

# The Funnel Beaker Landscape of Vintrie-Svågertorp, Southwest Scania, Sweden

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## Abstract

*In the autumn of 2011 a site with remains of huts, pits and burial monuments from the Early Neolithic–early Middle Neolithic was investigated in Malmö, southwest Scania, Sweden. The aim of this article is to relate the site to the surrounding settled landscape in order to understand some of its social significance during the time when it was initially used. In doing this, aspects of Funnel Beaker Culture landscape use will be discussed. This entails a discussion about our understanding of settlements as spatially clearly definable places and our often clear-cut categorization of sites. In the Early Neolithic I the burial site with two long barrows is connected to a farm of a possibly leading household living near the burials. Activities connected to the farm can be related to a large area. During the Early Neolithic II–early Middle Neolithic II there seems to be an increase in the number of farms in the area. Continued and intensified use of the burial site, including the construction of two long dolmens and the extension of one of them, indicates the importance of the burial site to all the farms in the area.*

## Background and aim

The study of Funnel Beaker Culture landscape use and settlement organization has a long tradition in Scandinavian archaeology. The focus has been on interpreting relations between settlements, burials and depositions in order to understand economic, social and ritual aspects of Funnel Beaker societies (e.g. Larsson 1984; 1988; 1992; Skaarup 1985; Andersson 2004; Edring 2005; Björhem & Magnusson Staaf 2006; Rostoványi 2007;

Hallgren 2008; Schülke 2009; Andersen 2013; see also Müller *et al.* 2013 for northern Germany). This article is a contribution to the discussion of Funnel Beaker landscapes in southernmost Scandinavia.

The Funnel Beaker Culture remains found within a small area immediately to the east of Vintrie village (Vintrie-Svågertorp) in the southern parts of the city of Malmö, southwest Scania, will be discussed (Figs. 1 and 2). Several



Fig. 1. Vintrie-Svågertorp in southernmost Sweden.

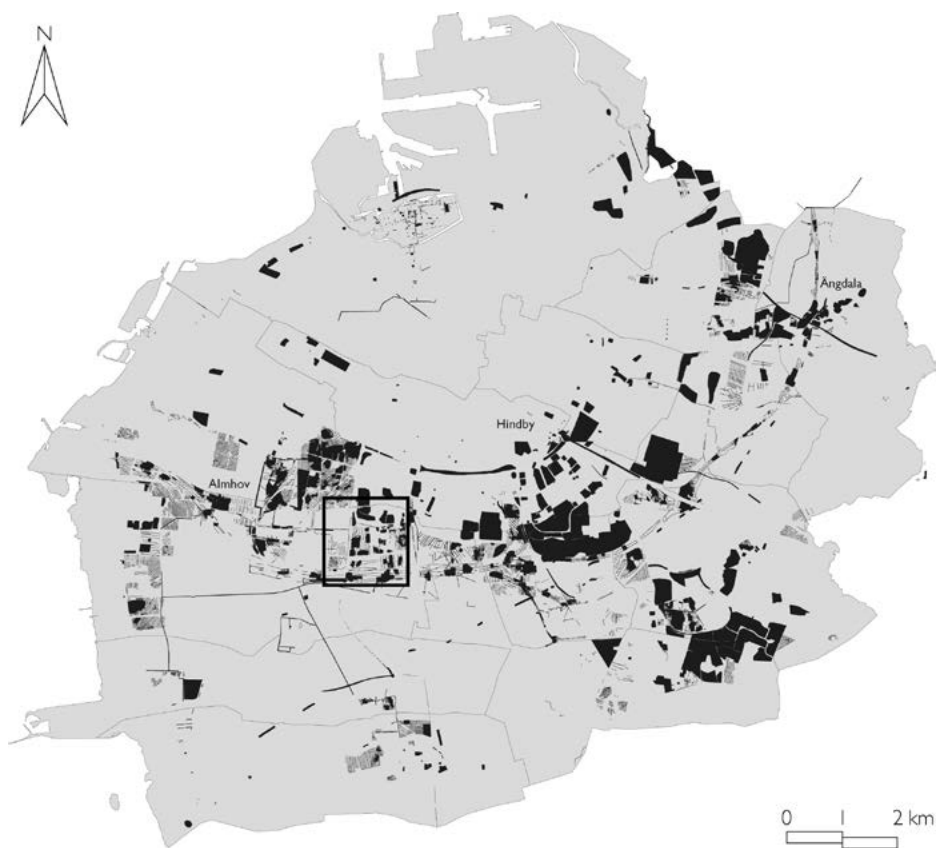


Fig. 2. The Vintrie-Svågertorp area in Malmö (black frame). Black areas indicate archaeologically investigated areas.

large-scale investigations during the last two decades, in this and other parts of the Malmö area, have yielded a large and varied body of archaeological material attributed to the Funnel Beaker Culture. In the autumn of 2011 a site – Vintrie Park C2 and C5 – within this area with remains of huts, pits and burial monuments (long barrows and long dolmens) from the Early Neolithic and early Middle Neolithic was investigated as part of a developer-funded project (Brink & Hammarstrand Dehman 2013). (Early Neolithic I: 4000–3500 cal. BC; Early Neolithic II: 3500–3000 cal. BC; early Middle Neolithic I–II: 3300–3000 cal. BC).

