

## 4. THE CAMPS VALLEY

### 4.1 Introduction

An area measuring nearly 10.6 ha was investigated across Camps Valley in relation to the construction of access tracks (Illus 4.1) and installation of electrical cables. Due to the routes of the cables and access track, the archaeologically monitored areas comprised a series of roughly parallel linear strips which ran from close to the top of the ridge on the southern side of Camps Valley (an area known as Mossy Dod), down across the valley floor and then up the slope over a high knoll (Crannies Hill) on the northern side (Illus 4.2). The ground investigated ranged in height between *c* 270m AOD on the valley floor and 450m AOD on the slopes of the summits.

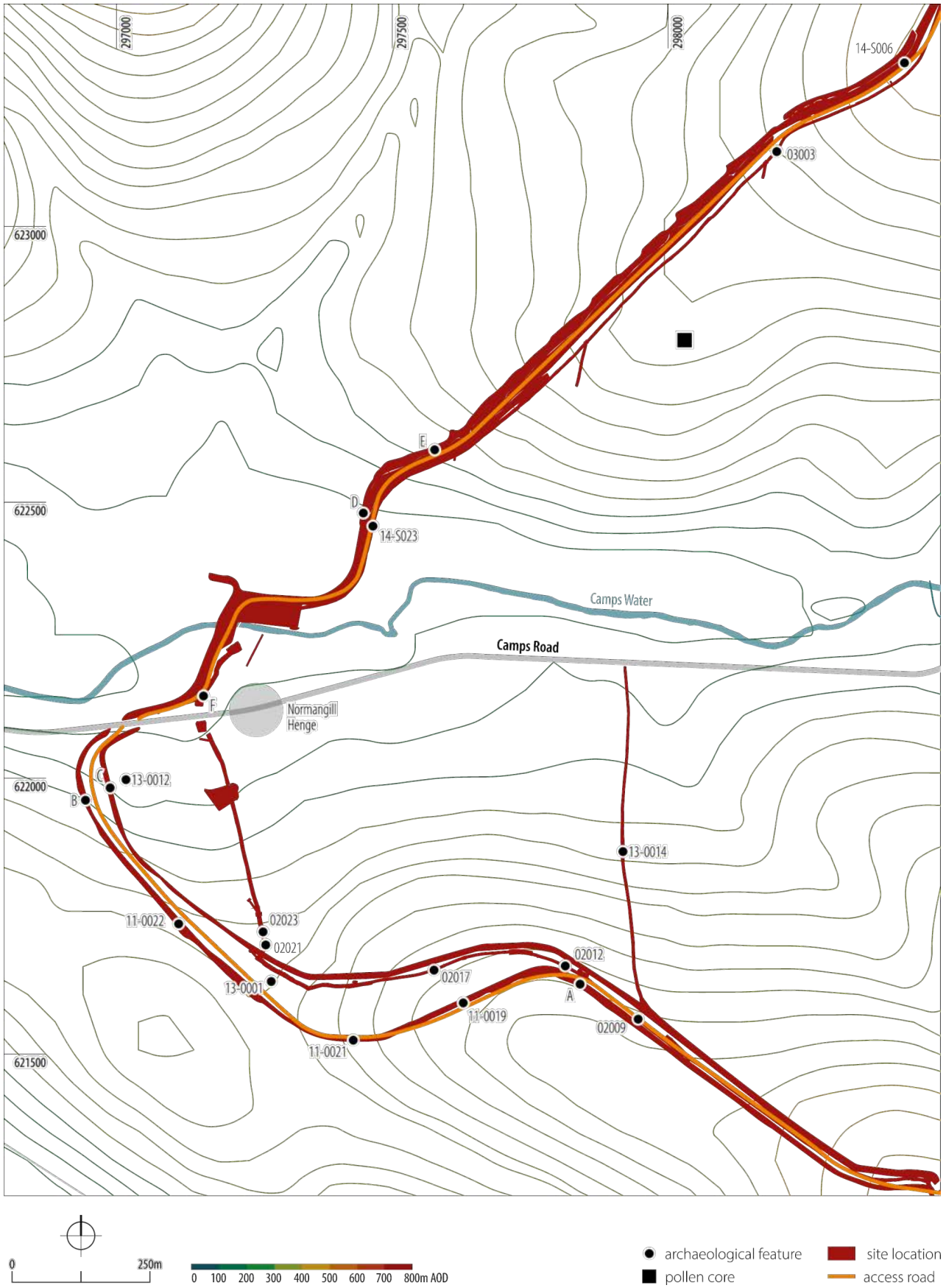
Camps Water runs through the valley from east to west, joining the Clyde some 3km downstream. The land around the cable routes and access tracks is currently used as rough pasture for grazing. A total of 48 individual features were identified during

the works, forming six foci of activity and fourteen isolated features. Illus 4.2 shows the location of the features, labelled either individually or by letter (Location A, B, C and so on) where there are groups; more detailed plans of the features in groups or individually are located throughout the chapter. The letter locations do not necessarily indicate contemporaneity of all features at that location. Camps Valley was also the location of the environmental pollen core sample described in Section 2.5.2. The majority of features were small shallow pits with limited evidence for structural remains. However, some evidence points to the presence of possible temporary structures. The features range in date from the Mesolithic through to the Late Iron Age.

It was not possible to establish the original depth of the pits as the extent to which they had been truncated and by what was difficult to determine. Truncation by cultivation such as ploughing or turf stripping or by pedogenesis were all possibilities,



**Illus 4.1** View west of topsoil stripping for access road on the southern side of Camps Valley. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



Illus 4.2 Plan of features in Camps Valley. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

but whether identification of these processes could be satisfactorily achieved within the limitations of the project is unknown. The circumstances of their discovery were a factor; identified as negative features in the geological subsoil when the turf/topsoil/peat was stripped away by machine, any potential evidence for the actions that reduced their original depth would have been removed.

The excavation established that the valley slopes in this location were not barren, featureless, and empty as might be assumed from current views; they had in fact been subject to fairly intense activity throughout the prehistoric period.

#### 4.1.1 Radiocarbon Dates and Dating

The majority of features were pits and were dated by the radiocarbon dating of material and the spot

dating of artefacts recovered from the fills. Of a total of 48 features, 21 were dated through radiocarbon determinations (Table 4.1). The dates in Table 4.1 show two significant gaps – one between 5900 BC and 3800 BC and the other between 3000 BC and 2500 BC, which may suggest a lack of dated activity in those periods. Evidence for the processes by which the fills of the pits were formed was not clearly discernible. On the one hand nearly all the environmental material was taken from charcoal-rich deposits or concentrations of charcoal which imply a deliberate or single event deposition, rather than from a well sorted and mixed deposit which would be indicative of natural erosion. On this basis the contextual security of the material is good enough to give an accurate indication of the date the pits were in use. Most of the pottery fragments,

**Table 4.1** Radiocarbon determinations from Camps Valley

Lab Code	Context No	Material	Radiocarbon Age BP	Radiocarbon Date (95% probability)
SUERC-58798	13-0002	Charcoal: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	7946±29	7030–6695 cal BC
SUERC-58794	14-S004	Charcoal: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	7925±31	7030–6680 cal BC
SUERC-58812	11-0028	Charcoal: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	7115±30	6055–5920 cal BC
SUERC-58809	14-E011	Charcoal: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	4957±29	3790–3660 cal BC
SUERC-58814	13-0016	Charcoal: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	4959±27	3790–3660 cal BC
SUERC-70744	02022	Charred Nutshell: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	4901±30	3765–3635 cal BC
SUERC-70748	02024	Charred Nutshell: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	4861±30	3705–3535 cal BC
SUERC-58813	11-0043	Charcoal: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	4823±28	3660–3530 cal BC
SUERC-58811	11-0025	Charcoal: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	4832±28	3695–3530 cal BC
SUERC-58808	13-0013	Nutshell: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	4698±30	3630–3370 cal BC
SUERC-58801	13-0004	Nutshell: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	4726±28	3635–3375 cal BC
SUERC-58804	13-0015	Charcoal: <i>Pomoideae</i> sp	4662±29	3520–3365 cal BC
SUERC-70762	03004	Charcoal: Non-oak	4463±30	3360–3025 cal BC
SUERC-70751	02009	Charcoal: Non-oak	4499±30	3350–3100 cal BC
SUERC-58800	14-S019	Nutshell: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	4470±30	3340–3025 cal BC
SUERC-58799	11-0004	Charcoal: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	3985±30	2575–2460 cal BC
SUERC-58803	11-0010	Charcoal: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	3972±30	2575–2350 cal BC
SUERC-58810	11-0023	Charcoal: <i>Corylus avellana</i>	3906±30	2470–2300 cal BC
SUERC-70752	02018	Charcoal: Non-oak	3897±30	2470–2300 cal BC
SUERC-70761	02013	Charcoal: Non-oak	3873±30	2465–2215 cal BC
SUERC-58802	14-S024	Charcoal: <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	1903±27	cal AD 25–210

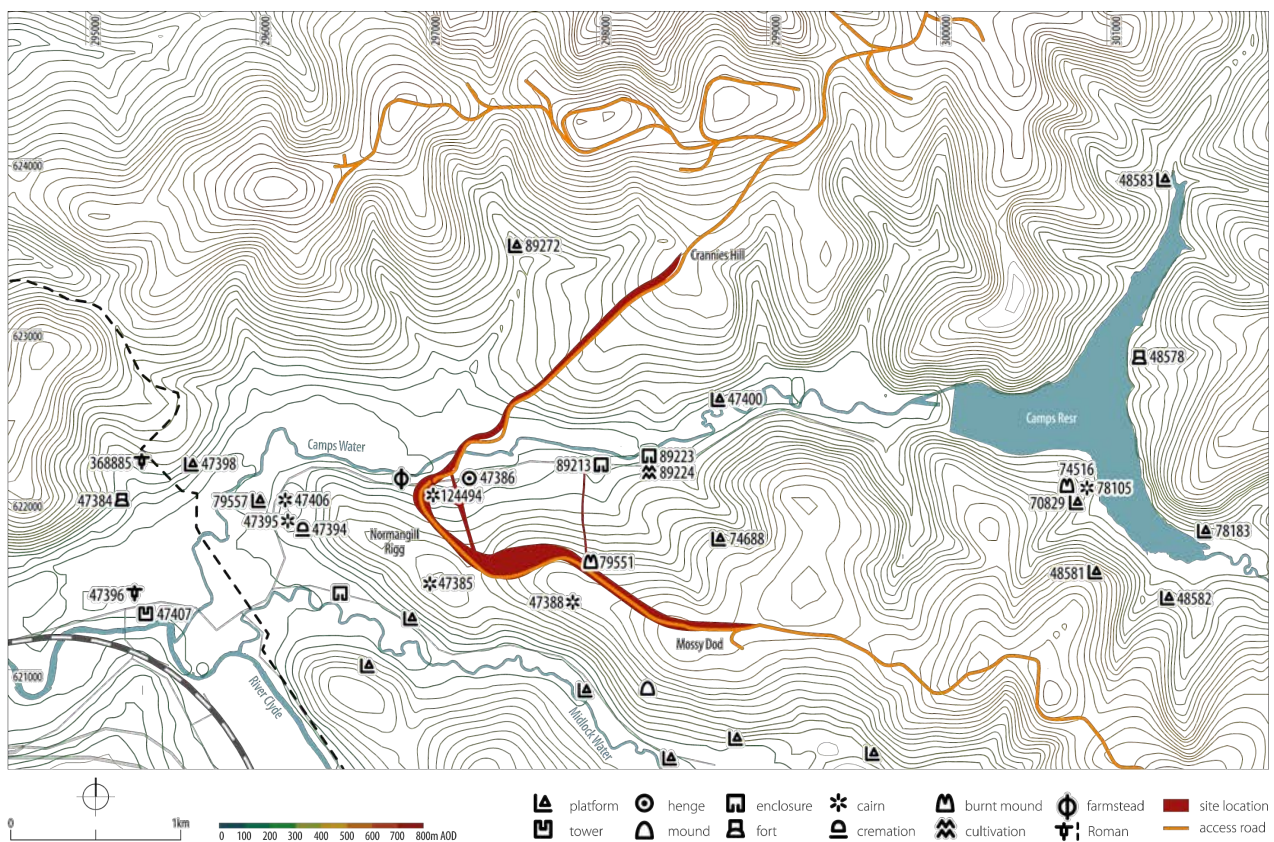


however, showed signs of abrasion implying the fragments were subject to frictional processes prior to their deposition in the pits. This abrasion is not indicative of primary or structured deposition, but the possibility that the abrasion of the fragments could have resulted from their curation cannot be discounted. In two cases there was a gap between the dates established for material recovered from the fills. This highlights the issues with dating material from shallow features and this is discussed in more detail below.

