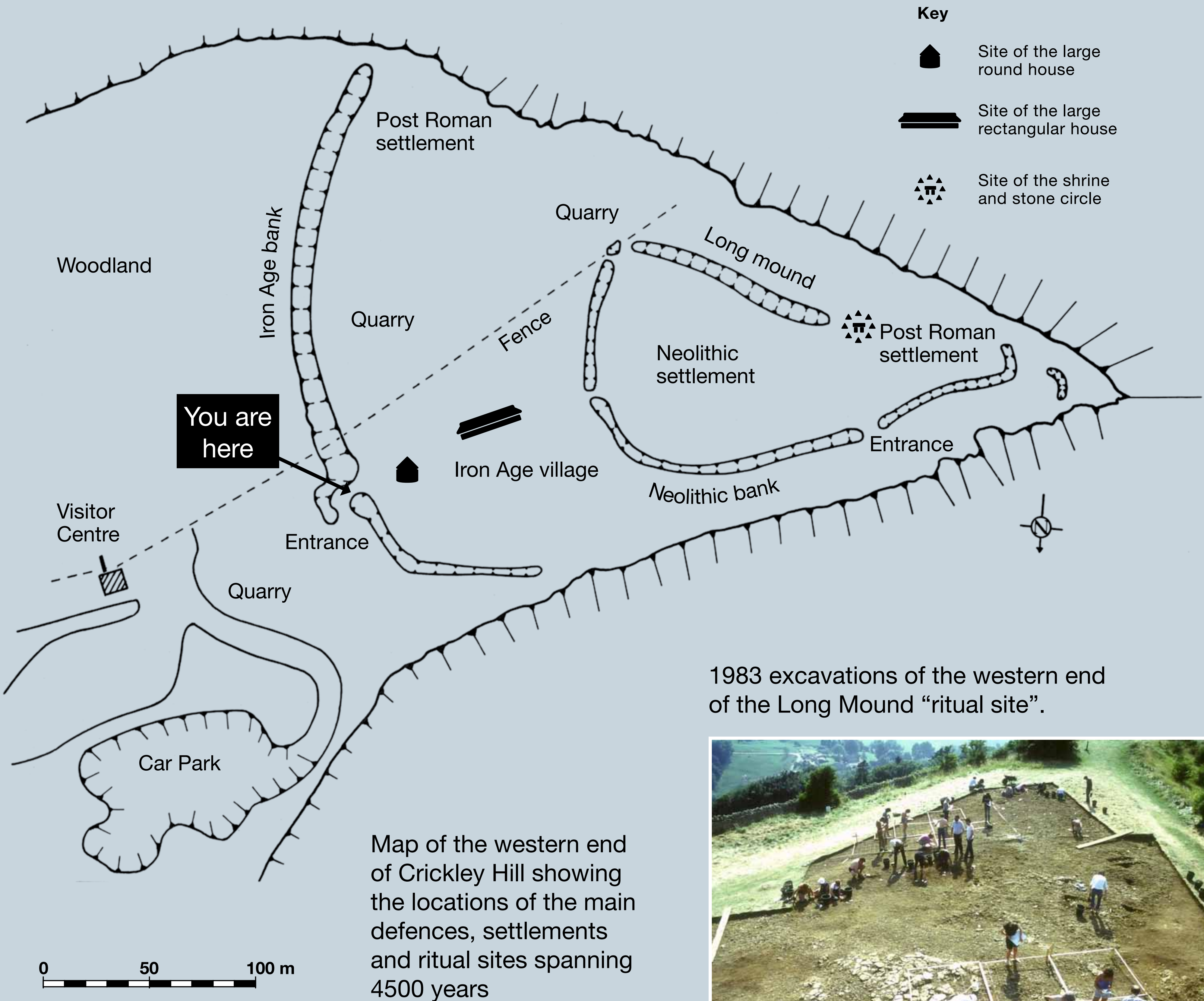


# Crickley Hill - 4500 Years of Settlement and Worship.

Beneath your feet lie archaeological remains of national importance. Excavations managed by the Crickley Hill Archaeological Trust took place here each summer from 1969 - 1993. In that time more than a million finds were excavated and the remains of fortifications, settlements and sites of worship uncovered. They indicate that the Hill was inhabited at various times for about 4,500 years between 3700BC and AD500.

