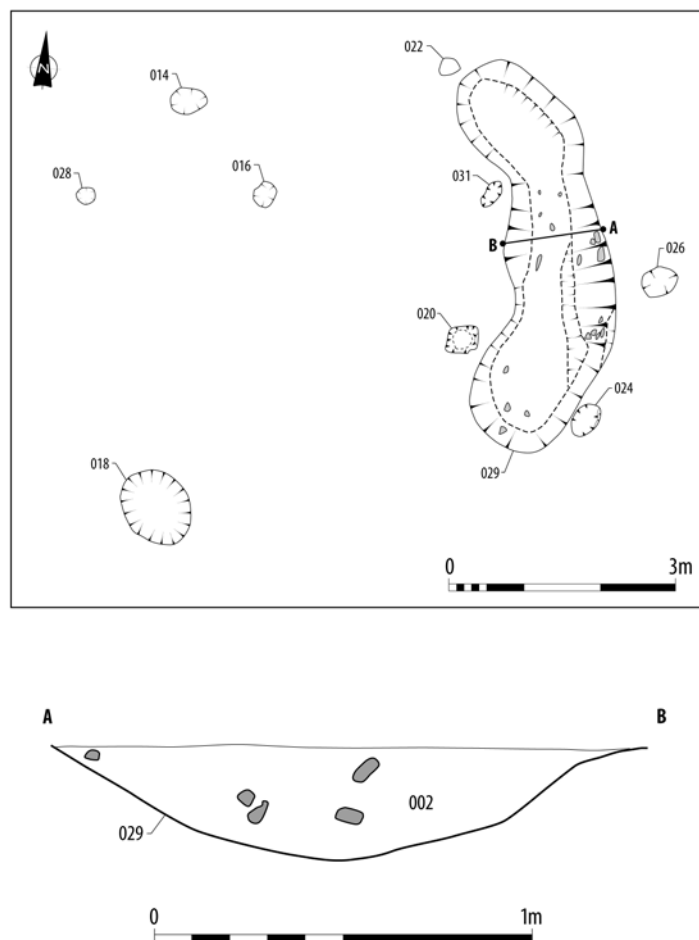


Illus 8 House 3, west-facing section

cobble-sized, flat stones (17007), which were badly fire-cracked. Above these stones was an orangey-red silty sand (17006) with flecks of charcoal, indicating intense burning. The upper fill of the hearth pit was black silty sand with dense concentrations of charcoal (17005). A large pit (17015) was identified immediately south of the hearth pit. It was oval in plan, measuring *c* 1.5m by 1m and *c* 0.5m deep, and was filled with mid brown/black sandy silt (17016).

The fill also contained flecks of charcoal as well as fragments of pottery and the pit was lined with large, angular cobbles and small boulders. The function of this pit was unclear, but a domestic function cannot be ruled out as it lies within the centre of the living space for the roundhouse.

An oval pit (17013) was located 0.6m to the south-west of the ring-ditch, measuring 0.8m by 0.7m, and 0.1m deep. It had shallow sloping sides and a



Illus 9 Feature Group 1, plan and section through ditch 029

flat base that was lined with a layer of fire-cracked cobble-sized stones, and it contained two silty sand fills. The presence of fire-cracked stones may indicate that this feature was associated with cooking.

Three radiocarbon dates were obtained for this structure, one from pit 17015 (SUERC 12842) and two from the upper fill of the hearth pit 17004 (SUERC 12846–7). These gave a maximum calibrated date range at 2σ of 1530–1210 cal BC, within the Middle to Late Bronze Age.

3.4 Feature Group 1 (possible roundhouse)

Feature Group 1 comprised a crescent-shaped ditch and nine pits (*illus 9*). The ditch (029) measured 5.2m in length by 1.3m wide maximum and 0.3m deep. It was filled with a dark brown loose and stony silt (002) containing patches of black charcoal-rich silt and orange ash. The edges of the cut were scorched orange in places, suggesting that material had been burnt in the ditch, and a considerable quantity of prehistoric pottery was recovered from the fill, more so than from any other feature on the whole site.

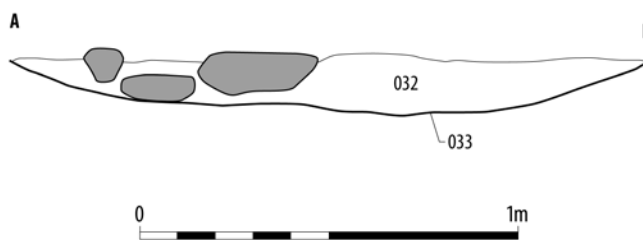
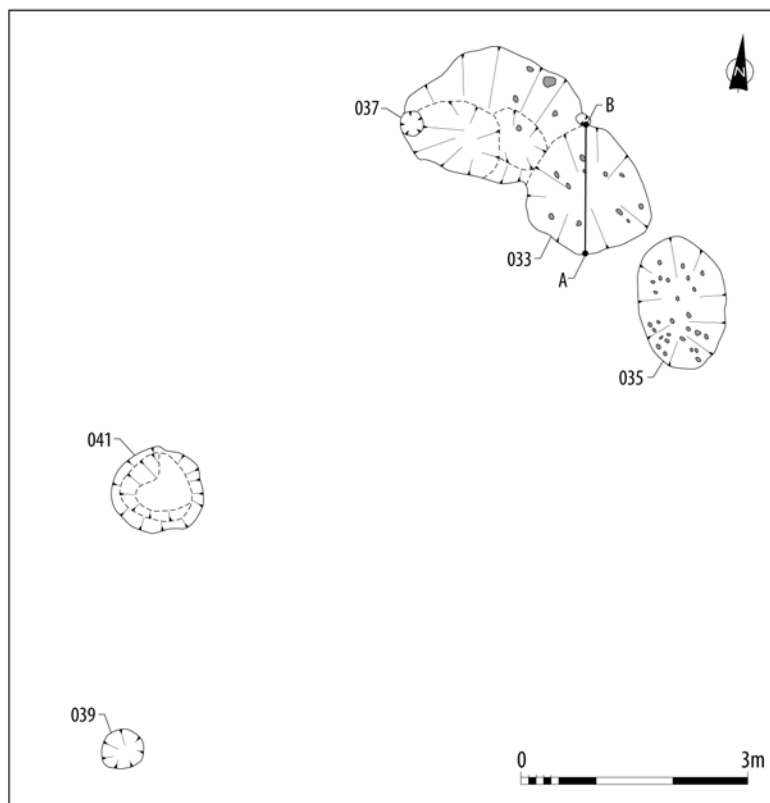
Nine pits were recorded, five of which (020, 022, 024, 026 and 031) were positioned surrounding and

