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Tidenham Chase Barrow

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TIDENHAM CHASE BARROW.

by C. SCOTT-GARRETT, D.SC.

IN the Summer of 1951 and Spring of 1952 the members of the Archaeological Section of the Forest of Dean Local History Society excavated a round barrow on Tidenham Chase, near Chepstow. This barrow, known locally as the Soldiers' Tump, lies in a large pasture field in front of Chase Farm. The nearby villagers have been accustomed for some years to have a bonfire on its top on Guy Fawkes night. Evidences of such fires in the shape of ashes, charcoal, nails and other burnt debris were encountered in the top spit of soil on the summit. The full National Grid reference for the barrow is 31/59; 553,985 and Witts¹ numbers it 119 in his section on round barrows. In Dr Ormerod's *Strigulensia*² it is shown as a tumulus on the map on page 8, near the junction of two roadways, with another tumulus near Offa's Dyke a short distance away to the westward.

It is worth recording that an ancient prehistoric cross-peninsular trackway passes the barrow some half-mile away to the eastward. This trackway begins on the Severn shore at the Broadstone, which is doubtless the terminal of a prehistoric river-crossing from the direction of Sheperdine on the opposite shore. It is evident as a deep hollow-way in the low lands below the Chase escarpment. This hollow-way crosses the main South Wales road and traverses the fields of Stroat Farm until it arrives at the rocky escarpment. In this reach it is noteworthy in having still remaining a line of large upright boulders flanking its northern edge—a stone row boundary in fact—most likely of Celtic date.³ After reaching the escarpment

¹ G. B. Witts *Archaeological Handbook of Gloucestershire*, p. 108.

² G. Ormerod *Strigulensia*, p. 8 (1861).

³ This is probably a portion of the Stone Row mentioned as a boundary in one of the Saxon Charters of Tidenham. See Grundy 'Saxon Charters of Gloucestershire,' *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, July (1935).

the trackway follows a course corresponding with the lane now called Rosemary Lane, and on attaining the upland level of the Chase it crosses the common known as the Park on the east

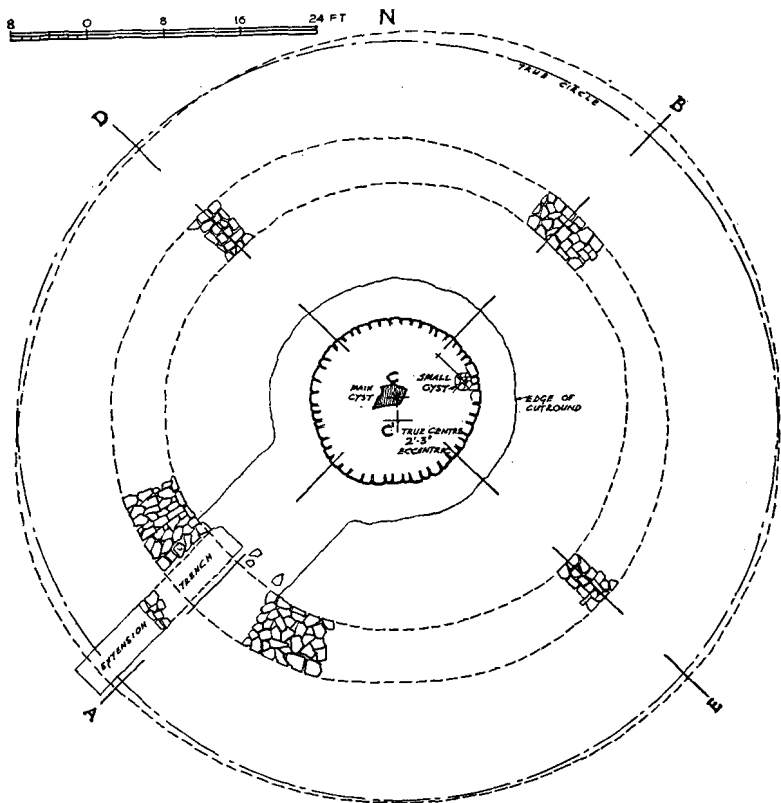


Fig. 1. General Plan

side of the modern church and proceeds as a broad, more or less disused roadway till it reaches Madgetts Hill. All along this upland course and at Madgetts there are occasional large upright stones, remnants doubtless of the stone row which still

exists on its lower reaches. From Madgetts the track is traceable down to the ford of the Wye at Brockweir.

A photograph, taken about 1930 from the eastward side of the barrow towards the deep gorge of the Wye Valley, shows the Windcliff on the Monmouthshire side on the right hand edge, and on the left the higher land of East Vaga across Nightingale Valley, a deep side valley running down to the Wye. The small walnut tree growing on the side of the barrow had disappeared before the excavation was undertaken, although brown tubes indicating its decayed roots were encountered from time to time during the work.