#### 4.1.2 Background

The landscape of Camps Valley contains many sites of cultural heritage interest (Illus 4.3), mostly identified through survey, dating from the Neolithic to the 20th century and ranging from ritual monuments and find spots to settlements and agricultural earthworks. The ritual monuments include the earliest dated feature which is Normangill Henge (Canmore ID [47386](#)), located

on the floor of the valley and one of the best upstanding monuments of this type in Scotland. Its morphology suggests it belongs to the ‘classic’ tradition of henge building (Harding 2003: 12) and it is likely to have been constructed after 3000 BC. It is unexcavated (although it was disturbed by the construction of a 20th century railway track – later replaced by a road – through its centre). In addition, three prehistoric burial cairns (Canmore IDs [47388](#), [47385](#) and [47395](#)) are noted on the southern ridge, on Mossy Dod, Normangill Rig, and Fall Hill, at least two of which have been disturbed by stone robbing. The Normangill Rig cairn was robbed in the 19th century to provide building material for a wall and revealed ‘the bones of a man of large stature’ (OS Name Book Vol 18: 127). Two small enclosed Bronze Age cremation cemeteries are recorded, one at the mouth of Camps Valley on Fall Hill (Canmore ID [47394](#)), the other at the head (Canmore ID [74516](#)). Two more cairns are recorded (Canmore IDs [47406](#) and [124494](#)) although their dates and functions have not been



Illus 4.3 Plan of known heritage assets in and around Camps Valley. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

established, and two burnt mounds (Canmore IDs [79551](#) & [74516](#)) are recorded on the southern slopes of the valley.

On the settlement front, eight unenclosed platform settlements were identified on the lower hillslopes either side of the valley; Rome Hill (Canmore ID [89272](#)), Reed Gill (Canmore ID [47400](#)), Earns Gill (Canmore ID [74688](#)), Campshead/Reeve Hill (Canmore ID [70829](#)), Midge Hill (Canmore ID [48581](#)), Peat Rig (Canmore ID [48582](#)), Campshead/Fairburn Rig (Canmore ID [78103](#)), and Grains (Canmore ID [48583](#)). These consisted of between two and five house platforms in each case with the exception of the 13 platforms at Grains. A cairnfield (Canmore ID [78105](#)) was noted close to Reeve Hill UPS possibly indicating some clearance for agriculture. Two further UPS were recorded at the mouth of the Camps Valley – Campside Wood (Canmore ID [47398](#)) and Camps Water (Canmore ID [79557](#)). On a knoll at the head of the valley a hillfort, Camps Knowe Wood (Canmore ID [48578](#)), was located, which is probably Iron Age in date, as is the hillfort at Berries Burn not far from the mouth of the valley.

The Border-Crawford-Inveresk Roman Road (Canmore ID [368885](#)) cuts across the mouths of both Midlock and Camps Valleys and not far

from its route Crawford Roman Fort (Canmore ID [47396](#)) was constructed, located 300m from the junction of the River Clyde and Camps Water. Crawford Castle (also known as Tower Lindsay – Canmore ID [47407](#)) is located some 100m to the south-east of the fort.

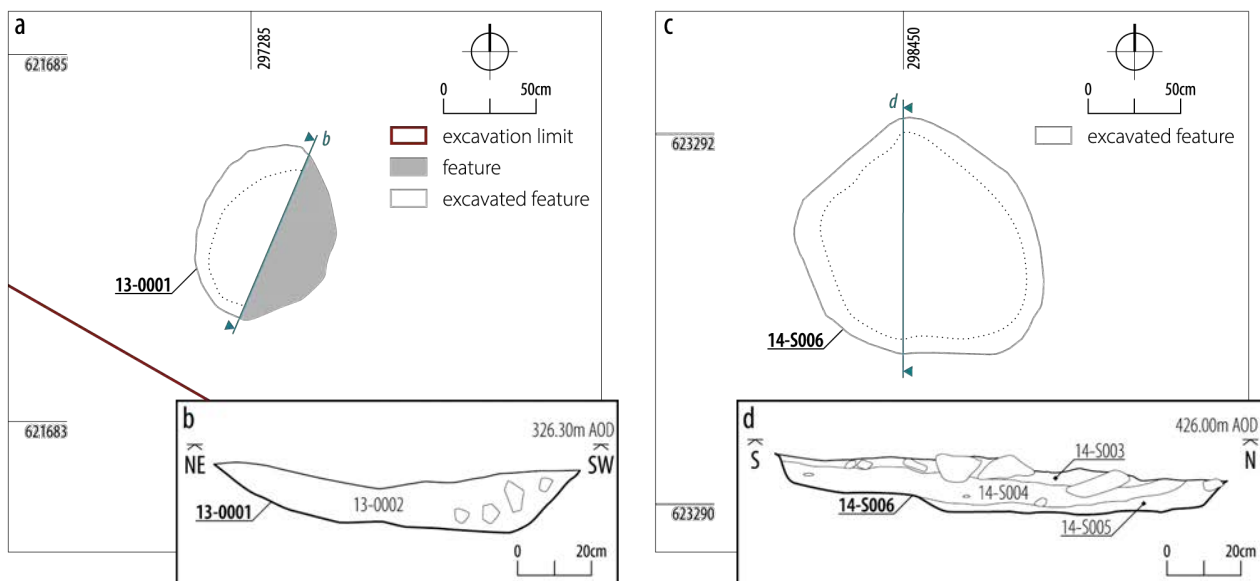
Post medieval remains in the form of rig and furrow and a series of earth banks and enclosures (Canmore IDs [89213](#), [89223](#), [89224](#)) were identified on the valley floor during archaeological surveys for a sewage plant. The upstanding remains of enclosures and a structure were recorded along the edge of the river escarpment between 100m and 500m west of the henge during survey works for the Clyde Wind Farm EIA.

## 4.2 Archaeological Results

The excavated features identified during the topsoil strip are presented below in period order.

### 4.2.1 Mesolithic

Three pits of Mesolithic date were recorded within the valley at elevations between 300m and 425m AOD: two on the southern side of the valley (C13-0001 and at Location B C11-0027 – its specific location is shown in Illus 4.12) and one on the northern side (C14-S006) which was at the



**Illus 4.4** (a) Plan of pit C13-0001; (b) North-west facing section of pit C13-0001; (c) Plan of pit C14-S006; (d) East facing section of pit C14-S006. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)





**Illus 4.5** North-west facing section of pit C11-0027. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.6** View of pit C14-S006 during excavation. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

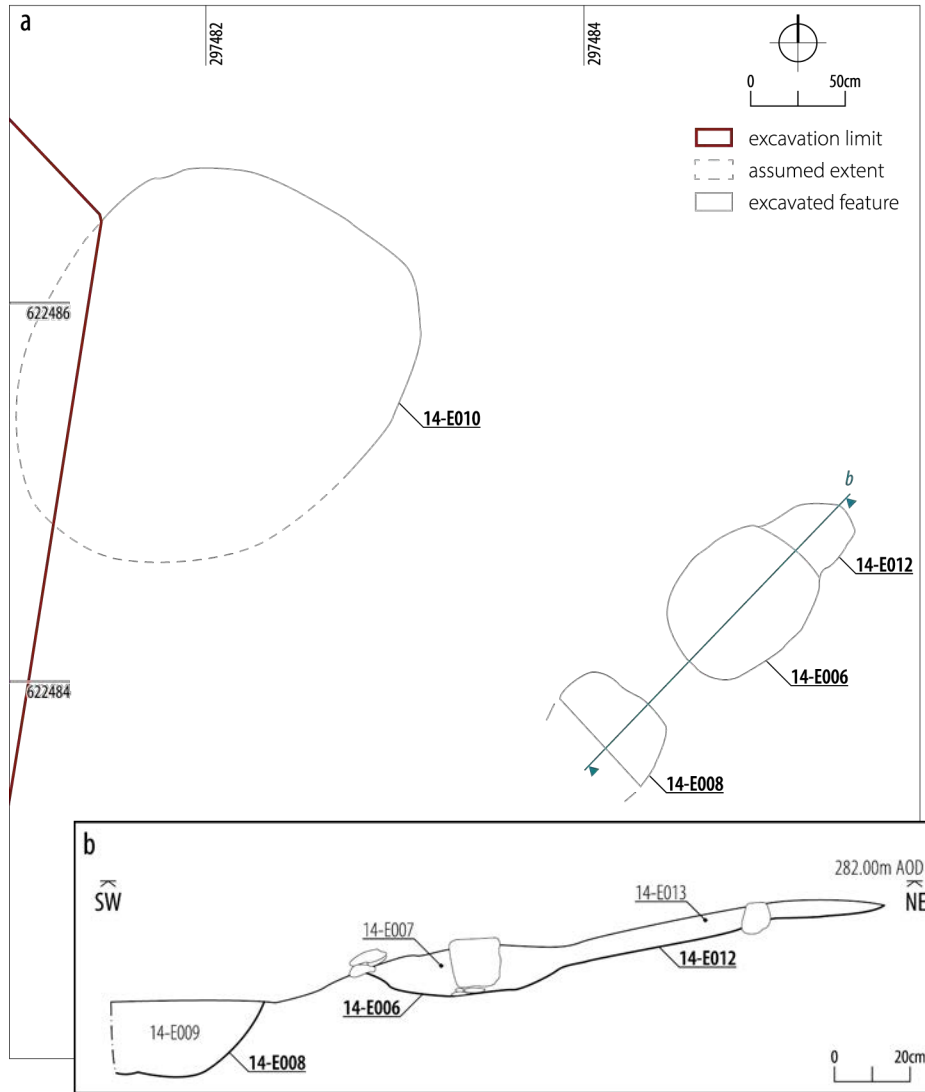
far north-east of the monitored area (see Illus 4.2). All three were of a similar size and shape, roughly circular in plan, shallow in nature but with relatively steep sides, and with diameters of between 1.1m and 1.4m (Illus 4.4a-d, Illus 4.5). Pit C13-0001 contained a single fill with a mix of hazel and maloideae charcoal, with the majority being hazel; a fragment of the hazel provided a radiocarbon date of 7030–6695 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58798). Pit C14-S006 showed more complex deposition with three fills, the middle of which contained a similar mix of hazel and maloideae charcoal. A fragment of the hazel charcoal provided

a similar radiocarbon date of 7030–6680 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58794). In general, its fills contained more stones than the others and it may have functioned as a hearth, although there was no sign of in situ burning. It was 100m higher up the side of the valley than the other pits, close to the summit of Crannies Hill (Illus 4.6). Although pits C14-S006 and C13-0001 were similar in date and contained similar fills they were separated by over 2km of distance, nearly 100m of elevation and were on opposite sides of the valley. The single fill of pit C11-0027 contained almost exclusively birch charcoal with a very small amount of hazel; a fragment of the latter provided a radiocarbon date of 6055–5920 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58812), close to a millennium later than the others.

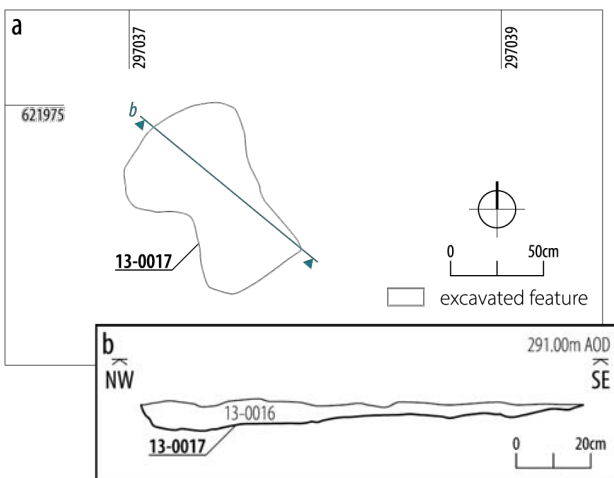
#### 4.2.2 Early to Middle Neolithic

Seven pits of Early Neolithic date were identified: a group of four pits on the northern side of the valley (Illus 4.2, Location D) and three individual pits on the southern side of the valley (C13-0017 in Location C and C02021 and C02023). The group of pits on the northern slopes comprised one large pit, C14-E010, measuring 1.9m by 1.1m, and three smaller pits, C14-E008, C14-E006, and C14-E012, 2m to the south-east, all around 282m AOD (Illus 4.7). The fills of all three smaller pits were similar. All contained a significantly larger proportion of hazel in comparison to other burnt material, and pit C14-E008 contained small amounts of oak charcoal as well, one of only two examples of oak from any of the features found in Camps Valley. Pit C14-E010 also contained significant fragments of Carinated Bowl ware (V11) and flint debitage. The group can be dated to the Early Neolithic (95% probability; SUERC-58809: 3790–3660 cal BC) from hazel charcoal found within the large pit, in association with the pottery, and the three smaller pits are thought to be contemporary due to their proximity and similarity of fills.