The main settlements were: Neolithic [Stone Age] - 3700BC to 3000BC, Iron Age 700BC - 400BC and Post Roman AD420 - 500. In addition a part of the site known as the “Long Mound” seems to have been used for ritual/religious purposes [3500 - 400BC] and included a Neolithic shrine, stone circle and processional way.

Please Note: The use of metal detectors is forbidden anywhere in the country park. Any disturbance of the ground may destroy valuable archaeological evidence forever.



1983 excavations of the western end of the Long Mound “ritual site”.



Aerial view of the 1972 excavations



Iron Age Bronze Fibula [brooch]



Part of Neolithic flint axe head, with the cutting edge



Iron Age Bronze Ring Pendant and Rolled Bronze



Late Iron Age Decorated Pottery



Military belt-buckle of the early fifth century AD from the post-Roman village.



Iron Age Cloak Pins

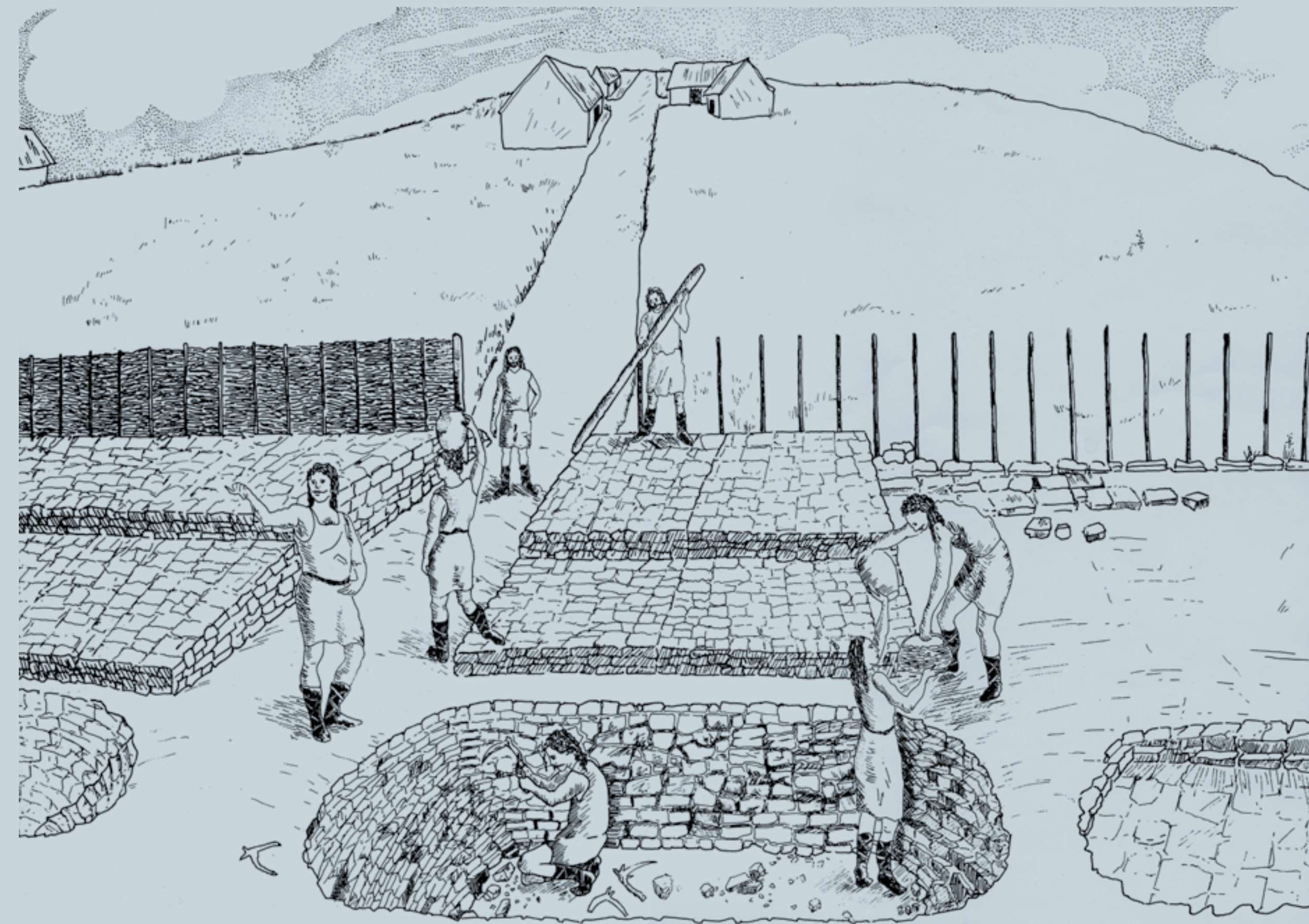


## First Neolithic Village

The first permanent residents of Crickley Hill were a community of perhaps 50 -100 people who built a village [200m to your right] some 5,700 years ago. These Neolithic or “New Stone age” people were among the earliest farmers in Britain. Neolithic man first reached Britain from the continent about 6,000 years ago introducing farming to this country and the manufacture of pottery. Before their arrival the native people lived only as hunters and gatherers.

At Crickley, with the aid of antler picks, they quarried stone from short lengths of ditch to build an enclosure consisting of two lines of low stone wall incorporating wooden fencing [palisades]. This structure not only protected them from enemies but also wild animals that still roamed Britain like the bear and wolf!

