

Excavations at Stanton Harcourt, Oxon., 1940, II

By D. B. HARDEN and R. C. TREWEEKS

IN the last volume of *Oxoniensia*¹ W. F. Grimes described certain work undertaken at Stanton Harcourt in the summer of 1940 'in connexion with activities involving the mutilation, if not the actual destruction of many of the "air-photography sites" for which Stanton Harcourt has become famous'. Mr. Grimes's account was written (though not published) before the end of the war, and it was not then possible to reveal that this 'activity' was the building of a landing-ground and dispersal points for aircraft.

The work involved the construction of a triangle of concrete runways with approach roads and dispersal areas for aircraft, the consequent removal of all standing impediments in the vicinity, and the careful levelling of the ground both inside and outside the runways. The runways covered the SE. portion of the Quoit Circle (Site 1) including the site of Quoit A, and also Sites 3 and 5.² Site 4 (Stanton Harcourt Barrow) was not in the line of a runway, but had to be levelled down to the mean level of the landing-ground which was some few inches below the top of the gravel subsoil at this point. Sites 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were on or near the dispersal areas or approach roads, and are now, therefore, either wholly or partially covered by concrete or other works, and the same is true of many of the other crop-mark sites on the plan, particularly those in the SW. portion of the area. Besides, many of the marks on the outskirts of the area were in the line of gravel-pits excavated to provide material for the concrete mixers. Thus practically the whole of the very thickly-marked field (Linch Hill) to the SE., much of which had been taken away by gravel-digging during the years before the war,³ has now gone, as well as the string of circles in the trapezoidal field on the northern edge of the area. In addition to the covering or destruction of these crop-mark sites, the three Quoits themselves had to be taken down and buried. Quoit A was interred just off the line of the runway, some 60 ft. W. of its hole and Quoits B and C were also buried near their former positions.

As pointed out by W. F. Grimes, the conditions under which the work

¹ *Oxoniensia*, VIII/IX, 19 ff.

² All the sites are marked on the general plan, *op. cit.*, fig. 8, here repeated as FIG. 5.

³ See *Oxoniensia*, I, 201; *ibid.*, II, 202; and *V.C.H. Oxon.*, I, 242, 252, 266 and other references *ad loc.*

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was done in 1940 did not permit of a systematic plan of campaign. Indeed, the time and labour available for the archaeological work—as may be readily understood from the date at which the work had to be done—was only sufficient for the examination of a few of the more important sites, and even they could not be dealt with as fully as might have been wished. The previous report described the work on the three Quoits and on Sites 1, 2, and 6-9. The present report covers such meagre probing as was possible on the two ring-ditches, Sites 3 and 5, and the work on Stanton Harcourt Barrow, Site 4.⁴

THE RING-DITCHES: SITES 3 AND 5 (FIG. 5)

These two sites, both ring-ditches, were clearly shown on the air-photographs (PL. III, A, B) as simple rings without any internal markings. Each of them was on the line of a runway, and it was unfortunately not possible to excavate either properly before the Contractors claimed it for concreting. A little test digging was, however, accomplished on each of them.

Site 3. About three-quarters of this ring-ditch was bared to a little above gravel level by the Contractors. They did not, however, require to clear the gravel surface completely, so as to reveal pits or pockets in the gravel and such work as we could accomplish was confined to one complete and one partial section of the ditch, the excavation of two pits in the gravel within the ring, and careful search in the centre which revealed nothing of archaeological significance; there was no trace of a central pit.

By a fortunate chance the complete section of the ditch (FIG. 6, *b*) revealed a crouched skeleton at the bottom in an oval pit (PL. IV, C, D) with vertical walls. The body, which was in very good condition, lay on its right side, the head on its right cheek, arms bent with hands in front of face, legs fully flexed; the skull was broken but complete and most of the ribs and finger and toe bones were well preserved. There were no grave goods. The burial-pit

⁴ Preliminary notes on these sites were published in *Oxoniensia*, v, 162, and the finds in the Barrow were briefly recorded in *Ashmolean Museum Report*, 1940, p. 8, pl. II (showing the pygmy-cup and dagger—the latter from a photograph taken before the displaced portion of the haft end (p. 28) had been joined on).

Thanks are due to the Contractors, Messrs. Wimpey & Co., Ltd., and to members of the Air Ministry and Office of Works staffs for their ready cooperation; to members of the O.U. Archaeological Society who gave valuable voluntary assistance during the excavation; to Mr. L. Monroe and Mrs. Piggott, each of whom spent several days on the site; and to Miss B. M. Blackwood, Dr. L. Chalk and Dr. K. P. Oakley for reporting, respectively, on the skeletal remains, the wood and charcoal, and the fossil bead. Mr. R. J. C. Atkinson not only helped during the excavation, but has assisted materially in the preparation of this report with criticism and advice. In the interpretation of the finds in the Barrow, particularly the central burial, Mr. E. T. Leeds's knowledge and judgment have proved invaluable. Much of the material for this report was prepared at intervals during the war years by R.C.T.; the whole has been edited and put into final shape by D.B.H.

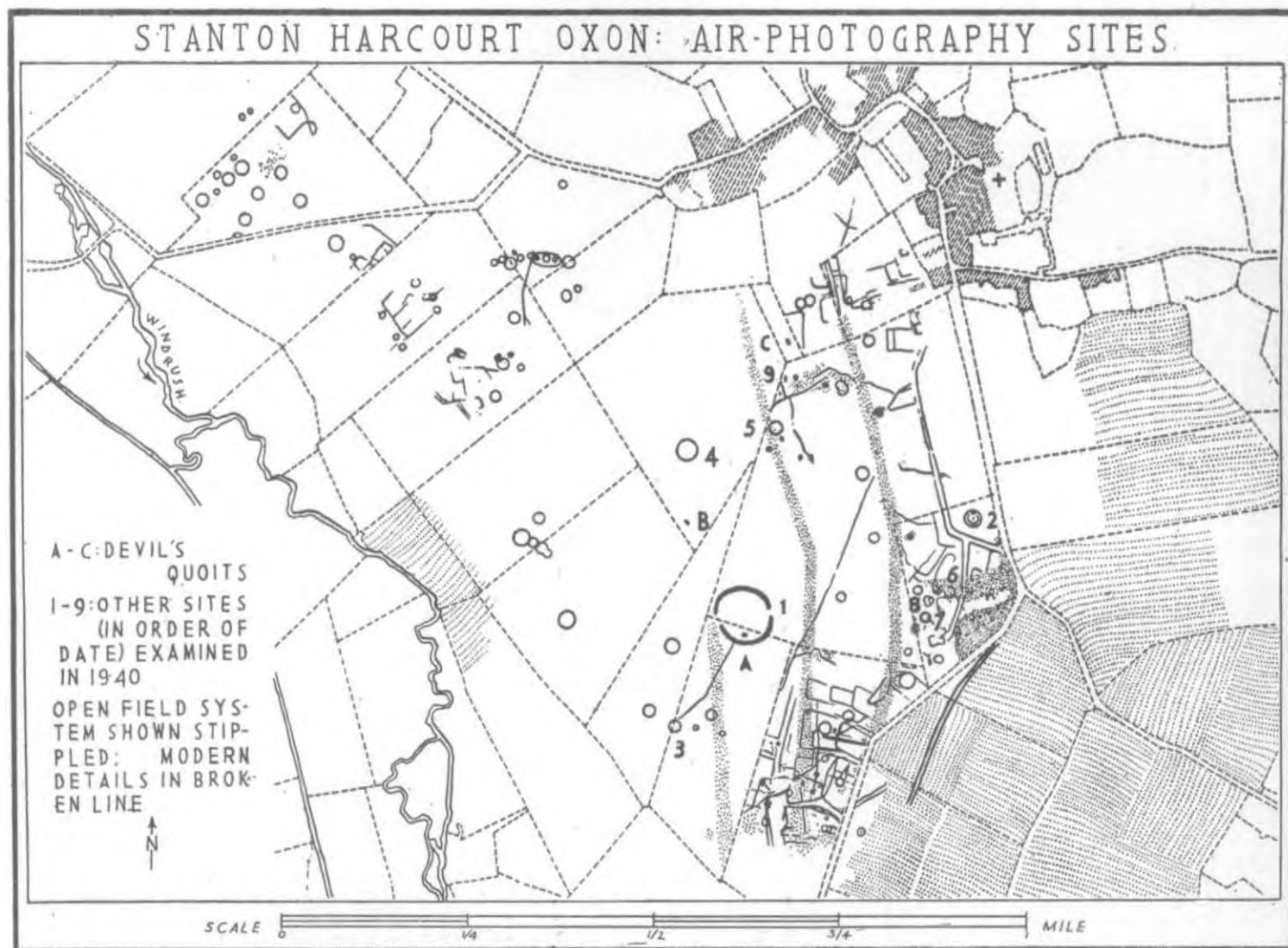


FIG. 5
PLAN OF THE AREA SW. OF STANTON HARCOURT, BASED ON CROP-MARKS SEEN FROM THE AIR
Sites 3, 4 and 5 are described in the present report.

Based on the 6 in. O.S. map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

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was 2 ft. deep below the bottom of the ditch proper, and 4 ft. long by 2½ ft. wide. The pit must have been cut after the ditch was finished, but before any silting had taken place, since the lowest few inches of the side of the ditch were covered, not with gravelly slide, but with the black filling of the burial-pit. Above this black filling was a layer of gravelly slide some 6 ins. thick, above which the filling of the ditch to gravel level was composed of brown earth, containing some Early Iron Age potsherds and a Romano-British olla rim; and above that was about 1½ ft. of topsoil.

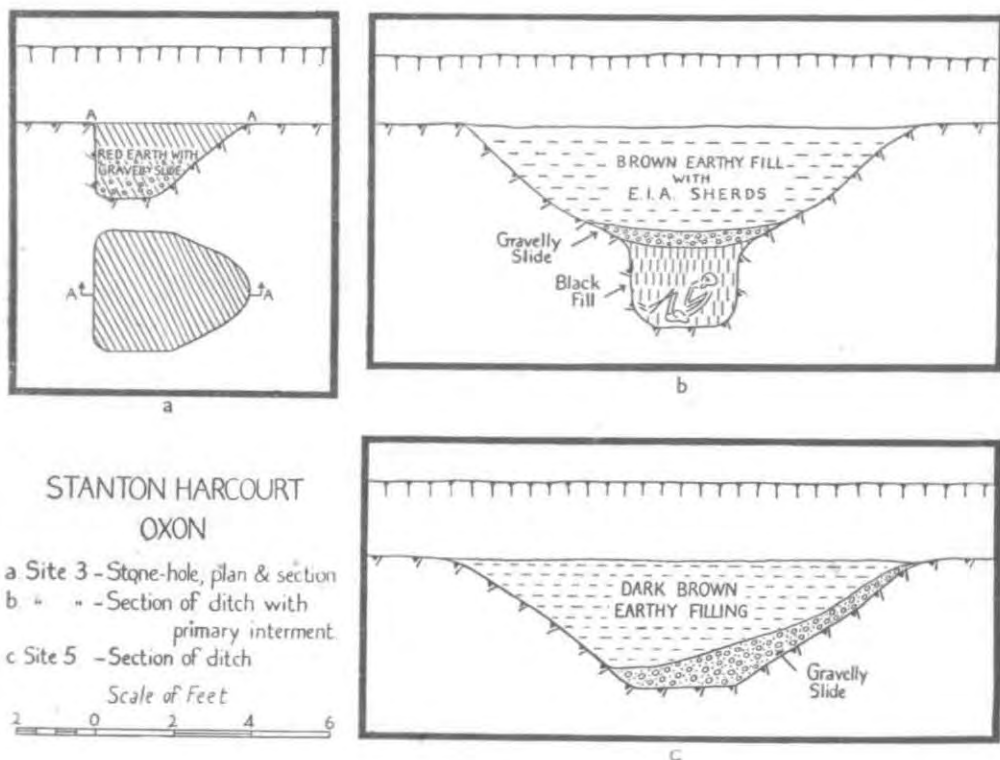
The skeleton was that of a young woman in her early twenties, and the general appearance of the burial and its pit suggested that it—and consequently the ring-ditch—belonged to the Early Bronze Age. The burial resembled those found in the double ring-ditch at Linch Hill Corner (Site 2, *Oxoniensia*, VIII/IX, 34 ff.), one of which had a beaker and other Early Bronze Age objects with it. The Early Iron Age pottery was mainly amorphous, but its general aspect suggests that it belongs to a very late A 2 phase, perhaps 1st century A.D. The olla rim was early rather than late Romano-British, and need not be much later in date.

