11 The Iron Age Settlement: Discussion

11.1 Settlement development and chronology

Illus 66 presents an outline scheme for the development of the key features of the site, based upon the stratigraphic and spatial evidence presented above, combined with the limited radiocarbon and artefactual dating evidence that is available. The 'phasing' scheme illustrated should not be interpreted necessarily as relating to sudden changes in the plan of the settlement. Rather, the intention has been to identify three groups of broadly co-existing features; assessing whether the change from one to the next reflects gradual evolution or radical re-organization is undertaken separately.

Many excavated features of the site cannot be phased reliably, and thus are excluded from the scheme presented – key amongst these being Houses 4 and 5. Other features, such as the pit graves and the rectangular structures, cannot be linked conclusively to any single phase. The 'phasing' is inevitably a 'best-fit' scheme capable of some revision or refinement.

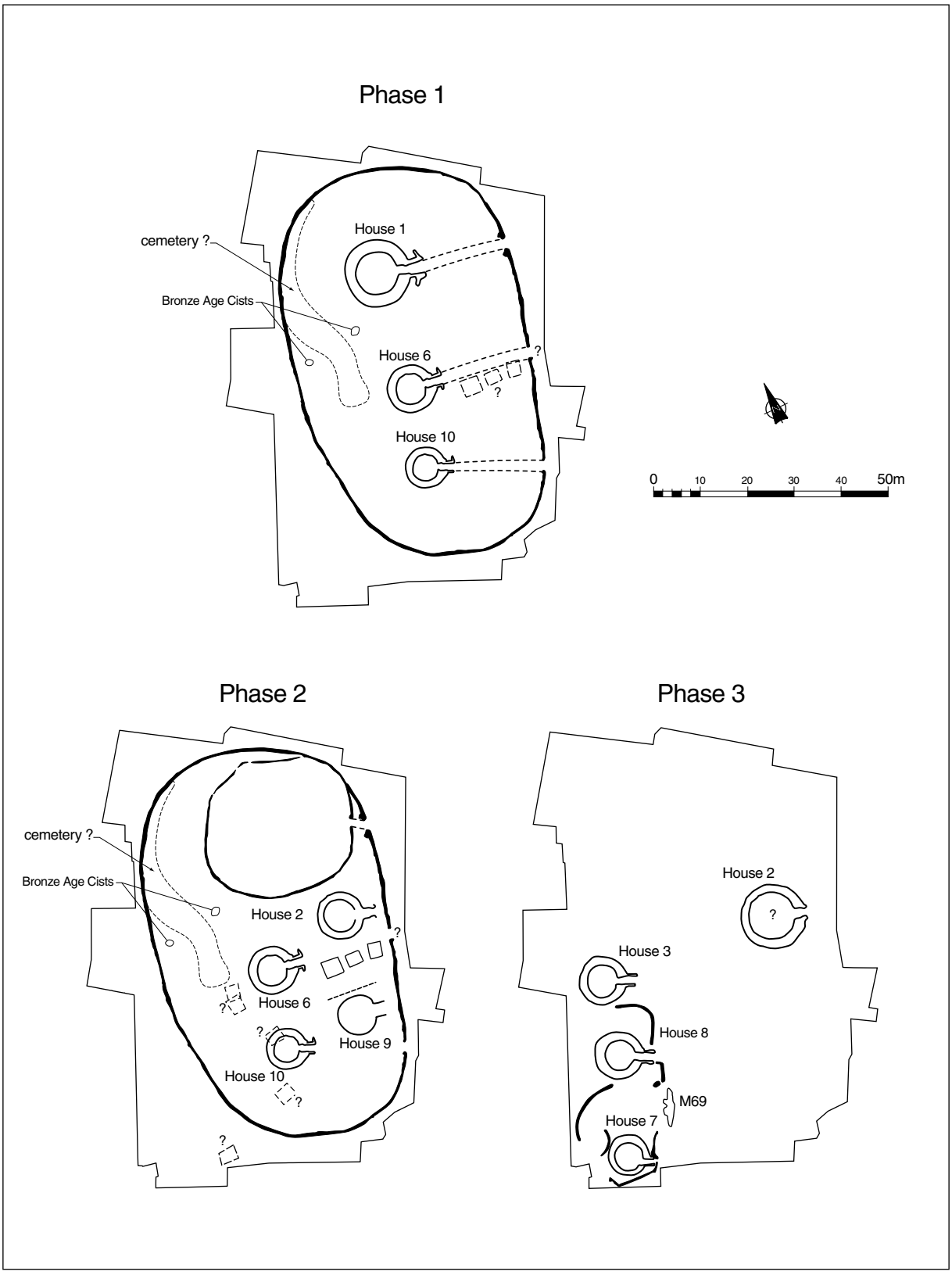
11.1.1 Phase I

This phase is defined by the construction of the more substantial palisaded enclosure. This feature was oval in form, measuring approximately 87m by 50m, and was bounded by a timber fence or palisade. It was provided with two, and possibly three equally spaced entrances on its east side. Two post-ring roundhouses recognized by the excavators (Houses 1 and 6) appear to have been constructed within the north and central interior of the enclosure as part of the original design, and a third likely structure (House 10) recognized by the present author appears to have occupied the south central area. House 1 was the largest of the structures, being at least 14.4m in diameter within its wall, whereas House 6 was the smallest, estimated to have been around 9.6m. House 1 was refurbished during its use-life. The overall scale and character of the proposed primary settlement morphology is not unlike that envisaged for the settlement he excavated at Staple Howe, North Yorkshire (Brewster 1963, esp fig 6).