First Neolithic enclosure wall being built from stone quarried from ditches with antler picks



## Final Neolithic Village

About 5,500 years ago a single powerful defensive wall was built [150m to your right] to protect a village of rectangular wooden houses and a small ritual site. The settlement ended in violence. There was a fierce battle, one of the first known battlefields in the country, in which over 400 flint tipped arrows were shot and the houses and gateways burnt. Flint arrow heads penetrate flesh better than steel ones and are more likely to break off in the wound!

The last Neolithic settlement [3000 BC]



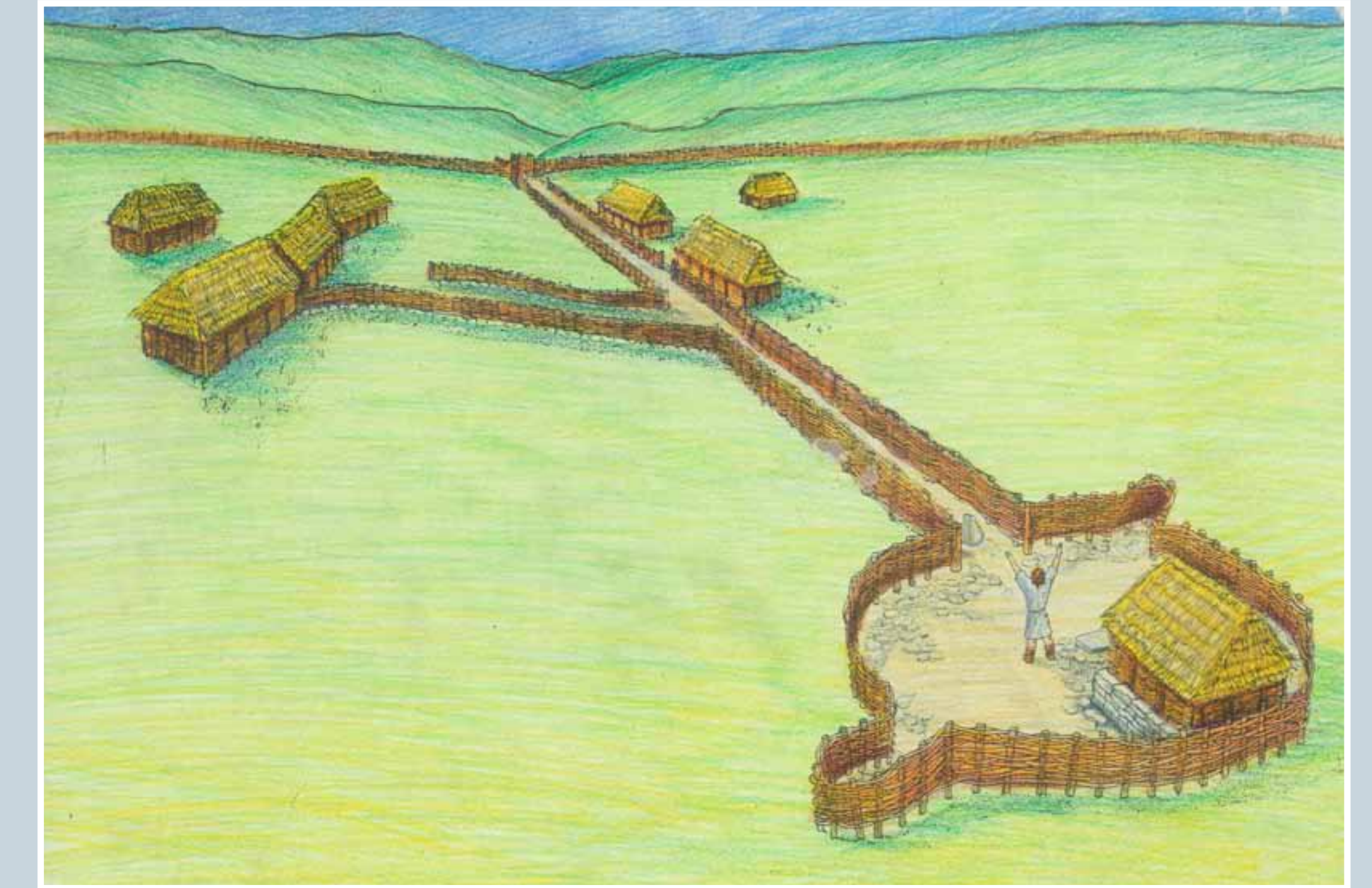
Neolithic Bowman.