One of the two pits found within the ring was clearly natural, judging both from its irregular form and its filling of compact brown earth; it was probably similar in nature to those found within the Quoit Circle (Site 1) and described in the previous report (*ibid.*, 30 f., and 60 f.). The other (FIG. 6, *a*), which lay 9 ft. inside the inner lip of the ditch on the E. side of the circle, was probably a socket for a small monolith; its shape was exactly like that of the stone-holes of the Quoit Circle (*ibid.*, fig. 10A, fig. 13) with three sides vertical and one sloping to form a ramp, but in this case the ramp was on the inside of the hole, facing the centre of the ring and not on the outside, as were all those of the Quoit Circle. The depth of the hole was 2 ft. below gravel surface (4 ft. below present surface) and its dimensions at gravel level were 4 ft. (E.-W.) by 3 ft. (N.-S.), so that it could not have held a stone whose horizontal dimensions were more than about 2 ft. by 3 ft.—a much smaller stone than those of the Quoit Circle. There were no packing stones in the hole; perhaps the monolith was not big enough to require them.

This ring-ditch may, therefore, have been another sacred circle. It was clearly of some archaeological importance and it is a pity that further work on it was not possible.

Site 5. Nearly two-thirds of this ring was bared to gravel level by the Contractors, and we were thus enabled to search that much of its area for pockets in the gravel: but none was revealed, either in the centre or elsewhere, and it would seem to have been one more example of the featureless ring-ditches that occur on many gravel sites in the Oxford district, and whose purpose

is as yet unexplained.⁵ The ditch (FIG. 6, c), of which two complete sections, one on the E. and one on the W. were taken, was 12 ft. wide at gravel level and its inner diameter was 102 ft. It had a flat bottom, and its filling was in two layers; at the bottom, and sloping up the outer side, was a gravelly slide and above that was a filling of dark earth. The position of the slide suggests that there was an exterior bank formed of the material excavated from the



STANTON HARCOURT
OXON

- a Site 3 - Stone-hole, plan & section
b " " - Section of ditch with
primary interment
c Site 5 - Section of ditch

Scale of Feet



FIG. 6

TWO RING-DITCHES (SITES 3 AND 5) : SECTIONS (pp. 17ff.)

a, b, centre of ring-ditch to right; c, centre of ring-ditch to left.

ditch. This ring was overlaid by a long ridge extending across it diagonally (visible in the air-photograph, PL. III, A) which gave it in parts an excessive covering, for this portion of the site, of 2-2½ ft. of top soil.

⁵ One other example was found during the present excavations (Site 7, *Oxoniensis*, VIII/IX, 46, fig. 19) and others are known from Port Meadow and elsewhere (*id.*, VII, 34 and other references *ad loc.*).

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STANTON HARCOURT BARROW: SITE 4

The great Stanton Harcourt Barrow formed in 1940 but a slightly perceptible eminence in the centre of Barrow Field (PL. III, B and Site 4 on the plan, FIG. 5). Its levelling, however, is known to have occurred half in the latter part of the 18th century and half in the middle of the 19th. Before that it must have been an imposing monument in the flat fields of the Windrush valley SW. of the village and it is not surprising that several early antiquaries make specific mention of it, not unnaturally connecting it with the Devil's Quoits.⁶ The first part of the levelling is recorded by Gough in his edition (1789) of Camden's *Britannia* (i, 294):

'Half a mile west by south from the church was a barrow, almost half of which to the north was cut down, and the earth carried away about 1777 by order of the warden and fellows of All Souls, perhaps to gratify curiosity, but report says to improve the field.'

No record of this event can be traced in the All Souls archives,⁷ but there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of Gough's statement, which was corroborated by local tradition within living memory, as is indicated by the following extract from *The Car*, no. 72 (7 October, 1903), p. 196, in an article entitled 'By the Way: Jottings from the Open Road':⁸

'Many years ago a barrow existed near these stones. Some time before 1794 the task of removing it was begun by the tenant of the then field. When the job was about half done, a violent storm burst over the village. Alarmed by what they regarded as a proof of divine anger, the superstitious labourers not only ceased work, but positively refused to begin operations again. The farmer himself, too, was not a little apprehensive of sudden death, on account of his temerity. So the other half of the barrow long remained undisturbed. When at last it was removed, no vestiges of burial were seen.'

The levelling of the remaining half, referred to in this quotation, took place c. 1840-50, according to an oral statement made to Mr. Percy Manning in 1902 (16 May) by Mr. Arnatt of Parsonage Farm, who claimed it was done by his (Mr. Arnatt's) grandfather, and showed Mr. Manning a Roman fibula

⁶ The first to mention it is John Aubrey (*Monumenta Britannica*, Bodl. MS. Top. gen. C. 24 f 67) who says: 'Two or three Bowshots from hence (i.e. the two Quoits he mentions) is a great Barrow'; see also Plot, *N. H. Oxfordshire* (1705), pp. 333 f., 350, who takes the Quoits 'to be appendices to that Sepulchral Monument', and Hearne, *Collectanea*, III (O.H.S., XIII, 1888), 403 (16 May, 1711/12), who says it is in 'Stony Field'.

⁷ We are indebted to the Warden and Professor A. H. M. Jones for checking this point for us.

⁸ A reference cited in the Manning MSS. (Ashmolean Museum).

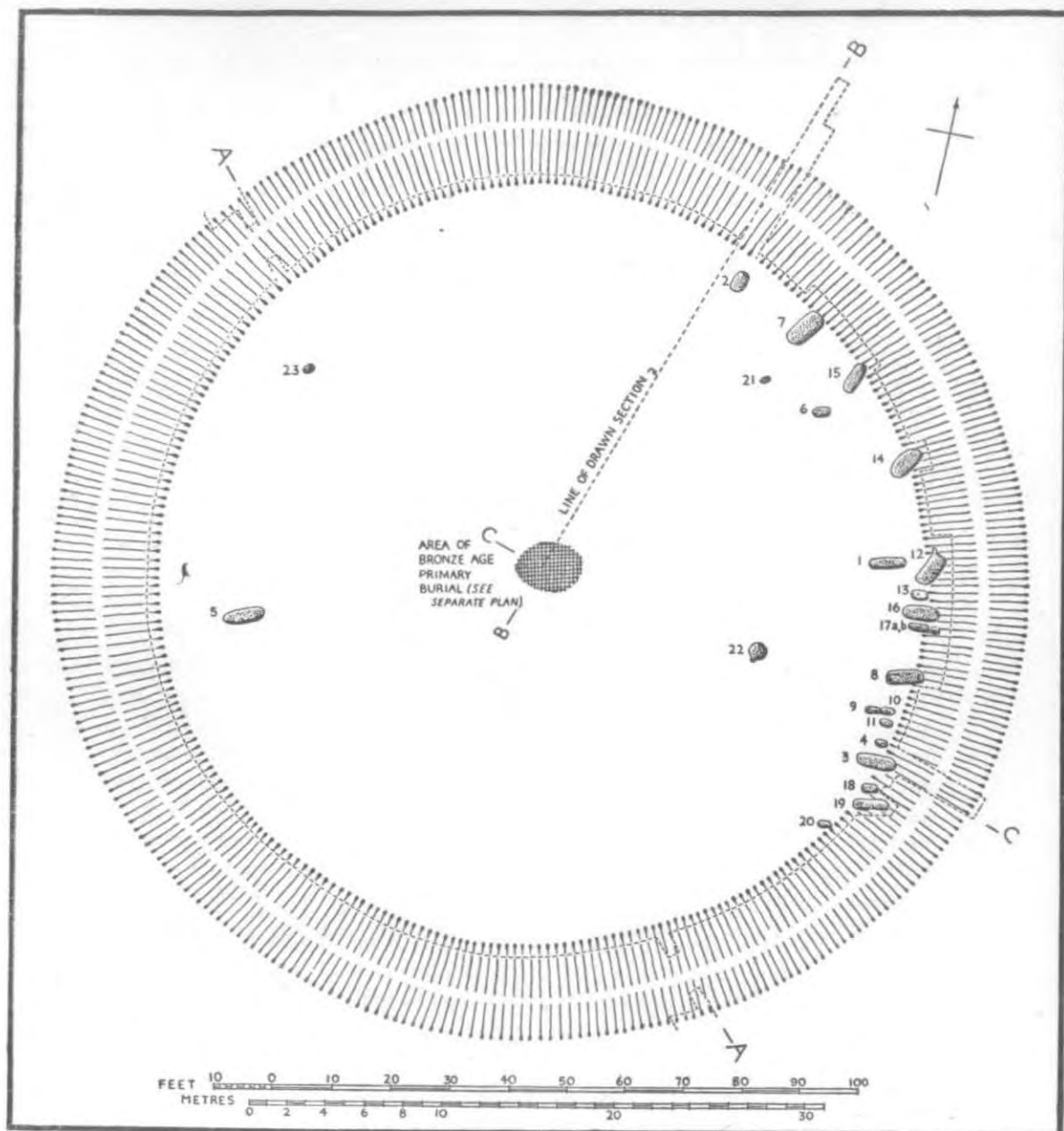


FIG. 7
STANTON HARCOURT BARROW: GENERAL PLAN (pp. 21ff.)

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(FIG. 9) of late 1st or early 2nd century date (Collingwood, *Arch. Rom. Britain*, fig. 60, group E) and some iron arrowheads 'found here', i.e. in the field, not necessarily in the barrow.⁹

A contour plan of the barrow made immediately before excavation showed it as an irregular eminence about 2 ft. high. As this eminence, small though it was, was destined to be levelled by the Contractors (p. 16), excavation was necessary if the barrow and its contents were to be scientifically recorded. The time available was short and paid labour could not be recruited locally, so that complete excavation on modern principles was clearly impossible. However, with the ready assistance of the Contractors, Messrs. Wimpey & Co., Ltd., who provided mechanical scrapers on two occasions to remove topsoil, a tolerably complete record of the barrow was obtained mainly with amateur labour within the space of 2½ weeks, and it is unlikely that any material of primary importance was destroyed by the mechanical clearance. This excavation did in fact prove that when rapid work is essential the *judicious* use of mechanical means at the appropriate time and place can be a help rather than a hindrance to scientific work and is not necessarily to be deprecated.

