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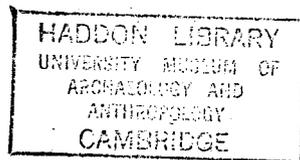
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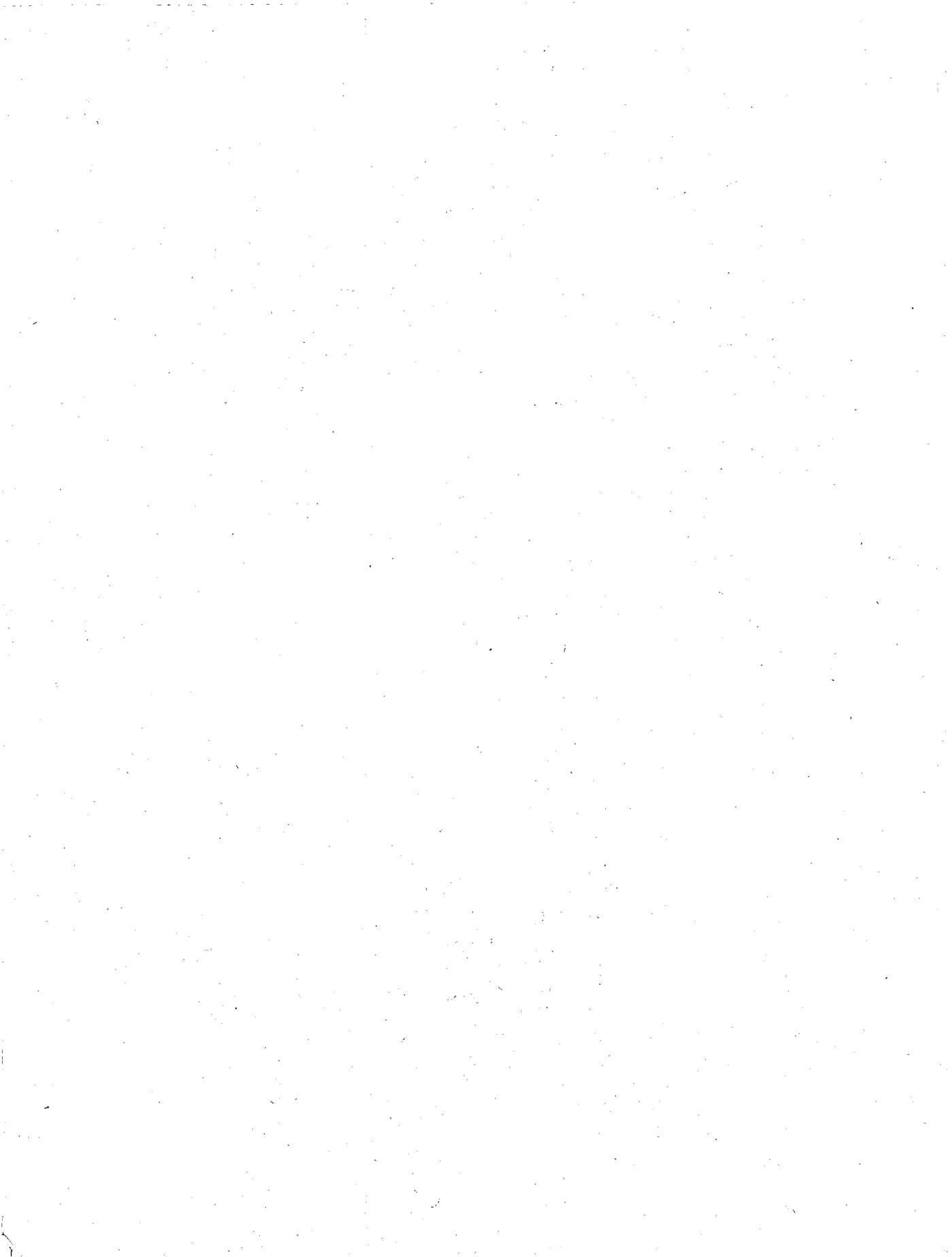
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## EXCAVATIONS AT BRAMPTON, HUNTINGDONSHIRE, 1966

D. A. WHITE

### INTRODUCTION

THE excavations described in this paper were undertaken by the writer on behalf of the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate, Ministry of Public Building and Works for four weeks during September and October 1966. The site had been bought by the Huntingdon R.D.C. who were planning to develop it for housing. In giving their consent for excavation to take place the council stipulated that trenches should not exceed 18 inches in depth anywhere on the site in case this disturbed house foundations when the area was developed, probably in 1968. This stipulation was rigidly enforced for the last fortnight of the excavations and restricted most of the work to stripping topsoil and plotting features cut into the bed rock deposits.