The second tumulus, already mentioned, as westwards of the Soldier's Tump, is marked on the National Grid 31/59; at 544,987. It is not recorded by Witts¹ but Ormerod includes it in his map of Tidenham Chase.² If a tumulus really exists at the point indicated it must be very low and of slight dimensions. The ground where it should occur is covered with a dense growth of brambles and efforts to confirm its presence have been so far unsuccessful. It is possible that other round barrows may have occurred on the ridge of highland of which the Chase is the southern portion. On the north side of the Carpenters' Arms Inn in Hewelsfield, close beside the main roadway, is an elevated corner of a field which when ploughed over shows an unusual scatter of stones, roughly circular, which may very well indicate the disseminated cairn of a former barrow, and on the southern side of St Briavel's there is a high point called Barrow Hill now occupied by a farm house, and although no trace of a barrow is observable to-day the name seems to perpetuate the existence of one there which has now disappeared.

The site of the Soldiers' Tump, which lies on the 600-foot contour, slopes gently towards the south and west and has the Carboniferous limestone (the Drybrook Limestone) as the underlying strata. This, however, changes to the Millstone Grit (Drybrook Sandstone) a short distance away in the same

¹ Witts, *loc. cit.*

² Ormerod, *loc. cit.*

field. The stones of the cairn within the barrow and its surrounding stone ring came from both these strata, heavy, squarish blocks or slabs tinged with a red colour from the latter, and irregular often water worn white stones from the former, smaller and less weighty than the grits. Wherever the limestone of this region has been exposed to water it has been worn into often fantastic smooth shapes, which causes blocks of it to be much used for garden decoration. The soil lying on the immediate surface of the limestone is often distinctly pink

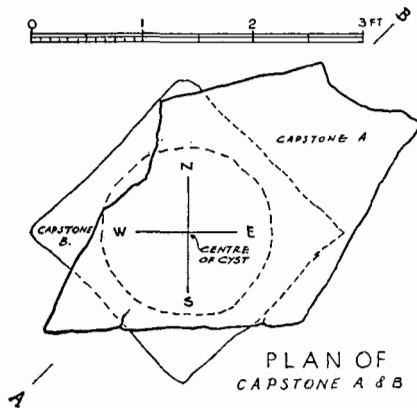


Fig. 2

in colour whilst that above the sandstone, a large belt of which lies to the north of the barrow, is distinctly yellow almost ochre coloured.

The earthy material of the tumulus contained a large amount of this soft yellow ochreous earth, and it would seem to have been obtained in great part from the sandstone area. When stones of this limestone strata had come into direct contact with this ochreous earth, as for instance, stray limestones in the body of the barrow, or a limestone block situated on the outside of the cairn pile, some sort of chemical reaction took place which produced a hard blue-black metallic looking

layer which resembled haematite in appearance. This constituted a black deposit on the outer faces of peripheral limestones in the cairn. In the case of small limestones scattered about in the earth of the barrow, a sphere of blue-black crust was formed around the stone, which was found in a hollow inside, when it had not been completely disintegrated, or else in its place there was a residue of sand left after the complete dissolution of the limestone. This phenomenon no doubt is due to seepage for many centuries of water containing dissolved carbon dioxide through the barrow material. Both the limestone and the ochreous earth are to some extent soluble in such water and the solutions formed would appear to react forming a dark insoluble metallic looking iron deposit whilst at the same time the limestone is eliminated leaving behind its siliceous impurities as sand. These 'nodules' when first encountered and broken seemed like crude black pottery and when cut through gave a black ring section which had some semblance to a post-hole ring, but their true nature was soon discovered. A section of a typical 'nodule' shows outside the dark ring a brown coloured area which shades off into the yellow of the surrounding earth.

The excavation of the barrow was carried out simultaneously from the top around the cairn, and by a broad cut, 12 feet wide, through the side from a south-west direction. The top stones of the cairn showed level with the sod on the top of the barrow. It is of course unlikely that this was so originally; it must have resulted from denudation and spreading of the superincumbent material. There was a small cavity in the very top of the cairn (see plan) measuring 2 feet by 16 inches by 1 foot deep, which could have held an upright stone standing free above the mound; a stone which if it existed has long since disappeared.¹

¹ It might just as probably have arisen from an abortive attempt to plant a tree in the centre of the top which was abandoned after the stony nature of the ground was discovered. This would explain why the tree already mentioned was not growing on the actual top of the mound but a little to the south-west of that point clear of the cairn top. Central standing stones have been found in round barrows in Wales: at Llanfachreth, Merionethshire, *Arch. Camb.* 213 (1873) and possibly at Linney, Pembrokeshire, *Arch. Camb.* 186 (1926).

The direction of the cut through the side of the barrow corresponded with the maximum slope downwards of the surface of the land. It was probably on account of this that the stone ring wall which surrounded the cairn at a distance of about 25 feet was here found to have slipped out of position leaving a gap of about 10 feet, while the slipped stones had become embedded further out and lower down. Water seepage¹ along this line was probably the most important factor in this slipping. The builders of the barrow fully realized that such slipping

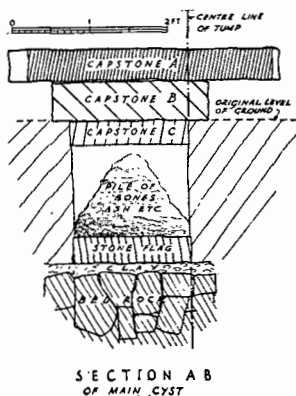


Fig. 3

might ensue, for the stones of the retaining ring all along the south and west sides where the land sloped downwards were set in a steep batter, as seen in PLATE II, whilst elsewhere the ring wall was constructed of levelly set stones.