As all the air-photographs taken by Major Allen which showed the barrow were oblique and did not, therefore, make it possible to plot its exact location, it was decided first of all to dig three trial-holes to locate the ditch on the eastern side and to use a mechanical scraper to cut a trial section segmentally across the western half of the mound (A-A on plan, FIG. 7). This segmental section was taken down to gravel level and the lips of the ditch located, though the ditch itself was not excavated; the section proved barren apart from one pocket in the gravel which was afterwards recognized as one of the infants' graves of Saxon date (no. 23, see p. 39), but as well as showing the location of the ditch it also gave a useful view of the make-up of the mound and an idea of what might be expected in the two radial sections which were next to be dug (B-B and C-C on plan, FIG. 7). By good fortune both of these were placed in the quadrant of the circle which contained the secondary burials; section B-B revealed grave no. 2 and section C-C graves nos. 3 and 4. As grave no. 1 had already been found in one of the trial-holes, it was thus clear that, apart from any Bronze Age primary or secondary burials that might be found, the whole of the barrow circle must be searched for Saxon interments as well.

The ditch filling in both sections, B-B and C-C, was completely cleared and revealed a fairly uniform picture (p. 32), but only one of these sections,

⁹ *Ibid.*, from which the drawing on FIG. 9 is taken; the MS. note gives only a rough sketch of the shape of the arrowheads, which look mediaeval.

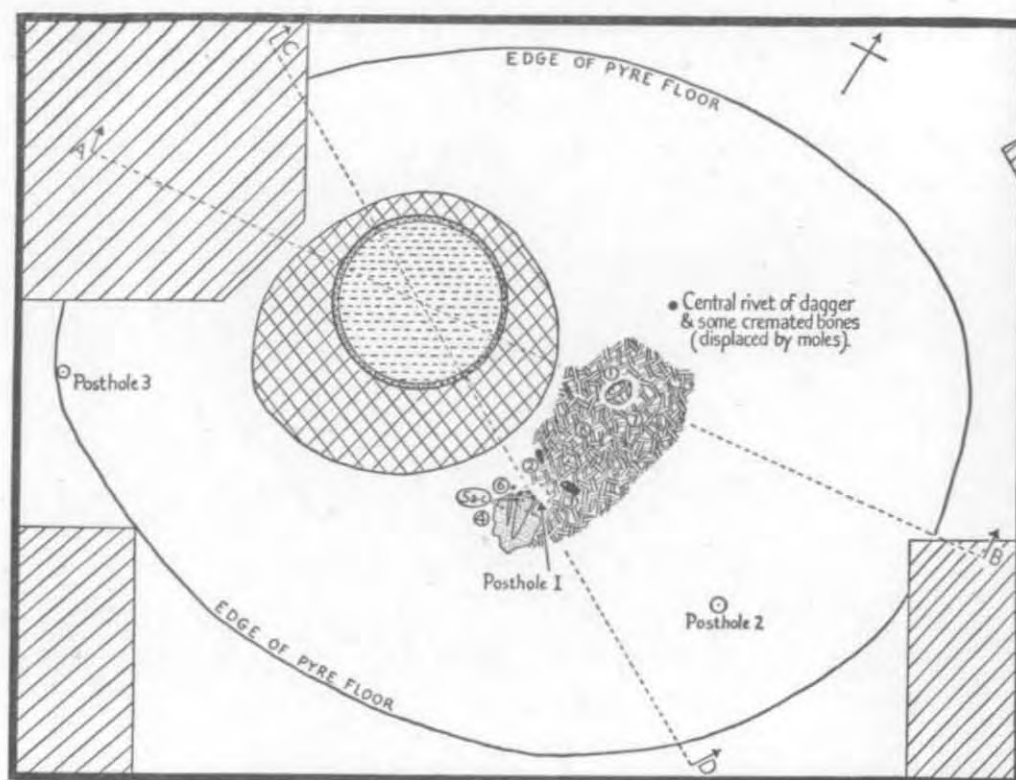
B-B, was carried through as a complete radius to the centre of the barrow, and this is, therefore, the only one plotted in section (FIG. 8).

The way was now clear for a search in the centre for the primary interment. For this purpose a trench 4 ft. wide was cut perpendicularly to a cross trench joining sections B-B and C-C. The primary interment, thus revealed, was completely excavated, an area about 10 ft. square being cleared to natural gravel. It had been hoped that an area 20 ft. square could be cleared here, but the Contractors were now pressing and they could not give us the time to do this, to take any further sections, or to search by manual labour for possible secondary burials in the topsoil. They therefore, at our request, provided a 12 ft. scraper to clear the whole of the barrow within the ditch down to gravel level in order to reveal any further Saxon interments that might exist. The scraper did this work, which would have taken many weeks' digging by ten men, in less than a day, and the result, the disclosure of no less than 23 (or perhaps 24) Saxon graves in all (see plan, FIG. 7, and pp. 33 ff.) was beyond our expectations. Despite careful watch while the scraper was at work, nothing else of archaeological significance came to light in the topsoil or on the gravel surface within the ditch. If Bronze Age secondaries existed, they must have been destroyed when the barrow was levelled. A further few days sufficed for the careful excavation of the Saxon graves and for clearing enough of the inner lip of the ditch throughout its circumference to prove that no more graves existed in the barrow. The site was then handed over to the Contractors.

THE PRIMARY BURIAL (PL. VI, FIG. 8)

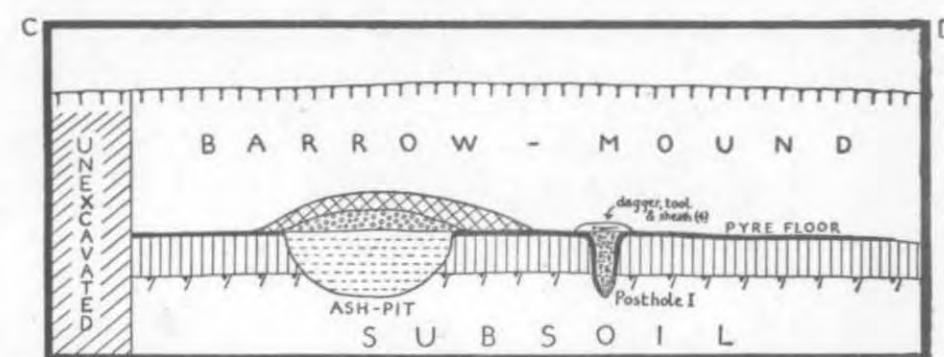
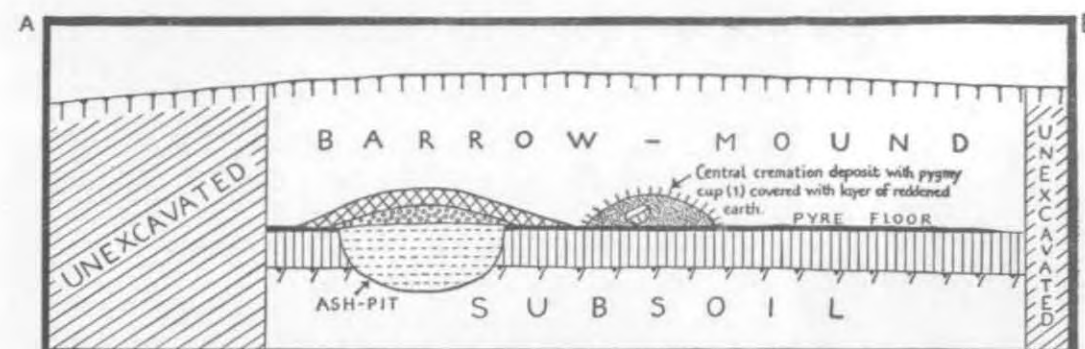
The primary cremation-burial is of great importance in that it revealed features which throw new light on Bronze Age burial customs in Britain. The cremation ceremony took place *in situ* round a central post, after which the bones and ashes were separated, the former being laid on the ground with some associated objects in a central deposit over the post-hole and the ashes in a circular pit near by. Two subsidiary post-holes existed near the edge of the pyre floor. There was no cremation-pit, and the only excavations below gravel-surface were the lower portions of the central post-hole and the ash-pit.

The *pyre floor* (FIG. 8) covered an elliptical area roughly 9 ft. by 11 ft. It consisted of a layer of heavily burnt earth, black above and red-brown below, about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ in. thick, lying 6 ins. above the gravel subsoil and clearly representing the original surface soil before the barrow was constructed. As might be expected, the extent of this floor was not easy to ascertain, since the signs of burning got less towards its edges, but the measurements given are



1. Pygmy-cup
2. Fabricator
3. Whetstone
4. Dagger & sheath
- 5a-c. Beads
6. Fragment of horn
7. Frags. of bone pin?
8. Head of bone pin?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Topsoil | Gravel |
| Old turf line | Subsoil |
| Ditchfill (d) earth with gravel | Cremated bones |
| Ditchfill (d) earth with less gravel | Ash deposit |
| Ditchfill (k) earthy silt | Earth with charcoal |
| Ditchfill (a) gravelly silt | Charcoal, bone frags. etc. (P.H. I) |
| Unexcavated | |



SCALE OF FEET FOR PLAN AND SECTIONS A-B, C-D. 1 0 1 2 3 4

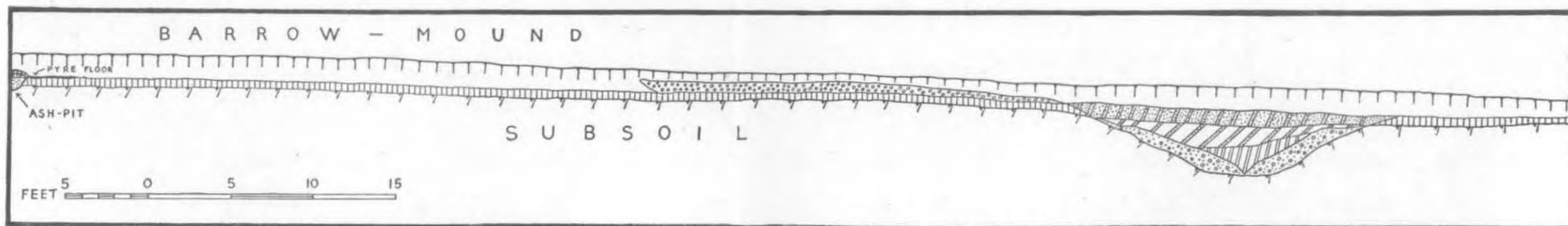


FIG. 8

STANTON HARCOURT BARROW: PLAN (top right) AND SECTIONS (top left) OF THE CENTRAL AREA (pp. 24ff.), AND RADIAL SECTION (bottom) THROUGH THE MOUND AND DITCH (pp. 31ff.)

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probably not far from the truth. The centre of this floor lay a little north of the half-way point between the central post-hole and the ash-pit, but this slight eccentricity probably has no significance; it certainly cannot be taken as evidence against the central post-hole being both the centre point from which the barrow was laid out and the centre of the cremation ceremony. The maximum variation in radii from this point is no more than 2 ft., a small error in a barrow where the mean radius to the inner lip of the ditch is 66 ft.