The original layout of the palisaded enclosure and Houses 1 and 6 was carefully planned. The entrance to House 1 was aligned on the north-east entrance to the outer enclosure, and that for House 6 may have been similarly aligned on a central entrance, although the presence of that feature remains unproven but was suspected. House 10, if its former existence is accepted, was aligned on the south-east entrance of the outer enclosure. The alignment of house and enclosure entrances is not uncommon, and for example is paralleled in the Late Bronze Age enclosed site at Springfield Lyons, Essex (Buckley 1988). The unity of the primary design of outer enclosure and post-ring structures is further strengthened by the recognition that the three structures were laid out in a row. It is apparent from the site plan (illus 3) that the structures are strung out on a broad north-east/south-west alignment. However, the precision of the design is not immediately recognizable as the roundhouses are of different sizes, but becomes apparent when it is appreciated that the entrance alignments lie on the same north-east/south-west axis. A straight line can be drawn through the posts defining the inner ends of each entrance passage, ie within the post-rings of House 6 (posts L50 and L52) and House 10 (posts O65 and O73) and the inner post-ring of House 1. This alignment is on an orientation almost parallel to the alignment of the section the outer enclosure palisade trench between the south-east and north-east entrances.

The ordered layout of the settlement appears to encode information relating to the relationships between the three roundhouses and, assuming they were dwellings, their occupants. For example the provision of separate entrances could signify the intended independence of each household, albeit one forming part of a community defined by the presence of the palisaded enclosure. The different sizes of the roundhouses could reflect varying social status of their inhabitants, although we should perhaps avoid being deterministic in assuming that the largest building contained the headman of the community and his kin, since the size variations could alternatively reflect differing numbers of inhabitants or some other social factor that cannot be established from the archaeological remains. As is widely accepted, roundhouses could have fulfilled a range of functions, not all simply being domestic residences. Buildings for non-domestic communal use may have been constructed and, while it is possible to conceive that size differences of buildings related to varying functions, there remains no convincing supporting archaeological evidence for non-domestic roundhouses in southern Scotland.

There could be a correlation between the largest roundhouse (House 1) being aligned with the most complex entrance to the outer enclosure, although the greater concentration of features in that entranceway could reflect a more complex structural history being represented in the archaeological record rather than the former presence of a more elaborate entrance structure. The elaboration of the roundhouse entrances, particularly House 1,



Illus 66 A simplified model for the development of the settlement at Dryburn Bridge

as suggested by their substantial foundations, could indicate an emphasis on the display of wealth and status to those entering the palisaded enclosure. However, issues relating to social status, both within the settlement and between the settlement and others in the contemporary landscape, may be better understood from considering Dryburn Bridge within a local or regional settlement context, which

is beyond the remit of this report. To the author's knowledge the ordered settlement layout interpreted for Dryburn Bridge is not replicated in any other comparable excavated Iron Age settlement of the Lothian plain.

The cemetery may have begun to form in this primary settlement phase, its location possibly determined by the recognition of the presence of ancient (Bronze Age) burials. Other excavated features may relate to the Phase I layout of the palisaded enclosure, although they may have been secondary additions rather than primary features. These include the rectangular structures aligned to the east of House 6 (and possibly others). Burial 12 appears to have been deliberately positioned outside the entrance to House 6 and at the corner of rectangular structure A. On spatial grounds it seems likely that the deposition of the burial was linked to the presence of one or the other, but the burial has not been dated. Its 'special' status is discussed further in Section 11.6. However, it is equally possible that none of the rectangular structures relate to this primary settlement layout.

No opportunities arose for the independent dating of the outer enclosure or Houses 1, 6 and 10, and the few stratified artefactual discoveries are not informative in chronological terms. The radiocarbon dates from Houses 2 and 9 (Phase II) indicate that it is reasonably certain that the foundation of the palisaded enclosure pre-dates 400 cal BC, and the radiocarbon date from Burial 1 indicates that it had been dismantled, at least in that locality, prior to 400 cal BC. These dates form merely *termini ante quem* for the date of foundation and longevity of use of the outer enclosure, and provide no positive dating evidence. At best they do not contradict a likely early/mid first millennium BC date for the palisaded enclosure, a chronological context often proposed for this settlement form (Harding 2001; discussed further in Section 11.2).

It is worth considering that, although the palisaded enclosure has been attributed to Phase I, the theoretical possibility exists that it did not form the primary element of the Iron Age settlement at this location. That there was nothing stratigraphically earlier than the palisaded enclosure or Houses 1 and 6 has been described above. To assert the presence of settlement remains pre-dating the palisaded enclosure would thus require special pleading, and in the author's opinion appears unjustified. However, there are unphased features, such as House 5 and fence-line (e), which have an uncertain relationship to all other elements of the site. It is reasonably certain, however, that there was no coherent, archaeologically detectable, settlement layout pre-dating the construction of the outer enclosure and contained post-ring structures. Some tenuous support for the primacy of the palisaded enclosure lies in the absence of any reused worked stones, particularly querns, within the packing of the foundation trench, which may be significant as such items occurred frequently in other features relating to the later occupation of the site.

11.1.2 Phase II

A second settlement layout can be detected within the palisaded enclosure, superimposed over the original design. In the northern interior, House 1 was removed and replaced with the inner enclosure. This was fitted into the north-east corner of the outer enclosure, its eastern side set on a separate alignment from that of the outer enclosure, creating an oblique entrance passage between the two. Direct access between the inner enclosure and the remainder of the outer enclosure to the south appears to have been barred off. The resetting of the outer enclosure entrance is likely to have occurred at this time. The foundation trench for the inner enclosure was less substantial than that of the palisaded enclosure, and contained little stone-packing, suggesting that the inner enclosure was bounded by a less substantial fence or stockade than the outer. Given its morphology and the apparent absence of internal features, the inner enclosure may best be interpreted as a stock pen. Phosphate spot tests taken in a transect across the site returned higher readings from within the inner enclosure than from outside it, which might be attributed to the result of stock penning. However, given the prolonged use of the site, any conclusions drawn from a single transect must be treated with extreme caution. The report on the phosphate analysis forms part of the site archive.