In the cairn itself the same procedure was followed. The stones on the south and west consisted for the most part of heavy grit slabs set at a batter, especially at the bottom layers of the cairn. The bulging at the foot of the cairn noticeable in

¹ The present annual rainfall at the barrow site amounts to 37½–40 inches, whilst on lower ground at Lydney it is only 27½–30 inches. Playne *Gloucestershire Survey*, 16, (1945).

the Section AB (FIG. 4) was in addition meant as a buttress to prevent slipping of the cairn down the slope. The ring wall whose top was from 6 inches to 1 foot below the surface varied in width, being widest, about 7 foot 6 inches. on the south-west where it was laid slantwise, and narrowest on the north-east, about 3 foot 6 inches where it was laid levelly in three courses, the lowest of which projected slightly,—the genesis of a wall footing. As with the cairn its stones were grey grits and white limestones, but in the ramped portions the heavy grit slabs preponderated.

As the excavation of the cairn proceeded it was noticed that considerable numbers of flakes of carbonaceous matter occurred in the earth surrounding the lower portion and this occurrence broadened out at lower depths. This phenomenon almost certainly arose from the piling of turves around the basal layers of the cairn.

The cairn pile seems to have been set on the original ground level as the carbonaceous line indicating this practically corresponded with the lowest layers of stone and any cutting into this line of an inch or so was due to the superimposed weight of the cairn mass.

The outer edges of the stone ring may be sunk about 6 inches into the original surface in some places but generally it too seems to have been set on the original surface. A count of the stones in this 6 foot high cairn pile was made: the grits amounted to 1263 and the limestones to 1066 but the mass of the grits greatly exceeded that of the smaller limestones and it was noticeable that the limestones were mostly in the centre of the pile, whilst the grits were more used for the building of the outside layers of the cairn.

No secondary burials were encountered during excavation anywhere throughout the mass of the barrow, either around the cairn, in the broad south-west cut, or in any of the openings made to examine the ring wall. After this work was completed the whole material of the barrow was removed in trucks to South Wales (Newport and Abergavenny) and as then also no secondary burials were discovered it can be concluded that

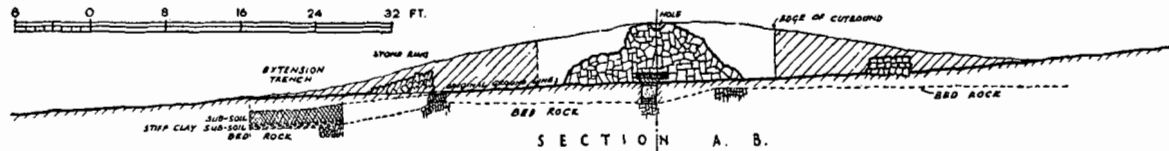


Fig. 4

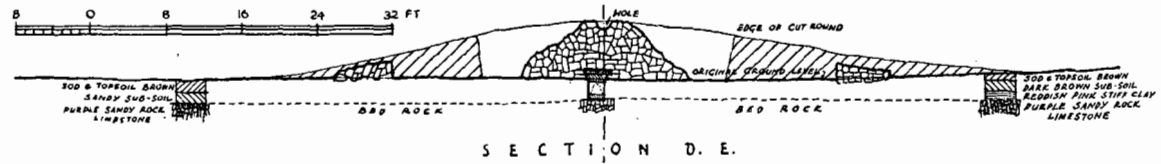


Fig. 5

none existed and that this tumulus has remained intact since its original formation.

To test whether the barrow was of the *bowl* or of the *bell* type an extension trench, 20 feet long was dug out into the field in continuation of the line of the south-west cut and carried down to rock bottom. This showed conclusively that no trench had ever been dug around the barrow, so that it must be considered as of the *bowl* type. It was in this extension trench that so much stiff pinkish coloured clay was encountered immediately above the underlying limestone rock. The section consisted of 1 foot turf and top soil, 1 foot stiff clay of dark brown colour and 1 foot of pinkish red stiff clay on sandy limestone with greyish purple and red streaks.

The articles recovered from the earthy material of the barrow comprised the following:—

1. Modern materials such as iron nails, bottle glass, rough pottery and burnt debris from the top surface derived from the many bonfires which had been lit on the top of the mound. One piece of undecorated late Samian ware; a filigree ivory cameo showing a pastoral scene with deer and trees, probably the panel of a brooch, most likely of Italian work and relatively recent date. These two items were recovered from the sifting of earth found amongst the stones of the cairn. Their exact location could not be determined. Some few chips of coal were found in the gap in the stone ring and in the extension trench. These were considered to be too near the surface to have any prehistoric significance.
2. Pieces of charcoal were found at various levels and samples of these have been examined and reported upon by Dr Jane.
3. Flint artifacts and chips which have been examined and reported upon by Mr Alexander.

A natural pebble of quartzite¹ with a cavity on one face giving it the semblance of a small stone dish and a block of grit, 4 inches long $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick which was smoothed artificially as if from use as a hone. The pebble stone occurred deep in the body of the tumulus but the block was only 1 foot from the surface three quarter way down the cut side and may therefore be of no great significance.²

¹ I am indebted to Sir Cyril Fox and Professor J. G. D. Clark for their valued opinions that this pebble is entirely of natural origin.