The *central post-hole* (PL. VI, B), when seen in section (FIG. 8, C-D), was clearly shown to begin at the level of the top of the pyre floor and to have existed at the time of the cremation-ceremony, as its sides were well burnt. It must have held a wooden post, which was burnt with the pyre. The hole was 4 ins. in diameter at the top and tapered to a point 3 ins. below gravel level. Its contents were well-burnt earth and debris, the core yellowish, the outside blackish, with much charcoal. Among the debris were some bits of cremated bone and fragments of bronze from the dagger (p. 26f.) including one rivet, which worked down afterwards from the burial deposit lying immediately above.

The *central deposit*, which was about 3 or 4 ins. thick and covered with a layer of earth reddened in places, lay in a raised heap on the pyre floor and covered an area $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. by $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. (PL. VI, C, FIG. 8). It consisted of the bones of a complete body of an adult male from which the ashes had been carefully sieved for deposition in the ash-pit, and was accompanied by the following objects in the positions specified:

1. Just N. of the centre, nestling in the bones, slightly inclined to one side, mouth upwards—a *pygmy cup* (so-called 'incense cup') (PL. V, A, B, FIG. 9). H. 2 ins.; Diam. mouth 2 ins.; Diam. shoulder $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins.; Diam. base 2 ins.; T. of walls varies from $\frac{1}{2}$ in. on base to $\frac{3}{16}$ in. on shoulder. A.M. 1940.175. Brown ware, fine and not very gritty, burnt to a light buff (or in places grey) tone and to a very hard consistency; on the bottom, inside, one long crack and one curly flake sprung from the floor—effects of heating which must have been caused (p. 40) by contact with the hot cremated bones, as they are not strong enough to have been due to actual burning in the pyre; squat biconical form; ring mouth with straight-edged, bevelled lip; flat shoulder, slightly convex body in which are nine open vertical slits; flat base with very slight and probably unintentional concavity on under side. The whole exterior is decorated with patterns incised before firing; on the lip bevel, vertical panels of crosses and triple chevrons pointing downwards, alternating, except in one place where two of the latter are contiguous; on the shoulder, two bands of horizontal chevrons pointing left and flanked by single lines; on the body, nine panels, seven broad and two narrow, surrounded by single lines, between the slits; of the seven broad panels three contain St. Andrew's crosses with the top and bottom angles filled with hatching in one direction, and four contain three bands of horizontal chevrons pointing left with single

lines between; of the two narrow panels one contains a St. Andrew's cross as before, the other has two vertical lines of chevrons pointing upwards with a single line between; on the base, an equal-armed cross in the centre is surrounded by three concentric lines between which are two bands of chevrons pointing clockwise.

No exact parallel to this cup exists. At least six other examples of pygmy cups with slitted walls are known: (a) Clayton Hill, Sussex, Abercromby, *B.A.P.*, no. 224; (b) Lancing, Sussex, *ibid.*, no. 223; (c) Burlestone Down, Dewlish, Dorset, *ibid.*, no. 225; (d) Normanton, Wilts. (barrow 155), *ibid.*, no. 222 and *Cat. Dev. Mus.*, 1, 127 and fig.; (e) Camboots, near Scarborough, Yorks., *Archaeologia*, xxx, 458; (f) Scalby, Yorks., F. Elgee, *Early Man in N.E. Yorks.*, p. 277. Of these the first is nearest in shape and decoration to the present example.

2. One ft. S. of the pygmy-cup, on top of pile of bones—*fabricator*, flint, (FIG. 9). L. $2\frac{2}{5}$ ins.; W. $\frac{7}{16}$ in.; T. $\frac{1}{2}$ in. A.M. 1940.176. Grey patina, stained brown from contact with burnt earth of pyre; club-headed shape with ridged back made from a long thick flake; secondary flaking on all edges except at butt end; signs of attrition practically all round the worked edge, and well-marked gloss on the middle section of each long side.¹⁰

These fabricators are not uncommon (cp. e.g. *Cat. Dev. Mus.*, 1, 209 from Woodyates) but their use is uncertain. For various suggestions see J. Evans, *Ancient Stone Implements* (1872), pp. 367 ff., and Armstrong in *Proc. Preh. Soc. East Anglia*, vii (1934), 386 (we owe this latter reference to the kindness of Dr. Eliot Curwen).

3. Six ins. E. of no. 2, just under top of pile of bones (perhaps, like no. 4, originally hanging from owner's belt)—*hone* (FIG. 9). L. 3 ins.; W. 1 in.; T. $\frac{1}{2}$ in. A.M. 1940.172. Shale stained brown as no. 2; flat, rectangular, with rounded butt end pierced with a circular hour-glass-shaped hole for suspension.

For the type, to which several parallels exist, cp. Piggott, *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, n.s. iv (1938), 76, fig. 14 (Camerton no. 26) and 86, fig. 17 (Brigmerston, no. 8); and Colt Hoare, *Ancient Wilts.*, 1, 199, pl. xxiv, and *Cat. Devizes Mus.*, 1, no. 120 (Normanton, no. 139), but this example has a shaped loop for suspension.

4. Above the central post-hole, and overlapping the S. half of it—a *dagger* and *sharpening-tool*, both of bronze (or copper) in a *sheath* of leather and wood (probably deposited with the owner's belt from which they hung):

(a) *Dagger*. (PL. V, C, D, FIG. 9.). L. $6\frac{1}{2}$ ins.; W. at butt $2\frac{1}{4}$ ins.; T. at midrib $\frac{1}{2}$ in. A.M. 1940.173. Triangular (faintly ogival) in outline, with broad midrib, elliptical in section, bounded on each side, on each face of the dagger, by three straight grooves, cast and not engraved, parallel to the edge of the blade and meeting in a point $1\frac{1}{4}$ ins. from the tip of the blade; haft end imperfect, but portions of three equidistant rivet-holes, just over $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

¹⁰ Dr. E. C. Curwen, who has kindly examined the implement, writes: 'I think that a badly-fitting wooden haft, with a lot of consequent friction, might produce the gloss in course of time. But I should have expected to see signs of similar gloss on the back-ridge of the implement at about its mid point, and actually I do not find this. Also the amount of attrition underlying the gloss seems to me to indicate some much more vigorous cause than a badly-fitting haft, but I cannot see what cause is likely to have produced such an effect all round the worked edge.'

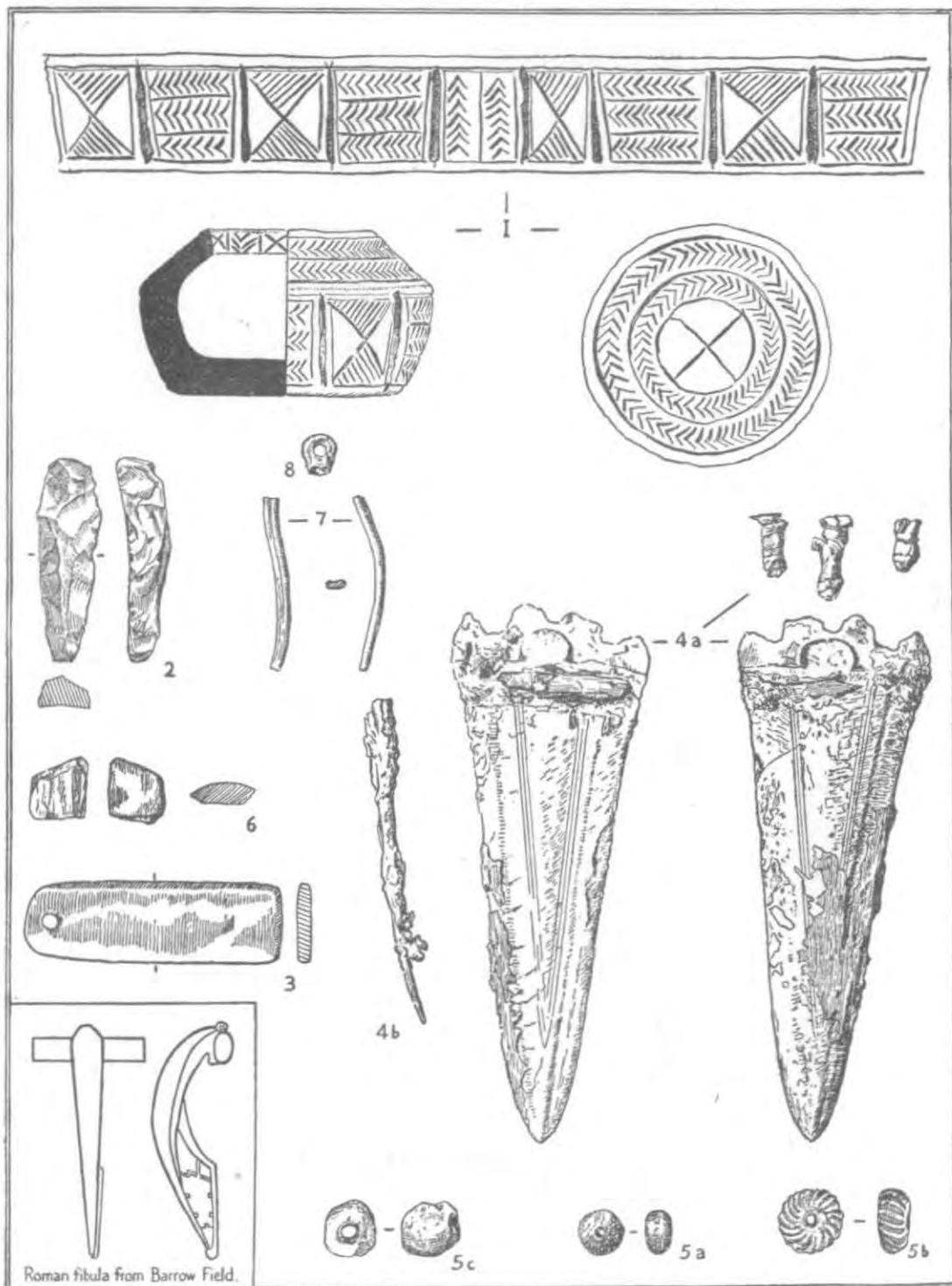


FIG. 9

STANTON HARCOURT BARROW : OBJECTS ACCOMPANYING THE PRIMARY BURIAL (pp. 25ff.)

The Roman fibula (inset) was found many years ago in Barrow Field (p. 21f.).

Nos. 5, 6, Sc. $\frac{1}{2}$; remainder, Sc. $\frac{1}{4}$.

diameter, preserved, as well as the three rivets, the middle one 1 in. long, the others $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and all $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in diameter; below the rivet-holes on each face, well-marked thin ridges of — outline.¹¹ On the dagger blade are many traces of wood, for which see below under (c); the traces of the haft, however, at the haft end resemble horn rather than wood.

The central rivet was found with a few fragments of bone some 3 ft. N. of its proper position on the northern edge of the pile of bones and a few inches below the pyre floor, having presumably been carried there later by moles, whose runs could still be traced; a fragment broken off the haft end was similarly displaced to a point 6 ins. W. of its position; and, as already recorded (p. 25), the right rivet, and some corroded fragments from the blade, had dropped into the filling of the post-hole.

This dagger is typical of the Wessex culture of the Middle Bronze Age, which succeeded the Beaker culture in that area and is described in full by Piggott in *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, n.s. iv (1938), 60-106, where numerous references to similar daggers will be found, e.g. especially fig. 14 (Camerton, Som.) and figs. 17-18 (several Wiltshire examples). See also Childe, *Prehistoric Communities of the B. Isles*, pp. 135 ff., figs. 38-9.