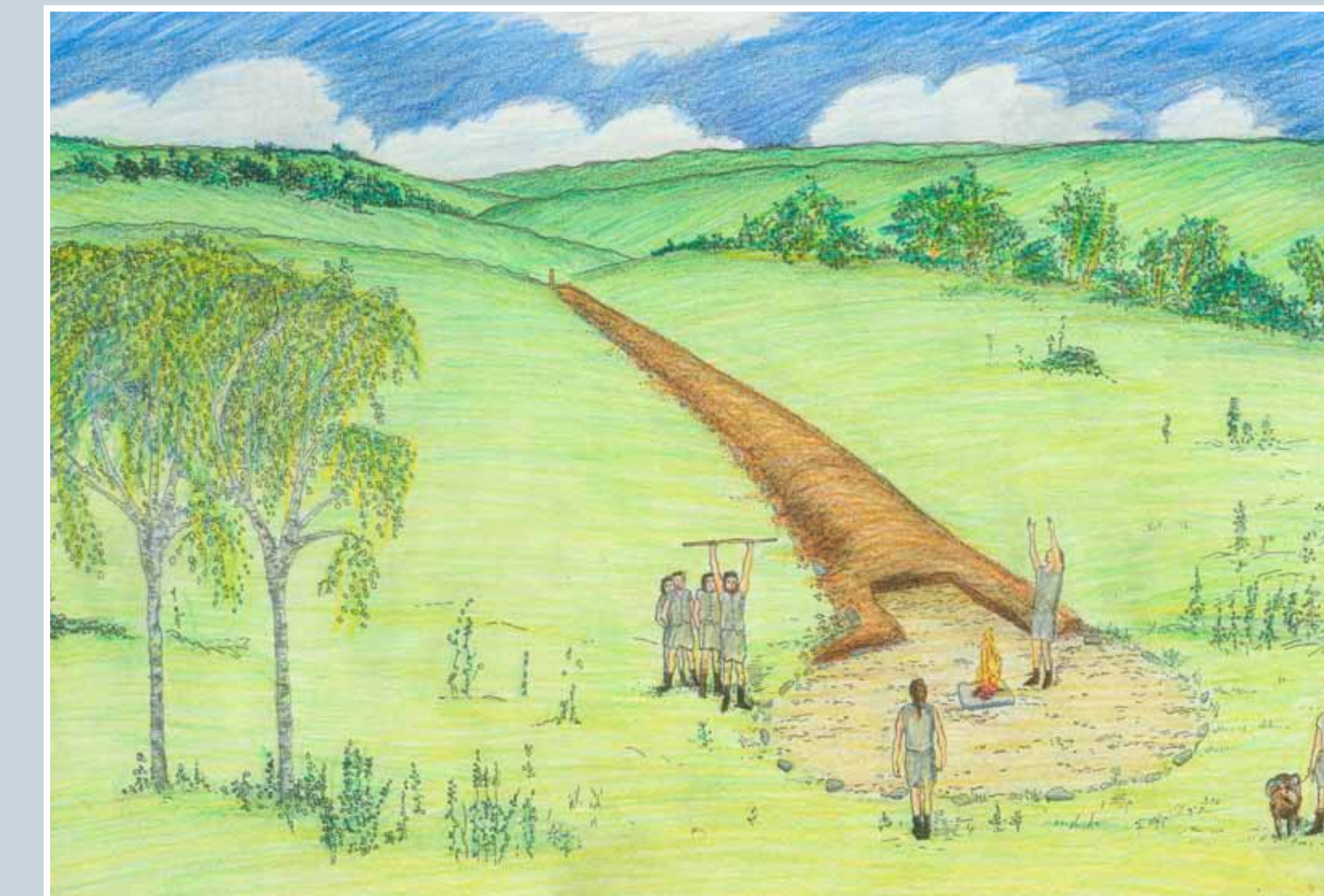
Neolithic leaf shaped flint arrow heads and bronze age barbed example [middle].