² But see Marsden, *Proc. Prehis. Soc. Ang.* III, Pt. 1 p. 59 f. (1918-19). Reference supplied by E. M. Alexander.

4. Several sherds of dark coloured prehistoric pottery, one showing a carbonaceous speck. Dr H. N. Savory has examined and reported on these.
5. A few fossil corals and shells derived from the limestone strata and a small ring of a fossil encrinoid stem.
6. It is perhaps also worth recording that a large slice of a nodule of haematite with a notch in its thin edge like a notched flint artifact was recovered from deep in the tumulus. It was therefore cracked off in prehistoric times and there is a possibility of its use as a tool.

All these articles, except those classified under No. 1 must be regarded as originally occurring in the soil which was used in the construction of the barrow and therefore likely to be of pre-barrow age. Some of the artifacts were of Early Bronze Age type, some of Mesolithic type and some were of indeterminate age.

When the cairn had been completely unearthed to the original ground level, PLATE III, and the broad cut to the same point, the cairn was dismantled stone by stone. The position of the central cist was marked by an unusually large diamond shaped slab of grit laid level, and bounded by smaller upright stones. This overlay a thick heavy almost square shaped slab of grit. This stone which rested on the original surface, was formed into a sealed dome over the cist by very complete luting, 3 inches in depth, of stiff red clay around all its sides. This stiff clay noticeably contained many flecks of charcoal throughout its mass. Between these two capstones one small bone and an empty snail shell occurred, brought there, it is conjectured, by some small burrowing animal. When the second thick capstone was removed the top of the cist was visible closed by a small slab set level with the original surface, whose opposite edges rested on ledges around the cist cavity. A small amount of opening into the cist not covered by the third capstone had been closed by two small slabs and stiff red clay luting.

The cist itself was a cavity in the original ground dug down to rock bottom, paved with three roughly fitting slabs of grit. It was situated slightly off the true centre line of the cairn.

In the cist cavity, by no means completely filling it, was a conical pile of cremated human bones with some admixture of



PLATE II. Stone Ring, ramped on south-west side

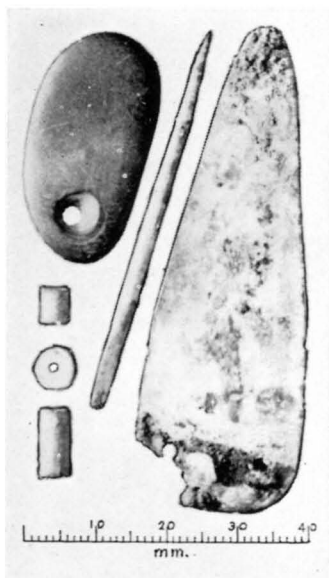


PLATE IV. Articles found in the Primary Cist

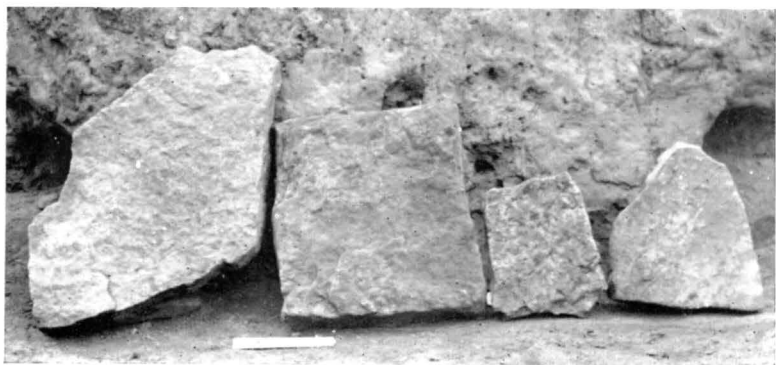


PLATE V. The Capstones

charcoal and carbonaceous matter. The cremated bones had doubtless been contained in a bag of some sort which had decayed away leaving no trace. With the bones there was recovered (PLATE IV):

1. A short bronze dagger which had once had a handle attached by two rivets, the handle was entirely gone.
2. A fine sharp pointed bronze pin or awl with a squared tang for a handle which also had gone. This would have been used for closing up the bag containing the remains.
3. A flat tabular shale amulet, long-shaped, with a suspension hole at one end bored from each face.
4. Three fossil encrinoid beads—2 long tubes and one of larger diameter, disc shaped.

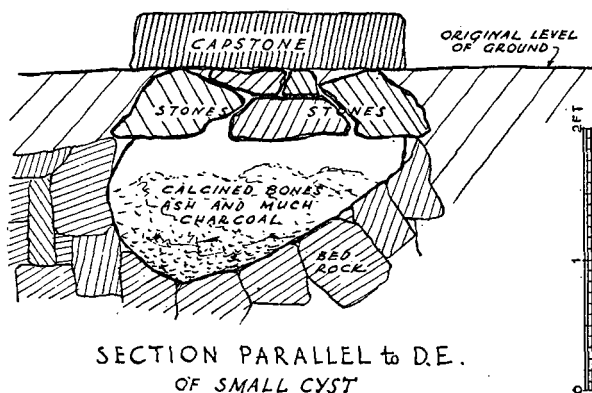


Fig. 6

The efficacy of the hermetic sealing up of the cist had caused both bronze implements to be bright and untarnished over most of their surfaces when taken out of the cist. They have since dulled considerably.