(b) *Sharpening-tool*. (PL. V, D, FIG. 9.). L. (imperfect) 4 ins.; Diam. $\frac{1}{4}$ in. A.M. 1940.174a. Straight, awl-like implement, circular in section, tapering to a point; much oxydized, especially at its upper end (now imperfect). This tool was originally about 5 or 5½ ins. long, to judge from its position next the dagger in the sheath (c), its point being 4½ ins. below the hafting flange. It either terminated in a knob or, perhaps, the horn object which lay near the right rivet-hole of the dagger in line with this tool was a portion of its handle. Adhering to the implement, 1 in. from its point, is a small piece of bent bronze wire which may have been a staple driven into the sheath wall, inside, as a loop to hold the point of the tool.¹²

(c) *Sheath*. When found, the dagger was almost entirely hidden by a layer of leather which, though broken and decayed, could be lifted in fairly large pieces, two of which (A.M. 1940.174b) were in a condition to permit of preservation, but too amorphous to illustrate. Below this leather the dagger lay in a shallow depression in a mass of decayed wood, and this leather and wood clearly represented the dagger-sheath. Some portions of the wood, still showing clearly its graining, are preserved on the dagger itself. On the haft end, below the ridges (and therefore not forming part of the haft) on each side is a strip with grain running laterally across the dagger; these strips, now only $\frac{1}{4}$ in. wide or less, were originally about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide, and above them are

¹¹ These ridges, which occur on many other examples of these Wessex daggers—e.g. *Cat. Dev. Mus.*, 1, 24a and fig., Colt Hoare, *Ancient Wilts.*, 1, 67 (South Down Farm, near Bratton, Wilts.); *Cat. Dev. Mus.*, 1, 35 and fig., Colt Hoare, *op. cit.*, 242 (Woodyates barrow 22); *Cat. Dev. Mus.*, 1, 21 and fig., Colt Hoare, *op. cit.*, 122, pl. xiv (Winterbourne barrow 15)—look at first sight like stop-ridges for the haft. Second thoughts, however, suggest that they are too slender to have been cast or soldered on as constructional details, and they are more probably ridges of corroded metal, formed along the base of the haft, and preserving, in effect, the actual outline of its lower edge. Dr. Plenderleith and Mr. Maryon of the British Museum, who kindly inspected the dagger, have confirmed this interpretation.

¹² E. T. Leeds has suggested to us that this combination of dagger and sharpening-tool may be compared with the Scottish 'skian-dhu', where a similar tool is carried in the sheath.

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remains of bits of thin bronze sheeting which seem to have been folded over them. On the right edge of the upper face of the blade is a strip with grain running lengthwise down the dagger and elsewhere on the upper face are slighter traces of wood with grain running lengthwise, especially towards the point and on the left edge. Over much of the downward face are considerable traces, the grain again running lengthwise. A few tiny fragments of wood not adhering to the dagger are also preserved. The main mass of the wood, however, had lost too much of its nature to be handled, but measurements and notes taken by E. T. Leeds while the material still held together make it clear that on each edge there was a border which, at the middle of the blade, where it was best preserved, was $\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide on the left and $\frac{7}{8}$ in. on the right, where it had to be wider to allow room for the sharpening-tool (b). These borders diminished gently towards the point of the sheath, which unfortunately was not preserved, but was probably blunt. Under the dagger-blade, for more than half its length, the wood was more than $\frac{3}{4}$ in. thick, but from there it diminished outwards and towards the point, producing a shape and section like that of a flat-bottomed boat. The mouth, to judge from the extant remains, was straight-edged.

Dr. L. Chalk of the Department of Forestry, University of Oxford, who has kindly examined some of the extant fragments of wood from the sheath reports that it appears to be hardwood but the fragments have become so stony that it is impossible to section them.

5. Just W. or on top of the leather at the haft end of no. 4a, three beads :
(a) *Bead.* (FIG. 9.) Diam. $\frac{3}{16}$ in. A.M. 1940.179. Amber; oblate spheroid with circular (cylindrical) hole; chipped on one side by disintegration.
(b) *Bead.* (FIG. 9.) Diam. $\frac{2}{8}$ in. A.M. 1940.180. Jet: oblate spheroid with circular (cylindrical) hole; on exterior neatly carved parallel ribs, inclined to right; one end chipped away.

This bead, from its decoration, appears to be a new type among British Bronze Age beads, but vertically ribbed biconical jet and shale beads occur, e.g. Colt Hoare, *op. cit.*, 1, 202 (Normanton 156, jet) and *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, n.s. iv, 70, fig. 8, nos. 6 (Normanton 72, shale) and 19 (Manton 68, shale).

- (c) *Bead.* (FIG. 9.) Diam. $\frac{3}{16}$ in.; H. $\frac{7}{16}$ in. A.M. 1940.178. Fossil sponge; spheroid with circular (cylindrical) hole; surface rubbed and worn.^{12a}

6. Adjoining the haft end of no. 4a, in line with no. 4b—fragment of ivory or horn object (PL. V, D, FIG. 9). L. $\frac{2}{8}$ in.; W. $\frac{3}{16}$ in. A.M. 1940.181. Exterior surface highly polished; stained green from contact with the dagger. Perhaps part of the knob of the sharpening-tool or a fragment from the dagger-haft.

7. Among the cremated bones—four contiguous fragments of a *bone pin* (?), $2\frac{1}{8}$ ins. long (FIG. 9). A.M. 1940.182. Elliptical section, $\frac{1}{8}$ by $\frac{1}{16}$ in., with a groove longitudinally on the exterior, bent into a curve by the heat of the bones.

8. As no. 7—head of pin (?) (FIG. 9). L. $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; W. $\frac{2}{8}$ in. A.M. 1940.177. Bone, partially calcined from contact with cremated remains; made from a bird's tibia, the portion preserved being the distal end; perforated with a circular hour-glass-shaped hole. Perhaps the end of no. 7.

^{12a} See Appendix, p. 41.

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The *ash-pit* (PL. VI, A, D, E, FIG. 8) was a most interesting and important feature. Its centre lay about $2\frac{3}{4}$ ft. W. of the centre of the central deposit. It was a circular shallow pit, 2 ft. diameter at the level of the pyre floor and 1 ft. $7\frac{1}{2}$ ins. diameter at gravel level, thence dipping in basin form 3 ins. into the subsoil. When seen in section it was clear that this pit, unlike the central post-hole, had been cut through the pyre floor after the ceremony, as its sides showed no traces of burning. The pit was filled with sieved ash and cremated remains left over after the cremated bones had been separated for burial in the central deposit. The top of the ash deposit was very carefully flattened over at pyre-floor level. On top of it and exactly covering the circular pit was a layer of clean gravel, convex above and 4 ins. thick in the centre; this was obviously the gravel which had been excavated from the trough of the pit and carefully preserved for the purpose. Over this cover was a wider spread of earth containing much charcoal, which extended more on the south side of the pit than on the north side. Just as the gravel cover consisted of material excavated from the trough, so this wider spread probably consisted of the portion of the pyre floor and soil dug away to make the pit.

Other instances of similar separation of bones and ashes have occurred in barrows in England; often the bones are buried in a second barrow, but more exact parallels to the present case, where bones and ash were put in two separate deposits in the same barrow, also occur.¹³ What religious beliefs led to this careful separation of ash from bones, and to their deposit in a special pit so carefully excavated and covered with its original contents in two layers must, of course, be a matter of guess-work. No evidence was noted in this particular case which could be adduced as a reasonable explanation.

Of the two subsidiary post-holes (FIG. 8, nos. 2 and 3) one lay 2 ft. 7 ins. E. of the central post-hole and the other 5 ft. 10 ins. WSW. of it. They were V-shaped, like the central one, but much smaller, being only 2 ins. in diameter at pyre-floor level; one had its bottom on the gravel subsoil, the other was even shorter. Both contained red burnt earth inside a black, charcoally, core and the stakes they held had clearly been burnt, like the post in the central hole, during the cremation ceremony. It looks as if there must have been others in a ring or rectangle round the pyre area, and that the stakes they held may have formed the uprights of some sort of flimsy pyre-platform; being, however, cut into the original topsoil only, it is perhaps not surprising that, if others existed, they slipped our notice in an excavation that had to be undertaken within such short time limits.¹⁴

¹³ Grinsell, *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, n.s. VII (1941), 92 and 98 f., with examples there cited.

¹⁴ On stake-holes in barrows in general see Grinsell, *op. cit.*, pp. 92 ff. and Sir Cyril Fox, 'Stake-circles in turf barrows: a record of excavation in Glamorgan 1939-40', *Antiq. Journ.*, XXI (1941), 97 ff.

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Dr. L. Chalk, who has kindly examined fragments of the charcoal from (a) the central deposit, (b) the ash-pit, (c) post-hole 2, reports that in (a) and (c) it appears to be alder or hazel and in (b) might possibly be the same.

THE BARROW AND DITCH

As already mentioned (p. 24) the time available only permitted us to cut one complete radial section of the barrow and ditch (PL. IV, A, B, FIG. 8). The results obtained in that section were, however, in general confirmed by those of the segmental trial-section and the incomplete radial section, and they can therefore, be accepted as giving a fair indication of the make-up of the burial mound. The levelling of the barrow in the 18th and 19th centuries had the effect of spreading the material not only over the ditch, but over a portion of the surrounding area as well. The normal depth of topsoil in Barrow Field was about 1 ft., as was indicated by the outermost of the three trial-holes (p. 23). The second trial-hole, which was just outside the outer lip of the ditch found gravel at 1 ft. 8 ins. and the third, just inside the inner lip, at 2 ft. These depths of topsoil existing in 1940 are indicative of the spread of the ploughed-out mound.

The make-up of the barrow, as seen in section (FIG. 8), was simple. The old turf line was readily distinguishable in all cuttings rising to a height of 6 ins. above the subsoil, which had a slightly convex form across the barrow, rising about 1 ft. in the centre, and showing that the barrow was built on a low natural eminence. In the segmental section and in the cutting made between that and the central deposit this turf line lay beneath a deposit of iron-pan, 1 or 2 ins. thick; elsewhere this iron-pan was absent, and such a localized deposit may indicate the site of a ritual dancing-floor.¹⁵ In the centre of the barrow the turf-line itself was capped by a dark line $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ in. thick, representing the pyre-floor (p. 24). Above this turf line the barrow consisted of dark gravelly soil. The ditch was of flattened V-section, of a maximum depth of $5\frac{1}{4}$ ft. below present surface and 4 ft. below the subsoil. Its maximum width was difficult to judge, as the upper angle of the sides always presented a very obtuse contour, and it was not possible to say where the edge of the ditch actually lay; but its mean width was about 16 ft. at gravel level. The ditch was not big or deep enough to provide material for the whole of the barrow mound, most of which must have been carried from farther afield, but the upcast from the ditch had been thrown on the inner lip and showed there (FIG. 8) as a layer of almost pure gravel about 6-9 ins. thick and about 25 ft. wide; there was no trace of a counterscarp bank outside

¹⁵ For a similar floor in a Welsh barrow cf. Sir Cyril Fox, 'A Bronze Age Barrow (Sutton 268') in Llandow Parish, Glamorgan', *Archaeologia*, LXXXIX (1943), 89 ff. (espec. pp. 96, 110 and 124 f.).

the ditch. The barrow, therefore, conforms to Grinsell's normal bowl-barrow type, with the mound coming right down to the lip of the ditch and no exterior bank.¹⁶ This, as he says, is by far the commonest type of barrow in Wessex, being represented by some 5,500 examples.