The aim of this article is to relate the burial site to the surrounding settled landscape in order to understand some of its social setting and significance during the time when it was built and initially used by the local Funnel Beaker society. The varied and abundant archaeological remains of the area pinpoint a need to discuss them in relation to what they represent in terms of function and use (in a broad sense) and how they are related to each other as part of a settled landscape of many different activities, meanings and relations. Discussing this involves relating the material to views within current research on settlement pattern and organization of activities in Neolithic landscapes. In this article two related themes or perspectives regarding the settled landscape will be part of the discussion: our understanding of settlements as clearly spatially definable places, and our often clear-cut functional categorization of sites. These perspectives are discussed in the next section, which is followed by a discussion of the Vintrie-Svågertorp area in the fourth millennium BC.

## Perspectives on Funnel Beaker Culture sites and landscapes

Objects and features – whether pits, houses or monuments – were integrated in social life in Funnel Beaker Culture landscapes. This makes it necessary to interpret them in relation to each other as part of a landscape context with different meanings. The long continuity of varied activities on some sites in the Vintrie-Svågertorp area underlines the importance of looking at single archaeological remains of activities or structures not only as the result of single, planned and completed intentions, but as the result of an ongoing process of socially important events (cf. Barrett & Ko 2009). It is important to recognize that individual sites may not be easily put into clear-cut compartments of function. It is the activities or actions themselves, situated in the landscape and sometimes adding to or referring to existing features or monuments as well as to memories attached to them, which are of importance when trying to understand their meaning to the people once living there.

Knowledge about things such as size, organization and activities on sites has increased thanks to large-scale developer-funded investigations. Variation and complexity have been revealed (e.g. Andersson 2004; Rudebeck 2010). In defining Funnel Beaker Culture settlements there is a tradition of aiming at delimiting them in space (often in sq m). This task is of course to a large extent dependent on the size of trenches, combined with surface surveys. Settlements of the fourth millennium BC have generally “grown” in size as a result of the archaeology of the last decades. In southernmost Scania settlements have been interpreted, through surface finds and small-scale excavations, as limited in size, approx. 1,400 sq m at the most (Larsson 1992, 80 ff.). In western Scania main settlements, excavated by large-scale investigations, are estimated to have covered areas of up to

approx. 25,000 sq m (Andersson 2004, 58). These are but a few examples illustrating the development regarding views of settlement size. As stated by Artursson *et al.* (2003, 44), this development can be seen as the result of source-critical factors. For example, surface finds within spatially limited areas may be small activity areas belonging to a larger settlement. Thus, a focus on the character of activities is needed rather than a direct translation of single activities or activity areas equalling entire settlements.

This means that defining and delimiting single sites and separating them from other sites can become problematic when discussing site categories and trying to understand them in relation to each other as part of a settled landscape. The discussion here will follow the notion, or understanding, of settlement as a large area of varied activities as suggested by Niels H. Andersen (2013, 119) rather than as a single site (easily) delimited in square metres (see also Larsson & Rzepecki 2005, 4 ff.; Smyth 2014, 2, 103 f.). Following this, settlements are understood as organic and unbounded (Smyth 2014, 104). This does not mean that certain activities or areas of activities could not be delimited in square metres, but here this aspect will be downplayed. This also means recognizing that many different activities or functions can be related to what we can perceive as a settlement.

In analysing Neolithic landscapes, categorizing sites according to different functions has also been, and still is, important. However, categories tend to compartmentalize the landscape into functionally and spatially different sites, often dividing it into sites of domestic *or* ritual function or meaning. Categorizing sites and interpreting them in terms of function or in relation to each other is not a straightforward task. This is a well-known problem in archaeology, and categories must be continuously discussed. Recent discussions – in southern Scandinavia and

beyond – have underlined the fluid picture regarding functions and meanings within local Neolithic sites and landscapes (e.g. Björhem & Magnusson Staaf 2006; Hallgren 2008; Berggren 2010; 2015; Berggren & Brink 2012; Jorge 2014; Smyth 2014). This is also related to material culture where objects throughout the course of their existence can be involved in different economic, social and ritual arenas and activities (Jorge 2014, 435).

Settlement patterns vary within and between different areas of the Funnel Beaker Culture (TRB) North Group. The farm inhabited by a household is nevertheless a social unit that can be expected throughout the fourth millennium BC in several regions of this large area (e.g. Larsson 1992, 78 ff.; Andersson 2004, 130 ff.; Björhem & Magnusson Staaf 2006, 117 ff.; Müller *et al.* 2013, 64). This does of course not exclude more than one household at some sites (e.g. Andersson 2004, 154; Brink *et al.* 2014; Andersson & Artursson in press; see also Rosenberg 2008 for a site with several houses possibly indicating more than a single contemporary farm/household). Households are generally considered to have been based on the family and consisting of several generations (e.g. Larsson 1992, 83, families of 8–10 people; Ebbesen 2011, 516, families of 6–7 people; see also Artursson *et al.* 2003, 125 f. and Ahlström 2009, 135 for a critical discussion regarding family and household). Stig Welinder (1998, 127) describes the Neolithic farm as a group of people living in a house and relying on agriculture as a substantial part of their economy.