A pit, C13-0017, was located on the southern side of the valley, (Illus 4.8; its specific location is also shown on Illus 4.13). It was very shallow, surviving to less than 0.1m and the sides of the feature were barely perceptible. The fill of the pit contained charcoal and heat-affected stone, and there appeared to be evidence of in situ burning. The majority of the



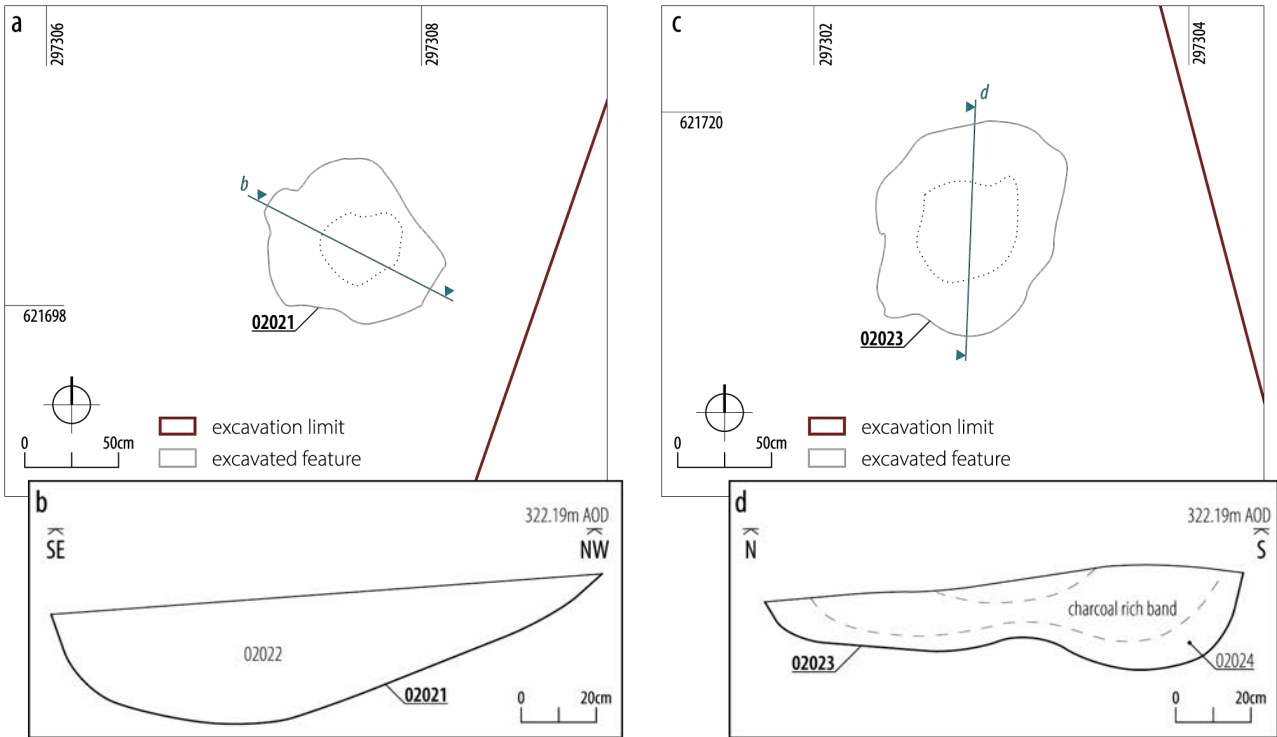
**Illus 4.7** (a) Plan of pits C14-E010, C14-E008, C14-E006, and C14-E012, Location D; (b) South-east facing section of pits C14-E008, C14-E006, and C14-E012. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



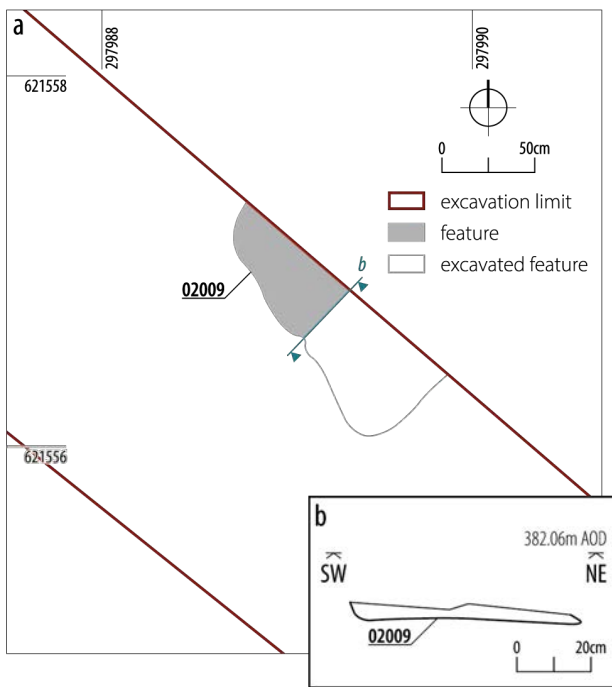
**Illus 4.8** (a) Plan of pit C13-0017; (b) South-west facing section of pit C13-0017. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.9** View of pit C02023 during excavation. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.10** (a) Plan of pit C02021; (b) North-east facing section of pit C02021; (c) Plan of pit C02023; (d) West facing section of pit C02023. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

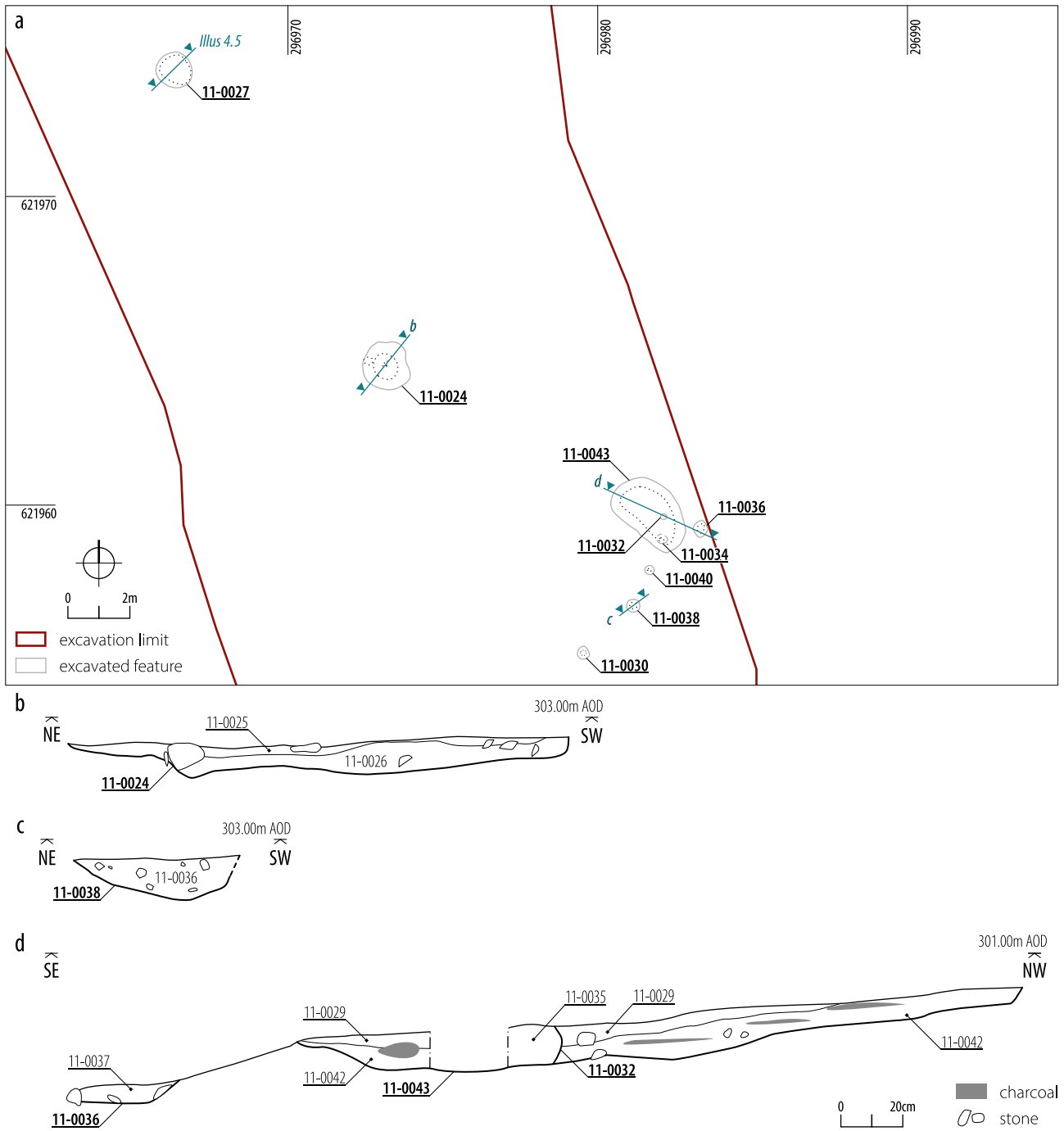


**Illus 4.11** (a) Plan of pit C02009; (b) South-east facing section of pit C02009. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

charcoal was hazel, and a fragment of that charcoal produced a radiocarbon date of 3790–3660 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58814). The pit lay at a similar elevation to and was contemporary with the group of pits on the northern side of the river.

Further up slope on the southern side of the valley, the remaining two pits, C02021 and C02023, were located around 35m apart (Illus 4.2). Both pits measured around 1m in diameter and 0.2m in depth and were located at a height of about 320m AOD (Illus 4.9). They were filled with similar deposits (C02022 and C02024 respectively) which were charcoal-rich dark grey-brown sandy silts (Illus 4.10). Both deposits contained Carinated Bowl pottery sherds and a small amount of lithic material. Charred nutshell retrieved from the fills dated to between 3760 and 3535 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-70744 and 95% probability; SUERC-70748 respectively). The presence of fragments of Beaker pottery recovered from pit C02023 is thought to be the result of later intrusion, since the typological date for the Carinated Bowl pottery sherds matches the date for the charred nutshell, although the nature of that intrusion was not clear.



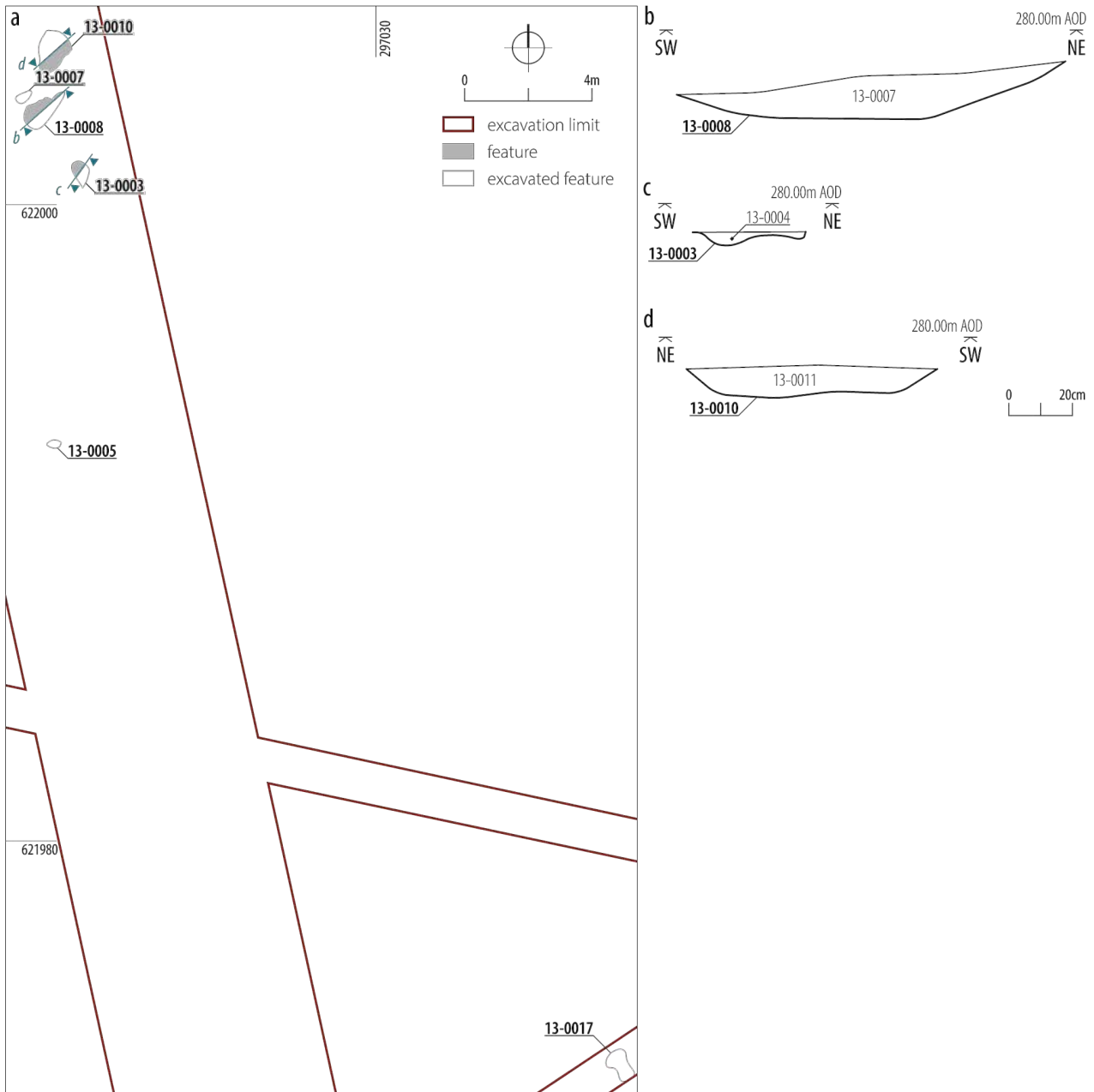


**Illus 4.12** (a) Plan of features at Location B; (b) North-west facing section of pit C11-0024; (c) North-west facing section of post-hole C11-0038; (d) North-east facing section of post-holes C11-0036, C11-0032 and pit C11-0043. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

Eleven features dating to the Middle Neolithic period were present, spread across both sides of the valley. The highest feature dating to this period was a spread of charcoal-rich material, C02009, at around the 380m AOD contour on the southern side of the valley (Illus 4.2). It measured 1.2m by 0.7m

and was only 0.03m deep (Illus 4.11). A fragment of non-oak charcoal from the fill produced a date of 3350–3100 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-70751) which is likely to be secure material for dating despite the shallow nature of the deposit.