The filling of the ditch (PL. IV, A, B, FIG. 8) was on the whole uniform in the two sections we dug, both in the NE. quadrant; but it is unfortunate that time did not allow of other sections in other quadrants to be taken, as these might have revealed divergencies. At the bottom (*a*) was a gravelly slide, of a maximum of 1 ft. thick, which was cut into in a V-section by the next stratum (*b*), an earthy silt which also averaged 1 ft. thick except in the middle where it cut into the lowest filling and had an overall thickness of $1\frac{3}{4}$ ft. Above this were two layers (*c-d*) of earth mixed with gravel, each again 1 ft. thick, the lower slightly more gravelly than the upper, and last of all (*e*) was the gravelly topsoil of a mean depth of $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. The distinction between the three upper strata (*c-e*) was not readily visible in the second section where the top 3 ft. or so seemed uniform.

A few sherds and one flint scraper were found in these two sections:

In filling (*a*), section C-C—a Romano-British sherd.

In filling (*b*), section B-B—a flint scraper at 4 ft;

do. section C-C—an indeterminate sherd (? Bronze Age or Romano-British).

In filling (*c*), both sections—several Romano-British sherds.

The Romano-British sherd found in the lowest layer (*a*) of C-C was grey-black, softish ware of Romano-Belgic affinity, probably dating from the 1st century A.D., and seems to suggest that the ditch remained open, with only a small amount of silting above the gravel slide, until Roman times at least, or else that the ditch was recut in Roman or post-Roman times. If the latter is true the sherd would give a *terminus post quem*, but as it is rubbed and worn it cannot date the recutting closely. We might, perhaps, conjecture that the recutting took place when, and because, the Saxons wished to use the barrow as a burial mound: but why they should recut the ditch is a mystery. Unfortunately both sections were dug in the quadrant where the Saxon graves were clustered, so we do not know whether the recutting only happened in this quadrant, or took place all round the circumference.

The top of filling (*b*) may be taken to indicate the surface line from Saxon times (if our second alternative be accepted) until the barrow was levelled in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the remaining three strata were the result of that operation.

¹⁶ *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, n.s. VII (1941), 75, fig. 1, a.

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THE SECONDARY BURIALS (PLS. VII-VIII, FIG. 7)

A feature of the excavation was the discovery of 23 certain and 1 other possible inhumation-grave of the pagan Saxon period on the periphery of the circle. Twenty-two of these lay in one quadrant of the circle (PL. VIII, C, D) on the NE., the remaining two (nos. 5 and 23) being outliers on the W. side (PL. VIII, B). Exhaustive search over the gravel surface within the ditch after the topsoil had been cleared by the mechanical scraper failed to reveal any further graves beyond these 24, and there can be no doubt that none existed. There was not time to look for any farther afield.

Most of the graves, as will be seen from the plan and photographs (PL. VIII, FIG. 7) lay on the inner rim of the barrow-ditch, some (e.g. nos. 3, 12, 14, 19) having their feet in the actual filling of the ditch, and all, even those that lay some distance from the edge of the ditch (e.g. nos. 1, 5, 6), being sunk a foot or two into the gravel subsoil.

All except no. 22, which may not have been a grave at all, were roughly rectangular in outline, though many widened a bit in the middle, and they were mostly (except e.g. nos. 12 and 14) rectangular in section. All skeletons had their heads, where such remains were recognizable, at the W. or SW. end of the grave; this was true even of no. 5, which lay on the W. side of the circle, so that there is no question of their having been orientated towards the centre of the circle.

Among the inhumations the preponderance of infants and young children is very remarkable, as the following analysis of the skeletal remains shows:

<i>Age</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Indeterminable</i>	<i>Total</i>
Aged	1	1		2
Middle-aged	2	1		3
Young adult	1			1
12-14 years	1			1
8 years			3	3
4-6 years			1	1
Infants: ¹⁷				
1-12 months			3	3
died at birth or mis-				
carriage			5	5
no remains preserved ¹⁸			4	4
Total ..	5	2	16	23

¹⁷ The estimates of age are based on comparison with foetal and new-born skeletons in the Department of Human Anatomy in the University Museum, Oxford, made by Miss Blackwood.

¹⁸ Omitting the doubtful grave, no. 22.

There would appear to be no doubt from this analysis that the burials represent a single family-group, and the high rate of infant mortality indicated is, so far as can be ascertained, unparalleled in any previous find of interments of the period. Since there were two instances (nos. 9 and 10 and 17*a* and *b*) of overlapping interments and three instances of possible miscarriages any suggestion that the burials are all contemporary, resulting from a massacre, is ruled out; and besides, in such a contingency, burial in individual graves would be most unlikely. The spear-head cleaving the skull of a child of 8 (no. 15) probably fell into the crack between the sutures after burial (p. 38) and does not indicate a violent death.

The paucity of associated objects (FIG. 10) in the graves is noteworthy. Normally such a feature in pagan Saxon interments, especially when associated with W.-E. orientation, is held to indicate a late date, not before the late 6th or 7th century A.D.,¹⁹ and this may be true here, though it might equally well indicate the poverty of the family group represented. Apart from the aged female, no. 12, who owned a silver pin to fasten her dress, the only burials with accompanying objects were three of the children (nos. 2, 14, 15) each of whom had a knife and some other objects. It is particularly surprising that not one of the four adult males carried any associated objects with him.

The skeletal material varied very much in its state of preservation, as often happens with interments on gravel sites. In the case of the infants, where any remains existed at all, they merely consisted of a few tiny fragments which fitted into a match-box: but it is indeed surprising, in view of the poor state of some of the adults, that any trace of the infants should have been preserved at all.

The graves (PLS. VII-VIII, FIG. 10).

1. L. of grave 6 ft. W. 2 ft. D. 1 ft. 4 ins.²⁰ Male, middle-aged, lying supine slightly S. of W.-E., face upwards, arms slightly flexed at elbows, hands on pelvis, legs extended. Arthritic left hip-joint and ankylosis of 5th lumbar vertebra to 1st sacral.
No associated objects.
2. L. of grave 4 ft. W. 2 ft. 6 ins to 1 ft. 10 ins. D. 8 ins. to 5 ins. Female (?), child, 4-6 years, lying on r. side, SSW.-NNE., head on r. side, r. arm extended, l. arm flexed with forearm across ribs, legs partly flexed.
PL. VII, D.

¹⁹ Leeds, *Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology*, pp. 100 ff., 111.

²⁰ D.=depth; Diam.=diameter. All depths are given from gravel level. Where two depth measurements are recorded, the first is at the head, the second at the foot of the grave. All grave floors near the ditch sloped down a bit towards the foot of the grave.

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On r. shoulder, point towards breastbone—*Pricker*, bronze, circular in section; at top a flattened circular eye which contained a fragmentary bronze ring (now lost). L. $2\frac{1}{8}$ ins. Diam. ring $\frac{3}{16}$ in. FIG. 10. A.M. 1940.184.

Outside l. shoulder, behind skull—*Bead*, green glass; flattened disk, circular in section. D. $\frac{1}{2}$ in. FIG. 10. A.M. 1940.185.

Inside r. forearm, in line with body, point towards feet, cutting edge outwards—*Knife*, iron, tanged; complete. L. $4\frac{1}{16}$ ins. W. of blade $\frac{2}{8}$ in. FIG. 10. A.M. 1940.183.

Beside feet—*Boot-lace tab*,²¹ bronze, fragmentary; flattened head, split foot, each half showing part of rivet-hole. L. $\frac{3}{4}$ in. FIG. 10. A.M. 1940.186.

At feet—remains of what may have been leather footwear.

3. L. of grave 6 ft. 9 ins. W. 2 ft. 4 ins. D. 3 ft. to nil (foot of grave in filling of ditch). L. of skeleton in grave, 5 ft. 6 ins. Female, middle-aged, lying supine, W.-E., head on r. side, r. arm slightly flexed, hand on pelvis, l. arm extended, hand below and curled round pelvis, legs extended, r. foot crossed over l.
No associated objects.
4. L. of grave 2 ft. 6 ins. W. 1 ft. 4 ins. to 1 ft. 1 in. D. 1 ft. 3 ins. to 9 ins. Grave orientated W.-E., barren, but presumably containing infant all of whose bones had perished.
No associated objects.
5. L. of grave 7 ft. W. 1 ft. 8 ins. D. 1 ft. to 1 ft. 4 ins. Male, middle-aged, lying supine, WSW.-ENE., head bent forward, face upwards, jaws open, r. shoulder slightly raised owing to narrowness of grave, arms extended, r. hand outstretched to r. of pelvis, l. hand bent round pelvis, legs extended.
PLS. VII, B and VIII, B.
No associated objects.
6. L. of grave 3 ft. W. 1 ft. 6 ins. to 1 ft. 4 ins. D. 1 ft. 6 ins. to 1 ft. 3 ins. Grave orientated slightly S. of W.-E., barren except for a few tiny fragments of skull (?). Infant, possibly miscarriage.
In fill of grave, 4 ins. below gravel level, fragment of Roman *ridge-tile*.
7. L. of grave 7 ft. W. 3 ft. to 2 ft. 9 ins. D. 1 ft. to 8 ins. L. of skeleton in grave 6 ft. Male, young adult, very tall and muscular, lying

²¹ Cf. *Camb. Antiq. Soc.*, 4to publications, n.s. III, 65 and fig. 31 for two similar tabs found at the feet of a skeleton at Burwell, Cambs. (grave 83). This parallel was kindly pointed out to us by Mr. T. C. Lethbridge, who published the Burwell examples.

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supine, SW.-NE., head on l. side, arms extended, hands on pelvis, legs extended, l. foot crossed over r. PL. VII, E.

No associated objects.

8. L. of grave 6 ft. 3 ins. W. 2 ft. 9 ins. D. 2 ft. to 10 ins. Male, aged, lying on r. side, slightly S. of W.-E., head on r. side, r. arm extended underneath body, l. arm extended, forearm across pelvis, 2 finger-bones loose on body, 3 lower vertebrae out of line, legs slightly flexed, knee-joints 6 ins. apart, knee-caps at ends of femora. Presumably during interment body slipped forward and the thrust dislocated the knees. Arthritic r. hip-joint. PL. VII, A.

In fill of grave—2 worn Romano-British *sherds* :

(a) rim-fragment, near head,

(b) body-fragment (different pot), near foot.

9. L. of grave 2 ft. 6 ins. W. 1 ft. 8 ins. to 1 ft. 5 ins. D. 1 ft. 4 ins. to 1 ft. 2 ins. This grave was dug after no. 10, being cut into its western end. The overall length of the two graves was 4 ft. 9 ins. and the step between the two was 7 ins. Grave orientated W.-E., barren, but presumably contained infant all of whose bones had perished. PL. VII, F. No associated objects.

10. L. of grave 2 ft. 6 ins. W. 1 ft. 3 ins. D. 1 ft. 9 ins. to 1 ft. 3 ins. This grave was dug before no. 9, which cut into it at its western end. Grave orientated slightly S. of W.-E.; a few bones of infant, very young, probably died at birth. PL. VII, F.

No associated objects.

11. L. of grave 2 ft. 6 ins. W. 1 ft. 7 ins. D. 1 ft. 3 ins. to 7 ins. Grave orientated slightly N. of W.-E.; a few bones of infant, very young, probably died at birth, or possibly miscarriage. PL. VII, F. No associated objects.