Houses 2 and 9 were erected within the outer enclosure, quite possibly at the same time as part of a major reorganization and as a replacement for House 1, although there is no direct stratigraphic evidence for this, and the radiocarbon and artefactual dating is too imprecise to provide support. House 2 in its original form appears to have been a ring-ditch structure approximately 10m in diameter, and House 9 was a smaller construction around 6m across. In both cases the walls of these structures were defined by ring-groove foundations. Radiocarbon dates obtained from Houses 2 and 9 tend to indicate that these buildings were constructed prior to 400 cal BC (assuming that the structural timbers dated were not reused old wood). House 2 appears to have been occupied for a prolonged period. At some stage it was enlarged, and was modified thereafter on at least one occasion. It is possible that these changes to House 2 occurred after the removal of the outer enclosure palisade, a point that is returned to in Section 11.1.4.

While Houses 2 and 9 were fitted into unoccupied spaces within the palisaded enclosure, it is evident that their precise siting was carefully organized. It is considered highly likely, though beyond absolute proof, that House 2 in its original form was positioned so as not to intersect the approach to House 6. If accepted, this suggests the continued existence

of House 6, which in turn implies a continuity of settlement between Phases 1 and 2. A similar spatial relationship could be inferred between Houses 10 and 9.

The case for proposing House 2, House 9 and the inner enclosure as contemporary elements of the settlement is considerably strengthened with the recognition that the entrances to these three buildings lie on exactly the same north-east/south-west axis. A line can be drawn through the posts defining the entrances in House 9 (posts L109 and L112), House 2 (terminal posts of the inner ring-groove) and the inner enclosure (posts in palisade terminals). This arrangement is very similar to the relationship between the entrances to the Phase I structures as interpreted above. The particular reasons underpinning the creation of what was effectively a frontage cannot be reconstructed. However, the alignment is more likely to have been ideologically or cosmologically governed than determined on practical grounds, as the effect was the erection of an alignment of structures running obliquely to the east side of the outer enclosure (and thus on a slightly different axis to that of the primary settlement layout, with a difference of *c* 6 degrees). Moreover, the reasons for the slight change in the alignment connecting the doorways, from that evident in the Phase I layout, is equally obscure (and is considered further in Section 11.3.5).

That the location of the new Phase II constructions appears to have been governed by a pre-determined alignment may well explain the peculiar morphology of the juxtaposed outer and inner enclosures. There seem to be no practical advantages to have been gained from building the inner enclosure oblique to the outer, creating an entrance passage but at the same time requiring the provision of what appears to be a blocking feature adjacent to it, seemingly to prevent internal access between outer and inner enclosure. It would have been far simpler to have continued the south side of the inner enclosure around to the outer enclosure, with both enclosures sharing the same east side and entrance.

Other features of the settlement could have formed part of this settlement layout. Rectangular structures A–C may have been standing at the time. Other rectangular structures, given their morphological similarities to A–C, could also have been in use, although they need not all have been exactly contemporary and some could have been replacements for others. Putative House 10 and rectangular structure H could not have co-existed. The cemetery was also likely forming during this occupation phase.

11.1.3 Phase III

The latest settlement layout which can be distinguished with any clarity relates to the presence of what appears to be an unenclosed settlement of ring-ditch houses (Houses 3, 7 & 8) in the south-west part of the excavation site. Because these structures were located at the edge of the excavation area, it is possible that those features exposed form only part of a more extensive suite, an hypothesis that cannot now be tested by further excavation as limestone quarrying has encroached into this sector of the site.

Houses 3 and 8 overlay the boundary of the outer enclosure, and therefore must have been constructed after it had fallen out of use. The three buildings formed a row, with Houses 3 and 8 spaced approximately 7m apart and Houses 8 and 7 located around 12m apart. Houses 3 and 8 were of very similar dimensions and character, whereas House 7 was slightly smaller and its structural characteristics were less comprehensible, perhaps as a result of greater plough-truncation. The buildings all had entrances facing south-east although, while the row of houses catches the eye, their doorways are not on an axial alignment as had been the structures of Phases 1 and 2. The significance of this observation is unknown, although it presumably relates to different principles underlying settlement layout. All three structures displayed evidence of rebuilding or refurbishment, suggesting that their occupation was not temporary.

The buildings appear to have been associated with a series of gardens or paddocks defined by composite boundaries comprising fence-lines and pit alignments. The presence of pit-defined boundaries perhaps can be best understood within the extensive landscapes of such features recorded in south-east Scotland (eg Halliday 1982; Macinnes 1984a), one of which at Eskbank, Dalkeith has been dated to the early centuries AD (Barber 1985).

The limited dating evidence for this layout indicates activity continuing into the Roman Iron Age. The evidence most intimately associated with the ring-ditch houses is provided by a single radiocarbon determination from a sample taken from the fence-line associated with House 7 (GU-1285). As discussed in Section 7.7.1, the mixed nature of the dated sample, combined with the uncertain taphonomy of the deposit from which the sample was extracted, present significant problems in assessing what the radiocarbon date means. Its date range covers the first half of the first millennium cal AD. However, Roman Iron Age activity in that part of the site is also attested by the radiocarbon date from the dog burial inserted into the upper fill of feature M69 (SUERC-4939). A piece of Roman bottle glass was also recovered from the fill of feature M69.