Figure 1 shows the geographical location of the site at Brampton and its association with other Bronze and Iron Age sites in the Ouse Valley. The sites are situated close to the River Ouse mostly below the 50' O.D. contour. This area was presumably relatively free of dense forest in the prehistoric period, enabling relatively easy movement of population and flocks and affording opportunities for primitive agriculture and for building settlements and funerary monuments. Bronze Age activity in the Ouse Valley appears restricted to the area upstream of Huntingdon, although the Alconbury Brook possibly afforded a route northwards to the Fenland Edge. Iron Age settlers, however, penetrated east of the Godmanchester water meadows up to St Ives and Earith. The proximity of the Fens here indicates that the present area lies on the borders of the inhabited area. The general pattern of distribution is similar to the one found by extensive aerial survey in the Warwickshire Avon.<sup>1</sup>

The site at Brampton (G.R. 204713)<sup>2</sup> lies at an approximate height of 43 ft above sea level. The bedrock consists of drift deposits which vary over the site. In the northwest corner of the field (Fig. 2, no. 1) one encounters soft sand alternating with small patches of more clayey deposits of alluvium. In the centre of the field the subsoil was more amenable to locating archaeological features, consisting of a regular gravel layer. The topsoil humus was 12-15 in. deep and represented the regular action of the plough. Below this there lay 6 in. of a brownish and featureless soil, part of the topsoil complex. The whole area was crossed by a series of mole drains down to 18 in. which had caused further damage to archaeological features. Generally it was necessary to clear down to 16 in. before the clearest archaeological features

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Jour.* CXXI, 1 (1965).

<sup>2</sup> Ref. 1" O.S. Tourist map, Cambridge.

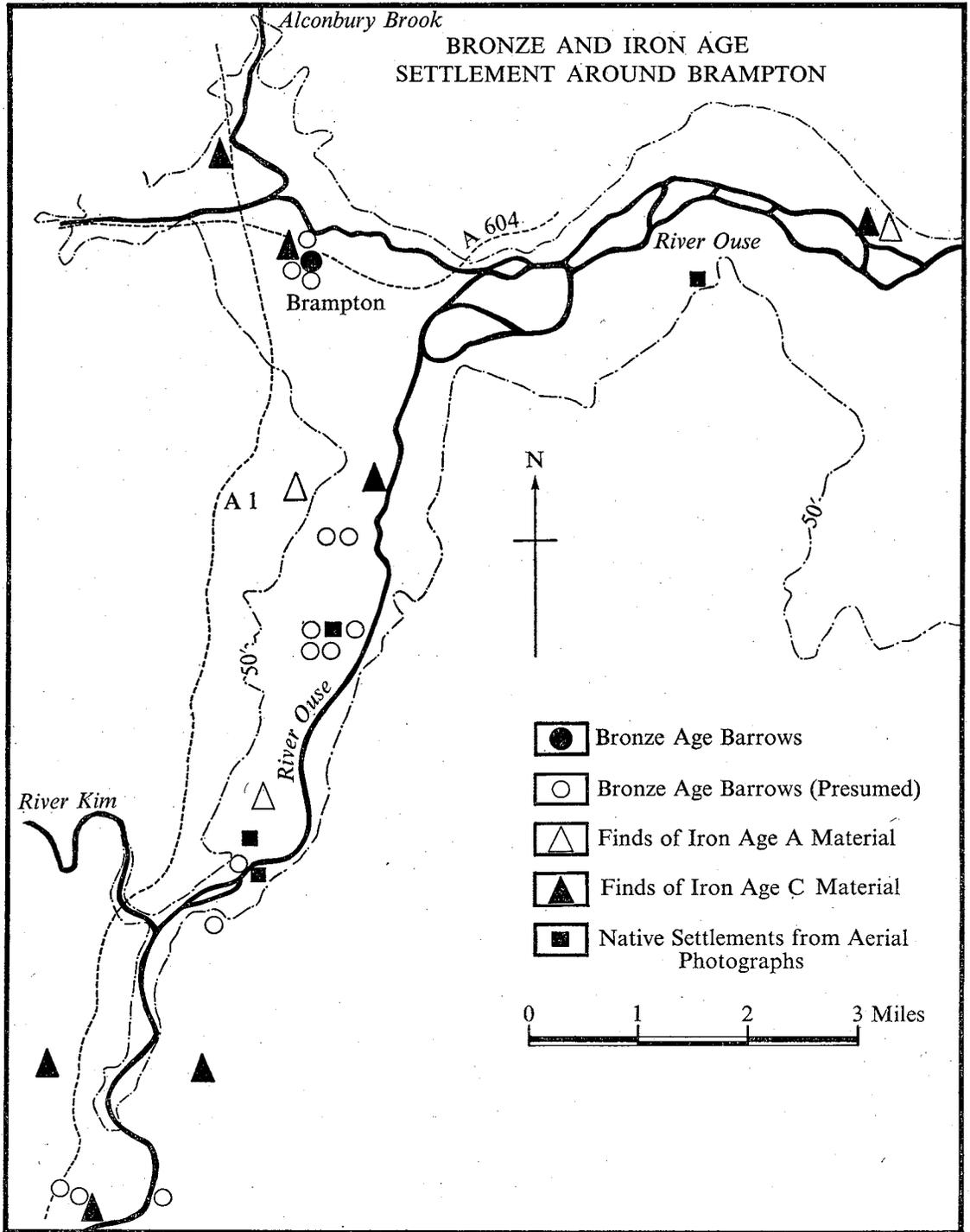


Fig. 1

began to show and at least down to 18 in. before a general feature plan emerged. Most of this topsoil was removed with the back-acter bucket of a mechanical digger from which the teeth had been removed. A skilled operator could dig a flat-bottomed trench which could be easily cleaned but this required considerable scraping before