There was also a subsidiary cist, of the same age as the principal cist, since it was in the original ground and beneath the cairn. It was situated under the outer edge of the cairn eastward of the main cist and had only a small capstone,

covering a setting of some nine smaller stones flush with the original surface. This cist was practically cut out of the rock since at this point a ridge of limestone rock came to the original surface. It was decidedly undercut into the rock in a north-west direction and was filled with cremated bones with some admixture of charcoal and carbonaceous matter.

The measurements of the capstones and cists are:—

1st capstone, Main Cist	Lozenge shaped grit, long axis <i>c.</i> 50 inches, short axis <i>c.</i> 28 inches, thickness 5-5½ inches.
2nd capstone, Main Cist	Square shaped grit, sides 23, 25, 22 and 24 inches, thickness 5½-7 inches
3rd capstone, Main Cist	Squarish grit, sides 13, 15, 12 and 14 inches, thickness 4 inches.
(2 smaller grits 4 inches by 2½ inches also used with this capstone.)	

The sides of the main cist, which was roughly circular 1 foot 6 inches in diameter, were unlined earth, but its base was roughly paved with 3 grits, the main one about 14 inches across and two smaller oblong pieces.

Capstone of Subsidiary Cist	Roughly triangular grit, sides 18, 20 and 21 inches, thickness 4 inches.
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This subsidiary cist had an irregular opening, longest width 21 inches, shortest 16 inches and its greatest depth was about 1 foot. This cist did not yield anything besides calcined human remains, charcoal and carbonaceous matter nor was it sealed with red clay in the way the main cist was. Around it, however, when the original surface was cleared of cairn debris, a noticeable reddening of the surface soil was observed, especially on the westward side. Here also was some scatter of burnt bone chips and charcoal. These facts would seem to indicate that the cremation pyre took place at this point previous to the formation of the cists and cairn. All the capstones are so definite in shape and thickness and so very suitable for their several purposes that they would seem to have been intentionally cut and dressed for these purposes rather than merely selected.

The carbonaceous contents of the cist were almost entirely wood charcoals, but a few other items which did not come under this heading and appeared to be fruits were submitted to the British Museum (Natural History) and the following report on them was made by Dr Melderris:

- Nos. 1-3 Portions of the fruit of *Raphanus raphanistrum*, L. (white charlock)
 No. 4 A branchlet of a tree or bush.
 No. 5 *Prunus Avium*, L. (Bird Cherry)

All other specimens were also portions of the fruit of *R. raphanistrum* (including beaks).

DATA

BARROW OUTLINE

N. S. DIAM. 79'-3" RAD 39'-7½"
 W. E. DIAM 79'-4" RAD 39'-8"

FAIRLY TRUE CIRCLE

CENTRE OF HOLE IN CAIRN IS
 ABOUT 2'-3" FROM TRUE CENTRE

Fig. 7

The white charlock is very akin to the yellow charlock but occurs more in maritime regions. For a long time there has been some doubt as to whether it was an indigenous plant.¹ This doubt can now be resolved by its occurrence here in a barrow dating from the Early Bronze Age. It grows among corn, like its yellow relative, and this suggests that corn straw containing the ripened stalks of this plant may have been used to kindle

¹ Clapham, Tutin and Warburg, *Flora of the British Isles*, p. 165 (1952).

the cremation fires. If so, it also gives a pointer to the time of year when cremation was carried out, namely after the harvest had been reaped.

The examination of the cremated bones was undertaken by Mr Lionel Cowley, M.Sc., Assistant Keeper of Zoology, National Museum of Wales. He reported as follows:— 'The Main Primary Burial consists in my opinion of the remains of two individuals, an adult female and a very young child. The Subsidiary Primary Burial shows no duplication of bones and therefore consists of one adult. I am unable to say of which sex nor can I make any estimate of stature.'

To the question as to whether the Subsidiary Cist might contain the residue of the remains of the woman and child, Mr Cowley replied:— 'I don't think so. The remains from this Cist contained the two condyles of the lower jaw, for instance, and the Main Cist also contained one condyle of lower jaw; all three being in my opinion, adult.'

The presence of the bronze dagger with the cremated remains would seem to indicate that this was the burial of a chieftainess, who perhaps died in childbirth. Some Bronze Age barrows¹ have yielded female remains but whether there are sufficient such to denote the existence in some Bronze Age tribes of a matriarchal system of leadership is an open question. The contemporary subsidiary burial in the same barrow might, if we only knew the sex for certain, indicate the holocaust, compulsory or voluntary, of the chieftainess's consort on her demise.

The fossil encrinoid beads² might reasonably be taken as substantiating the zoological diagnosis of a female burial, for some more masculine symbol would surely have been expected had the remains been those of a chief.

The shale amulet³ is an unusual feature in Bronze Age

¹ See for instance, Savory, *Arch. Camb.* 187 (1940).

² N.B. Significance as 'poor man's faience segmented beads': if the encrinoid beads owe their fashion to faience segmented beads we have a chronological pointer, *i.e.* this burial was not earlier than *c.* 1300 B.C. (H.N.S.).