This view of the farm and household runs the risk of giving a rather static picture of both social relations and understanding of land use and accessibility in the Neolithic. The fluid picture regarding functions and meanings within a settlement area discussed above can also be applied to aspects of social constellations, that is, *who* participated in

different activities. This connects to current discussions on Funnel Beaker Culture use of the landscape in Scandinavian archaeology, underlining accessibility and movement and the use of certain sites by groups of varying social constellations during different periods of the year or at special events (e.g. Björhem & Magnusson Staaf 2006; Rudebeck 2010; Hallgren 2008; 2013; Carlsson 2014; see also Sheridan 2013; Thomas 2013; Jorge 2014; Rudebeck & Macheridis 2015).

## Describing the Funnel Beaker Culture material of Vintrie-Svågertorp

The Vintrie-Svågertorp area as delimited in this study is approximately 1.5 × 1.5 kilometres (Figs. 2 and 3). The area – before modern construction – was characterized by a gently undulating landscape with areas of former wetlands, generally some 20–25 metres above sea level. The area chosen represents one level of past relations, and it is not archaeologically clearly defined as a separate settlement area. Funnel Beaker Culture remains are abundant in surrounding areas, primarily to the east, west and north following zones of large-scale excavations (Fig. 2; Hadevik 2009 lists all Funnel Beaker Culture sites in the Malmö area investigated as of June 2007). The archaeological material from the sites seen in fig. 3 has been studied through excavation reports. Excavations in the area have mainly been carried out in connection with two large projects – the Öresund Fixed Link Project and Svågertorps industriområde – of the last two decades (see Brink & Hammarstrand Dehman 2013, 26 ff. for a detailed account of references to excavation reports on sites in fig. 3; these excavation reports present details of features, finds, <sup>14</sup>C datings, etc.). The trenches seen in fig. 3 amount to roughly

380,000 sq m. This does not include the trial trenches which are not shown in fig. 3. Generally, <sup>14</sup>C-dated features have only been dated once and with varied materials. Source-critical aspects regarding this are however not discussed in full detail here.

Within the area in question pits and layers dominate but remains of one house and a few huts and wells have also been excavated (Fig. 3). Charcoal from a posthole left by the roof-bearing construction in a two-aisled house, house 17, in Svågertorp area J has been <sup>14</sup>C-dated to the Early Neolithic I (Fig. 4). The house was about 8 m long, possibly 11 m, but the two western posts are uncertain as part of the construction. The house is the only two-aisled structure in the area of fig. 3 dated to the Early Neolithic. Another house <sup>14</sup>C-dated to an early part of the Early Neolithic was however excavated just to the east of the area of fig. 3 (Hadevik 2009, 25, Fig. 4b; see also Sørensen 2014 207, Fig. V. 157). On a general level the houseplan corresponded with two-aisled structures of the period, although a later dating cannot be ruled out on typological grounds (see Artursson *et al.* 2003; Hadevik 2009; Larsson & Brink 2013 for surveys of Neolithic houses). Other houses have probably existed in the area of fig. 3 but they are not easy to recognize as a category during excavation because of their often poor state of preservation. Traces of them may have been completely destroyed by modern ploughing, although the effects of soil erosion in the area generally can be seen as having been quite moderate. Exceptions are the more clearly marked small hillocks such as Vintrie Park C2 and C5 where soil erosion was evident when the topsoil on the slopes was removed.

There are several features interpreted as possible hut remains from the area (Fig. 3). With one exception, the interpretation as hut remains and closer dating of them are uncertain. Generally, they belong to a category of features – curved narrow pits