The dating evidence available does not relate to the construction of ring-ditch Houses 3, 7 and 8, and could reflect the later or even terminal use of the Phase III settlement layout. The presence of Roman artefacts in terminal settlement contexts occurs widely in the settlement record of south-east Scotland (Hill 1982b, esp 8–12). The absence of rotary querns from Houses 3, 7 and 8, combined with the presence of complete saddle-quern lower stones incorporated in potentially useable positions

within the paved over ring-ditches of Houses 7 and 8, could be of chronological significance. In conventional terms saddle-querns are understood to have been replaced by rotary technology from around 200 cal BC (Caulfield 1978). However, it would be unwise to use the generalized model of quern replacement to flesh out the chronology of a particular site (cf Armit 1991 on the use of quern replacement as a dating tool for the Western Isles settlement sequence). Moreover, as noted in Section 7.4.4, the saddle-querns may simply have been recycled from elsewhere for use as paving slabs, and their date(s) and place(s) of manufacture may be unrelated to the date of the buildings that formed their final resting places.

There are no other features that can be certainly related to this phase of settlement. The possibility that the construction of these buildings overlapped with the continuing use of House 2 is discussed separately in the following section.

11.1.4 From enclosed to unenclosed settlement – between Phases II and III

To summarize, three sequential settlement layouts can be detected with varying degrees of clarity within the excavated remains at Dryburn Bridge. Phases I and II appear to represent a continuous period of settlement within the outer palisaded enclosure. The redesign of the settlement layout may have been a single event, but this is not certain. The Phase II roundhouses appear to have been erected prior to 400 cal BC, although associated settlement could have extended beyond 400 cal BC. All reliably dated burials pre-date 400 cal BC. However, the length of occupation represented by these two phases is not known. It could be expected that a free-standing palisade could not have lasted for any considerable period of time (cf Reynolds 1982, 46), but the possibility of archaeologically invisible repair and replacement needs to be borne in mind.

More opaque still is the history of the Phases II and III occupation of the settlement. Activity on the site persisted into the early centuries cal AD and overlapped with the Roman occupation/s of southern Scotland, but was it continuous? No straight answer can be provided. The settlement appears to have continued after the dismantling of the outer enclosure palisade, judging by the insertion of Burial 1 across its alignment. Other evidence that can be adduced in support is circumstantial rather than empirical. Judging by its juxtaposition with the outer enclosure and the apparent trampling of the outer enclosure palisade outside its entrance, it is possible that House 2 in its enlarged form continued to stand after the removal of the outer enclosure, but the chronology and longevity of this continuing occupation is unknown. The presence of a rectangular structure (I) outside the outer enclosure could indicate that the erection of such structures persisted beyond the removal of the outer enclosure: its stratigraphic relationship to House 7 was not demonstrated but intuitively the rectangular structure is more likely the earlier of the two. Whether other pre-existing structures also continued to stand after the removal of the outer enclosure is similarly unresolved. It cannot be established when ring-ditch Houses 3, 7, and 8 were erected, and whether House 2 was still standing at that unspecified time. This imprecise evidence allows for the settlement to be either continuously occupied or abandoned for a period during the last centuries cal BC.

Given these uncertainties, it becomes difficult to appreciate the specific context within which the change from an enclosed to an unenclosed settlement took place, and hence what significance should be attached to that development. The general similarities in form and layout between House 2 and Houses 3, 7 and 8 could indicate a link between them, and hence favour a model of continuous occupation. However, that evidence is not clinching, or even strong, as it could be observed in contrast that the form of the roundhouse wall of House 2 was different from that interpreted for Houses 3, 7 and 8. Additionally, the fact that House 3 truncated a linear feature (F2) that in turn truncated an earlier burial (B8) could suggest a lack of recognition of the cemetery by the later occupants of the settlement site, although again the evidence is not strong.

However, in citing the Dryburn Bridge sequence as being of fundamental importance to the undermining of the Hownam model of settlement form development (eg Armit 1999a, 70), the assumption of continuous occupation at Dryburn Bridge has been made. If the assumption of discontinuity between Phases II and III were to be accepted, the presence of two chronologically distinct settlements at the same location would be of considerable interest, not least as to how we should interpret the continuity of occupation on unexcavated settlement sites more generally (cf Harding 2001, 357 on Braidwood). However, the Dryburn Bridge sequence would provide neither support for nor rebuttal of the Hownam model, and after revisiting this issue it is concluded that Dryburn Bridge does not have the solidity of evidence previously claimed in support of an anti-Hownam stance. There is sufficient evidence from Broxmouth (Hill 1982a) and elsewhere to reject the Hownam sequence as having any widespread significance (reviewed by Armit 1999a).

11.1.5 Population growth/settlement expansion

One consequence of the discontinuous development sequence proposed above is that each settlement layout may have comprised no more than four roundhouses. It becomes difficult therefore to argue that the settlement expanded over time or that it supported a larger population. By contrast, the model of continuous occupation could allow for the physical expansion of the settlement over the former outer enclosure palisaded boundary in the Phase

III use of the settlement. In turn a greater number of structures might be a reflection of an increasing number of inhabitants (as discussed by Jobey 1974), although to propose this makes assumptions both about the functions of structures as well as consistency of numbers of individuals residing in particular buildings (cf Dunwell 1999, 350 on Edin's Hall). This latter cannot readily be calculated. By way of a cautionary modern analogy, the recent expansion and current shortage of housing stock across Britain is as much a result of different patterns of living – increasing numbers of single-parent families, single occupants, second homes – as of population growth or economic growth. This modern situation has no direct relevance to later prehistory beyond demonstrating that patterns of living change with time, and there is no *a priori* reason to assume that living styles did not alter over the course of the last millennium cal BC.

11.2 The palisaded (outer) enclosure

Harding's recent review of the Iron Age palisaded enclosures of south-east Scotland identifies several variant types of palisaded settlements and enclosures characteristic of the mid first millennium cal BC, frequently occurring in association with roundhouses displaying ring-ditch and ring-groove characteristics (Harding 2001, 365). These are the sites that had formerly been understood to form the earliest enclosed phase of the Hownam sequence (eg Ritchie 1970). These sites were proposed as forming a distinct grouping within a more long-lived use of palisaded construction methods, to the extent that Harding (2001) has questioned the usefulness of the term 'palisaded enclosure' as a classificatory term.