³ Compare the supposed axe amulets, flat stones perforated for suspension found in neolithic Monuments, *e.g.* *Unival P.S.A.Scot.*, LXXXII, p. 20 and Harristown, *Waterford J.R.S.A.I.*, (1941) pp. 137 f. (H.N.S.).

burials of this date. Such amulets have generally been found only in barrows of Neolithic Age and more rarely in the earliest ones of the Bronze Age. Professor Ian Richmond suggested that it might be an heirloom, a suggestion which if valid, would indicate a continuity from a more remote antiquity which is not strongly represented here locally, unless we go back as far as the Mesolithic Period.¹

It might, however, be taken as an indication of some sort of a link between the people on Tidenham Chase and the Neolithic inhabitants of western France in whose barrows these amulets have often been found.² It will be noticed that the amulet is slightly asymmetric in shape. As to whether the asymmetry is in any way intentional, it is sufficient to quote the considered opinion of Sir Cyril Fox who has examined the piece. 'The Tidenham amulet hangs' true when suspended through the hole in spite of its asymmetry; that is, the craftsman made the hole at the best point for this purpose, which was to make of a natural pebble, the closest copy possible of a formally shaped, symmetrically shaped, pendant.'

REPORT ON CHARCOALS

Dr F. W. Jane of the Royal Holloway College, University of London has examined fragmentary specimens of charcoals from different locations in the barrow and has reported as follows:—

From the barrow earth 8 feet from
Cairn centre at 3 feet depth

Probably *Birch* but specimens too fragmentary for absolute certainty.

From the barrow earth 16 feet from
Cairn centre at 2 feet 6 inches depth
From original ground level below cairn
found under a basal stone of the cairn.

Oak.

Ash but too fragmentary for complete accuracy.

¹ A very similar slate amulet was found in the Wilton zone, Southern Rhodesia, a zone which is definitely equated to our Mesolithic, Jones *Prehistory of Southern Rhodesia* (1949), p. 54.

² There is a display of such holed amulets in the Cartailhac Collection, Toulouse Museum, France.

From about 3 feet 6 inches depth in cairn	Uncertain: it may be from a <i>Roseaceous Plant</i> .
From near the bottom layer of cairn	<i>Oak</i> and other unidentifi- able fragments.
From below Capstone but above sealing stones of the Subsidiary Cist	<i>Oak</i> .
From the Main Cist mixed with the Cremated bones	<i>Oak</i> : also pieces of young twigs matching reasonably well with <i>Viburnum</i> . (Guelder Rose or Wayfaring tree)
From the Subsidiary Cist mixed with the Cremated bones	<i>Oak</i> .

REPORT ON THE POTTERY FRAGMENTS

By Dr H. N. Savory, Department of Archaeology, National Museum of Wales.

- a. This fragment is hardly true beaker ware, either in fabric surface colouring or decoration. On the other hand it is rather thin for a food-vessel or cinerary urn. I am inclined to suspect that it is from a rather poor Neolithic 'A' bowl or from one of those 'Secondary Neolithic' groups which merged with the beaker folk during the Early Bronze Age. I cannot make anything of the decoration.
- b. A difficult piece to place since one has little but the fabric to form a judgment by, and this if anything is suggestive of poor Neolithic 'A' rather than beaker. The carbonaceous speck is charcoal, no doubt from a piece of wood which got into the Clay and was baked with it—probably from oak wood.¹
- c. This sherd appears to come from the rim of a developed overhanging rim urn, probably of fairly early date (Early Middle Bronze Age c. 1400-1000 B.C.), since it is not markedly bevelled: two other sherds with their dark centre and brick-coloured surface seem closely related.

¹ View concurred in by Mr W. E. Howarth, Department of Geology and Mr H. A. Hyde, Department of Botany, National Museum of Wales.

- d. Another sherd is a rim-fragment, everted, with external bevel and internal hollow flange suggestive of a 'food-vessel'. The irregular and eroded surface of this small fragment makes calculation of the tilt and circumference of the rim hazardous: in South Wales 'food-vessels' are generally evolved and late and the horizon *c.* 1400-1200 B.C. is likely for the Tidenham fragments.

On looking over the sherds together I feel that they must represent the disturbance of occupation layers deposited near the site of the barrow in more than one period. Sherds (a) and (b) go together and with their dark ware and pitted surface seem to recall the Neolithic 'A' pottery of South Wales; there are no features of form or decoration apparent, however, which would confirm this.