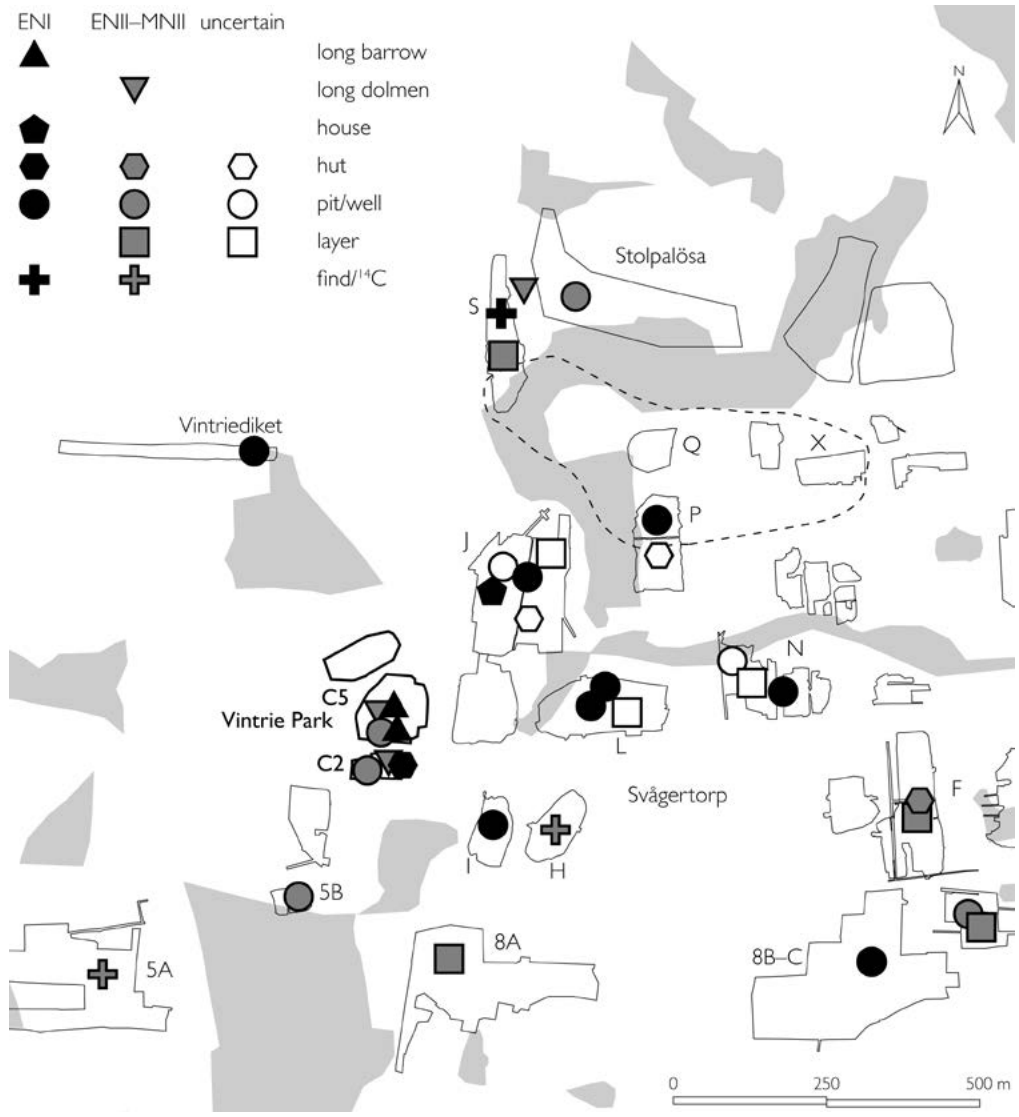


Fig. 3. The Funnel Beaker Culture landscape of Vintrie-Svågertorp. Early Neolithic I (4000–3500 BC). Early Neolithic II–early Middle Neolithic II (3500–3000 BC). Unfilled symbols represent Funnel Beaker Culture remains not clearly dated to one of the above periods. Note that symbols indicate presence, not exact numbers. Dotted line indicates an area of numerous pits from the latest part of the Funnel Beaker Culture, c. 3000–2800 BC, not dealt with in this article. Grey areas indicate lower terrain, possibly former wetlands, as seen on maps from the 18th century AD.

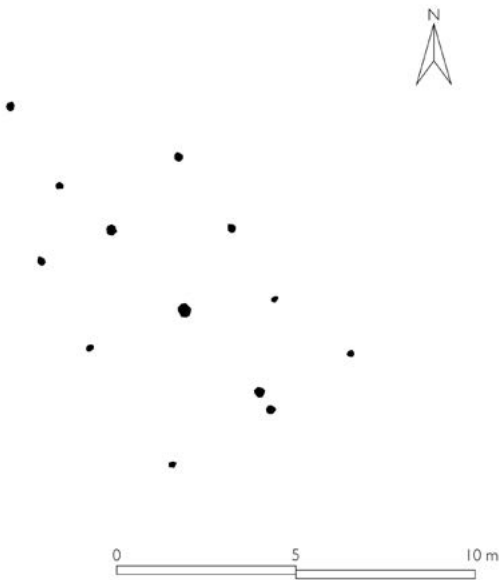


Fig. 4. House 17, Svågertorp area J. From Hadevik 2009, fig. 4d.

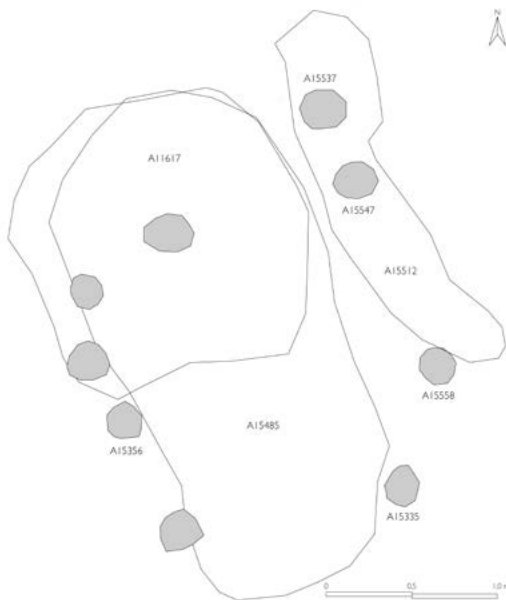


Fig. 5. Hut A10, Vintrie Park area C2.

sometimes with a few postholes – that are discussed as remains of possible huts, but which are source-critically difficult to deal with. They yield few or no finds and are difficult to interpret as regards details of construction (see Hadevik 2009 for a general discussion of huts from the Malmö area). In Vintrie Park C2 better-preserved remains of a hut were investigated (Fig. 5). These consisted of a floor layer with surrounding postholes, and with an opening towards the south. The floor area was roughly 4–5 m<sup>2</sup>. In the eastern part of the floor undecorated pottery was found in a small concentration. Flint was scarce and cannot be connected to specific activities. The hut is dated to the Early Neolithic I through the pottery and through its stratigraphic relation with a long dolmen (long dolmen 1 in Figs. 6 and 7). It was found underneath the stone brim of the long dolmen. One more feature close by was interpreted as a possible hut. While two-aisled house remains are generally considered to have been residences of households, huts are more difficult to interpret as regards social and economic function. Variation in size indicates varied use of these structures when we look at examples from the region of southwest Scania as a whole. Examples of huts large enough to have been occupied by households exist. There are also examples of small huts occupied by only one or a few people, or used for storage (Artursson *et al.* 2003; Brink *et al.* 2014; Andersson & Artursson in press). Due to preservation conditions the possible huts of the Vintrie-Svågertorp area are generally difficult to assess regarding size.