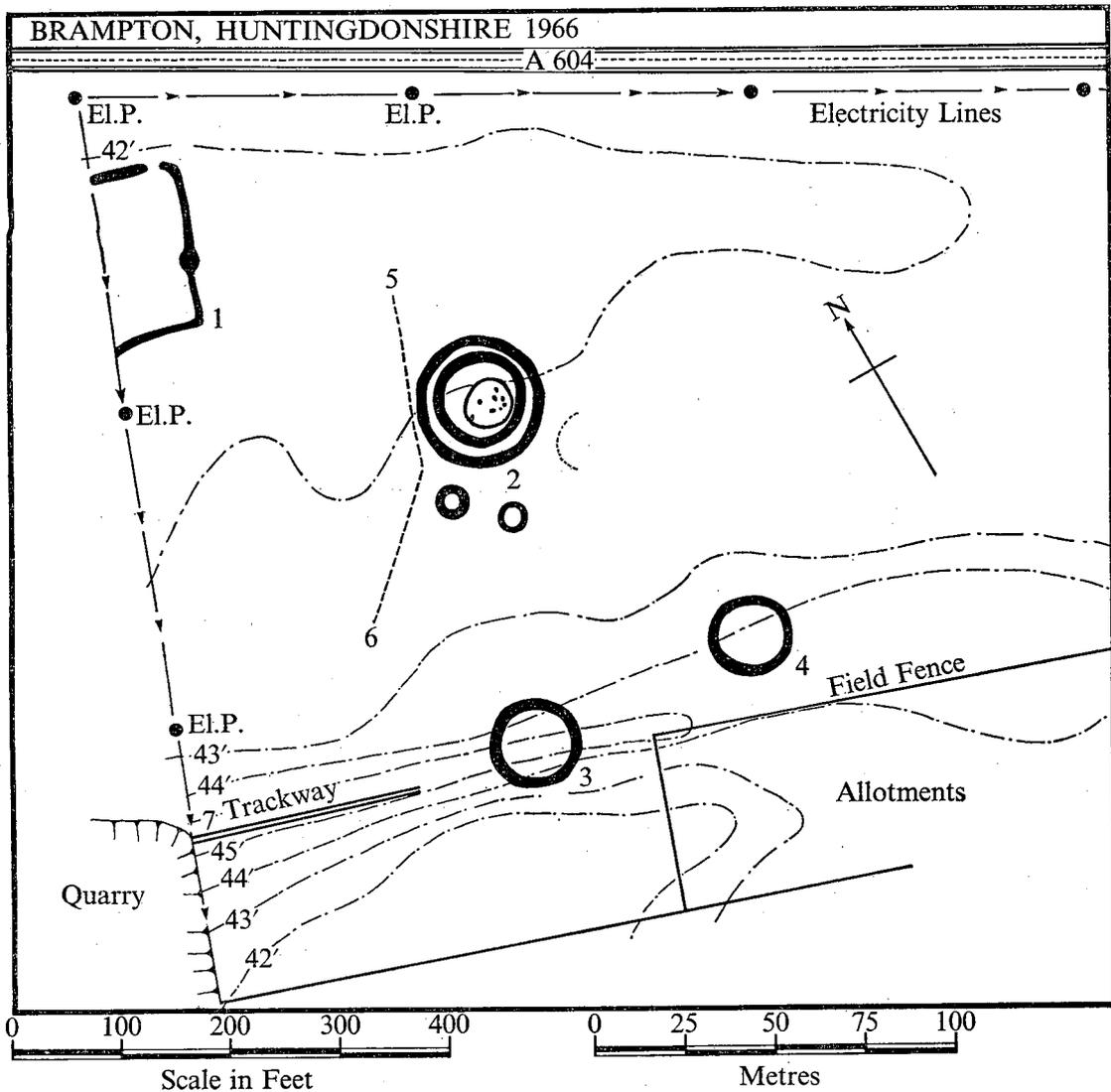


Fig. 2

archaeological features could be seen in the trenches. In more tractable subsoils such as chalk, a similar machine can dig a clean trench in which most of the features become immediately apparent.

The soil pH was low, around 5.8; it was generally free draining and this, combined with its acidity, meant that finds were not well preserved. Generally bone had

been completely dissolved away; all that was left was the enamel of teeth, although cremation fragments remained. Most potsherds were found in a very soft condition and there was no trace of any metal or even stains.

A general plan of the site is given in Fig. 2 and an aerial view is shown in Plate I. The two most important features of the site are a complex of ring ditches (Fig. 2, nos. 2, 3 and 4) and an enclosure with an entrance (Fig. 2, no. 1). This enclosure and two of the ring ditches were examined during the present excavations, as being possibly the most noteworthy earthworks in the field. Two other features are visible on the photographs. One is a pit alignment<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 2, nos. 5 to 6) which butts on to the north-western side of the double ring ditch complex and has a 45° corner. It is indistinct in Plate I but shows up clearer in other photographs in the Cambridge University Collection.<sup>2</sup> The other feature is a track (Fig. 2, no. 7) which runs from the corner of the allotments over to a derelict quarry. This was sectioned and shown to have a hard gravel surface 2 in. thick and 10 ft broad. No evidence was found in this section to date this track.