## The Long Mound

The Long Mound ritual site shows a sequence of use, extension and modification from 5,500 years ago in the Neolithic, to 2,400 years ago in the Iron Age. The earliest phase is associated with the final Neolithic village and consisted of a fenced “processional way” leading to the settlements shrine. Here rituals involved fire, the burning of bone, perhaps in animal sacrifices, and the gathering of pottery, flint, bone and antler in special places.



The fenced “processional way” and shrine of the final Neolithic village.



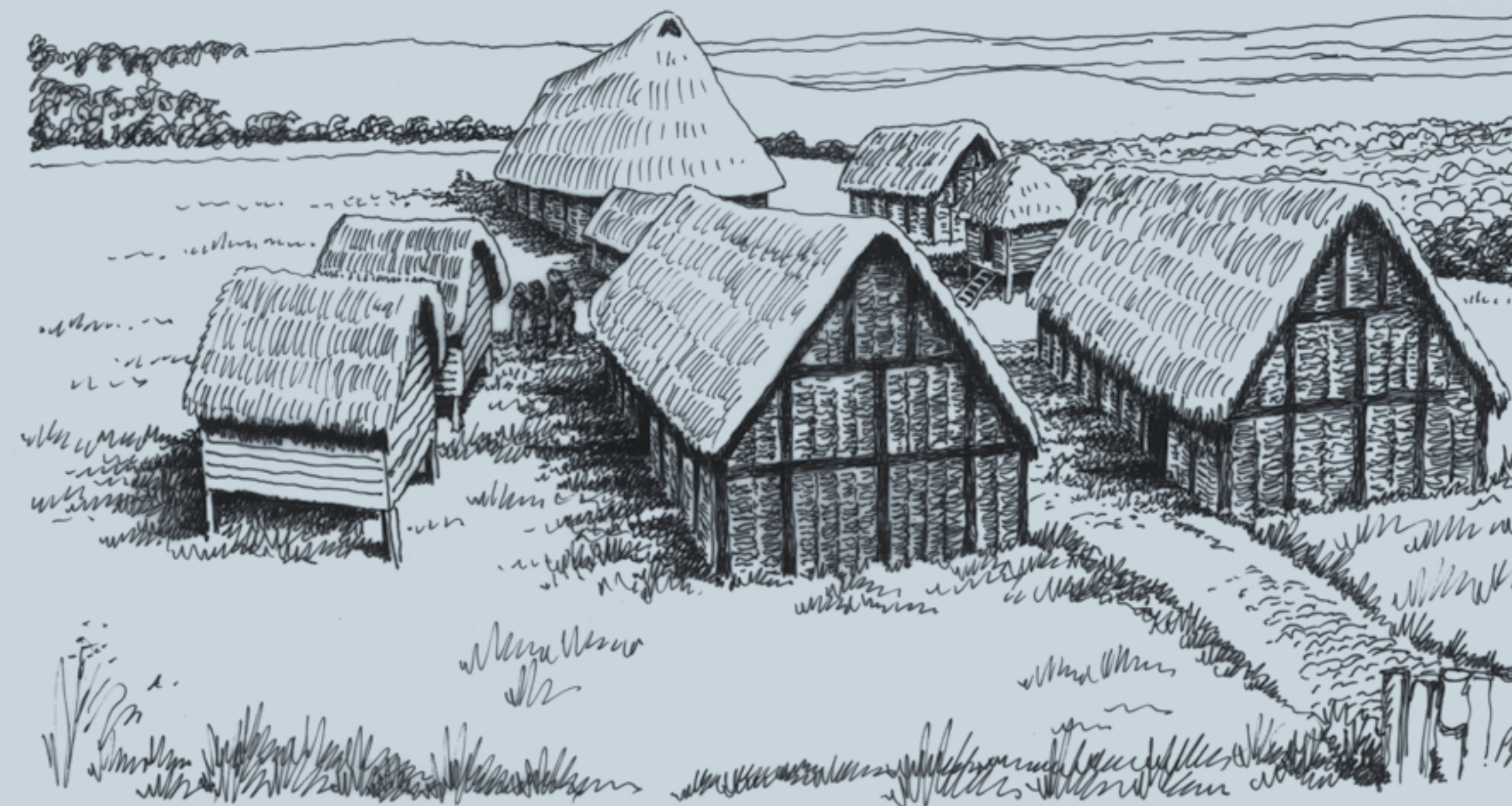
Later arrangement of the “long Mound” ritual site.