Pits are the most common feature of the Funnel Beaker Culture in the area and they cannot all be described in detail here (Fig. 3). Characteristically they are partly filled with flint, pottery and/or in some cases animal bones. The pits from Vintrie Park C2 and C5 can serve as general examples (Fig. 6). They may very well have been dug in order to deposit



Fig. 6. Vintrie Park C2 and C5. Funnel Beaker Culture remains are filled (black). The huts were found under the eastern part of long dolmen 1.



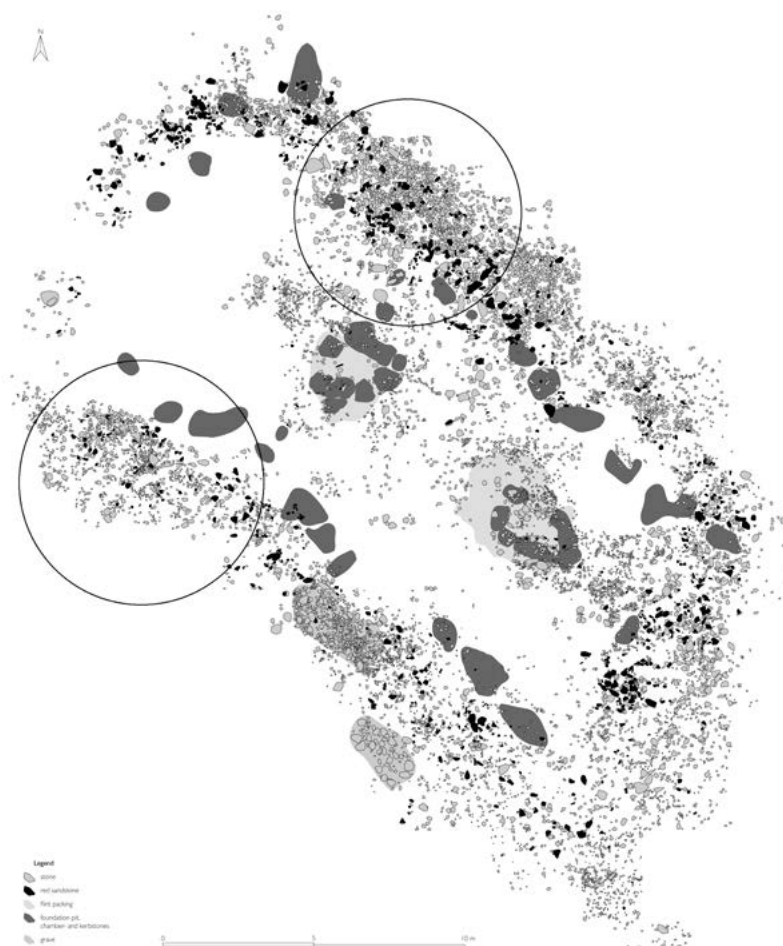


Fig. 7. Long dolmen 1, Vintrie Park. Circles indicate main areas of deposition (pottery).

selected material. In this case, as in many others, there is no other apparent function for these pits. The finds were generally deposited together with soil and without apparent order, but there are also cases where material was carefully arranged in the pits before they were filled with soil (mixed with finds).

A total of three large pits – one in Svågertorp area L and two in area B–C – have been interpreted as wells. They are dated to the Early Neolithic I, in one case in area B–C to an early part of the period. The well in area L is dated through the finds consisting of flint and pottery. Among the flakes there are several

which are diagnostic for the production of square-sectioned tools, and among the pottery remains there are shards representing several vessels as well as clay disc fragments and a large piece of a collared flask. The two wells in area B–C contained few finds and were dated through  $^{14}\text{C}$  analyses of charcoal from alder and hazelnut shell.

Several layers of different character have been partially excavated. They are all difficult to interpret in terms of how they were formed. Excavation reports tend to view them as either remains from throwing waste into a (former) wetland or as traces of settlement in general

if they are found on what is interpreted as having been dry land during the Neolithic. Interpretations rest on rather summary excavation. Thoroughly investigating layers is time-consuming, which means that often only a few square metres have been excavated in order to retrieve datable artefacts. Examples from southwest Scania have however shown that such layers may in fact be the remains of houses or huts with sunken floors. Thorough excavation is needed in order to interpret them as building remains and to document details of how they were constructed and organized internally (Hadevik 2010; Brink *et al.* 2014; Andersson & Artursson in press). This does of course not mean that all layers partially investigated in the Vintrie-Svågertorp area were house-remains, only that some perhaps well-preserved remains may have been overlooked. A possible example is a layer at Svågertorp area S. The layer measured 11 × 8 m, and 19 sq m of the 88 sq m was excavated. The size of the layer could very well be in accordance with the size of a house (for example house 17 described above). Since these houses often only had a few roof-supporting posts and often badly preserved remains of wall-posts, the chances of not finding them or not understanding one or two postholes found in single test pits (of one sq m) are obvious. If they are the remains of a house, thorough excavation would potentially give us more information about how the interior of a house was used than for example in the case of house 17 in fig. 4 where only postholes were preserved and where finds were scarce.