#### THE RING DITCH COMPLEX

Five ring ditches without entrances can be seen in Plate I, and their positions are plotted on Fig. 2. In the centre of the field there is a large double ring ditch whose outer ditch is 110 ft in diameter. To the south are two smaller rings 20 ft across, and there are two other rings (Fig. 2, nos. 3 and 4) which are about 100 ft and 75 ft in diameter respectively. Other aerial photographs show at least two similar earthworks within half a mile of the site. The balance of available evidence<sup>3</sup> shows that these features mark the position of round barrow ditches and none of the results of the present excavation disputed this conclusion. The ring ditches suggest the presence of a barrow cemetery in this area. Barrow cemeteries have been found elsewhere on gravel soil, for instance at Radley in Berkshire.<sup>4</sup> The cemetery at Radley is of the linear variety such as the well-known groups at Winterbourne Stoke and Normanton; the barrow group at Brampton is dispersed.<sup>5</sup>

A general plan of the area stripped over the ring ditches in the centre of the site is shown in Fig. 3. A preliminary trench 10 ft in width (Fig. 3, no. 4) was cleared by machine and hand to section the large double ring (Fig. 3, no. 1) and the westerly of the two smaller rings immediately to the south (Fig. 3, no. 2). On clearing the topsoil above this smaller ring a patch of charcoal 1 ft in diameter was found (Fig. 3, no. 5), which on clearing revealed the base of a small urn containing cremation fragments. The upper part of the urn had clearly been removed by the plough, leaving only the bottom 2 in. of the pot with a plain base 5 in. in diameter. The fabric of the pot was black inside and buff on the outside and the cremated remains were

<sup>1</sup> R.C.H.M., *A Matter of Time* (H.M.S.O. 1960).

<sup>2</sup> For example photograph no. YD 73.

<sup>3</sup> *A Matter of Time*.

<sup>4</sup> *Oxoniensia*, XIII, I (1948).

<sup>5</sup> P. Ashbee, 'The Bronze Age Round Barrows in Britain' (Phoenix House, London, 1960), p. 34.

those of an adult individual (see Appendix A). Nothing more of significance could be gained from the surviving sherds. The burial was placed just inside the ring ditch and is presumably a secondary interment. When cleared, the ring ditch was shown to be