Later phases of the Long Mound included a small stone circle with central hearth. In the final arrangement a mound of turf and soil nearly 100 metres long was constructed, with a pole erected at its eastern end and its sides marked out at intervals by large stone slabs, some covering butchered animal bones.



## The First Iron Age Hill Fort [700-600BC]

Crickley Hill was permanently occupied again at the beginning of the Iron Age nearly 3,000 years ago. A village was constructed of long timber houses [the blue markers on the ground on the flat area to your right show the position of the post-holes] defended by a large stone wall and ditch enclosing an area equivalent in size to 5 football pitches. The settlement was attacked, captured, and then thoroughly destroyed by fire.



Long houses of the first Iron Age Hill-Fort

Iron Age man practising with slingshot outside the Hill Fort entrance

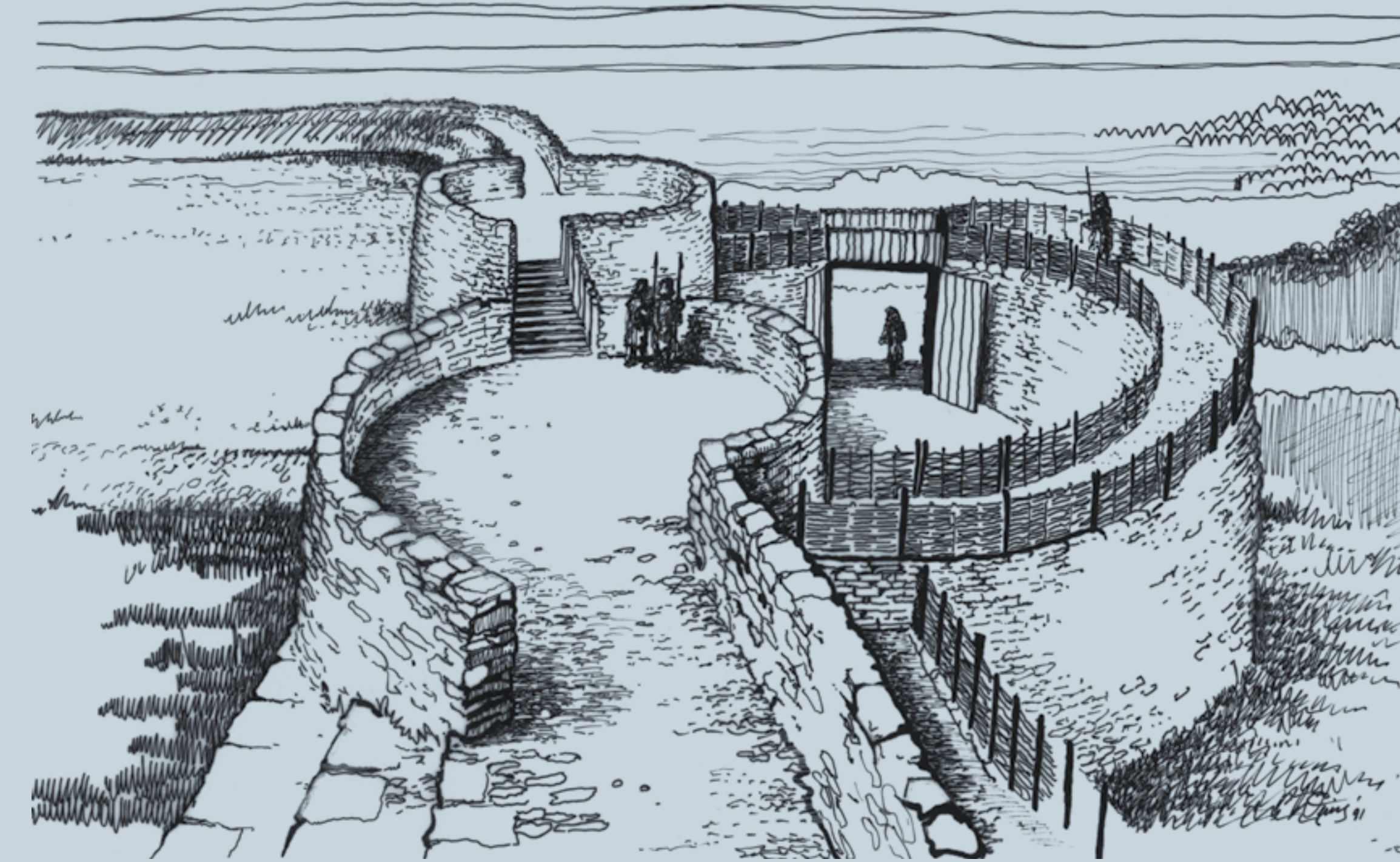


## The Second Iron Age Hill Fort [500BC]

After an interval which may have been short, a round house village was established [the yellow markers on the ground on the flat area to your right show the position of the post-holes from the largest round house, some 15 m in diameter]. You are standing in the entranceway through the later Iron Age fortifications, built 2,500 years ago to protect the village and its granaries. Beneath the grass banks on either side of you are the remains of a dry-stone wall originally 5 or 6 metres high. The new entrance was protected by stone bastions [guard towers] on either side with a set of heavy wooden gates and a walkway above them. These in turn were protected by a defensive “hookwork” curved wall [the grass covered remains of which can be seen to your left] that was entered through an outer gate. Any visitor or attacker was forced to expose their unshielded right side to the north bastion and its guards.

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The village was destroyed before the fortifications could be finished, no later than about 400BC. The Hill Fort was never rebuilt but some 400 years later, at the end of the Iron Age [1BC] a small area was occupied by modest dwellings.



Hookwork defended entrance of the second Iron Age Hill Fort [You are standing beneath the walkway that connects the two round guard towers]