Animal bones and seeds indicating farming are scarce from the area. In some cases soil samples have been taken but they have not been processed and/or analysed due to priorities made within single excavations (soil samples not processed are only saved until the excavation report is finished). Existing evidence nevertheless consists of

small amounts of bones from cattle, sheep/goat and pig. Cattle bones have been found in both Early Neolithic I and Early Neolithic II–early Middle Neolithic II features while sheep/goat and pig bones have been found in features from the Early Neolithic II–early Middle Neolithic II. Identified seeds consist of charred grains from naked barley, bread wheat, emmer/spelt wheat and millet. Hazelnut shells are also represented in the archaeobotanical material. Grains of barley and emmer/spelt wheat have been <sup>14</sup>C-dated to the later part of Early Neolithic I and the later part of Early Neolithic I–Early Neolithic II respectively.

Excavated burials are all located at Vintrie Park C2 and C5 (Figs. 3, 6 and 7). Indications on historical maps of a ploughed-out long dolmen exist in the northern part of the area but have not been corroborated despite investigations (Fig. 3). At Vintrie Park C2 and C5 remains of two long barrows and two long dolmens were excavated. The long barrows were placed on the top of the small hillock dominating area C5. They consisted of stone-filled pits where posts marked the eastern façades of the mounds. There were no traces of the actual mounds left, thus the interpretation as long barrows rests on the façades alone (see Rudebeck 2002 for a discussion of long barrows). However, to the west of the façade of long barrow 1 two features interpreted as possible burials were documented. Both <sup>14</sup>C dates and the two possible graves indicate different phases of this long barrow. Two <sup>14</sup>C datings on charcoal from oak retrieved from the façade have been made, dating it to early Early Neolithic I and late Early Neolithic I–Early Neolithic II respectively (the trial excavation report does not mention what part of the oaks were dated, thus there is a risk of old-wood effect, Aspeborg 2009, 19). Long barrow 2 lacks evidence of burials and only one <sup>14</sup>C dating was made on hazelnut shell, placing it in a late part of the Early Neolithic

I. Pottery dated to the Early Neolithic II–early Middle Neolithic indicates possible phases and/or later activities in this case too.

The long dolmens were placed on the western and southern slope of the small hillock in area C5, continuing into area C2. Long dolmen 2 was badly preserved, consisting of shallow trenches where kerbstones once stood, and a packing of stone and flint interpreted as the chamber floor. Long dolmen 2 was slightly trapezoid, measuring approx. 11–11.5 × 5–5.5 metres. No finds can be securely connected to burials or burial rituals. A flint scraper was found in the stone and flint packing of the chamber floor.

Long dolmen 1 was located on a ledge on the southern slope of the hillock. The ledge was partly formed when the monument was built. The structure measured roughly 29 × 15 metres. The remains consisted of a stone brim, pits where kerbstones have stood and two chamber areas with pits where chamber stones have stood (Fig. 7). In the stone brim several small slabs of red sandstone were found, possibly used as dry-walling between the larger blocks. Both chambers had openings; the eastern chamber towards the north/northeast and the western chamber towards the west/southwest. No finds could be connected to burials in the chambers. A few pits left by kerbstones on either side of the western chamber have been interpreted as marking the placement of stones belonging to an initial phase of the monument (Fig. 7) extended when the western chamber was built. Barley retrieved from a hearth underneath the stone brim was <sup>14</sup>C-dated to a late part of Early Neolithic I. The hearth belonged to an older phase of settlement together with the huts mentioned earlier (Fig. 5). A large part of the find material from the area of the long dolmen probably belongs to this earlier phase of occupation. There were, however, two areas where above all pottery was deposited (Fig. 7). These areas of deposition generally fit with

areas outside the direction of the openings of the chambers. Pottery from the southern concentration is dated from Early Neolithic I–early Middle Neolithic II. The northern concentration has pottery mostly dated to the early Middle Neolithic I–II (Bronssohn 2013). As a whole this indicates that the long dolmen was built and extended in the very latest part of Early Neolithic I at the earliest and then activities continued into the early Middle Neolithic I–II (the earliest datings of dolmens based on <sup>14</sup>C are continuously discussed and often placed at *c.* 3500 cal. BC – for example Sjögren 2011 – or in some cases slightly earlier at *c.* 3650/3600 cal. BC – Mischka 2014).

## Interpreting the Funnel Beaker Culture landscape of Vintrie-Svågertorp

Through examples from the area in fig. 3, different and varied activities and relations within the local Funnel Beaker landscape will be highlighted. The Vintrie-Svågertorp area was settled in an early part of the Early Neolithic I, possibly during the first two hundred years of the fourth millennium BC. This is indicated through <sup>14</sup>C datings from a long barrow at Vintrie Park C5 and wells from Svågertorp area B–C. It is not until *c.* 3700 BC that evidence becomes more robust with more <sup>14</sup>C datings and the evidence of a house (Fig. 4). General continuity is then seen throughout the fourth millennium BC although material culture and <sup>14</sup>C datings do not reveal details regarding possible fluctuations in landscape use.

