

COMPARISON OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE BARROW FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES

APPENDIX 1

	Scheduled Monument entry	Original OS card	NMR Pastscape	Wiltshire HER	Grinsell's Arch. Gazeteer in VCH* Vol 1 p165 1957	Goddard WAM Vol 38 p221 (1913)
Name and ref.no.	Bowl barrow 400m west of Cooks Plantation. List Entry No. 1010133 (1925) SM 19037	North of the Old Bath Road – Cherhill 6; bowl barrow	BA bowl barrow Grinsell's Cherhill 6. North of the Old Bath Road. Monument No. 215627	NE of Knoll Down SMR No. SU06NE617	Cherhill No.6 N of Old Bath Road	Cherhill 6. Large bowl shaped barrow on Yatesbury boundary just N of Old Bath Rd with ditch running N.
Grid ref	SU0675269628	?	SU06746963	SU06746963	06746963	OM 27 SE
Description	Substantial bowl barrow. 30m in diameter, 3.4m high. The whole centre of the mound has been hollowed out and a concrete and brick second WW observation post has been built into the mound.... The ditch round the barrow survives as a buried feature some 3m wide.	28 paces by 8ft. A brick-built structure was inserted in the centre during the last war (Inspector's Report 1970) 30m diameter, 3.4m high. The centre is mutilated by a wartime defence post. A side bank of the Old bath Rd overlies the S. periphery (Inspector's Report 1973)	BA bowl barrow still extant as an earthwork mound. The centre has been mutilated by a World War Two defence post. A side bank of the Old Bath Rd overlies the S. periphery. 30m diameter 3.4m high.	BA bowl barrow damaged by wartime building. Side bank of Old Bath Rd overlies S. side.	28 paces diameter 8ft high. Brick-built structure inserted in centre 1939-45.	Large bowl shaped barrow on Yatesbury boundary just N of Old Bath Rd with ditch running N from it. Ref. to Smith's book (1885). NB <i>The Smith map '100 sq miles round Abury' shows the barrow with a ditch running N from it.</i>
Archaeological work/finds	"Finds made in the barrow when the pill-box was built included fragments of human bone and fragments of shale and BA pottery, including an intact beaker."	"Beaker sherds, MBA sherds, fragments of shale, male forearm bone and human teeth found superficially by O.Meyrick."	"Beaker sherds, MBA sherds, fragments of shale, male forearm bone and human teeth found superficially by O.Meyrick."	"O.Meyrick found a beaker, MBA sherds, shale fragments and human bone superficially". Ref."Devizes Museum 1984.100.21"	"Beaker sherds, MBA sherds, fragments of shale, male forearm bone and human teeth found by O.Meyrick superficially."	"Opened, no record" <i>(Not clear if this means it was opened but there's no records or that there's no record of it being opened)</i>

COMMENTS ON THE INFORMATION GIVEN ABOUT THE FINDS IN THE TABLE ABOVE

What is said to have been found

- Two of the sources of information shown in the table above – the Scheduled Monument entry and the Wiltshire HER – include ‘**an intact beaker**’/‘**a beaker**’ in their lists of finds. The other three main sources list **Beaker sherds** not a whole beaker.
- All the sources mention **BA/MBA sherds**
- All the sources mention fragments of **shale**
- All the sources mention **human bone** – described as a male forearm bone in three of the sources.
- Three of the sources mention **human teeth**

How and when found

Four of the sources say the finds were made by O. Meyrick ‘superficially’ but give no date. Presumably the ‘superficially’ implies surface finds as opposed to any sort of excavation.

The Scheduled Monument entry does not mention O. Meyrick and says the finds were made “when the pill-box was built”.

Owen Meyrick’s annotated OS six inch maps and a hardback notebook described by him as ‘Wiltshire Archaeological Sites (Revised 1969)’ are held by WANHS at the Museum in Devizes. His entry for the barrow reads:

“Site 21
Cherhill/Yatesbury Down: Round Barrow Cherhill 6 (Goddard)
XXVII SE
Beaker: *4 ornamented sherds thrown up from a badger sett, also one rim and other sherds.*
MBA: *Several sherds (1 orn.) 1 base with orn. underneath.*
Also bone of forearm (male) and teeth; 2 fragments of burnt shale (?)
RB: *2 or 3 small sherds*
Barrow previously opened, no record.”