Pit C11-0024 lay around the 300m contour on



**Illus 4.13** (a) Plan of features at Location C; (b) South-east facing section of pit C13-0008; (c) South-east facing section of pit C13-0003; (d) North-west facing section of pit C13-0010. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

the lower slopes of the southern side of the valley, at Location B (Illus 4.2). It was around 1.7m in diameter, 0.1m deep (Illus 4.12a, 4.12b), and had two fills, the upper of which was a charcoal-rich sandy silt and clay. The charcoal was entirely made up of hazel, which was dated to 3695–3530 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58811). No artefacts were found within the feature.

It should be noted that a similar radiocarbon date (3660–3530 cal BC; 95% probability; SUERC-58813) was obtained from a fragment of hazel charcoal in pit C11-0043 which lay 7m to the south-east. However, artefacts recovered from the fill suggest this feature belonged to a later date (Late Neolithic) and the fragment of charcoal from which the date was obtained was a later incorporation. It

is not impossible that the charcoal in pit C11-0043 originated from pit C11-0024 or activities immediately related to it.

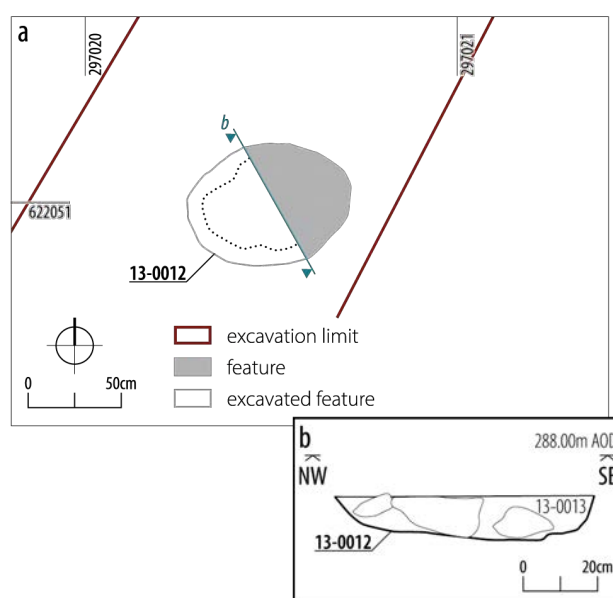
A group of four features was located at the 280m contour on the southern side of the valley (Illus 4.2, Location C), in a slight hollow set back into the slope of the hill. They measured between 1.5m by 0.9m and 0.4m by 0.3m (Illus 4.13) and all had been heavily truncated (Illus 4.13b-d), with the best-preserved example being less than 0.2m deep. Two pits, C13-0003 and C13-0008, had evidence of burning within their base and contained greyish-brown sandy silt fills in contrast to the darker clayey fills of the other two features (Illus 4.14). In general, hazel was the most common charcoal present in the fills, although one pit, C13-0010, contained a very high proportion of maloideae, and another pit C13-0008 contained a broadly equal proportion of hazel and alder, with a small amount of maloideae present. Small amounts of lithic debitage were also present in some of the pits. A fragment of nutshell from one of the pits in the group (C13-0003) provided a date of 3635–3375 cal BC, (95% probability; SUERC-58801) placing it in the Middle Neolithic. A small shallow pit C13-0005 was located 10m south of this group of features; no environmental or dating evidence was recovered from it but it may be contemporary.

Another pit of contemporary date lay 45m to the north-east (Illus 4.2). This pit, C13-0012 (Illus 4.15), was around 0.8m in diameter and 0.1m deep and contained large amounts of heat-affected stone. The charcoal from the pit was a mix of mostly hazel, some alder and a small amount of blackthorn – the only occurrence of blackthorn on this site. A fragment of hazel charcoal from the fill was dated to 3630–3370 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58808). Two sherds of modified Carinated Bowl pottery were also retrieved from the fill, which fit with the radiocarbon date, along with a small assemblage of lithics that point to the earlier part of this period.

Still on the southern side of the river, but nearly a kilometre to the east of pit C13-0012, pit C13-0014 was found at an altitude of 330m AOD (Illus 4.2). It was 0.5m in diameter and contained a charcoal-rich fill and fire-cracked stones (Illus 4.16), although there was no evidence of in-situ burning present (Illus 4.17). The pit was dated to 3520–3365 cal BC

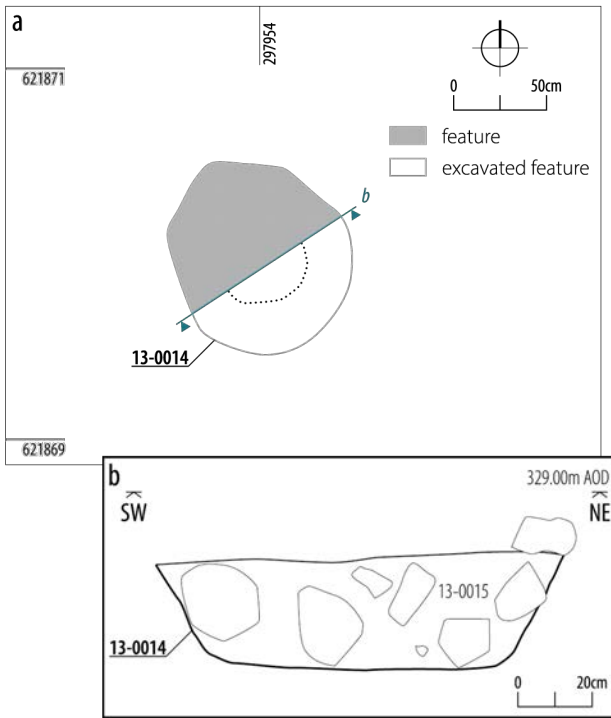


**Illus 4.14** View south of features at Location C prior to excavation. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



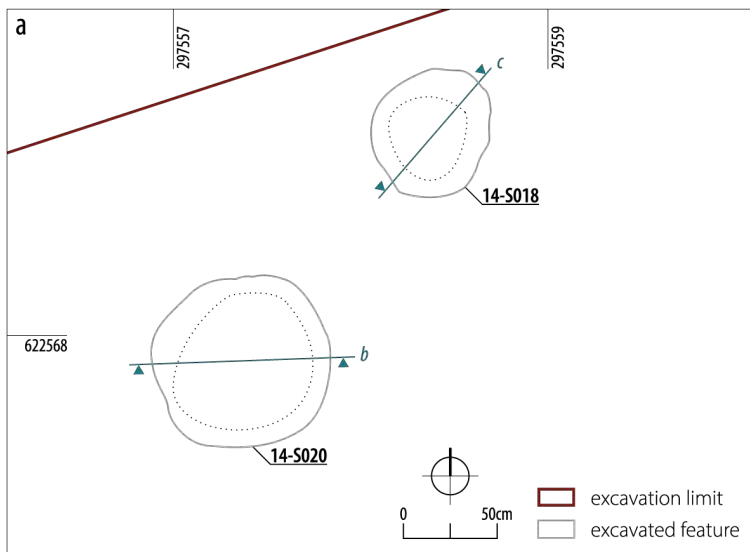
**Illus 4.15** (a) Plan of pit C13-0012; (b) Southwest facing section of pit C13-0012. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)





**Illus 4.16** (a) Plan of pit C13-0014; (b) South-east facing section of pit C13-0014. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

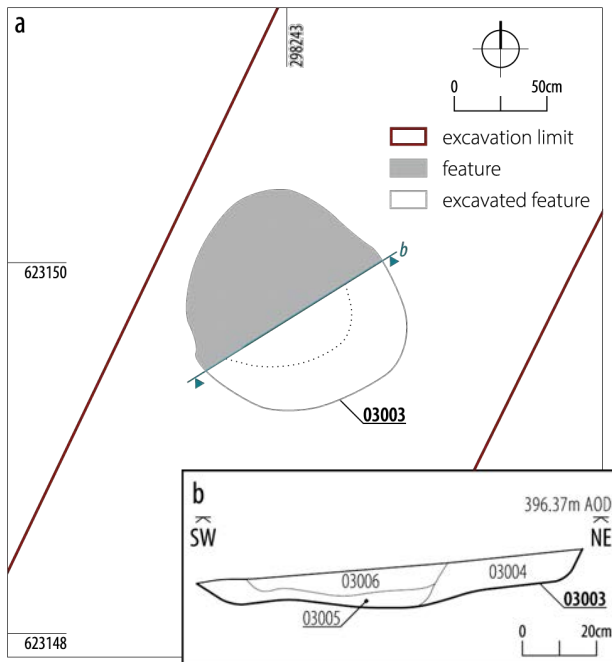
**Illus 4.17** View north-west of section through pit C13-0014. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.18** (a) Plan of pits C14-S018 and C14-S020 at Location E; (b) South facing section of pit C14-S020; (c) North-west facing section of pit C14-S018. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.19** View south-east of pit C14-S018. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.20** (a) Plan of pit C03003; (b) South-east facing section of pit C03003. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

(95% probability; SUERC-58804) by a fragment of pomoideae charcoal.

On the northern side of Camps Valley at Location E, two adjacent pits, C14-S018 and C14-S020 (Illus 4.2, Location E, Illus 4.18), could also be dated to the Middle Neolithic, although a few centuries after the features described above. The larger pit C14-S020 was around 1m in diameter and was one of the best-preserved features excavated in Camps Valley,

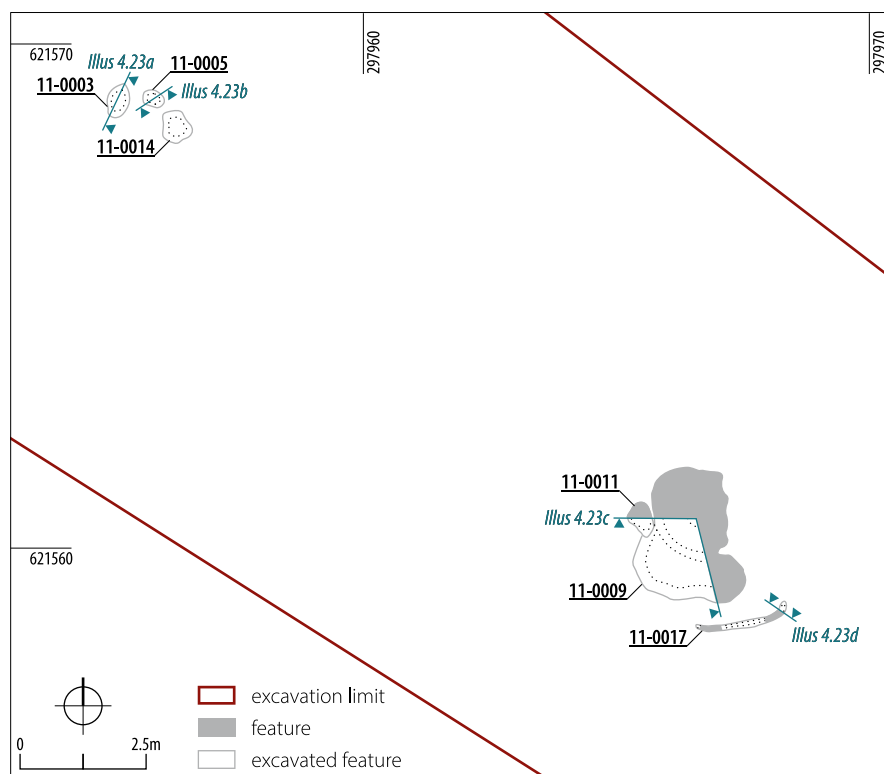
surviving to a depth of 0.3m. It contained a single sherd of Impressed Ware. The smaller pit C14-S018 was around 0.7m in diameter and contained larger quantities of Impressed Ware pottery fragments (V9; Illus 4.19). Both contained small amounts of lithic debitage. Charcoal from the pits was largely hazel, with a small amount of alder, oak, and maloideae also present. Charred hazelnut shells were also found within both features and nutshell from the smaller pit was dated to 3340–3025 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58800).