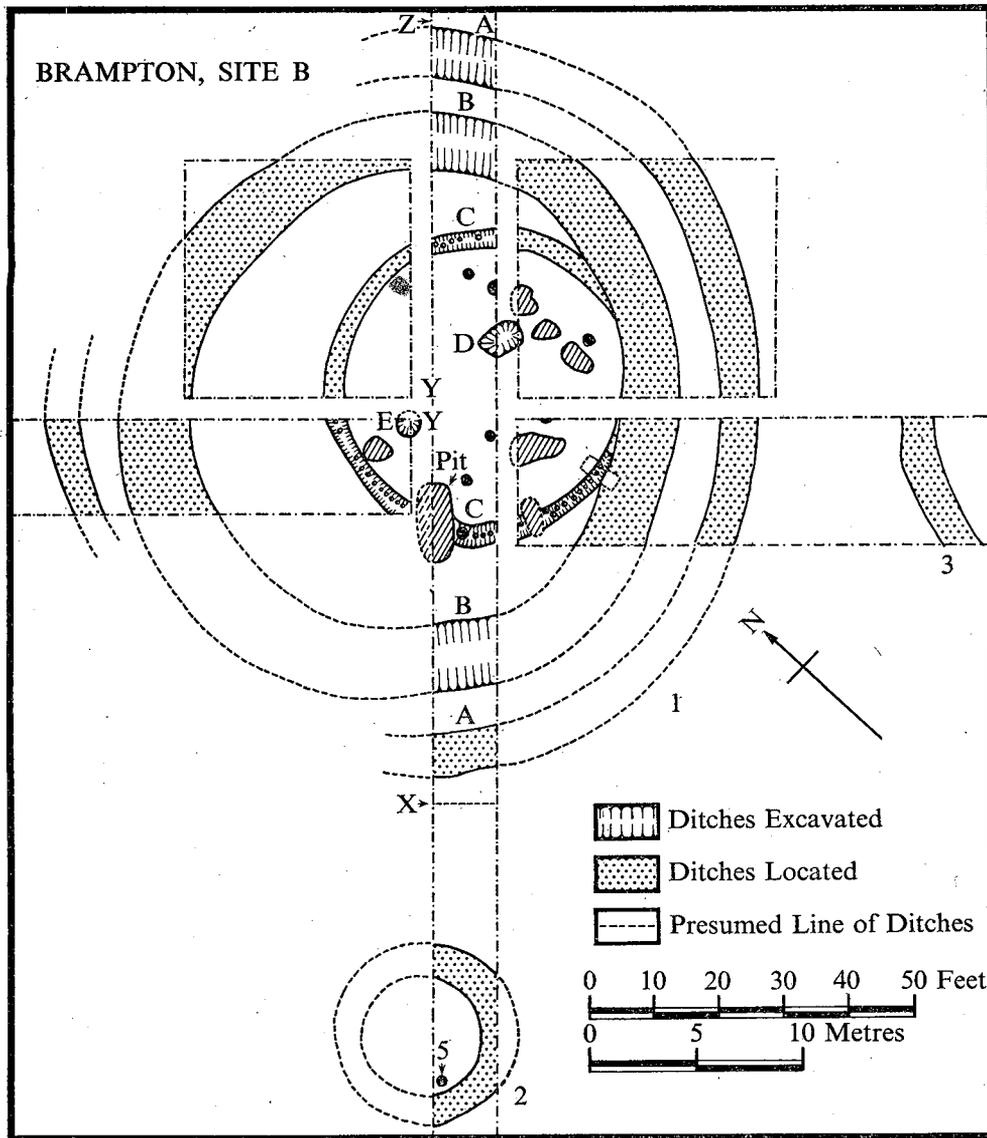


Fig. 3

about 5 ft wide, but due to the '18-inch' stipulation the ditch could not be sectioned. However, probing suggested that the ditch was U-shaped in profile and that its bottom was about 3ft 6 in. below the topsoil surface. Since there was a good gravel subsoil the probe traverse is likely to have roughly indicated the profile of the ring ditch.

Four other trenches were opened up over the centre of the large double ring and the south-easterly of these contained the segment of another circular ditch about 3 ft 0 in. deep (probe), Fig. 3, no. 3. This may be traces of another barrow just to the east of the large one. No sign of it appears on any aerial photograph of the area.

### *The Double Ring Ditch*

This is a very prominent feature on the aerial photograph (Plate 1). There are two large, concentric, almost circular ditches, with the inner one appearing the larger on the aerial photograph. There is a small circular ditch inside the inner ring which touches the latter on its eastern sector. Inside the large rings there is evidence of several pits. Double ring ditches have been reported from a number of other locations<sup>1,2,3</sup>, and a triple ring is known from an aerial photograph taken in the valley of the Warwickshire Avon.<sup>2</sup> A general view of the site from the south-east is given in Plate II *a* and a plan in Fig. 4.

### *Section across the Ring Ditches*

It was planned to examine a complete section of the ring ditches. This was impossible due to the conditions laid down by the Huntingdon R.D.C. which affected work towards the end of the excavation. Before the ban on deep excavation became effective a complete box section was cut in the northern segment of both ring ditches. This involved cutting a trench by machine about 5 ft deep and removing the natural gravel between the two ditches. This enabled rapid examination of the two ditches and would have been followed by hand clearing of sections of the southern segments of the rings.

The box section is shown in Fig. 5 (A to B). The outer ditch is slightly smaller than the inner one though not as small as one might be led to suppose from the aerial photograph. The reason is due to the difference in the fills of both ditches. The inner ditch appears to have been filled in naturally over the years whereas the outer has a gravel fill in its upper levels below which there is a distinct stabilization line. Below the turf line in the outer ditch there are a series of gravel tip lines and one of these (Fig. 5, I) is cut into by the northern side of the inner ditch. One is led to conclude that the inner ditch is the most recent and marks a phase in reconstruction of the barrow, probably for secondary use. A start was made in sectioning the inner ring ditch in a southern sector (Fig. 5, G); a few fragments of cinerary urn type ware were found in this trench, in the gravel tip line on the bottom of the ditch.

### *Small Inner Ring and Palisade* (Fig. 5, C)

This small ring was about 2 ft 6 in. wide and cut a foot into the natural gravel. It is clearly far too small in cross-section to be the ditch of a barrow and its regularity in size throughout its length is evidence that it was completed. When its eastern

<sup>1</sup> *A Matter of Time.*

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Journ.* cxxi, 1 (1965).

<sup>3</sup> *Oxoniensia*, xi and xii, 5.

