



# Ancient Monuments

## *Compton Chamberlayne*

### Chalk Map of Australia

925m south west of Upper Hurdcott Farm

This monument is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended as it appears to the Secretary of State to be of national importance.

#### *Reasons for Designation:*

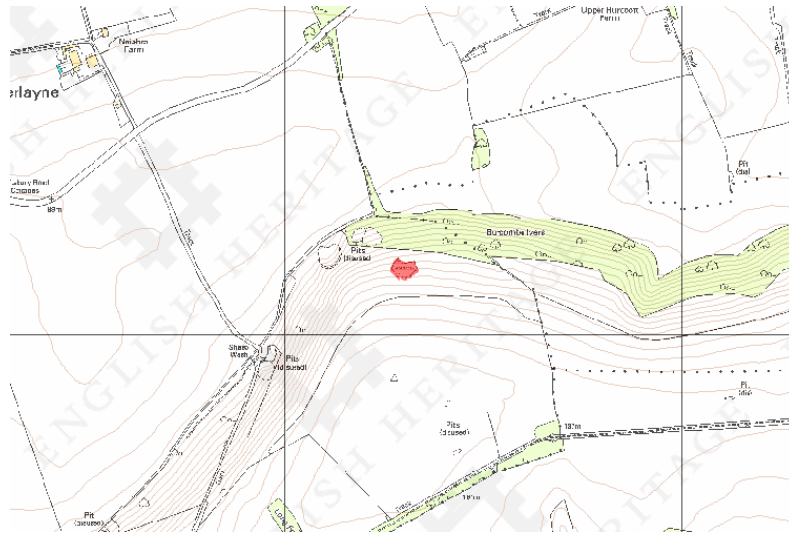
Constructed by either stripping the turf to expose the bedrock beneath, or by cutting bedding trenches and packing them with chalk rubble, hill figures are an extremely rare phenomenon nationally with only 40 or so identified, most of which are to be found on the chalk downs of southern England. Archaeological opinion is divided as to the date of the earliest examples, some of which may have their origins in the late prehistoric or Romano-British period. However, most appear to belong to the post-medieval period, of which those from the 20th century are by far the most numerous with 26 examples recorded nationally. With the exception of one figure cut as an advertisement, the remainder of 20th century hill figures appear to have been cut for commemorative purposes, with a significant proportion dating to World War I and intended to record the presence of military units in specific localities. The 19 badges and motifs either visible today as surface features or surviving as buried deposits on Fovant, Compton and Sutton Downs represent by far the largest and most complete group of hill figures in England. They are prominent features in the landscape and along with the military graves in nearby churchyards are a visible record of the importance of the area during World War I. Their significance is further enhanced by their association with a number of regiments or units which were either subsequently disbanded, or whose members left Fovant to fight in some of the most bloody battles of World War I.

#### *Details:*

The monument includes a chalk map of Australia cut into the northern slope of Compton Down, overlooking the village of Compton Chamberlayne. The map, which was constructed by excavating a series of shallow bedding trenches into which clean chalk rubble was inserted and compressed into place, consists of a simple outline of the Australian continent, within which is the legend 'Australia'. It was originally cut by troops belonging to the Australian Imperial Force, Australia's expeditionary force. The Australians underwent training in the locality during August 1916 and March 1917 but took over many of the camps around Fovant from October 1917 until after the Armistice, when the camps were used as dispersal centres for those awaiting repatriation. A further series of contemporary chalk

badges on Fovant and Sutton Downs are the subject of separate schedulings. All fences are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath them is included.

MAP EXTRACT The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract. It includes a 2 metre boundary around the archaeological features, considered to be essential for the monument's support and preservation.



*(English Heritage)*



*(Photo courtesy of Fovant Badges Society – 2005)*