Some distance to the north-east of these pits, a single isolated pit, C03003, was recorded at a height of 390m AOD (Illus 4.2)– the highest Neolithic pit on the site (only one other pit – from the Mesolithic – was higher). The pit was 1.2m in diameter with steeply sloping sides and a flat base (Illus 4.20). The primary fill, C03004, was a mid-brown silty loam located in the north-eastern half of the feature and contained charcoal that dated to 3360–3025 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-70762). Overlapping the primary fill and located on the south-west (downslope) side of the pit were deposits C03005 and C03006, darker grey silty loams thought to be residues from burning.

#### 4.2.3 Late Neolithic / Chalcolithic

Features and deposits spanning the Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods were identified at five locations, solely on the southern side of the valley, and included two temporary structures. At Location A (Illus 4.2) on a flattish section of the slopes of Mossy Dod there was a group of three pits and a further group of two pits and a gully a short distance away. These were all concentrated around the 380m contour.

Three pits, C11-0003, C11-0005, and C11-0014, all lay within a metre of each other (Illus 4.21). Two of the pits, C11-0005 and C11-0014, were steep sided and appeared to have been truncated, though by what was unclear. One pit, C11-0003 (Illus 4.22a), was much shallower with gently sloping sides, and contained 40% of a complete pot of Grooved Ware / Impressed Ware type (V4). Another smaller pit, C11-0005 (Illus 4.22b), contained fragments of the same vessel, suggesting that while these features may not have been dug at the same time, they were certainly backfilled contemporaneously and were intrinsically linked in some way. Pit C11-0003 also



**Illus 4.21** Plan of features at Location A. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

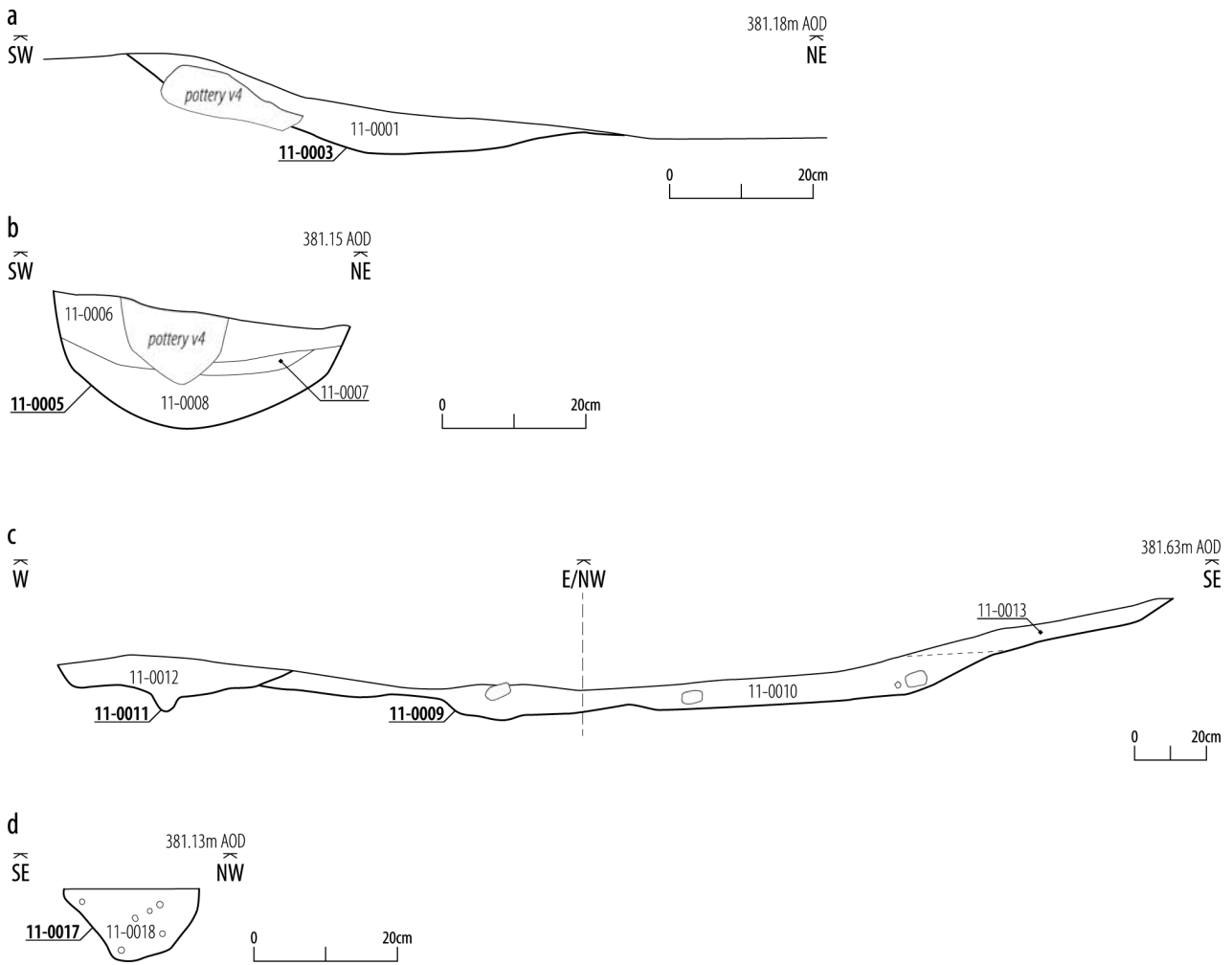
contained an arrowhead from a much earlier period (Early to Middle Neolithic) and two potentially contemporary scrapers (Middle to Late Neolithic). Of these two pits, the smaller, C11-0005, contained a large proportion of birch charcoal, while the larger contained more hazel. The third pit, C11-0014, was heavily truncated but showed evidence of in situ burning in the form of heat-affected natural subsoil across part of the feature. The feature had been so heavily truncated that no charcoal or charred material of any sort was recovered from the fill of the pit, despite indications of in situ burning. Hazel charcoal from the fill of pit C11-0003 was dated to 2575–2460 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58799) and it is thought that all three features date to the same period.

Just over 10m to the south-east on the same contour, a large black spread of material was identified (Illus 4.23) but was revealed after excavation to be three features – a large pit, a smaller intercutting pit, and a gully (Illus 4.21). The large pit, C11-0009 (Illus 4.22c), was shallow and its fill contained charcoal and fire-cracked stone. On its western side, it was cut by the small sub-circular pit

C11-0011. Both pits had considerable amounts of charcoal within their fills, suggesting either in situ burning or deliberately dumped material. Bordering the pits was a narrow, curved gully C11-0017 (Illus 4.22d). It followed the line of the pit and was steep sided, which suggests it contained uprights of some description that functioned as a windbreak, protecting the features to the north (although some protection from a southerly wind would have been afforded by the hill), and leaving the group open overlooking the valley. This group of features was dated to 2575–2350 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58803) by a fragment of hazel charcoal from the fill of the large pit C11-0009, broadly contemporary with the group immediately to the north-west.

The presence of fragments of one pot in two different pits and an arrowhead from a different time period highlights the issue of interpreting such shallow features where the formation process is undetermined by lack of evidence. If the arrowhead was deliberately deposited in the pit at the same time as the pottery fragments it was a ‘historical’ artefact to those depositing it and suggests the





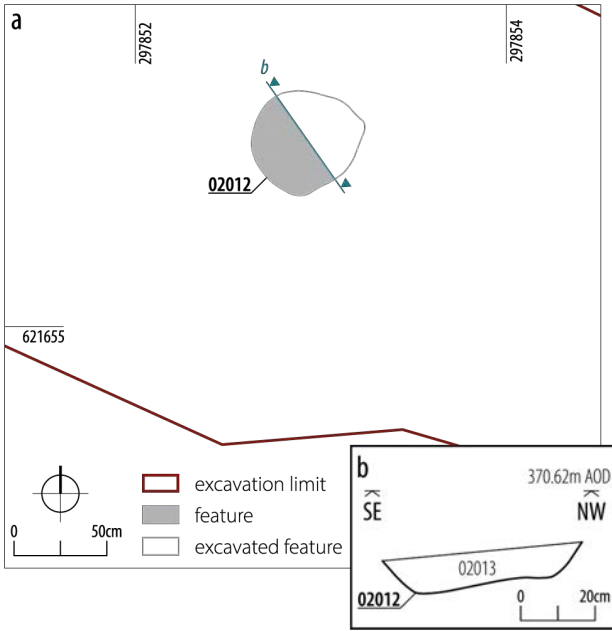
**Illus 4.22** (a) South-east facing section of pit C11-0003; (b) South-east facing section of pit C11-0005; (c) South and south-west facing section through pits C11-0011 and C11-0009; (d) North-east facing section of pit C11-0017. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.23** View south-east of spread of black material prior to excavation. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

location was a focus for ceremonial activity. The evidence of the gully indicates a change in activity from simply digging pits to the erection of structures (whether permanent or temporary) and may reflect a general change in the activities taking place in the valley.

Three further pits on the southern side of the valley, C02012, C02017, and C11-0022 (Illus 4.2), were identified and dated to the Chalcolithic. A small pit, C02012 (Illus 4.24), lying 40m north-west of Location A measured 0.5m in diameter and 0.15m deep and contained a concentration of angular stones, C02014 (not illustrated), which may be indicative of post packing. The upper fill of grey clay silt contained small sherds of Beaker pottery, and non-oak charcoal retrieved from the pit dated



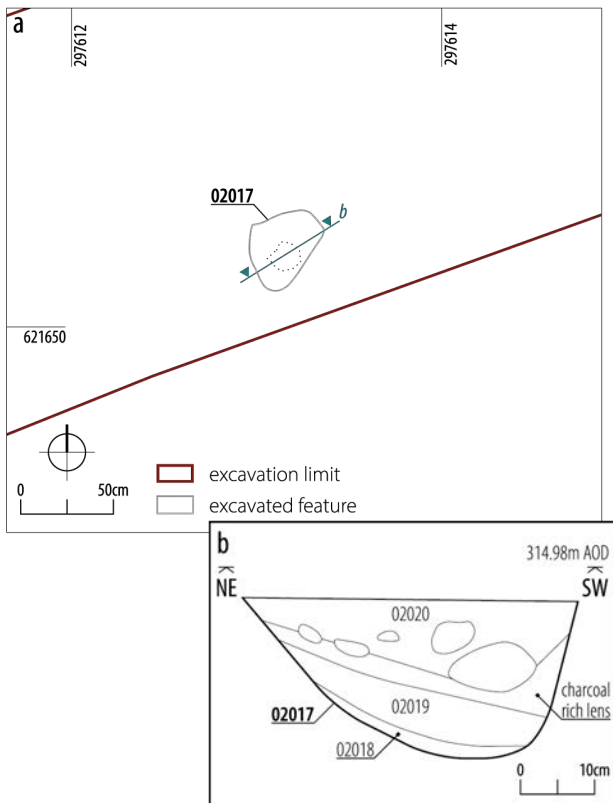
**Illus 4.24** (a) Plan of pit C02012; (b) North-east facing section of pit C02012. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.26** North-west facing section of pit C11-0022. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.27** View south-west of pit C11-0043. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.25** (a) Plan of pit C02017; (b) North-west facing section of pit C02017. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

to 2465–2215 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-70761); this is in keeping with the Beaker date. It is slightly later than the dates for the features in Location A although the date range is overlapping and is broadly speaking part of the same character of activity.

About 250m west of pit C02012 a further small pit, C02017, was recorded at 367m AOD. It was oval in plan and measured 0.4m diameter and 0.22m deep. The pit contained three fills (Illus 4.25); the basal fill, C02018, was charcoal-rich and a fragment of this non-oak charcoal was dated to 2470–2300 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-70752).

Pit C11-0022, located 450m west of C02017, was subcircular in plan measuring 0.7m in diameter and had been badly disturbed by animal burrowing

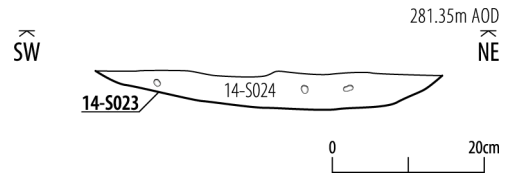
(Illus 4.26). The fill, C11-0023, was entirely made up of hazel charcoal. A fragment of this charcoal was dated to 2470–2300 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58810).