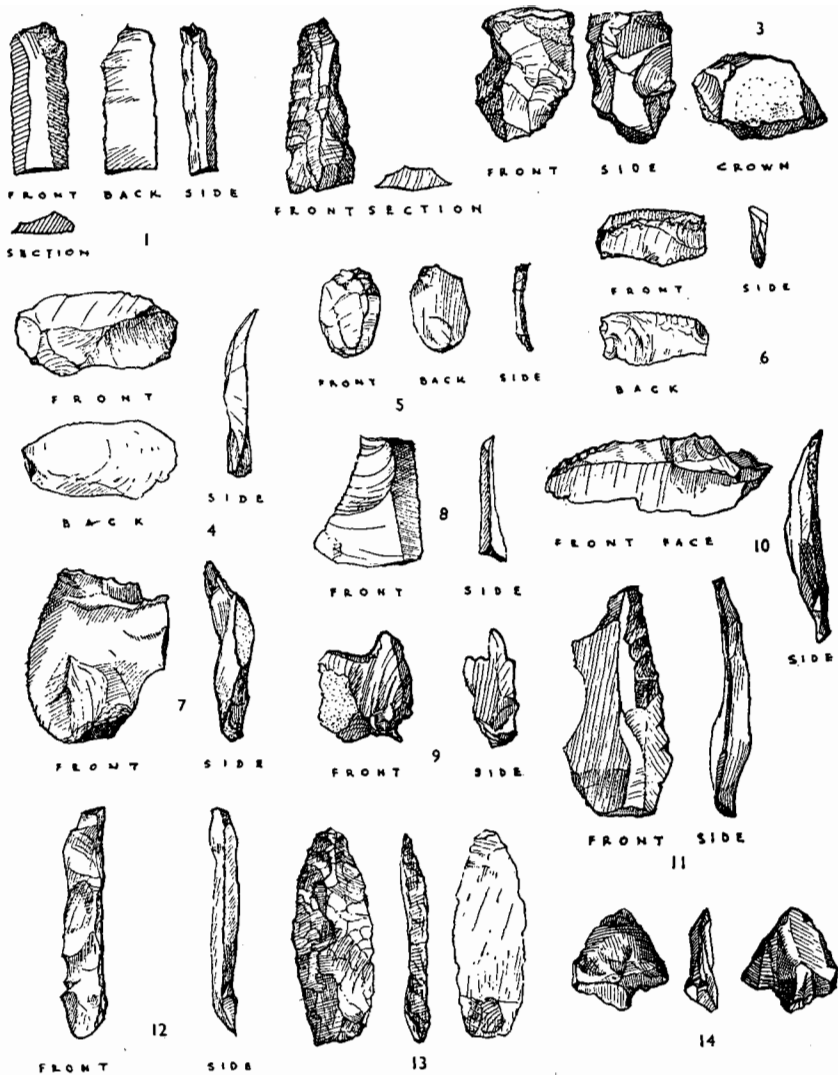
ARTIFACTS

A number of flint flakes and artifacts were found throughout the material of the barrow. As all of these were haphazardly positioned in the barrow it is fair to assume that they were gathered up with the soil collected from neighbouring occupation surfaces to form the mound.

Similar artifacts occur in the fields and lands of the Chase around the barrows, and for some thirty years Mr H. J. S. Burder of East Vaga, beside the barrow, has assiduously collected them. From this large collection of material samples of all the salient types were submitted to the British Museum for expert examination and Mr E. M. M. Alexander, Assistant Keeper Department of British and Medieval Antiquities has carried out the examination.

His observations and reports are as follows:—

'In the area surrounding the Bronze Age Barrow on Tidenham Chase a number of flint artifacts have been found from time to time. They are all surface finds and comprise not only specific implements but also a number of unworked flakes and blades, many of them broken; some show signs of use.



TIDENHAM CHASE

Fig. 8

1. Mesolithic. Microlithic back blade (broken).
2. Mesolithic. Butt end of microlithic blade, worked on one end.
3. Mesolithic core.
4. Mesolithic flake.
5. Microlithic end scraper.
6. Saw.
7. Mesolithic flake.
8. Small flake.
9. Mesolithic flake trimmed as a hollow scraper.
10. Probably Mesolithic.
11. Probably Mesolithic.
12. Probably Mesolithic small flake.
13. Planoconvex knife. Early Bronze Age.
14. Early Bronze Age arrowhead.