very close to the curved ditch. The remaining four (014, 016, 018 and 028) lay to the west. One pit (018), which lay 4m to the south-west of the ditch, was slightly larger than the others, measuring 1m across and 0.2m deep, whereas the others measured on average 0.35m across and 0.2m deep. No definite patterning of the pits was discernible, other than the five that surrounded the ditch feature.

The purpose of this feature group is unclear, but it quite possibly represents the severely degraded remains of another roundhouse, as the size and shape of the ditch is comparable to the ring-ditch seen in House 1, and an arc of five pits could conceivably be described by 028, 014, 022, 026 and 024. Stratigraphic relationships could not be directly inferred as none of the features were intercutting, so more than one phase of activity could be represented. Dating of the ditch, and by association the other features in the group, to the Late Bronze Age is based upon pottery evidence (*Johnson*, below).

3.5 Feature Group 2 (possible roundhouse)

The features in Feature Group 2 consisted of a crescent-shaped ditch, which was revealed upon



Illus 10 Feature Group 2, plan and section through ditch 033

excavation to be two separate features (033 and 035, *illus 10*), and two pits to the south-west of the ditch (039 and 041).

The southerly part of the ditch (035) was a shallow oval pit measuring 1.7m by 1.2m by 0.14m deep. Pit 033 measured 3.5m by 1.6m maximum and 0.2m deep (*illus 10*), and appeared to have been dug in two segments. Its fill concealed a small pit (037), measuring 0.32m across and 0.16m deep, cut into the base of 033 at its northern end. The larger of the two pits (041) measured 1.2m across and 0.35m deep and was filled with dark brown silt, from where a large sherd of unabraded prehistoric pottery was recovered. This feature had suffered disturbance due to root action and a few modern finds were also recovered from its fill. The smaller pit (039) provided no useful information.

It is quite possible that pit 035 was originally

conjoined with 033, as another ditch segment, but that subsequent erosion or plough-truncation had resulted in the separate features that survived. If so the feature group is similar in character to Feature Group 1, and could be interpreted as the severely truncated remains of another building.

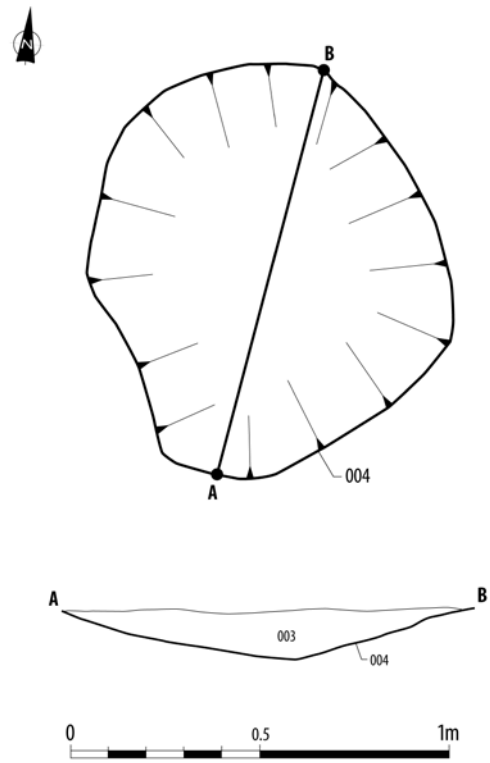
3.6 Pit 006

This shallow oval scoop (*illus 11*) was 2.85m long by 1.5m wide by 0.2m deep. It was filled with dark brown loose silt (005) containing several large stones and abundant possibly fire-cracked stones. Prehistoric pottery and worked lithics were also recovered from this fill. At the south end of this feature, a small pit (008) measuring 0.4m across and 0.2m deep was discovered. The fill (007) contained small angular



Illus 11 Pit 006 plan and sections

stones, which may have been packing stones to hold a post. It was partly truncated by a smaller pit (010).



Illus 12 Pit 004, plan and section

3.7 Pit 004

An isolated circular pit ([illus 12](#)) measuring 1.1m by 1m by 0.13m deep was located at the eastern edge of the excavation area. The feature had a flat base and contained a large quantity of heat-shattered stones. The pit contained a large proportion of hazelnut shells and may represent an earlier feature than the other features on the site ([Hastie](#), below).