The enclosure at Dryburn Bridge is morphologically similar to other putative early Iron Age constructions such as Hayhope Knowe (Piggott 1949), Braidwood (Piggott 1958; Gannon 1999) and the larger enclosure at High Knowes, Alnham (Jobey & Tait 1966), as well as the more extensively explored site at Myrehead, Falkirk (Barclay 1983). The Dryburn Bridge enclosure was most likely a primary component of that settlement, but this was not the case at Myrehead (Barclay 1983), and possibly also not at Braidwood (Gannon 1999). The structural histories of even this small group of settlements, in as far as they can be reconstructed, are variable and specific, and warn against using the results of one excavation to make generalizing statements. All, however, appear to have been in use by the mid first millennium BC.

Harding has discussed the various possible uses for palisaded enclosures (Harding 2001, 365) – homestead, village, ancillary enclosure, hillfort. He considered Jobey & Tait's interpretation of the larger palisaded enclosure at High Knowes, Alnham as a village and the smaller as a homestead, pointing to other examples in the Anglo-Scottish Borders, and raised the issue of their social inter-relationships (Jobey & Tait 1966). This distinction is pertinent to Dryburn Bridge as a smaller palisaded enclosure, *c* 35m in diameter, is recorded as a cropmark only *c* 100m north of the excavation site (NMRS: NT77NW 30), and could have formed a contemporary part of the early Iron Age landscape. This site remains unexcavated, but has recently been subject to geophysical survey in advance of proposed quarrying, revealing two circular enclosures with suggestions of internal features (*Discovery Excav Scot* 2001, 31).

11.3 Roundhouses

11.3.1 Post-ring structures

The primary structures present in the outer enclosure were post-ring structures of distinctly unequal sizes. House 1, even at 14.4m in diameter based on its conservative reconstruction (Section 7.2.2), was 'substantial' in the sense discussed by Hingley. It represents an example of what is increasingly being recognized as a not uncommon feature of the early Iron Age landscapes of eastern and southern Scotland (Hingley 1992, 27–8). Recently excavated examples of similarly large early Iron Age roundhouses include the dated House 1 at Bannockburn (Rideout 1996) and the double-post-ring structure approximately 18m in diameter at Ironshill East, Angus (McGill 2003), both located centrally within palisaded 'homestead' enclosures, in the latter case with the entrances to building and enclosure aligned.

House 6 appeared to be smaller version of House 1, with an estimated ground floor space (72sq m) less than half that of House 1 (163sq m); or less than a third if the larger 18m diameter reconstruction is accepted (254sq m). Potential explanations for the varying sizes of the post-ring buildings have been considered above (Section 11.1.1).

11.3.2 Ring-ditch buildings

Only following the Dryburn Bridge and Broxmouth excavations was the recurrent presence of ring-ditch houses within south-east Scotland considered in terms of their chronological (Hill 1982b) and functional (Reynolds 1982) significance. Hill noted that ring-ditch houses were well established in south-east Scotland by the mid-first millennium cal BC, on the basis of dated structures from Broxmouth (Hill 1982a) and Douglasmuir, Angus (Kendrick 1995), as well as House 2 at Dryburn Bridge. More recent excavations have extended the currency of the form back into the second millennium cal BC, on the basis of a dated structure from Kintore, Aberdeenshire (Alexander 2000; M Cook, pers comm) and forwards towards the later first millennium cal BC and beyond (Ironshill, Angus: Pollock 1997; Culhawk Hill, Angus: Rees 1998). It is with the understanding of

this extended chronology for ring-ditch houses that the association of the radiocarbon date from the fence-line of House 7 (GU-1285) with the occupation (although not the construction) of the building itself becomes less startling. Furthermore in this light, the interpretative possibility that the ring-ditch houses at Dryburn Bridge were not all contemporary foundations does not appear problematic.

Ring-ditches were initially interpreted as designed for cattle-stalling (Jobey & Tait 1966; Reynolds 1982). The ring-ditches at Douglasmuir have more recently been interpreted as constructed for crop storage and comparable in function to souterrains (Kendrick 1995). There is no reason why the functions of ring-ditches could not have varied between structures, settlements or regions, or why particular features could not have had multiple functions (cf Harding 2001, 368). The contrast between the relatively deep-cut features present at Douglasmuir, for example, and the shallow interconnected scoops present at Braidwood and High Knowes, Alnham has been considered previously (Reynolds 1982), and it seems unlikely that both could have been intended to serve the same purposes, whatever they may have been. At Dryburn Bridge both types are present within House 2. The features characterizing Houses 3, 7 and 8 are fairly shallow, although this may be partly a result of plough-truncation – it is notable that the deepest feature, in House 2, was preserved in the only environment where positive archaeological features were preserved on the floor level of a building. The scarcity of hearths from the ground floors of excavated ring-ditch structures (as noted by Ralston 1996, 146) hinders interpretation of their function as domestic structures, but may simply reflect a lack of archaeological survival.

It is noteworthy that the ring-ditches at three of the four structures containing such features were filled in and at least partly paved over. Their infilling in most cases was demonstrated to be a secondary act, and was clearly not part of the initial design of the ring-ditch. If one intention of the excavation of the ring-ditch had been to provide additional headroom under the eaves, then the filling in of the features may have been a significant act. The ring-ditch fills were not sampled and this has not allowed their potential functions to be assessed by palaeobotanical or soil micromorphology studies. In this respect Dryburn Bridge is representative of the excavated data set of ring-ditch houses as a whole. Until the contents of one or more ring-ditch are assessed scientifically and produce meaningful results, our discussions of the specific functions of these features are little more than speculation.