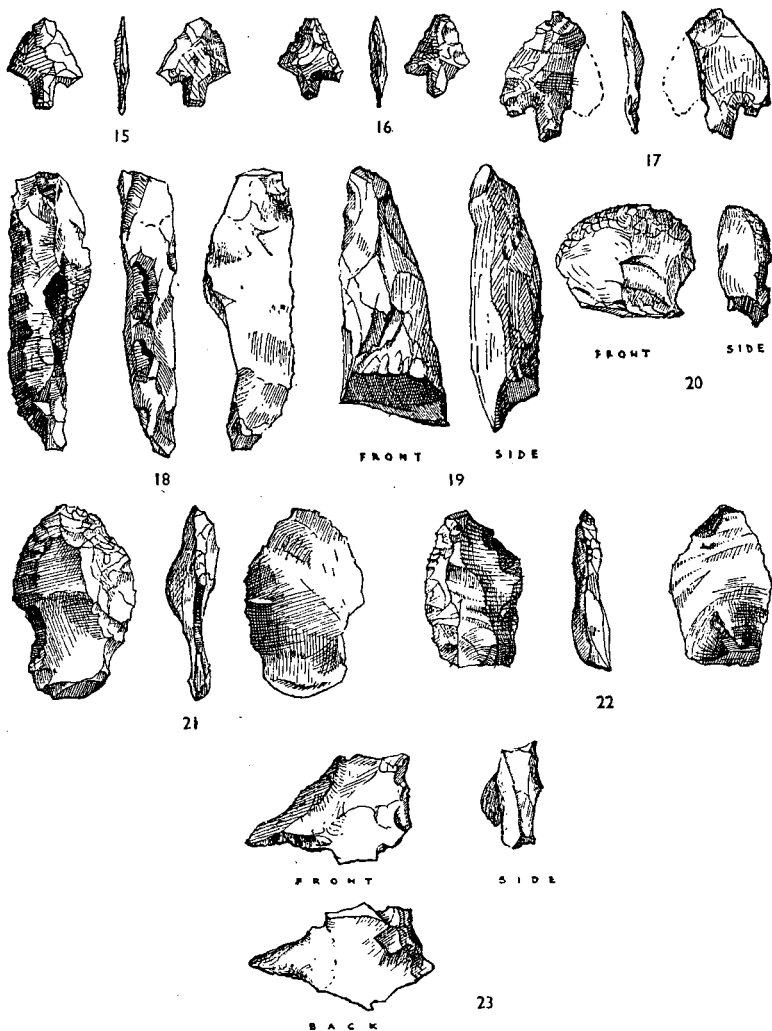


Fig. 9

15. Early Bronze Age straight barbed arrowhead.
16. Early Bronze straight barbed arrowhead.
17. Early Bronze Age circularly barbed arrowhead.
18. Early Bronze Age Fabricator, broken horizontally.
19. Early Bronze Age Fabricator, point only.
20. Early Bronze Age round scraper from the barrow earth.
21. Early Bronze Age trimmed point with shallow hollow worked on one edge at a later date.
22. Early Bronze Age trimmed point on side scraper.
23. A borer (barrow.) Indeterminate Age.

Surface finds of flint implements are always difficult to date satisfactorily and this difficulty is much increased when (as in the present case) the raw material is of inferior quality. Among the undoubted artifacts only a few can be assigned more or less definitely to a particular period. Many of the others may be of any period from the Mesolithic onwards. The implements which may be assigned to a particular period or culture are as follows:

Mesolithic:

Microlithic backed blade (broken) No. 1 Butt end of a microlithic blade worked on one edge. No. 2.

Five cores of Mesolithic type (Specimen found in the barrow. No. 3).

Mesolithic flake with no characteristic trimming, but shows signs of use. No. 4.

Microlithic end-scraper. No. 5.

Probably Mesolithic:

Saw; the non-serrated edge shows signs of use. No. 6.

Flake with nibbling re-touch. No. 7.

Small flake with nibbling re-touch on the bulbar face. No. 8.

Large flake which seems to have been trimmed as a hollow scraper. No. 9.

Flake with nibbling re-touch round a part of one edge. Looks like some implement in the making. No. 10

Blade with re-touch on one edge. No. 11.

Small flake with steep trimming at point. No. 12.

Some round scrapers.

(Nos. 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 have a microlithic look about them.)

Early Bronze Age:

Plano-convex knife. A good example. Although characteristic of the Early Bronze Age these knives have been found in late Neolithic contexts mostly in Scotland.¹ No. 13.

Four barbed and tanged arrowheads. These are definitely of the Early Bronze Age. Nos. 14-17. (No. 17 has rounded barbs).

Two fabricators—one broken horizontally. No. 18 and the point only of the other No. 19.

Thirteen thumb and round scrapers (Specimen found in the barrow. No. 20).

Trimmed point with shallow hollow worked on one edge at a later date. No. 22.

Trimmed point or side scraper, No. 22.

¹ See article on these knives by Prof. Grahame Clark. *Antiq. Journ.*, xii, 158 (1932), and *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, LXXXII, p. 234, (1947-8).

Neolithic:

Five cores are of Neolithic type, but nothing that can be assigned with certainty to the Neolithic has been noted.

General:

There are no leaf-shaped arrowheads, but many pointed flakes with little or no working; many untrimmed blades which show signs of wear on one edge; some small hollow scrapers of any period and a possible end-scraper also occur.

A borer, from the barrow, indeterminate, has the extreme tip worn with use. The trimming on both sides of the point is on the bulbar face which is unusual. No. 23.

CONCLUSIONS

'There are slight but undoubted traces of Mesolithic occupation of the area. It was also occupied in the Early Bronze Age. There are no absolutely certain signs of Neolithic occupation although this is very likely. The district may, however, turn out to be one of those in which the Bronze Age followed closely on the heels of the Mesolithic.'

Mr Alexander's diagnosis of the flint artifacts shows that while the Mesolithic and Early Bronze Ages are definitely represented there is a complete absence of any specimens of the typical Neolithic leaf arrowhead. Other types of Neolithic artifacts may be present but are not definitely identifiable as such. This is a significant deficiency, but still some slight support for the presence of Neolithic culture is derivable from Dr Savory's diagnosis of the two fragments,¹ a and b, of pottery from the barrow. These results show, however, that on this site the Neolithic period separating the Mesolithic and Early Bronze Age, if present, is very poorly represented and can only have been of very short duration.

Finally, I have to thank Dr H. N. Savory for the substantial interest he has taken in all this work; also all the other authorities who have furnished reports on particular subjects; and Mr D. V. Woodhead of Lydney for preparing the drawings.

¹ In an area like the Forest of Dean, Neolithic A.2 pottery might be of Early Bronze Age date. (H.N.S.).