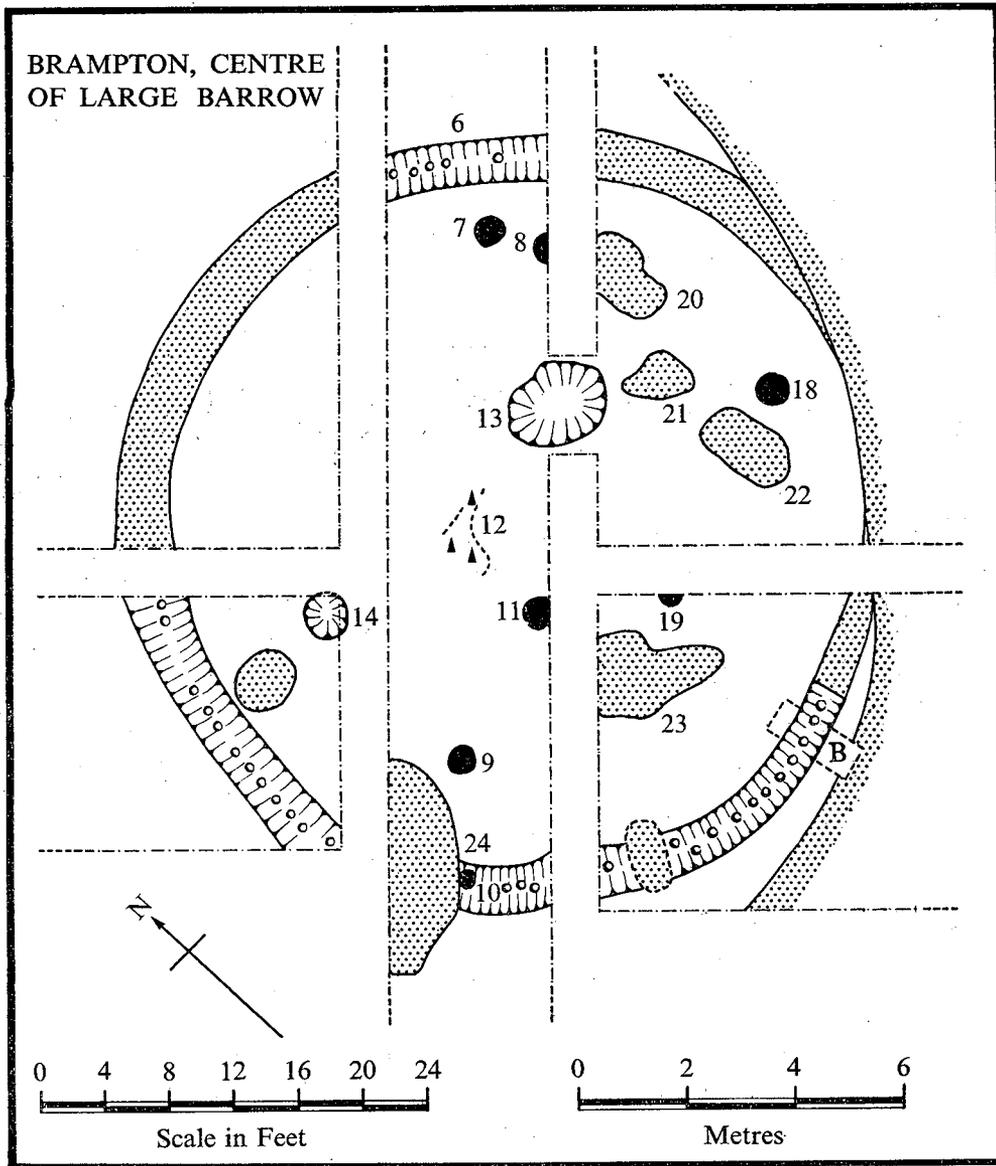


Fig. 4

section was cleared (Fig. 4) the bottom was found to have regular soft patches which were particularly noticeable after rain. When cleared out they revealed a pattern of stake holes (Plate II *b*); the diameters of the holes varied from 3 to 5 in., and they were from 7 in. in depth. They appeared to be placed 10 in. to 1 ft apart and were found in the other segments of the ditch that were excavated. No datable finds were made in the filling of the ditch. Cows' teeth were found in the northern segment (Fig. 4, no. 6).

The eastern segment of this feature was obliterated in the plan view by the inner of the large ring ditches (Fig. 3, B). This is strong evidence that the palisade trench was built before the second ring ditch. To establish the relationship by sectioning proved impossible due to the 18-inch stipulation. However a small box section (Fig. 4, B) was cut, revealing a tip line of the main inner ring falling down over the palisade. This further strengthens the assumption that the inner ring ditch is a secondary feature on the site.

'Palisade' trenches similar to the one found at Brampton are reported from

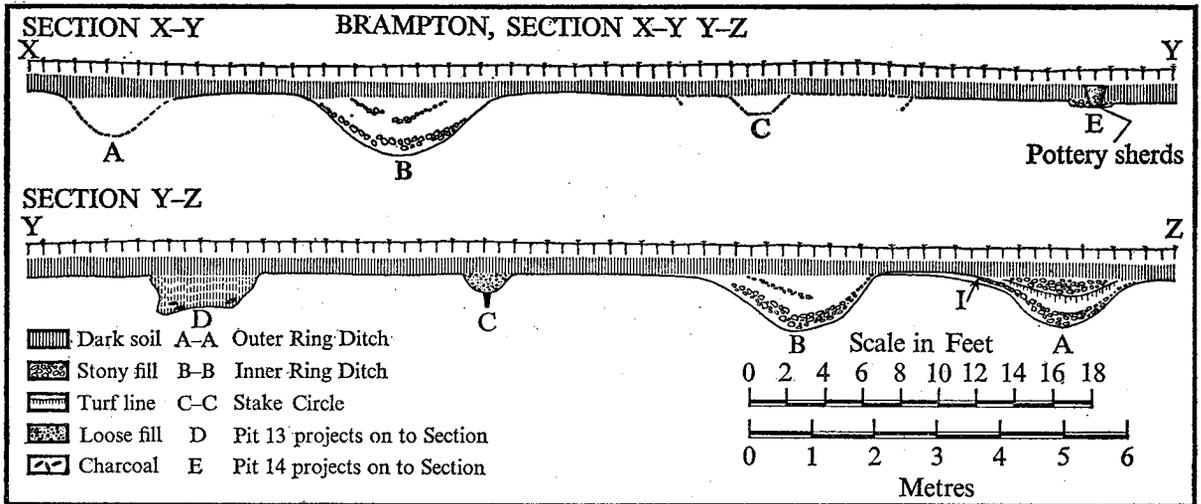


Fig. 5

Letterston, Pembrokeshire.<sup>1</sup> These examples fall into Ashbee's category B 2,<sup>2</sup> that is narrow-spaced stake holes set into a footing trench. Other barrows in this part of East Anglia have been found to contain stake circles. These are situated at Snailwell<sup>3</sup> and at Chippenham<sup>4</sup> in Cambridgeshire. Neither of these examples parallels the palisade ring at Brampton.