11.3.3 Ring-groove construction

House 9 was a small, single-ring roundhouse defined by a post-ring partly embedded in a ring-groove foundation. The use of ring-groove wall foundations in timber roundhouses is a construction device, and their presence cannot be used to define a particular building style or function. The use of this foundation technique is not chronologically sensitive, and can be traced running from the unenclosed settlements of the middle second millennium cal BC (for example Ednie, Peterhead: Strachan & Dunwell 2003; Lintshie Gutter, Upper Clydesdale: Terry 1995), throughout the first millennium cal BC and into the Roman Iron Age (for example Camelon: Proudfoot 1978). House 2 at Dryburn Bridge also incorporates ring-groove wall foundations.

11.3.4 Houses as cultural and chronological indicators?

This sub-heading paraphrases Hill, who proposed that different types of roundhouse might be chronologically distinct (Hill 1982b, 7), drawing a particular distinction between ring-ditches and houses in the 'Votadinian tradition' (Hill 1982c). At Dryburn Bridge the post-ring buildings pre-dated the appearance of ring-ditch buildings, although the two appear to have co-existed during the Phase II settlement layout. The wider significance of this relationship is uncertain.

The absence of houses of 'Votadinian' style from Dryburn Bridge is of interest, given that these are regarded by Hill as a vernacular style of the late first millennium cal BC and early first millennium cal AD (Hill 1982b),. At Broxmouth (Hill 1982a) and St Germains (Alexander & Watkins 1998) such structures were associated with the latest phases of occupation, and appeared to have continued in use into the Roman Iron Age, to judge from the recovery of Roman artefacts at those sites. Given the presence of Roman material at Dryburn Bridge, its association with continued occupation of ring-ditch houses appears likely and suggests that at some sites, of which Dryburn Bridge is one, this style of timber building continued in use while elsewhere 'Votadinian' structures may have become the norm. This is the simplest explanation based upon the evidence excavated at Dryburn Bridge: to associate the Roman Iron Age activity with stone-floored buildings either not surviving or present outside the excavation area would fall foul of Occam's Razor.

11.3.5 Orientations and cosmology

The widespread south-easterly orientation of later prehistoric roundhouse and enclosure entrances is reflected at Dryburn Bridge, and is widely (eg Oswald 1997) but not universally considered to be imbued with cosmological significance. In this regard there is a difference of *c* 12 degrees to be drawn between the entrance orientations of the palisaded enclosure and the roundhouses of Phases I and II and the Phase III structures (Houses 3 and 8; the entrance orientation of House 7 is not certain). Assuming it is

not entirely coincidental, the change in alignment appears to have chronological significance on the basis of the structural phasing presented. This alteration also appears to correspond with the adoption of less rigidly aligned 'frontages' between the doorways of the Phase III roundhouses. It is of note that the orientation of the roundhouse entrance persists into Phase II despite a slight but noticeable change in the frontage alignment. This tends to indicate a conceptual link between Phases I and II, reinforcing the suggestion that these phases represent continuous occupation. The distinction between Phases I/II and Phase III could be taken to indicate the reverse, although of course not necessarily, as what factors lay behind the observed changes are difficult to reconstruct.

As an adjunct to the above, it is worth considering the alignment of the entrance passage between the inner and outer enclosures. This does not follow the orientation for other Phase I and II entrances. There is no evident practical reason that the inner enclosure could not have been constructed to maintain the same alignment. Thus, we can consider that the decision to alter this alignment was significant and related, for example, either to specific practical functions associated with the inner enclosure, or for unknowable symbolic reasons. As above, these observations assume that the re-alignment was meaningful and not the result of casual and unthinking acts.

11.4 Rectangular structures

The interpretation of the function(s) of rectangular post-defined structures within Iron Age settlement contexts has been the subject of much discussion in recent decades (see Section 7.5), but is based mainly on discussion of discoveries in central and southern Britain. Excavations at Danebury have revealed a range of rectangular structures with four-, six- and nine-post foundations comparable to those identified at Dryburn Bridge (Cunliffe 1984). However, there is comparatively little evidence for the construction of rectangular buildings during the pre-Roman Iron Age in Scotland (cf Ralston 2004, 22), although several six-post structures similar to the Dryburn Bridge examples were excavated with the unenclosed settlement of ring-ditch houses at Douglasmuir, Angus (Kendrick 1995). Other rectangular structures have also been detected within the palisaded enclosure at Myrehead, Falkirk (Barclay 1983), close to a ring-ditch house at Ironshill, Angus (Pollock 1997), within the ditched enclosure at Port Seton East (Haselgrove & McCullagh 2000, 110) and associated with Late Bronze Age ring-ditch houses at Deer's Den, Kintore (Alexander 2000). The four-post structure at this last-mentioned site has been dated by radiocarbon methods to the early first millennium cal BC, and the settlement associations of the others fall within the same millennium.

Kendrick concluded that the most likely explanation of the Douglasmuir structures was as raised granaries (Kendrick 1995, 64) (comparable in form to the reconstructions based on the rectangular structure excavated at Staple Howe; Brewster 1963, 53). She argued that this interpretation was supported to a certain degree by the recovery of charred cereal remains from some of the post-holes of one structure. However, the quantity of material mentioned (100+ wheat grains, 15 barley grains and one oat grain; Brewster 1963, 57) is hardly large. In addition, it is not clear how this material supports the interpretation of the structure as a granary, as the material presumably entered the post-holes either before the setting of the post or after its removal (cf Guilbert 1981, 108–9). More generally, the presence of a granary implies the storage of surplus crops, whereas charred cereal remains reflect primarily crop-processing activities.