Direct evidence of agriculture (and of hunting and gathering) in the area is sparse, as we have seen, and conclusions cannot be drawn regarding the importance and organization of this. In this respect we do not know for certain that the people of the Vintrie-

Svågertorp area were farmers living on farms according to Welinder's definition, although the scanty evidence points in that direction. As pointed out by Julian Thomas, even small amounts of cereal grain in the archaeological material indicate that cereal was present in "appreciable quantities" since their presence is most often due to accidents (Thomas 2013, 393). The possible increase in the number of sites (possibly farms/households) from Early Neolithic II in the area may nevertheless be linked to an intensified human impact on the landscape and a shift in agricultural techniques – from horticulture in Early Neolithic I to agriculture in Early Neolithic II – as suggested by Müller *et al.* (2013, 64; 2014, 179). More people within an area may have brought this change, possibly through the introduction of the ard (e.g. Andersen 2013; see also Furholt 2010 where the breakthrough of a Neolithic identity is set at c. 3500 BC and Sørensen 2014, 245, who sees a fully established agrarian society in Scania from early in the Early Neolithic). Over time an increase in the number of farms may also have altered the landscape so that it gradually became more open, at least until the Middle Neolithic when evidence from the Hindby area (Fig. 2) indicates a decrease in clearings used for cultivation and grazing in the forest (Berggren 2014, 230). Details of this are unknown for the Vintrie-Svågertorp area.

House 17 from the Early Neolithic I can be interpreted as the remains of a farm inhabited by a household. Apart from house 17 we do not have clear evidence of single households in the form of house remains from other sites within the area of fig. 3 although, as mentioned earlier, remains of another house were excavated just east of this area. Pits have been investigated on a few sites but these may very well represent single events of digging pits and depositing material rather than separate farms. A well is a feature indicating more than temporary

activities. House 17 and the well at Svågertorp area L can be seen as part of the same farm. The wells at Svågertorp area B–C may also represent a farm. The early datings from these wells suggests an earlier phase; perhaps a single farm moved a short distance to area J/L although contemporaneity between two neighbouring farms cannot be excluded. The example offers a way of looking at settlement as a larger area rather than a single site. It is an area of different activities, performed by the household, certain individuals of the household and in some cases probably with participants from other households from outside the area of fig. 3. Continuing the example of house 17 and the well in area J and L in the Early Neolithic I (Fig. 3), the size of the farm is several tens of thousands of square metres if we only draw a circle with the house and the well just within the outer perimeter of the circle. This is of course not a valid size estimate; it only illustrates that we are possibly dealing with very large areas that may be interpreted as part of one farm/settlement. The many pits with deposited material are, as mentioned, difficult to interpret regarding settlement connection. Pit sites are discussed within archaeology as the result of a range of activities, representing different functional, temporal and social events (e.g. Anderson-Whymark & Thomas 2012; Smyth 2014). Examples from the Malmö area (Fig. 2) clearly indicate that pit deposition occurred in different contexts, spanning from large sites such as Almhov, interpreted as a large burial and assembly place representing several events over time (Rudebeck 2010), to single or limited events at the level of single settlements or households (e.g. Berggren & Brink 2012; Brink *et al.* 2014).

There were pits close to house 17 although these are generally only connected to the Funnel Beaker Culture and not given more exact dating. Thus we do not know whether they all belong to Early Neolithic I. This is

also the case regarding huts, both at site J and on the other sites (Fig. 3). The exception is the huts at Vintrie Park C2. These are dated to Early Neolithic I and may be contemporary with house 17. These huts are connected to activities during a period when the long barrows were built (in phases). Their moderate sizes indicate that they were not inhabited by entire households. A common interpretation of huts is of short-term occupation, often as the result of hunting, for example. This is of course also possible in the case of the huts here, but it is also possible to draw them into the sphere of activities connected to the farm of area J/L and the activities by the long barrows as part of the settlement. This means stretching or breaking a clear boundary between settlement and burial site (cf. Smyth 2014, 137). In investigations of megaliths in the Sarup area in Denmark house remains have been found at spots where the megaliths were later built. These houses are suggested to have had special purposes (Andersen 2010, 11). Perhaps the huts in question were occupied during the construction of the long barrows. These periods of construction, connected to burials, may have required that some participants (from different groups) building the monuments had to live apart from non-participating members on the nearby farm. Finds from the area around the huts (found when excavating the remains of the mound of the long dolmen) indicate rather intense activities, i.e. something more than short stays during, for example, hunting expeditions. The settlement area as discussed here was thus an area of different social as well as temporal zones. People brought water from the well every day but walking up the small hillock of the long barrows may have been a more infrequent event.

During the Early Neolithic I the long barrows thus seem to have been clearly connected to a single farm, located close by the monuments (Fig. 3). The monuments were

made by a leading family living on the nearby farm, and likely also connected to a larger kin group consisting of several farms located also outside the area of fig. 3. Two long barrows as well as indications of phases in them indicate more than one generation of a leading family with both status and resources to build these monuments (cf. Nordquist 2001, 138 ff.; Andersson 2004, 131 ff.). The long barrows may in this respect have commemorated the foundation of a social group (the leading family) in the area, a stable material referent that conveyed collective identity and property holding over the generations, an idea put forward by Julian Thomas for the long barrows of Britain and southern Scandinavia (2013, 329 ff., 337). The social situation seems to have changed with the Early Neolithic II–early Middle Neolithic II.