12. L. of grave 5 ft. W. 2 ft. 10 ins. D. 1 ft. 9 ins. to 5 ins., and sloping down 1 ft. towards east side. Female, aged, lying supine, SSW.-NNE., head on r. side and squashed in, arms extended, r. hand extended outside pelvis, l. hand curled round pelvis, legs extended, feet vertical. PL. VIII, D, foreground.

On r. ribs, near top of breastbone, point outwards—*Pin*, silver, circular in section; flattened oval head, on each side of which two stamped bull's-eye circlets; above head a circular eye through which is threaded a ring of silver wire with ends crossed and each folded once over the other.

L. of pin $2\frac{3}{10}$ ins. Diam. of ring $\frac{3}{10}$ in. FIG. 10. A.M. 1940.187.

In filling of grave—one worn Romano-British *sherd*.

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13. L. of grave 3 ft. W. 1 ft. 7 ins. D. 1 ft. 7 ins. to 7 ins. Circular pocket (Diam. 7 ins. D. 3 ins.) in gravel at head of grave and elongated pocket (L. 1 ft. W. 3 ins. D. 3 ins.) across foot. Grave orientated W.-E.

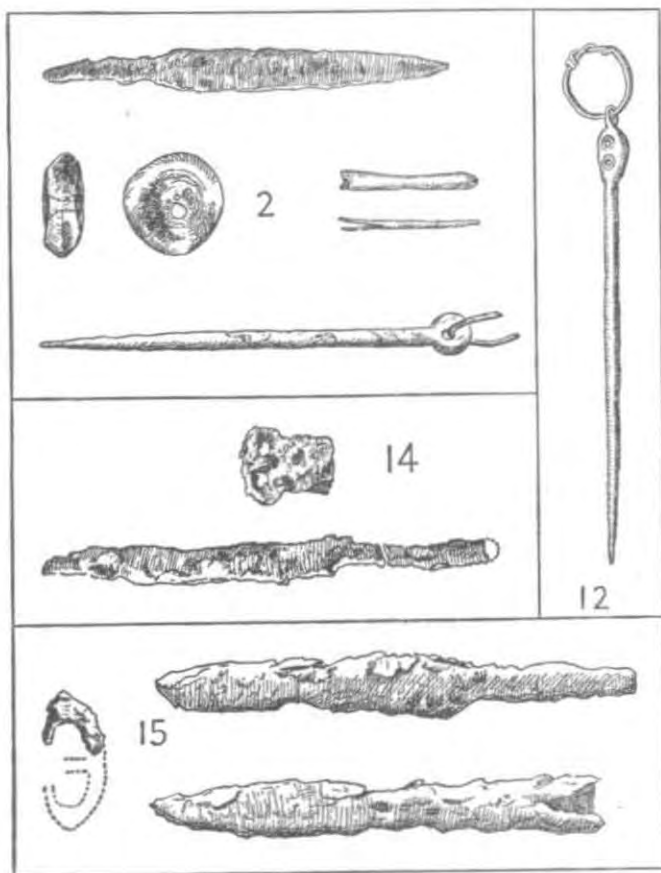


FIG. 10

STANTON HARCOURT BARROW : OBJECTS ACCOMPANYING THE SECONDARY BURIALS (pp. 34 ff.)

Iron objects, Sc. $\frac{1}{2}$; remainder, $\frac{1}{2}$.

Many teeth and bits of skull, ribs and arms found, but no legs. Infant, 8 to 12 months (?) PL. VIII, A, D.
No associated objects.

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14. L. of grave 6 ft. W. 2 ft. 7 ins. D. 1 ft. 11 ins. to 8 ins., and sloping down 10 ins. towards east side. L. of skeleton in grave 4 ft. 6 ins. Child, male, 12 to 14 years, lying supine, SW.-NE., face upwards, skull fractured along parietal sutures, r. arm extended, hand on pelvis, l. arm flexed, hand on ribs, legs extended. PL. VIII, c, foreground.
Between l. elbow and pelvis, point towards elbow, cutting edge inwards—*Knife*, iron, tanged; complete, in three pieces. L. $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. W. of blade $\frac{3}{8}$ in. FIG. 10. A.M. 1940.189.
Inside r. forearm, pointing outwards—*Buckle*, iron; oval with rectangular plates, between which two iron rivets still in position. L. 1 in. W. of hoop $\frac{1}{8}$ in. FIG. 10. A.M. 1940.188.
15. L. of grave 5 ft. 10 ins. W. 2 ft. 2 ins. D. 1 ft. 7 ins. to 1 ft. Child, male (?), about 8 years, lying supine, SSW.-NNE., head inclined towards r., right parietal suture pierced by spear-head, r. arm flexed, hand on breastbone (one finger 3 ins. higher up body), l. arm flexed, hand on r. ribs, legs extended. The split in the suture in which the spear-head lay was quite wide and the edges showed no trace of the fracture which would have been caused had it been thrust into the skull during life. The head fell to one side when the body sank in the grave and this opened the suture into which the spear-head fell when its wooden shaft decayed. PL. VII, c.
Piercing r. parietal suture, with point inside skull—*Spear-head*, iron; leaf-shaped blade, split socket containing traces of wood; complete except for tips of each lip of socket. L. $4\frac{3}{8}$ ins. W. of blade $\frac{3}{8}$ in. FIG. 10. A.M. 1940.194.
On 14th vertebra—*Buckle*, iron; fragmentary and disintegrating, only part of the hoop now preserved. Original W. of hoop $1\frac{2}{3}$ ins. FIG. 10. A.M. 1940.191.
At l. side, in line with and outside l. upper arm, point towards shoulder, cutting edge inwards—*Knife*, iron, tanged; complete, except for tip of blade. L. 5 ins. W. of blade $\frac{3}{4}$ in. FIG. 10. A.M. 1940.192.
16. L. of grave 6 ft. W. 2 ft. 6 ins. to 2 ft. D. 1 ft. 10 ins. to 6 ins. Child, sex doubtful, about 8 years, lying supine, W.-E., head on r. side, arms extended, hands on pelvis, legs extended. Skeleton very poorly preserved. PL. VIII, A, D.
No associated objects.
- 17a and b. Two overlapping graves, orientated W.-E., a dug before b, overall length 5 ft.; a low wall in the natural gravel, 2 ins. wide at the middle, where it was narrowest, separated the two graves. PL. VIII, A.

EXCAVATIONS AT STANTON HARCOURT, OXON., 1940

- a. L. of grave 3 ft. 6 ins. W. 1 ft. 2 ins. to 1 ft. 5 ins. D. 10 ins. to 5 ins. Infant, 6 to 8 months (?), only a few fragments of skeleton preserved.
- b. L. of grave 1 ft. 4 ins. W. 1 ft. 5 ins. D. 3 ins. to 1 in. Infant, probably under 6 months, only a few fragments of skeleton preserved.
No associated objects.
18. L. of grave 2 ft. 4 ins. W. 1 ft. 9 ins. to 1 ft. 4 ins. D. 1 ft. to 1 in. Grave orientated slightly S. of W.-E., barren, but presumably contained infant all of whose bones had perished.
No associated objects.
19. L. of grave 6 ft. W. 1 ft. 9 ins. to 1 ft. 4 ins. D. 1 ft. 7 ins. to nil. Most of this grave was in the ditch and there was a twist in the S. wall. The foot lay in the filling of the ditch and did not penetrate into the gravel subsoil. Child, sex doubtful, about 8 years, lying supine, slightly S. of W.-E., head inclined to l., arms and legs extended, hands on pelvis. Skeleton poorly preserved.
No associated objects.
20. L. of grave 2 ft. 4 ins. W. 1 ft. 3 ins. D. 6 ins. to 1 ft. Grave orientated W.-E., a few fragments of bones of very young infant, probably died at birth or shortly after.
No associated objects.
21. L. of grave 1 ft. 11 ins. W. 10 ins. D. 6 ins. Grave orientated SW.-NE., a few fragments of bones of very young infant, probably died at birth or late miscarriage.
No associated objects.
22. Doubtful grave consisting of two perfect circles overlapping by 1 in., the larger Diam. 2 ft. 6 ins., D. 6 ins., the smaller Diam. 7 ins., D. 5 ins. Orientated SSW.-NNE., no skeletal material discovered; filling consisted of normal barrow material. In construction this feature was similar to the ash-pit (p. 30) and the perfection of line suggests that it was not a natural dip in the gravel, but its purpose is obscure.
No associated objects.
23. L. of grave 2 ft. 4 ins. W. 1 ft. 3 ins. D. 6 ins. Grave orientated SW.-NE., barren, but presumably contained infant, all of whose bones had perished.
No associated objects.

CONCLUSIONS

The site was probably chosen because it formed a low natural mound. A post was then driven in at the proposed centre and left standing until the actual cremation, during which it was consumed by the fire. If, as seems probable, this post was used as the centre for marking out the ditch,²² that operation must have taken place before the cremation.

After the cremation-ceremony, when the remains of the pyre were cool enough, the bones were separated from the ashes by sieving and placed carefully in a deposit on the surface as nearly as possible over the position where the central post had stood. To this deposit were added the pygmy-cup and the beads, fabricator, pin, dagger and sheath, and hone, the last two probably deposited with the owner's belt from which they hung. The cup, fabricator, pin and hone show traces of having been subjected to considerable heat; the other objects show no such traces. Had the cup actually been burned on the pyre it would almost certainly have been distorted more than it was, if it had not disintegrated altogether; these objects therefore, must have been placed with the bones while they were still hot, and the reason why the beads and dagger were not affected was because they were farther away from the centre of the deposit. This deposit was immediately covered over with a layer of earth which, from the heat still contained in the bones, became burnt and reddened in places.

Next the circular ash-pit was dug (it had not existed before the cremation-ceremony for it was clearly cut through the pyre floor), the diggers being careful to keep the topsoil and gravel subsoil separate. The pit was then filled with material from the cremation which had passed through the sieve. Not all the material passing through the sieve was used, but only sufficient to fill the hole level with the gravel surface, for much more ash than was found in this hole would be collected from a pyre of this size. Then the gravel from the hole was carefully replaced as a cover and it, in its turn, sealed with the topsoil that had been dug out to make the hole; this topsoil, in view of the presence of the ashes, formed a small mound over the pit.

There was now a burial in two tiny mounds on the surface ready for the barrow to be piled up on top. The main mound was now completed with surface soil mixed with gravel, brought from farther afield, and, finally, the ditch was dug, the upcast being piled on the inner lip. The Bronze Age work on the barrow was thus finished, for, as already recorded, no Bronze Age secondary burials occurred.

²² Cf. Grinsell, *op. cit.*, p. 90, who cites a parallel from Plaitford (Hants.), *Antiq. Journ.*, xiii (1933), 425 f.

EXCAVATIONS AT STANTON HARCOURT, OXON., 1940

The date of this Bronze Age interment is fairly certainly not far removed from 1400 B.C. It belongs to the upper Thames extension of the Wessex Bronze Age culture²³ and the forms of the pygmy cup and dagger leave little doubt of its place in the series, bringing it into line, in fact, with the burials containing segmented beads of Egyptian 18th dynasty forms and (probably) fabrication.²⁴

Thereafter the barrow remained untouched, so far as we can tell, until Saxon times, the bottom of the ditch silting up about 12 or 18 ins. to a level of rest. A family or two of Saxons living near by—they cannot have amounted to a village community—then decided to use it as their graveyard, and perhaps recut the ditch. These interments were not all contemporary, and to judge from their consistent orientation and the grave furniture, or rather lack of it, they date from the late 6th or 7th century A.D., rather than earlier.