Without any positive archaeological evidence it is not possible to be confident in interpreting the particular functions of the Dryburn Bridge structures, which need not have been contemporary (and indeed structures D and E cannot have been). At least some could well have been raised timber granaries, with the implications that such an interpretation carries for the storage of surplus agricultural produce. If this interpretation were accepted, it would remain the case that archaeological evidence for this form of storage technology is relatively rare in the later prehistoric settlement record of eastern Scotland, an area in which grain storage pits (sensu Reynolds 1974) are also very rare, if not wholly absent. The archaeological evidence from eastern Scotland does not seem to represent the sort of large-scale 'centralized storage' seen in southern England at some sites such as Danebury (Gent 1983; Hill 1996, 97–8 for a critique).

It is also of potential interpretative significance that the rectangular structures were founded variously on four-, six- and nine-post arrangements. This may indicate that the foundations were designed with different load-bearing capacities and hence were intended to fulfil different functions. For example, the possibility that structure G represents an excarnation platform associated with the nearby Early Bronze Age burial cists has been considered previously (Section 6.2), but an Iron Age origin could also be advanced (cf Carr & Knüsel 1997).

11.5 Souterrain-related features

Two features were excavated which bear resemblance to the more modest forms of souterrain excavated at sites such as Dalladies (Watkins 1980) and Dubton Farm, Brechin (Cameron 2002). Souterrains are more characteristic of north-east Scotland (Armit 1999b, 577–8), although an example has been confirmed recently in the Upper Forth Valley (*Discovery Excav Scot* 1999, 88). Until recently they were not known to occur commonly south of the Forth, and most of those that were known were stone-built constructions of relatively grand scale

and Iron Age date (Welfare 1984). Aerial photography is beginning to rectify this imbalance, with roundhouses associated with souterrains identified in East Lothian (D Cowley, pers comm) and as far south-west as Galloway (Garphar: Cowley & Brophy 2001, 65, 68).

Of the two potential souterrain-related features at Dryburn Bridge, one was cut into the uppermost floor surfaces of House 2, and may be related at the earliest to its final stages of occupation. The other appears to have been associated with the Phase III settlement layout, and contained a sherd of Roman bottle glass. Both these features thus relate to the later stages of occupation at the site. Roman material has been commonly recovered from souterrain fills in north-east Scotland, and has been argued as dating evidence for a 'souterrain abandonment horizon' in the late second or early third century AD (Armit 1999b, 587), involving the widespread ritualized infilling and closure of souterrains and possibly the deliberate deposition of Roman artefacts (Armit 1999b, 584–7).

There was no evidence recovered by which the function/s of the Dryburn Bridge features could be determined, although the consensus of opinion is gravitating towards the function of souterrains having been associated with storage of crops and other produce (cf Armit 1999b, 582–3; Alexander 2005).

11.6 Cemetery

The excavation of an Iron Age cemetery at Dryburn Bridge represents an important addition to the limited corpus of later prehistoric burial sites of this period from south-east Scotland. Conversely, the Iron Age burial record from this area is rich by comparison to many other areas of Great Britain. Other examples of pit graves include the cemeteries at Broxmouth (Hill 1982a) and Winton House (Dalland 1991), as well as a single example at Port Seton East (Haselgrove & McCullagh 2000, 125). These single burials, most of which occur in confirmed settlement contexts, appear to contrast with the multiple burials in apparently off-site contexts such as North Belton (Crone 1992) and Lochend (Longworth 1966), and with the 'warrior burials' so-called because of the burial of weaponry with the deceased (eg Dunbar High Street: Roy 2006).

The Dryburn Bridge cemetery contains only ten graves. All but one occupied the north-west part of the settlement, which appears to have been reserved for funerary practices (to judge from the dearth of other archaeological features in that area). The graves surely account for only a small proportion of the inhabitants of the settlement over its period of occupation, and this suggests that most of the dead were disposed of either off-site and/or by means other than burial, such as cremation and the scattering of ashes. The selectivity of who was buried on the site is perhaps emphasized by the absence of children from the cemetery population.

The generally curvilinear distribution of the majority of the graves is noticeable. This might suggest that the arrangement of graves within the cemetery formed some orderly sequence, but this cannot be distinguished within the set of radiocarbon dates. The presence of four graves along the line of the outer enclosure palisade surely reflects an example of the structured deposition of significant deposits along a settlement boundary (reviewed in the Scottish context by Hingley 1992, 31–2), which formed important loci for structured deposition at various stages during the Iron Age (Hingley 1990). This occurrence is paralleled in the burial record elsewhere in Britain (Whimster 1981; Wait 1985), for example nearby at Broxmouth (Hill 1982a, 179–80), where a cemetery was located outside the Outer Ditch and isolated graves were present at other liminal locations such as the south-west entrance and across a palisade trench. Two of the Dryburn Bridge burials (7 and 13) had been placed immediately outside the settlement boundary, a location which must have been carefully chosen to project certain information about the identity, status or means of death of the deceased (cf Bruck 1995). The proximity of the graves to the Early Bronze Age cist burials is also surely more than coincidence.

The archaeological remains of the burial form are relatively simple, each comprising the remains of an individual placed in a crouched position in the base of an unlined pit. The pits were not backfilled with the sand and gravel excavated from them, but were covered directly with stones either imported or reused from elsewhere on the site (such as disused houses or palisade lines). The meaning of this filling material is of course beyond meaningful reconstruction, but its repeated appearance within the graves indicates that it must have been of some significance to the burial rite. It seems possible that the excavated subsoil may have been used to form a low mound over the grave, of which nothing would have survived plough-truncation.