#### *Post holes within the Barrow*

During fine weather in the early part of the excavation, the gravel in the trenches dried out and revealed the ditches and pits clearly as damper patches. Two post holes (Fig. 4, nos. 7 and 8) appeared in this manner near the north sector of the palisade. They were situated about 6 ft apart. Four other definite post holes were found during the course of the excavation (Fig. 4, nos. 9, 10, 11 and 18). The sections of these features are shown in Fig. 6 and the numbers correspond to those of Fig. 4. Four of these post holes (nos. 7, 8, 9 and 11) appeared to be similar in size and about 20 in.

<sup>1</sup> H. N. Savory, *Arch. Camb.* c (1949), p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> *Proc. C.A.S.* XLII, 30.

<sup>2</sup> P. Ashbee, *op. cit.* p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* xxxvi, 134.

across with well-pronounced ghost holes for the posts which would have been approximately 10 in. in diameter. Post hole 10 was set into the 'palisade'; it was also probably 10 in. in diameter, but its ghost is a stony fill which suggests that it was removed rather than rotted *in situ*. Post hole 18 differed from 7, 8, 9 and 11 by having considerable quantities of charcoal in its ghost hole which indicates that it may have been burned *in situ*. The charcoal showed that the original post was oak. Post hole 19 was a small, rather nebulous feature about 15 in. in diameter and 3 in. deep. It is probably the remains of the base of a post hole.

## BRAMPTON, POST HOLE SECTIONS

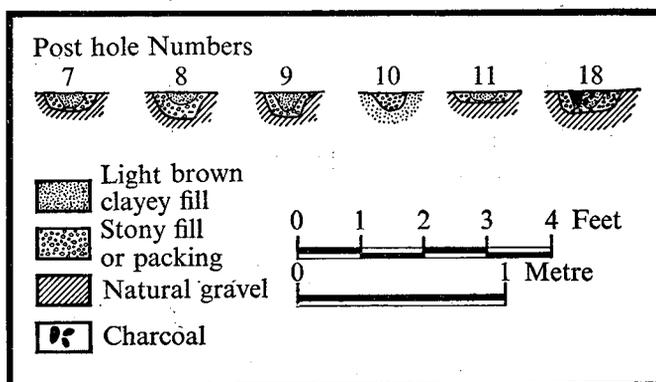


Fig. 6

After the discovery of post holes 7 and 8, it was hoped to link them up with others in the immediate neighbourhood, but this was not the case; the six post holes do not apparently form any coherent structure. A similar sort of post-hole assemblage appears to have been found in Barrow A at Chippenham, Cambs.,<sup>1</sup> though the report is not too clear on their actual nature. Isolated post holes are also known from other barrows. One at Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire<sup>2</sup> is set near a cremation and is possibly a marker, another in a similar location is set into a dry stone sarsen retaining bank in a barrow in Wiltshire.<sup>3</sup> In the present barrow there are two, possibly seven burials, so that the hypothesis that each post is related to a burial cannot be entirely ruled out. On the other hand only no. 18 is a probable centre post for a cremation pyre since such a post would in all likelihood have charred down to the bottom.

*Pits within the 'Palisade'*

Seven pits were located within the 'palisade' (Fig. 4, numbers 13, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24). One of the pits, no. 24, is in fact cut into the 'palisade'. Only pits 13 and 14, excavated in the first half of the dig, were properly examined. The others were

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. C.A.S.* xxxvi, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxoniensia*, x, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> *P.P.S.* xxxii, p. 122.

simply cleaned over the surface and planned and a few specks of charcoal were noted in the top layer of the pit (Fig. 4, no. 22). There are seven pits and possibly seven post holes within the 'palisade', yet no post hole seems definitely connected with a pit or is placed contiguous to one.

Pits 14 and 13 produced positive evidence of burials and presumably the other five pits would have yielded the same evidence. Pit 14 (section shown in a projected view in Fig. 5), was a circular and rather shallow feature  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft in diameter and cut 6 in. into the bedrock gravel. In it was placed a large cinerary urn of the primary series (Fig. 7, no. 1). The rim of the urn had been removed by the plough. The urn contained a quantity of charcoal, cremated bones of an adult? female (see Appendix A) and the tip of an arrowhead (Fig. 7, no. 2).