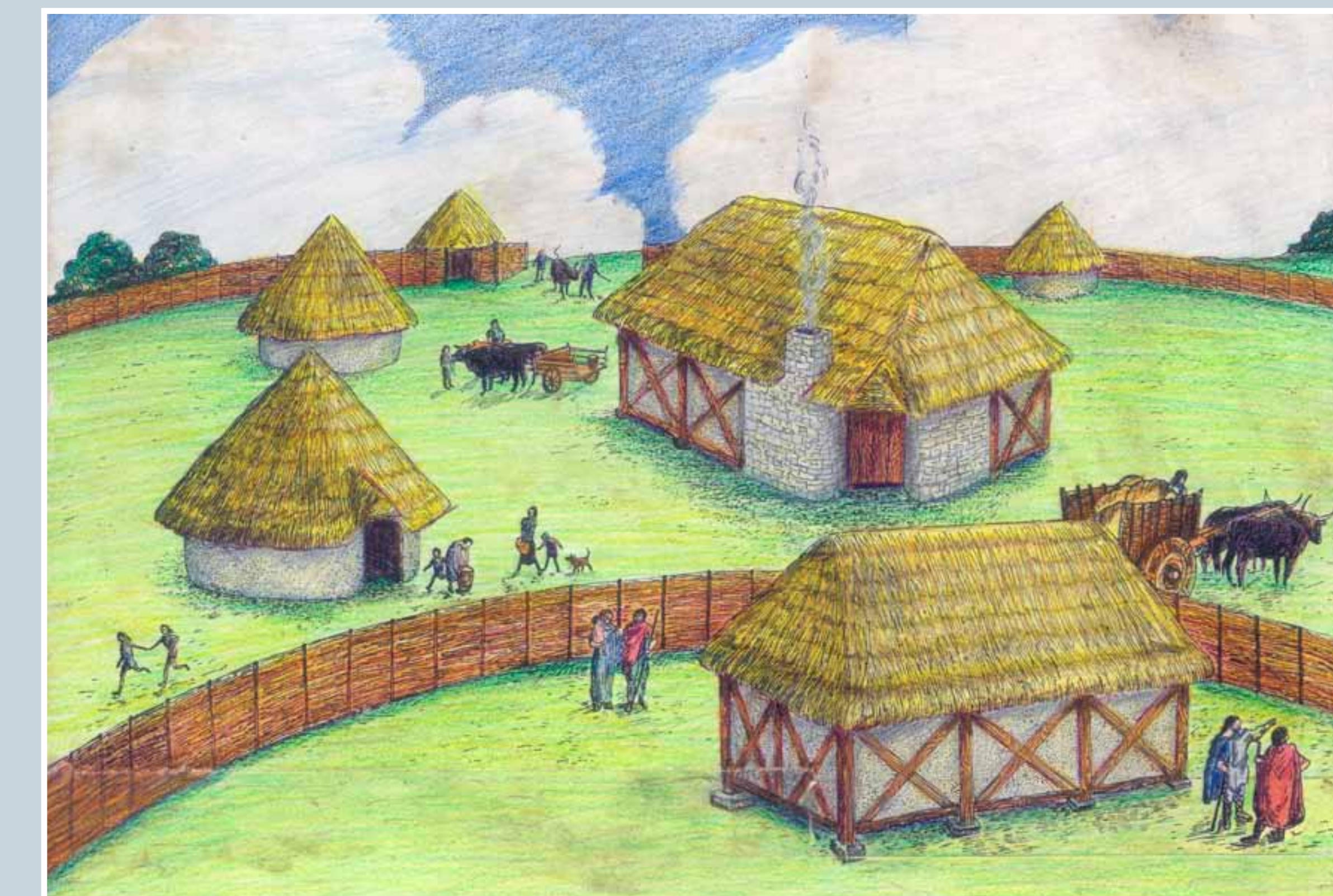
Stone work of the defensive wall of the Second Iron Age Hill Fort [1970 excavations]



Iron Age Hill Fort entrance excavations [1970]

## Post-Roman Village [420 – 500AD]

Crickley Hill was last permanently occupied about 1500 years ago shortly after the Romans withdrew from Britain. This village was in two parts. The more important section stood at the point of the hill some 250m away to your right and was made up of larger buildings (7m x 8m) including a granary, protected by a wooden enclosure. These may have housed the chieftains of the village, while their followers lived some 200m away just inside the southern end of the old Iron Age wall. Here there was a group of small houses (about 4m long) probably made of turf thatched with barley straw, each having a central hearth. Both parts of the village were burnt, rebuilt and burnt again before being abandoned about 500 AD.



Post Roman Village: Chieftain’s house and granary