Most of the graves were orientated north/south and, where it could be established, with the bodies facing east, either on their left side with the head to the north (slightly more common), or on the right side with the head to the south. The former is the more common arrangement found in Iron Age burials found in Britain as a whole (Haselgrove 2001, 49), although the variation in arrangements is repeated for instance at Broxmouth (Hill 1982a, 179) and in the East Yorkshire Iron Age square barrow cemeteries (Parker Pearson 1999a, 53). The reasons for this variation in body orientation are not known, but on the basis of the sexed individuals at Dryburn Bridge it does not appear to have been a gender-related distinction (Table 10). The introduction of a sheep molar into Burial 3 and cannel coal working debris and indeterminate animal bone fragments into Burial 2 may well have been unintended. However, given the repeated associations of certain animal

body parts or bones with male and female burials in East Yorkshire (Parker Pearson 1999a), we should be wary of dismissing the potential link altogether.

Burial 12 stands out from all the others excavated at Dryburn Bridge. The grave lay on a different orientation (north-west/south-east), the inhumed body faced south-west, and it was isolated from the rest of the graves and at what appears to be a significant location within the roundhouse settlement area, outside the entrance to House 6. This burial seems therefore to be a good candidate for a 'special' burial, perhaps a dedicative or commemorative deposit of some kind. However, we should be cautious of arguing for special burials on the basis of orientations of a small number of graves – at Broxmouth two of the nine graves within the cemetery area faced west, six east and one north (P H Hill 1995).

No disarticulated fragments of human bone were recovered at Dryburn Bridge, unlike at Broxmouth (P H Hill 1995) where fragments of cranium, post-cranial bone and teeth were recovered from a variety of ditches and pits.

11.7 Economy

In the light of contemporary excavations then underway at Broxmouth (Hill 1982a), it was initially hoped that, despite it being a plough truncated site, Dryburn Bridge would produce material for environmental analysis (Triscott 1982, 117). In the event no palaeobotanical data was recovered. The mammalian bone assemblage is of limited interpretative value given its generally poor preservation, although the range of domestic species present indicates that livestock played a role in the farming practices adopted by the occupants of Dryburn Bridge throughout its sequence of settlement layouts.

It appears from the combination of ground stone tools, particularly the large numbers of saddle-querns, and the faunal evidence that a mixed agricultural economy was followed. It is not possible to determine with any confidence whether the structural changes in the types and numbers of buildings were matched by changes to agricultural practices.

11.8 Wealth and status of the settlement

There is nothing in the limited and mostly prosaic artefact assemblage to indicate that the occupants of Dryburn Bridge were at any stage of high status although, as noted by Hunter (Section 8.9), the assemblage no doubts represents a very partial record of the materials and items that were present on the site during its occupation. The Roman bottle glass is exotic, but similar fragments of Roman material culture have been recovered from a wide range of settlement contexts in southern Scotland (Robertson 1970; Hunter 2001), and their occurrence need not in itself indicate that the settlement was of high status (eg Macinnes 1984b; Macinnes 1989).

The archaeologically visible acts of enclosure and the construction of ostentatious roundhouse entrances could indicate that the occupants of Dryburn Bridge, at least in its original settlement form, were of enhanced status within a local context, but these settlement features could equally have been symbolic boundaries or elements of display (cf Collis 1996). Assessment of the wealth and status of a particular site can be investigated reliably only within a regional context, which is beyond the remit of this report.

11.9 Structured deposition and ritualized acts?

The disposal of human remains represents one expression of structured deposition at Dryburn Bridge, but are there others? This point is now difficult to assess, however some suggestions can be made.

The insertion of a dog burial into the fill of the souterrain-related feature could have been a deliberate act, in light of the considerable evidence for the structured deposition of animal deposits (summarized by Fitzpatrick 1997, 82), including dogs (eg at Danebury: Cunliffe 1984, 12 and fig 3.8). The potential for the dog burial to have been a 'special animal deposit' (after Grant 1984) is especially pertinent when viewed in light of Armit's proposals for the ritualized destruction and infilling of some of the Angus souterrains (Armit 1999b, 583–6). The dog burial also lies on the circuit of the palisaded enclosure although as this feature may have been dismantled for a considerable time it is not known in this instance whether the superimposition was the result of design or coincidence. The dog appears to have been cherished in life, as it had been allowed to recover from a fractured leg and following death was interred in a carefully stone-floored grave pit. The radiocarbon date for the dog burial is consistent with the Roman glass present within the fill of the souterrain-related feature. Both could have been deposited as part of the closure of that feature, although to propose the Roman glass as a structured, ritualized deposit is not justified on archaeological evidence, although it undeniably forms part of the widespread occurrence of Roman material within souterrain fills (cf Armit 1999b). The sickle recovered from the souterrain is more likely to reflect a case of structured deposition than the shard of Roman glass (Section 8.9.2).

Elsewhere, pottery and animal bone recovery from the foundation trench of the palisaded enclosure concentrated at the north-east entrance. Conversely, there was nothing obviously meaningful in the distribution and contexts of the many saddle-querns discovered (cf Hingley 1992, 32). They had for the most part been reused for packing of post-holes or were found within the rubble infill of the House

2 ring-ditch. Some appeared to have been incorporated into secondary paving within ring-ditch houses (eg Houses 2 & 7), but do not certainly reflect anything beyond opportunistic reuse. Some of the large artefact-bearing pits interpreted as rubbish pits (eg O48) could have been the focus of acts of structured deposition, but this is now impossible to establish. The recovery of fragments of horse bone from an entrance post-hole in House 6 could also have been a deliberate deposit (Section 9.1.6).

Finally, the scarcity of charred *in situ* timbers suitable for radiocarbon dating reflects the lack of evidence for deliberate destruction of the built elements of the settlement. However, of the five charred timbers that did survive, four were roundhouse door-posts associated with Houses 2 and 9. It is a matter of conjecture as to whether this can be interpreted as evidence for the selective ritualized destruction of doorways as opposed to the chance by-product of fires.