The barrow remained as the Saxons left it for another 1200 years or so, until in the late 18th and mid-19th century it was levelled. This levelling filled the ditch completely and spread the mound in an even slope to well outside the outer lip, the condition in which we found it when excavation began in 1940.

APPENDIX

NOTE ON THE FOSSIL-SPONGE BEAD FOUND WITH THE PRIMARY BURIAL

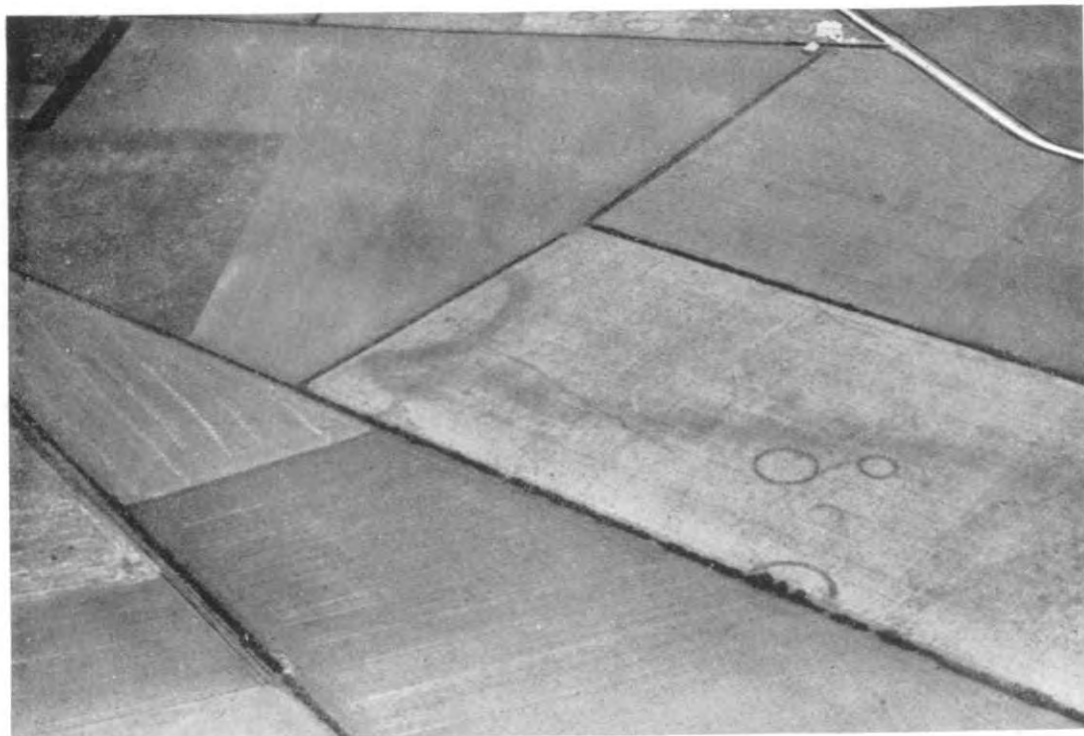
By K. P. OAKLEY

The bead (no. 56, p. 29, FIG. 9) is an example of *Porosphaera globularis* (Phillips), a fossil sponge from the Chalk, the nearest probable source being the White Horse Hill region. The central hole is natural. These naturally-perforated fossil sponges appear to have been collected and used by man at almost all stages of culture. *Porosphaera* beads have been found on Romano-British sites and in Saxon graves, and a single example with a natural hole enlarged at the mouth by use or artifice was found in a Belgic level at Maiden Castle (R. E. M. Wheeler, *Maiden Castle*, Res. Rept. Soc. Ant., no. XII, pp. 292-3). I know of only one instance of the use of *Porosphaera* in the Bronze Age, but it is a spectacular one. Seventy-nine specimens (Geology Department, British Museum (Nat. Hist.) E.1082), presumably once forming a necklace, were found associated with an apparently crouched skeleton in a cist under a tumulus in Higham Marshes, near Gravesend, Kent, excavated in 1880 (H. S. Toms, *Rochester Naturalist*, May, 1932, p. 128).

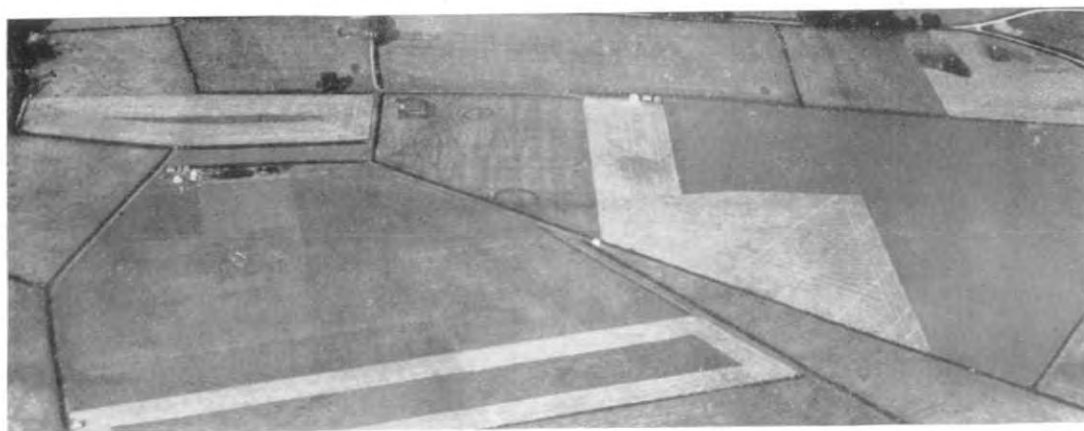
²³ Piggott, *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, n.s. iv (1938), 92 ff.; Childe, *Prehistoric Communities of B. Isles*, pp. 135 ff.

²⁴ Piggott, *loc. cit.*; and H. C. Beck and J. F. S. Stone, *Archaeologia*, LXXXV (1936), 203 ff.

PLATE III



A



B

STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.

- A. Air-view showing Site 3, ring-ditch (cut by field-hedge, bottom right) and Site 1, the Quoit Circle (centre), (pp. 17 ff.). The three rings near Site 3 have not been investigated.
- B. Air-view showing Site 5, ring-ditch (to right of field-hedge, centre) and Site 4, the Barrow (foreground), (pp. 19 f., 21.)

Phh. the late Major G. W. G. Allen.

PLATE IV



A



B



C



D

STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.: SITE 3 (RING-DITCH) AND SITE 4 (BARROW)

- A. Site 4: section B-B of barrow ditch, looking inwards (p. 32).
- B. The same, looking outwards.
- C. Site 3: grave before clearance (p. 17).
- D. Site 3: crouched skeleton in position (p. 17).

Phh. : A, C : D. B. Harden.
 B : R. C. Treweeks.
 D : C. M. Piggott.

PLATE V



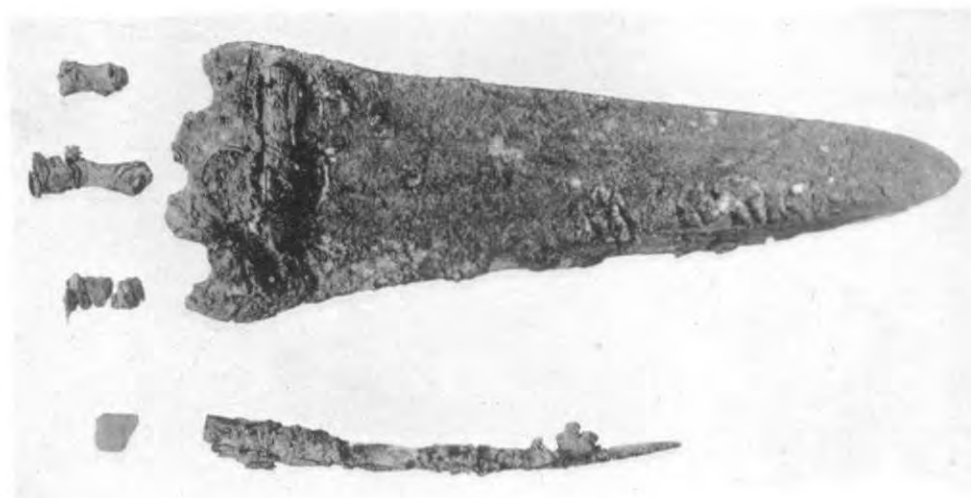
A



B



C



D

STANTON HARCOURT, OXON : OBJECTS FROM PRIMARY BURIAL IN THE BARROW

A, B. Side and bottom view of pygmy cup (p. 25, no. 1).
C. Dagger (p. 26, no. 4a), view of under face.

D. Dagger and rivets (no. 4a), view of upper face ; sharpening tool (no. 4b) and knob (?) (no. 6) (pp. 26 ff.).

*Phh. : Ashmolean Museum.
A, B, after Ash. Mus. Rept. 1940, pl. II, by courtesy of the Visitors.*



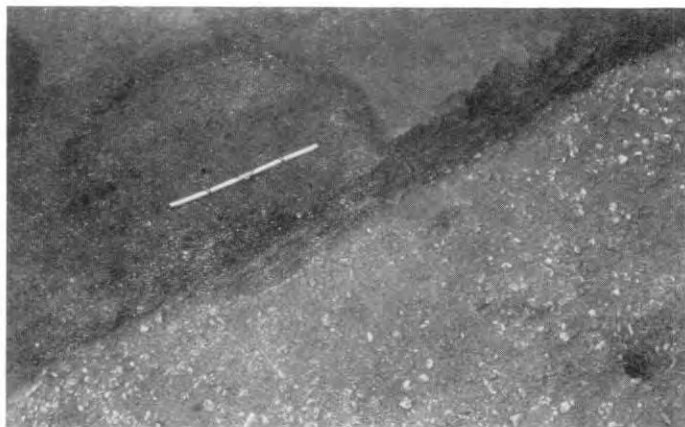
A



B



C



D



E

STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.: THE PRIMARY BURIAL

- A. The ash-pit, cleared (p. 30).
- B. The central post-hole, surrounding soil removed (p. 15).
- C. The central deposit (pp. 25 ff.).

- D. The ash-pit, earth and gravel covers removed (p. 30).
- E. The ash-pit, before clearance (p. 30).

Phh.: A, B, C: R. C. Treweek,
D, E: D. B. Harden.



A



B



C



D



E



F

STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.: THE SECONDARY BURIALS

A. Grave 8 (p. 36).

B. Grave 5 (p. 35).

C. Grave 15, close-up, showing spear-head in skull (p. 38).

D. Grave 2 (p. 34).

E. Grave 7 (p. 35).

F. Graves 11 (left) and 9 and 10 (right) (p. 36)

Phh.: R. C. Trewicks.



A



B



C



D

STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.: THE SECONDARY BURIALS

A. Graves 17 (left), 16 (centre), 13 (right) (p. 37 f.).

B. The SW. quadrant of barrow, Grave 5 in foreground (p. 33).

C. The NE. quadrant of barrow, Grave 14 in foreground (p. 33).

D. The NE. quadrant of barrow, Graves 12, 13, 16 in foreground (p. 33).

Phh.: A, D: R. C. TrewEEKS.
B, C: D. B. HARDEN,