At around 300m AOD (Illus 4.2, Location B), a pit, C11-0043, and six post-holes, C11-0030, C11-0038, C11-0040, C11-0034, C11-0032, and C11-0036 (Illus 4.12), provide further tantalising evidence for a structure. The features were poorly preserved with one post-hole, C11-0038, having significantly disturbed edges and similar appearance to a pit in profile (Illus 4.12d). The oval pit, C11-0043, was nearly 3m long and was slightly cut into the slope of the hill, potentially to form a flat surface (Illus 4.27). Its primary fill, C11-0042, was a charcoal-rich sandy silt (Illus 4.12d); a fragment of hazel charcoal from this fill was dated to 3660–3530 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58813). The deposit also contained pottery sherds of Late Neolithic Grooved Ware (V6 and V7) which dated to nearly a millennium later; even more of the same material was found in the deposit above. The features were located in a slight naturally occurring hollow which may have afforded protection to the activities taking place in the location.

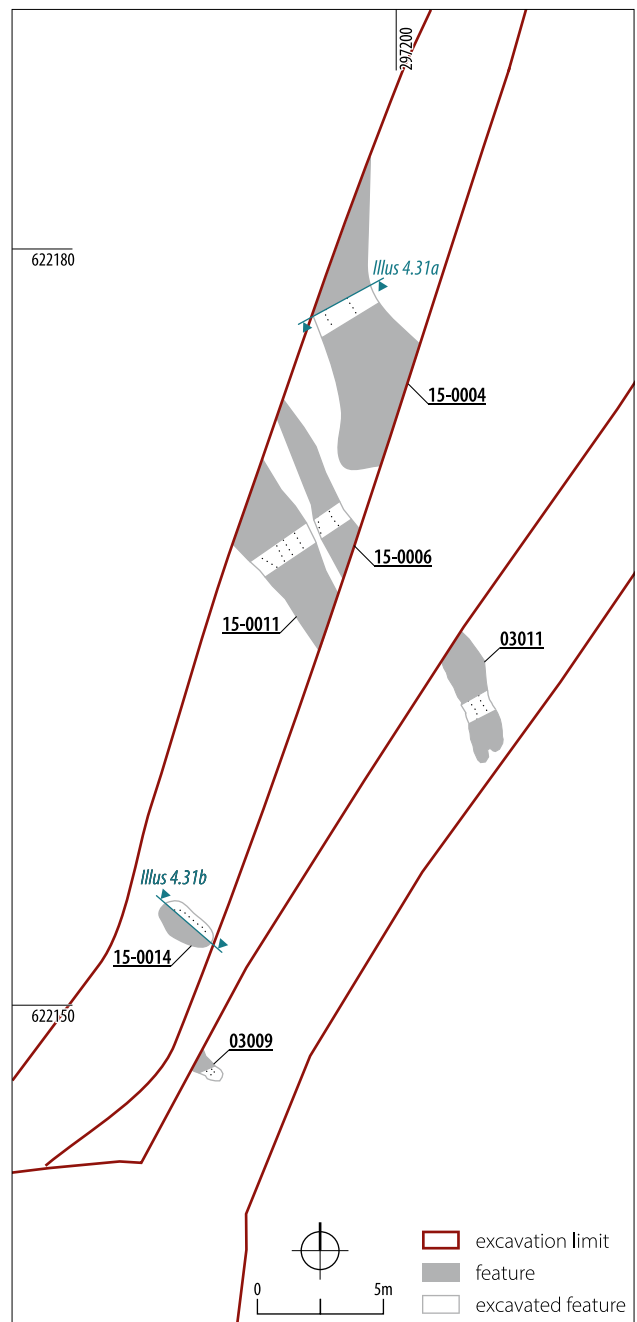
The evidence here is as confusing as the evidence for the features at Location A. The charcoal rich sediment may relate either to activities within the pit (and therefore the radiocarbon date likely reflects the date of the pit and those activities) or activities outwith the pit, in which case the sediment entered the pit through natural processes. The pottery sherds would be later intrusions in the first case and either later intrusions or contemporary with the pit in the latter. The presence of potential post-holes, although not necessarily clearly structural in function, appears to represent something different in character to the evidence of earlier activities.

4.2.4 Iron Age Activity

A single pit, C14-S023, found close to Location D on the northern side of the valley (Illus 4.2) was radiocarbon dated to the Late Iron Age (cal AD 25–210, 95% probability; SUERC-58802). The pit was small, with a 0.4m diameter and a 0.04m depth (Illus 4.28). Despite the shallow nature of the pit, the fill contained abundant alder



**Illus 4.28** South-east facing section of pit C14-S023. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.29** Plan of features at Location F. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



charcoal. This pit is something of an anomaly in comparison to the other recorded features as there are no known Iron Age sites nearby, and without the radiocarbon date the pit could easily have been classified as Neolithic by comparison with the other features.

#### 4.2.5 Undated Features

In addition to the pits which can be assigned to specific periods through radiocarbon dating, artefactual evidence or by association, there are seven features which cannot be confidently ascribed to any specific period. However, these undated features contain evidence of activity that may relate to the features discussed above and can still contribute to an appreciation of how densely (or otherwise) the valley was occupied.

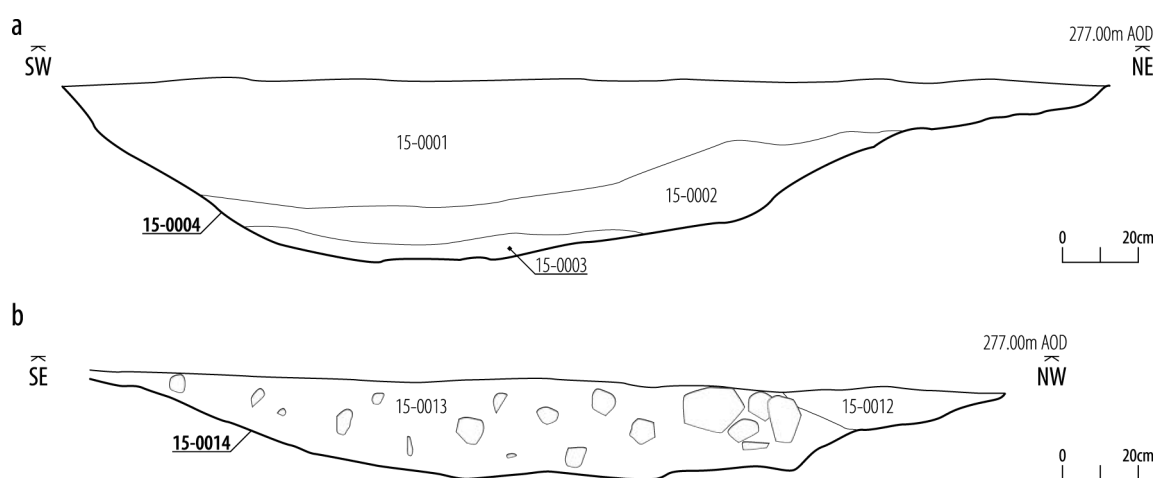
Two isolated pits contained limited material suitable for radiocarbon dating and therefore remain undated. Both are on the southern side of the valley on the western extent of Mossy Dod. Pit C11-0019 lay at around 378m AOD (Illus 4.2), was under a metre in diameter and was filled with a deposit similar to those seen in the pits at a similar altitude 250m to the east, although containing considerably less charcoal. It may be that, like those pits, it is Late Neolithic/Chalcolithic in date, however, this is conjecture. Feature C11-0021, 200m to the west, comprised a patch of natural subsoil which had been subject to intense heat at some stage, becoming bright pink, bright orange, and dark purple in



**Illus 4.30** View north-west of ditch C15-0011. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

colour. A very small number of charcoal fragments were present on the top of the burnt natural. The feature is presumed to be the base of a hearth which has been almost entirely truncated and could be of any date.

Three parallel ditches running north-west to south-east and two shallow oval pits were located on the valley floor (Illus 4.2 – Location F). Two of the ditches were around 2.5m wide (Illus 4.29); the northern one, C15-0004, had a U-shaped profile and the southern one, C15-0011, had two ‘channels’ along its base creating a double U-shaped profile (Illus 4.30). The upper fill, C15-0001, of ditch C15-0004 (Illus 4.31a) contained several flakes of chert and while these are undiagnostic, they are



**Illus 4.31** (a) South-east facing section of ditch C15-0004; (b) North-east facing section of pit C15-0014. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

broadly prehistoric in date. However, their presence in the fill is likely to have resulted from the washing in of material from surrounding deposits and therefore they cannot be used to date the feature. Between the two wide ditches was ditch C15-0006, which measured 0.8m wide and 0.12m in depth – it is likely that a second ditch, C03011, in a second stripped area directly east is a continuation of the feature.

The features lie directly to the west of Normangill Henge, and to the east of a series of banks and enclosures on an escarpment south of the river, which are interpreted as the remains of a post medieval farmstead. The ditches are on the same alignment as the rig identifiable on LiDAR (National Library of Scotland 2022) immediately adjacent to the henge. While their exact function cannot be determined they are most likely to be associated with the farmstead rather than the henge.

Location F also included two shallow oval pits, C15-0014 and C03009, lying 13m south of the southeastern ditch C15-0011. Pit C15-0014 (Illus 4.31b) contained a very small amount of magnetic residue. However, it is such a small amount it may be natural in origin, if it had not been incorporated into the feature from elsewhere.

### 4.3 Finds Synthesis

*Julie Franklin*

The archaeology from Camps Valley was in the form of isolated pits and small pit clusters along a linear route and the finds assemblage thus is characterised by small scattered assemblages that do not form a coherent picture of prehistoric activity at any particular location. These sub-assemblages are typically too small for reliable statistical analysis, but they provide evidence for the dating and, to some extent, the nature of activity in these locations. Most of the pottery could be dated on typological



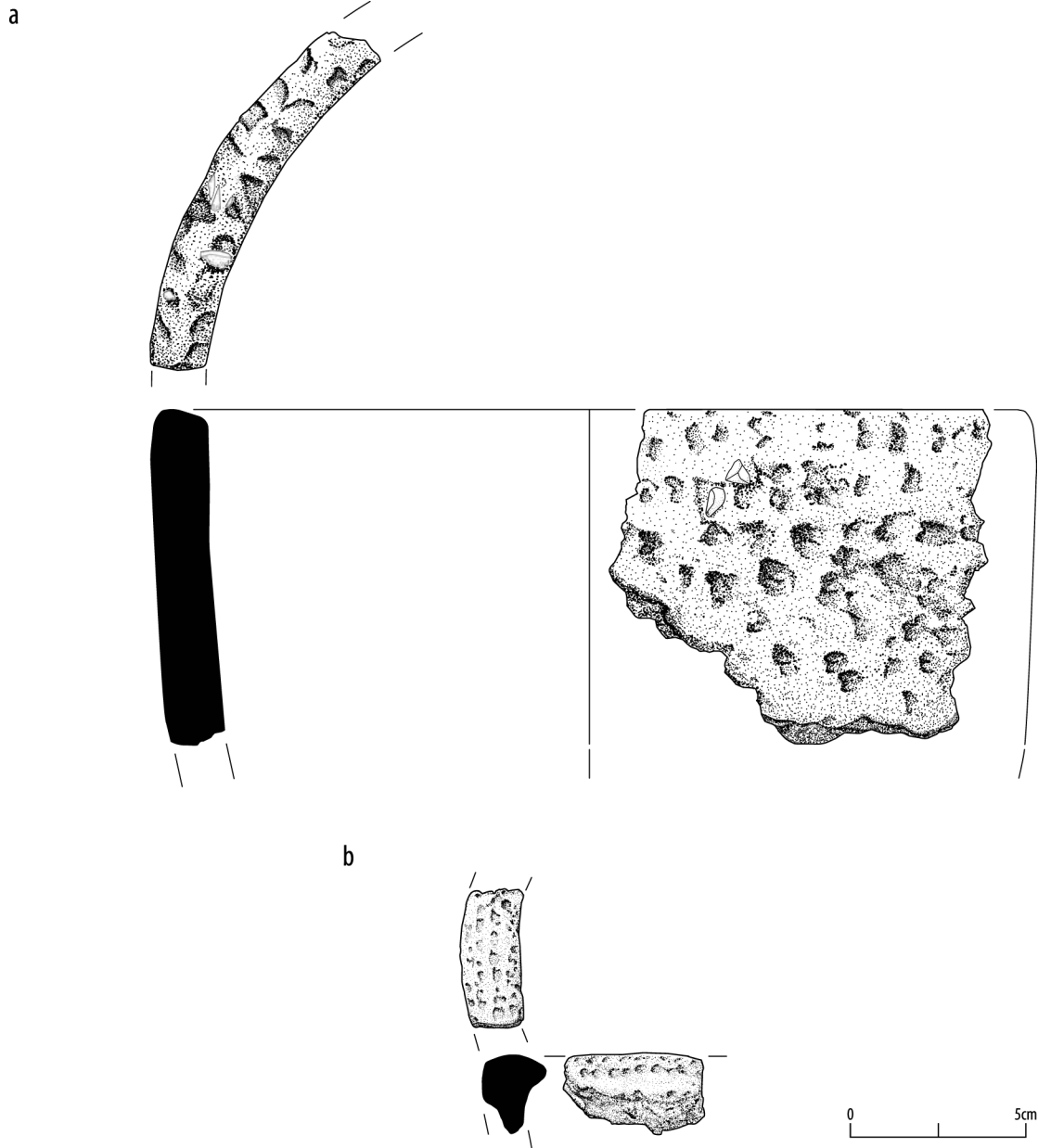
**Illus 4.32** Fragment of Middle Neolithic pot.  
(© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

grounds such as a fragment of Middle Neolithic pot (Illus 4.32), or fragments of Impressed Ware (Illus 4.33) and Grooved Ware (Illus 4.34), but most of the lithics could be dated only by association with pottery or radiocarbon dated material.