Where are the finds

Owen Meyrick collected material from excavations and fieldwalking over several decades including the 1930s and 40s. Some of the material he gave to WANHS during his lifetime. Other material has come to WANHS via Marlborough College and in the form of a collection left to the Society on his death in 1983.

In WAM Vol. 81 (1987) pp. 7-18 there is an article by Gill Swanton about the donated Owen Meyrick collection. She lists the material in the collection using Meyrick’s site numbers and for each site compares what is in the collection with what is listed in his site register.

Site 21 is described as *Cherhill (parish) SU 06746963 around barrow Ch. 6* and the material for this site as:

- 7 Beaker sherds
- 1 EBA sherd
- 1 unidentified sherd
- 1 RB sherd
- 2 burnt shale fragments
- Missing – bone and teeth

More recently (2010-11) the Meyrick collection has been accessioned and recorded on the WANHS collections database. Meyrick's finds from Cherhill barrow 6 (SU 06746963) are recorded as follows:

- DZSWS:1984.100.5 5 body sherds of Beaker pottery (with impressed cord and combed decoration)
- DZSWS:1984.100.6 4 sherds of BA undecorated pottery
- DZSWS:1984.100.7 1 possible rim sherd of RB pottery
- DZSWS:1984.100.8 2 pieces of burnt shale

There is no date recorded for when Meyrick found this material.

So it seems the finds were made by Meyrick 'around' the barrow, including from a badger sett; the human bone and teeth have gone missing; and he never recorded having found a whole beaker.

Where has the idea of a whole beaker being found (as stated on the Scheduled Monument entry and on the Wilts HER) come from?

There are three possibilities:

1. A whole beaker was found when the 'observation post' was built into the barrow (ie. nothing to do with Meyrick) but, if so, a) where was it recorded and b) where is it now? It's definitely not with WANHS.
2. The Scheduled Monument file for the scheduling of the barrow in 1925 also covers another barrow – bowl barrow NE of White Horse Plantation (SM 19036, List Entry No. 1010134) – although they were later split into two records. Perhaps the beaker belonged to this second barrow. But the records (Pastscape, HER, etc) for this second barrow do not mention a whole beaker, just two Beaker sherds found in a rabbit scrape in 1949.
3. A confusion could have arisen because of the way Goddard lists the barrows in Cherhill in his list of barrows in WAM Vol.38 (1913). Directly under the Cherhill 6 barrow entry is another entry with no number so it almost looks as if they are one entry not two. The entry for this unnumbered barrow says: "*Barrow opened at Cherhill 1835. Pottery, bones, urn, and large pair of ox horns. Jackson's Aubrey, 40; Devizes Gazette, Oct 25th 1835.*" The 'Jackson's Aubrey' reference is in *Wiltshire Collections* (1862) where in the section in which Aubrey writes about Cherhill, Jackson has added a lengthy footnote which includes the following: "*On*

opening a barrow here a quantity of substances, moss, etc encrusted by a petrifying spring, British pottery, bones, an urn, and a very large pair of ox horns were discovered in 1835 (Devizes Gazette, October 25th)." Could the 'urn' mentioned here have become the 'beaker' of the Cherhill 6 barrow via the misreading of the Goddard list?

Explanation 1) seems very unlikely; explanation 2) is apparently proved incorrect; and explanation 3), on investigation, compounds the muddle. There is an article by Maud Cunnington in WAM Vol.47 (1935-37) called 'The horns of urus said to have been found in a barrow at Cherhill.' A Urus is an extinct ox. In the article MC says that William Cunnington wrote in WAM Vol.4 that the horns had been found in a barrow in Cherhill in 1833 together with pottery, bones, antler, etc. But, MC says that letters and manuscripts belonging to WC that have come to light clearly show the remains weren't found in a barrow but in a river deposit. She refers to the fact that Jackson also peddles the story (see above) and that he says it was in 1835 and that there was also an urn. MC says: "*This is the only mention of an 'urn' and it doubtless is fictitious. It is also mentioned as from a barrow by Canon Goddard in 1913 (WAM 38 p.221).*"

Conclusion

The records are confusing and contradictory. The balance of probability suggests:

- The only recorded finds from the barrow were those found by Owen Meyrick and they were surface finds from 'around' the barrow comprising pottery sherds, bone and shale.
- There never was an 'intact beaker'.
- If any artefacts were found when the WW2 structure was built, either they weren't recorded or they were recorded in War Department files somewhere.
- Some of the official records of the barrow contain errors.

* in table VCH - Victoria County History