The problem of interpreting chronological relations between sites becomes even more evident when we reach Early Neolithic II. The Early Neolithic II–early Middle Neolithic II material has not revealed post-built houses, although layers in the area may have held evidence of such structures. Conclusions drawn from earlier research suggest an increase in the number of sites in this area (Rostoványi 2007, 124 ff.) as is the case in other parts of southern Scania (Larsson 1992, 82 ff.; Andersson 2004, 150 ff.). Looking at fig. 3, it is not self-evident that there is an increase in sites from Early Neolithic II. However, there is a clear tendency for layers, possibly indicating more durable activities than single pits, to be dated to this period and not to the Early Neolithic I. If layers only dated to the Neolithic (Fig. 3) also belong to the Early Neolithic II–early Middle Neolithic II there would be a clear increase in more durable areas of activity (on the other hand, these layers are located close to pits/wells from the Early Neolithic I). As for Early Neolithic I, we do not know whether the remains are the result of farm(s) moving from one location

to another or of several contemporary neighbouring farms. It may of course be a result of a combination of both. Evidence of continuity throughout the fourth millennium is also supported by the activities at the burial site at Vintrie Park C2/C5.

In the Early Neolithic II–early Middle Neolithic II two long dolmens were built and used, long barrow 2 was modified in some way, and pits close by the monuments reveal continued activity (Figs. 3, 6 and 7). Additional megaliths may have been built in the northern part of the area, but this has not been verified archaeologically (Fig. 3). In Early Neolithic I erecting the long barrows was primarily connected to the farm or household in area J/L. In the Early Neolithic II–early Middle Neolithic II it is more difficult to understand the burial site as more clearly associated with a specific farm or household. In this respect it may have been the main burial site of all farms (although perhaps not all individuals) in the area and possibly beyond.

Material evidence of activities in or close to the monuments indicates intensified use of the burial site. Long dolmen 1 was erected and then extended when a chamber was added. Long dolmen 2 was built at some point close in time. Depositions by the kerbstones of long dolmen 1 suggest continuous activities in the early Middle Neolithic I–II. There were no traces of burials in the chambers but the openings suggest that access may have been possible after the initial burial, although not as easily as in the case of passage graves (cf. Schülke 2014, p.119). Passage graves have so far not been found in the Malmö area (Hadevik 2009); instead a few long dolmens such as long dolmen 1 at Vintrie and the long dolmen at Hindby (Burenhult 1973) (Fig. 2) seem to have drawn activities, most notably depositions outside the kerbstones, for a long time. In this respect they may reflect the role of passage graves in areas where this type of monument was built (for example Schülke

2015, 196). Activities at the burial sites were important in a local society where social relations may have grown more complex during the course of the Early Neolithic and into the early Middle Neolithic (Nordquist 2001, 140 ff.; Andersson 2004, 150 ff.). Choosing only one of the long dolmens for rituals and possibly burials (although no direct evidence of the latter exists) in the Middle Neolithic I–II indicates that a leading family chose long dolmen 1 as their scene of local power, creating bonds to real as well as mythical ancestors through rituals at the chosen monument.

The pits at the burial site indicate time depth in the activities performed at the monuments. The three neatly aligned pits south of long dolmen 2 suggest contemporaneity while the other pits suggest solitary events (in the case of A682 this is more uncertain as it was located close to the edge of the trench, thus we do not know whether this is the only pit in this limited area). The pits contained ordinary objects – bone, pieces of pots and flint, in some cases used. The objects may have been brought from a nearby farm, or perhaps farms, where they may have been used for a long time before being part of events at the burial site (cf. Jorge 2014, 449). The pits could represent activities connected to commemoration rituals, to building activities and actual burials on the site. The pits also put the finger on what is to be understood as part of a settlement. They contained deposited material that could easily be interpreted as representing a settlement of its own if the trench had been limited to the area of the pits, not revealing the burial monuments.

The above interpretations underline the potentially complex use of sites within the realm of a settled area of one or several farms. Spatially expanding further from, for example, house 17 in Early Neolithic I, beyond the well at area L and the huts at Vintrie Park C2, is most certainly necessary in order to cover

economically and socially important activities of this specific household. People were part of events at special sites, for example the large burial and assembly place at Almhov or the flint mines in Ängdala (cf. Björhem & Magnusson Staaf 2006, 123 f.; Rudebeck 2010, 221; Rudebeck & Macheridis 2015) (Fig. 2). Other gatherings may of course have involved building megaliths and participating in burials on neighbouring farms, possibly at sites such as Hindby where another long dolmen has been investigated (Burenhult 1973). Building material for the megaliths may have required contacts and resources outside the immediate vicinity. As shown in a study of western Scanian megaliths, sandstone (some of it more or less red-colored) used for packing spaces between large blocks was brought from locations several kilometres away. These locations were used by more than one group of people in western Scania (Hårdh & Bergström 1988; see also Hydén 2015). Small slabs of red sandstone were part of the stone brim in long dolmen 1 (Fig. 7). In this case we do not know where the material comes from (a larger slab of red sandstone was found on a nearby site) (Brink & Hammarstrand Dehman 2013, 148). Different sites of importance for the local community meant that individuals were away from the farms for certain periods. These are only a few examples of how people may have moved. As Anna Lagergren has shown, travelling by foot could bring one a good distance in a few hours' walk through the landscape of Neolithic western Scania (Lagergren 2012, 76 ff.). Even wider contacts were of course part of life for people in the Vintrie-Svägertorp area in the fourth millennium BC.

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