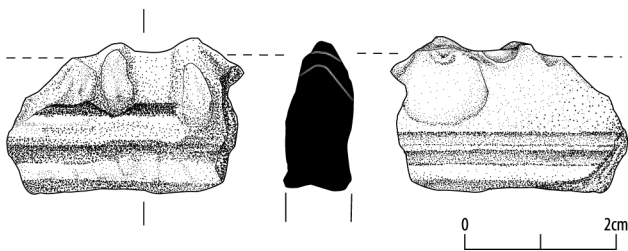
The abraded sherds of pottery and lithic knapping debris might be considered characteristic of refuse relating to everyday activities from the mid-4th millennium BC to the late 3rd millennium BC. The remains are not extensive enough to ascertain the degree of continuity between these phases. Pits are often the only evidence of occupation from the Mesolithic to the Early Bronze Age periods with little in the way of archaeologically visible structural remains, although some features here show hints of structural elements. Beaker pottery found in Midlock Valley (see Chapter 5) was associated with the possible beginnings of the platform settlement which might imply a shift in settlement patterns at this time. There are no such indications in this section of Camps Valley.

A different type of deposition might be represented at Location A on the southern side of the valley. Grooved Ware vessel V4 (Illus 4.35) was represented by large, fresh-edged sherds of a thick, coarse pot, encrusted with thick organic residue and spread between two pits. This pottery vessel was associated with a date of 2575–2460 cal BC (95% probability; SUERC-58799) from pit C11-0003, which fits with Grooved Ware use but was also found with an Early to Middle Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowhead (Illus 4.36a) and two Middle to Late Neolithic scrapers (Illus 4.36 b–c). If these were deposited at the same time, then the arrowhead would have been a curated find, at least several centuries old at the time, and the deposition may have been deliberate – a ritual act. The location also has a much higher lithic tool to debitage ratio compared to the other lithic finds in Camps Valley. Unusual deposits of large parts of Grooved Ware vessels associated with non-domestic activity are a well-recognised phenomenon (Cowie & MacSween 1999: 53; Lochrie 2008). The assemblage may represent the aftermath of a one-off event or ceremony.

As well as changes in pottery styles, change in lithic technology and raw material sourcing might be visible, though statistics taken from such small assemblages should be viewed with a degree of caution. There seems to have been an increase in



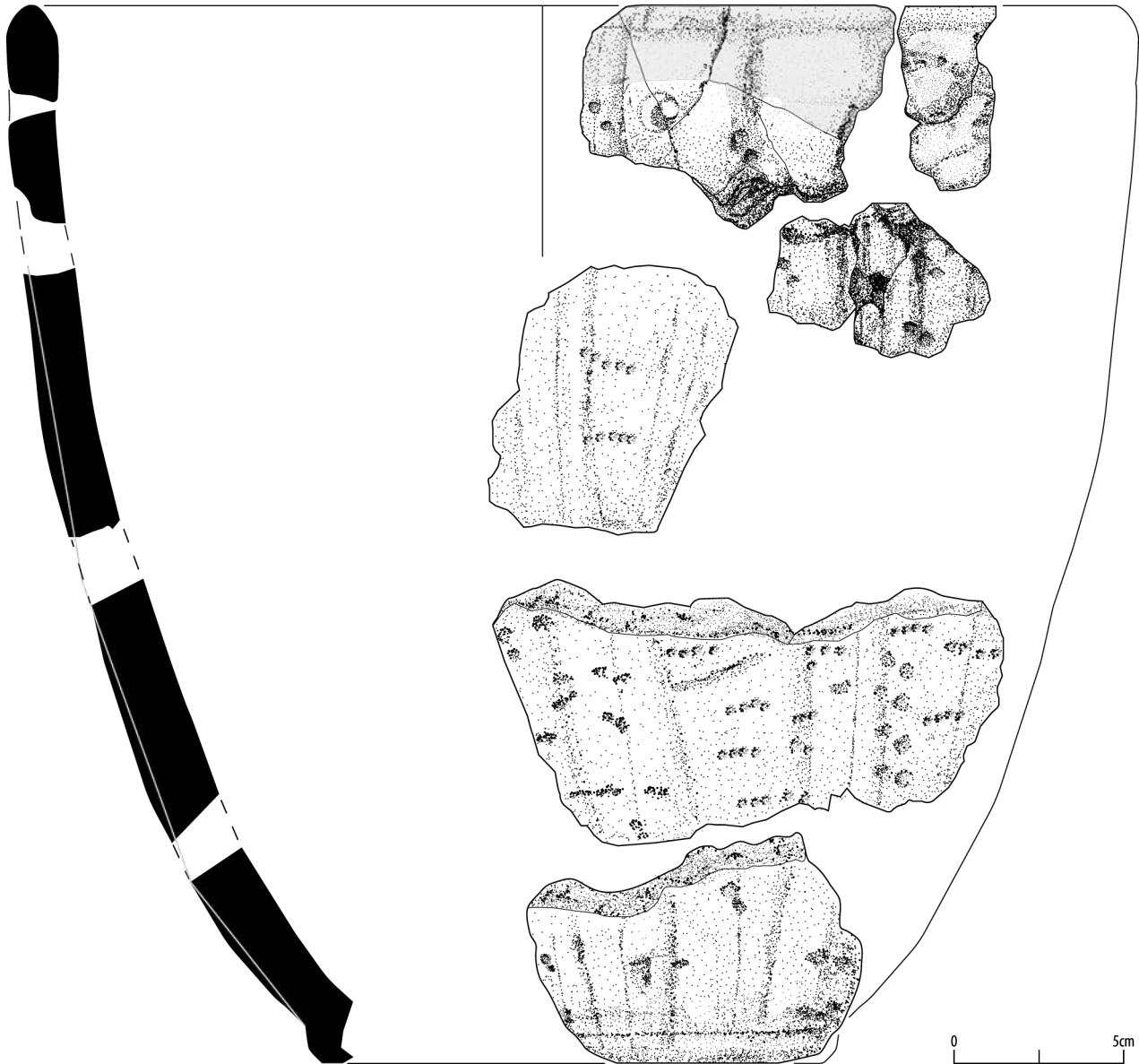
**Illus 4.33** Fragments of Impressed Ware. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)



**Illus 4.34** Fragments of Grooved Ware. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

hard hammer percussion in the later Neolithic. This period also seems to mark the height of flint use. Flint in Scotland is not widely naturally occurring and is found either on beaches (the nearest source of beach flint to Camps Valley is 60km away on the Clyde coast) or in flint gravels such as the deposit near Buchan, Aberdeenshire (Wickham-Jones & Collins 1977), and its occurrence indicates importation of raw material during the Neolithic (Saville 1994). Flint was associated with activity during all the periods represented in Camps Valley.





Illus 4.35 Grooved Ware vessel V4. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

At the Late Neolithic site at Location A, flint was found exclusively suggesting that by this time it was readily available and chert was shunned in its favour.

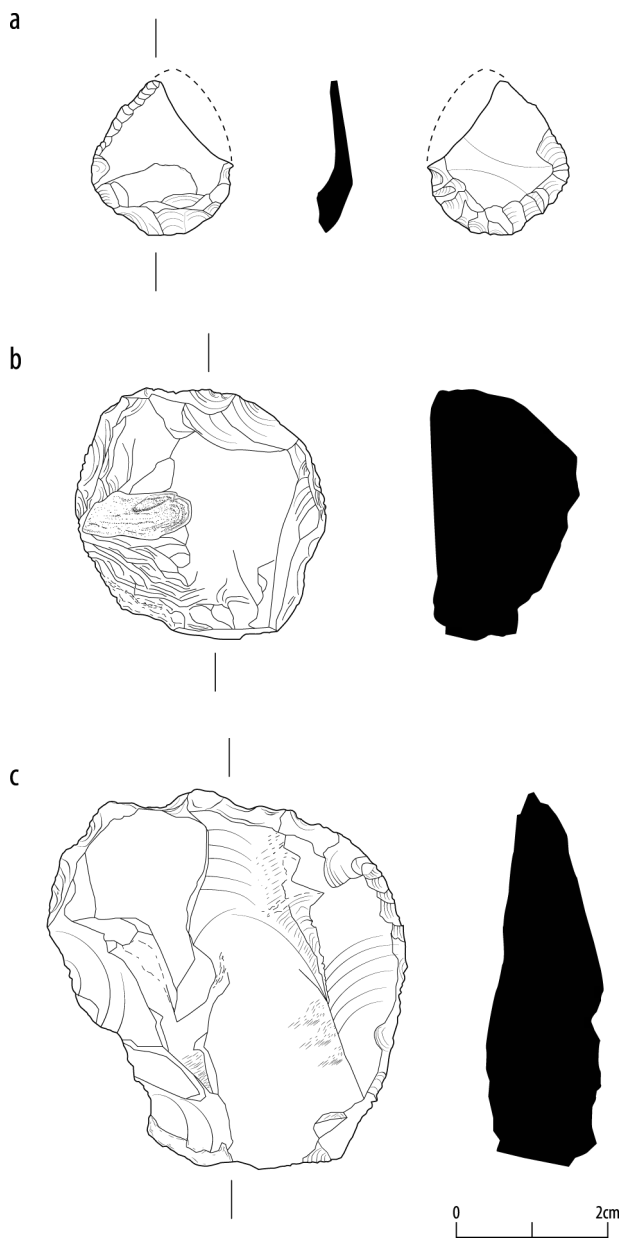
#### 4.4 Environmental Synthesis

Angela Walker & Laura Bailey

Charcoal from features dating from the Mesolithic through to the Late Iron Age was identified. In the absence of dated pollen evidence prior to the Late Bronze Age, the charcoal from Mesolithic features provides a valuable insight into woodland resources present in the Camps Valley during the Mesolithic

period. Apart from charcoal and hazelnut shell, few other plant remains were found from any of the periods.

Birch, hazel, and maloideae charcoal were identified in three Mesolithic pits, C13-0001, C14-S006, and C11-0027. Birch and hazel were two of the early colonisers in Scotland. Birch colonised everywhere by 11,000 years ago and hazel approximately 800 years later (Tipping 2003: 20). It is likely that birch grew on the valley floor and valley sides and hazel would have been confined to the valley sides. The maloideae charcoal was of *Sorbus* type, probably rowan (*Sorbus acuparia*). Rowan seedlings are hardy and grow fairly vigorously giving



**Illus 4.36** (a) Early-Middle Neolithic arrowhead; (b) Middle-Late Neolithic scraper; (c) Middle-Late Neolithic scraper. (© Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd)

the tree some pioneering qualities (Stuijts 2005). Rowan is very common in open woodlands and scrub, by mountain streams and in valleys. It is a light demanding species and prefers moist light soils. It is likely that the rowan grew in scattered stands and small copses rather than extensive woodland stands (Tipping 2003: 24).

Palynological evidence gathered elsewhere suggests that birch-hazel woodland dominated southern and central Scotland throughout the

Mesolithic period. Oak and alder were also locally dominant in some areas during the latter part of this period (Bishop et al 2015). Pollen diagrams from Airds Moss (Durno 1956), in the uplands of Central Ayrshire, and at Carnwath Moss (Fraser & Godwin 1955), a site located near Carnwath, Lanarkshire, at a height of 220m AOD, show that this type of woodland together with alder and hazel and occasional pine, elm, and oak was widespread in this part of Scotland.

The majority of charcoal analysed from Camps Valley came from pits dating to the Early to Middle Neolithic period. Hazel, alder, maloideae, and occasional blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and oak were identified. The abundance of hazel in the charcoal assemblage is probably a reflection of its dominance in the environment. The additional presence of hazelnut shell in a number of the pits (Haston 2011; Timpany 2012a, 2012b) suggest that hazelnuts were undoubtedly an important food resource during the Neolithic period, as they were throughout prehistoric Scotland, and that the nuts may have been gathered simultaneously with fuelwood.

Interestingly, the Early to Middle Neolithic pits on the northern side of the valley were the only features locally to contain oak charcoal. The only other occurrences of oak were associated with the smithing deposits in the Iron Age enclosure at Woodend (Chapter 3) and occasional fragments in Neolithic pits and the Platform Settlement at Midlock Valley (Chapter 5). Its presence suggests that it was available in the area though perhaps not widely utilised. Given oak's suitability for a variety of different purposes, its relative absence in the charcoal assemblage is interesting. It is possible that oak was reserved for specific purposes such as smithing, seen at the Woodend site, or that other species with small branch wood were favoured due to the amount of time and effort required to process oak in comparison to small branch wood which was more readily available and abundant.

Blackthorn or sloe was also only present in pit C13-0012 dating to the Early to Middle Neolithic period, together with alder. Blackthorn is a spiny suckering shrub or tree, often found in woodlands where the canopy has been opened or in forest margins. It is common in scrub vegetation and along streams where it grows sometimes with alder (Stuijts 2005).

Charcoal from the later Neolithic / Chalcolithic pits revealed a similar presence of species to the Early to Middle Neolithic with hazel dominant alongside alder. Birch was notably absent in the Neolithic features being only present in two of the assemblages from the Late Neolithic / Chalcolithic periods, which is curious given that it is a good fuelwood. It was identified in one of the Mesolithic pits C11-0027 and was apparently widely used in the Early Bronze Age in Midlock Valley to the south (see Chapter 5). Birch is notoriously shade intolerant but copes particularly well in poor quality or shallow soils, if exposed to harsh weather conditions for prolonged periods and even at elevated altitudes (Austin 2009). Bishop et al (2015) remark that in contrast to hazel and oak, birch appears to be underrepresented in Scottish Mesolithic charcoal assemblages relative to its importance in the environment. It is suggested that its rarity may be due to the nature of combustion properties, as it is a fast burner and would perhaps have a lower chance of carbonisation than other species. However, it is also suggested the relative rarity of birch reflects the fact that other woods were preferred as fuel (ibid: 65). As birch was undoubtedly present in Camps Valley it is entirely possible that other species were favoured. Without a contemporary pollen diagram for this early period, it is unclear whether the absence of birch in the charcoal record is due to human factors such as differential selection, or ecological factors which would affect its local availability. Factors such as variations in topography, altitude, soil type, and quality for example might have promoted or limited the growth of certain tree species (Stuijts 2005).

During the Chalcolithic period there was little variation in the charcoal assemblage. Hazel, alder, birch, willow, and malvoideae were identified. Interestingly willow (*Salix* sp.) was only present in pits located on the upper slopes of Mossy Dod. Willow favours wet conditions and is a characteristic tree of lowland parts often lining the banks of rivers (ibid).

As there are no dated pollen diagrams for Camps Valley prior to the Late Bronze Age, it is not clear whether the variation in species noted is significant and represents temporal change in woodland cover or other factors such as topography or differential selection. The features are spread over the full width of a valley and therefore certain species may not have

been locally available as topographical factors such as variations in soil, slope, soil moisture content, and drainage might have promoted or limited the growth of certain tree species (Stuijts 2005).

The dominance of light demanding taxa in the charcoal assemblages suggests that the landscape in Camps Valley, from the Mesolithic to Chalcolithic periods was fairly open rather than dense woodland. The pollen evidence from the Camps Valley pollen core (Timpany 2015) discussed in Section 2.5.2, largely supports the data from earlier studies. Overall, the charcoal evidence suggests that larger trees, such as oak, ash, pine, and elm, all of which were identified in the pollen record, were largely avoided in favour of smaller, scrubby taxa.

## 4.5 Discussion

### 4.5.1 Introduction

The excavations within Camps Valley provided a rare opportunity to investigate an upland valley from the ridgelines right down to the valley floors and the data collected allows some degree of comparison of activity types and distribution at a genuine landscape level. If the interpretation of the results had had to rely solely on the dating of the artefacts, a fairly narrow date range of features would have been assumed. Instead, the broad scope of the radiocarbon dating programme has established the presence of Mesolithic and Early Neolithic features which might otherwise have been understood to be later in date. The data revealed by the excavations suggests that there are scattered pits all across the slopes of Camps Valley and that only a small sample of these has been revealed during these works.

### 4.5.2 The Pits

The majority of the features recorded were small pits, spread across the valley slopes and all of a similar nature; shallow, usually about a metre in diameter, containing stony fills with small amounts of chert flakes and charcoal. All the features are either directly related to burning events (that is, they are the base or remains of temporary fire pits or hearths) or contain the discarded rakeout of hearths presumably located nearby which no longer survive. The evidence suggests that material that had been used as a fuel source was being deliberately buried.



The three Mesolithic pits were unexpected in this landscape but are not unique. A range of Mesolithic sites was discovered in Daer Valley 16km directly south of Camps Valley, on another tributary of the River Clyde (Ward 2017: 8). Two sites were discovered only 50m apart and lay high on a north facing hill slope at Coom Rig at 340m OD, with a view down to the Daer Water and the valley floor 1km away and to the east; a similar vista to that from the Mesolithic pit recorded in Camps Valley. The earliest Mesolithic feature recorded in Camps was roughly contemporary with the later of the two sites at Daer. The concentration of material recovered at the Daer Valley sites strongly indicates some attraction for returning to that spot on the hill (Ward 2010: 9–10), whereas the evidence from Camps suggests that while not returning to the same spot within the valley the Mesolithic hunter-gatherers returned to the valley more than once. Natural features such as water courses were being used as signposts to guide hunter-gatherers through the landscape to the locations in the Camps and Daer Valleys.

The majority of the pits excavated in Camps Valley were dated to the Neolithic period. Interpretations of the function of pit deposition has produced much debate with three contrasting schools of thought; pits either functioned for the dumping of domestic waste (Connolly & MacSween 2003: 43; Toolis 2011: 44) or were repositories which have been imbued with ritualistic meaning (Cook et al 2000: 108; Pollard 2001), or were ‘neither wholly ceremonial nor completely mundane’ (Brophy & Noble 2012: 63; see also Brophy 2006: 19; Kilpatrick 2015: 25). The Camps Valley pits conform to characteristic Neolithic pits found across Britain, being relatively shallow and deliberately backfilled, having few fills and containing pottery, lithics, and charcoal (Noble et al 2016: 182–3). It is difficult to differentiate between the contrasting categorisations of pits as being either domestic, or ritual or a combination of the two (ibid: 189) and easier to see them as products of various events whether routine or not, although the abrasion to most of the pottery fragments recovered in Camps Valley can be interpreted as evidence of a more utilitarian deposition.

Isolated pits or groups of pits dating to the Neolithic period are not uncommon finds during

open area archaeological excavations. Often when these pits are uncovered they are the earliest phase of a palimpsest of activities (for example Simpson & Coles 1990: 43; Shepherd 1996: 40; Simpson 1996: 83; Cameron 2002: 68), and are interpreted as indicative of the popularity of that location for occupation (for example Alexander 2000: 67; Arbaolaza 2019: 34; Dingwall et al 2019: 133, 250; Spence 2019: 32). It is common to define them in clusters or groups of features, assuming that the pits in the cluster are contemporary even though frequently not every pit is dated or datable. They are often interpreted as representative of settlement; clusters of pits within a defined area that left no other archaeological trace such as a naturally open area or lightly constructed building for example (Alexander 2000: 66).

It is one of the benefits of the large scope of schemes such as this project that archaeologists get the rare opportunity to excavate a transect across several valleys and are able to compare the results. The next valley to the south, Midlock Valley, is rich in both prehistoric and historic activity. This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter but excavations there show it was occupied for several millennia (see Chapter 5) with the multiple unenclosed platform settlements being the most densely distributed feature of this landscape. It is noted here that there are eight unenclosed platform settlements identified through survey in Camps Valley and the vast majority of them are small in number comprising no more than five houses compared to the density of settlement in Midlock Valley.

Ten features in the neighbouring Midlock Valley to the south were attributed to the Early–Middle Neolithic. The features comprised two post-holes, three linear ditches, and five pits, three of which were similar in size and type to the pits in Camps Valley. All of the features – bar one pit – were grouped around the 300m contour. The character of these features is different to the pits in Camps Valley – the clustering in only one area, the variety in the features – which is suggestive of a different type of activity. Further contrast is apparent in that no features were recorded during the monitoring of c 3.3km of access track associated with the wind farm in the landscape of Woodend (see Chapter 3) – a significantly different result to Camps Valley – and

no Neolithic features were found in any of the other monitored areas. The longevity of the practice of pit digging within Camps Valley, the distribution and density of the pits and their absence or near absence in other valleys, points to the significance of this location in the Neolithic period, a significance emphasised by the presence of Normangill henge.

#### 4.5.3 Special Locations

The presence of Neolithic pits as a precursor to significant later activity is noted at other sites in Scotland. At the Balfarg / Balbirnie ceremonial complex in Fife, which comprised timber mortuary structures, a henge, and a stone circle, the first recorded episode in a continuum of activity that spanned thousands of years was groups of Neolithic pits containing fragments of worked stone, pottery and charcoal (Barclay & Russell-White 1993: 167). The excavators speculated that the structures were the legitimisation of later ceremonial activity which was enhanced by the use of places of earlier settlement (*ibid*: 168). At Meldon Bridge in Peeblesshire – a large Late Neolithic timber enclosure site located at the confluence of two rivers in the Upper Tweed Valley – the presence of Middle Neolithic pits, some of which contained pottery fragments and stone artefacts as well as charcoal, was taken as evidence of the first ceremonial activity on site (Speak & Burgess 1999: 105).

At the Blackhouse Burn Neolithic Enclosure between Biggar and Lanark, *c* 20km north of the Clyde Wind Farm development, a programme of survey, field walking, and trial excavation (Lelong et al 2005) found evidence of reuse of the landscape from the Early Mesolithic to the Bronze Age. The enclosure itself was located at the head of a small valley surrounded on three sides by hills and enclosed the sources of three small streams. It was in use during the Late Neolithic period (Lelong & Pollard 1998a: 41).

The scope of that programme of survey covered the slopes of the valleys from close to the valley floor to the ridgelines. The results revealed evidence of Late Mesolithic activity in the form of lithic scatters concentrated in the valley bottoms while the Late Neolithic saw more prolonged activity on slopes and into the uplands due to more sustained settlement there (Lelong et al 2005: 31). In contrast,

the evidence from Camps Valley shows no such distinction of elevation with Mesolithic activity on high slopes *and* towards the valley bottom; and Neolithic activity spread throughout. This may be an indication that the activities in Camps Valley that produced the pits were not confined by settlement areas, and that the only constraints on the pit digging were the ridgelines of the valley itself which marked the boundary between outside and in.

Evidence of Neolithic activity in the form of pits and post-holes was recorded during works for the Calliachar Windfarm, 6km south of Aberfeldy, Perth and Kinross (Scott 2012). Although the features were located on the lower slopes of a valley, they were found at an elevation of nearly 500m AOD. This evidence suggests that more value can be obtained from comparing the position of sites within their landscape unit rather than comparing their elevations. Camps Valley is a distinct ‘closed’ landscape, where it is not possible to see up the valley from its entrance – any activities taking place within it could not easily be seen by those outside the valley, and the views from the valley slopes are concentrated within it. In contrast both Midlock and Clyde Valley, while contained within fairly steep slopes, are unobstructed at the ends and Woodend is located in a more ‘open’ landscape with gradual, rolling hills.

Camps Valley would have held a particular relevance to the people who visited it with the slopes and floor potentially being protected from settlement and the pits and temporary structures representing evidence of pilgrimage in and out of the valley. This special status would have existed long before the construction of the Normangill Henge (likely sometime after 3000 BC) which took place after the dates of most of the pits.

Where henges are constructed, they are rarely the first activity to take place at that location. For example, the Balfarg enclosure / henge surrounded an earlier structure and the Balfarg henge was preceded by pit digging (Barclay & Russell-White 1993: 47) and the North Mains, Cairnpapple, and Forteviot henges had monument predecessors (Younger 2016: 129). Henges would have been built with reference to the past and in particular to past activities at that location. The appreciation of the special nature of the location would have endured prior to the henge construction (Barclay 1999: 39).

While henges referred to the past, they were also entirely new forms of monuments (Younger 2016: 133) and represented a remaking and redefining of the location. Normangill Henge itself was an expression in monument form of the reverence in which the landscape of Camps Valley was held, and evidence of new practices taking place at the location.

Monuments such as Normangill Henge may have functioned as gathering places for groups within the wider area (Lelong et al 2005: 32). It is the most southerly of four henges in the Upper Clyde Valley; Hillend (Canmore ID [47370](#)) and Westside (Canmore ID [47557](#)) are all located on the banks of the Clyde, while Weston (Canmore ID [48914](#)) is on the banks of a tributary of the Clyde. Balwaistie Henge (Canmore ID [48698](#)) just north of Biggar is next to a small stream that eventually flows into the

Tweed. The location of these henges is a reflection of the importance of the Clyde Valley as a routeway through the landscape.

The importance of the discoveries in Camps Valley lies not in the pits themselves – the shallow nature of the features makes conclusive interpretations of their functions difficult – but in their distribution within the landscape and in the evidence of changes in the practices that took place in Camps Valley over time. While it cannot be suggested on the evidence here that the special significance of Camps Valley began in the Mesolithic, the importance of the valley was maintained through the Neolithic millennia. Over time the practices that took place here changed from pit digging and depositional acts to the creation of more permanent monuments reflecting the changing nature of the ways in which the significance of the valley was marked.