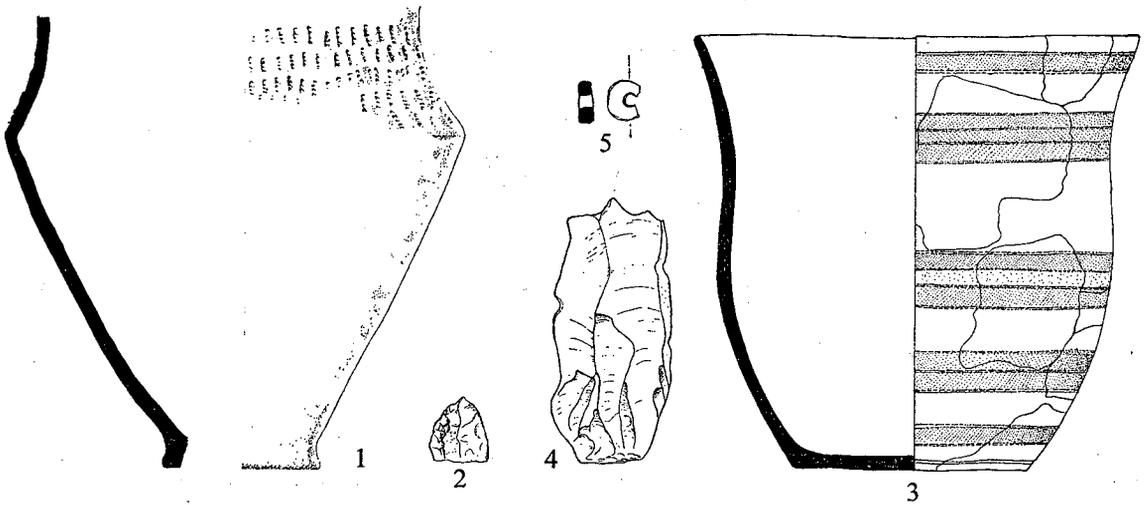


Fig. 7. Brampton barrow: 1. Bronze Age urn (scale  $1/6$ ); 2. Flint arrow; 3. Beaker; 4. Flint blade; 5. Amber bead (all scale  $1/3$ ).

Pit 13, also shown as a projection on Fig. 5, was cut 2 ft. into the natural gravel and had large quantities of charcoal in the bottom 6 in. of fill. The charcoal was entirely oak. The pit was oval, about 5 ft across, and its bottom was flat though the southern part was cut into the side of the pit. Hard against the northern wall a mass of light red clay was found. This was the remains of a beaker (Fig. 7, no. 3). Ground consolidation and acid soil had combined to squash the vessel flat. A bead (Fig. 7, no. 5) made of amber was found in the vicinity of the pot, and a flint blade (Fig. 7, no. 4) lay in the centre of the mass of clay. The whole of the vessel and associated remains were removed in one piece by cutting a large lump of the bedrock gravel below the red clay as reinforcement and lifting the pot and gravel on a tray. Dr D. L. Clarke kindly examined the reconstruction of the beaker and made the following report:

The sherds of the beaker clearly indicate a fine example of the 'maritime' variant of the European beaker group (E). The decorative zones are defined by cord but filled in by very fine oblique

comb (dentated blade?) impressions; the trend towards zone contraction is apparent and emphasized by grouping the decorated zones in twos and threes to form broad zones. Although zone contraction does provide a rough chronological seriation for Bell beakers one must balance this 'prototypical' feature against the 'archaic' use of cord zoning and the 'modal' low, broad silhouette exhibited in the reconstruction—bearing in mind that contemporary assemblages of such vessels variously integrate archaic, modal and prototypical attributes. The Brampton vessel would therefore appear to be an ordinary member of the 'maritime' assemblage, a regional variant of the over-all European Bell beaker group (E). The very extensive series of carbon dates at Vlaardingen, Oldesloe, and Oostwoud give a narrow horizon for the Dutch/German 'maritime' assemblage c. 1950–1900 B.C. and one would expect the Brampton burial to fit into this chronological band.<sup>1</sup>

The closest geographical and morphological parallel to the Brampton vessel is the superb 'maritime' beaker, 'maritime' bowl and undecorated beaker found together with the primary burial in a barrow at Mol, Lommel, on the Dutch/Belgian border; only a little more distant taxonomically are the Vlaardingen 'maritime' beakers themselves.<sup>1,2</sup> The Mol assemblage partially illustrates the range of the domestic ware of this group which often includes decorated and undecorated beakers, bowls, and dish-lamps as well as large fingernailed and impressed giant storage beakers. The beakers from Mol are themselves of great importance since they are the most 'Breton' of all the Low Countries' European Bell beakers and actually appear to represent the initial extension of the 'maritime' beaker assemblage from Brittany to Belgium, the Rhine Delta, and thence to the Middle Rhine.

The amber bead associated with the Brampton 'maritime' vessel is the earliest beaker association of its kind in this country. Similar amber beads have been found with beakers of this same type in the Netherlands (2.Ib) where this association is significantly shared with Dutch and German All-Over-Cord beakers (2.IIb); AOC.<sup>3</sup> Apparently, the early beaker penetration of the Low Countries stimulated and tapped the coastal supply of amber brought south along the Frisian littoral from Jutland. The amber bead, the barrow burial and the cord-defined, paired-zone 'maritime' beaker from Brampton therefore point firmly to the Mol context lying only c. 150 miles away across the Channel. The siting of the Brampton beaker burial on the Huntingdon hills overlooking the shore of the Fens reminds one of the many beakers of this early group which must now lie under many feet of silt around the Fen margins, like their deeply buried cousins from the creek at Vlaardingen. It is therefore likely that the primary beaker settlement in the Fen/Wash area was originally even more significant than it already appears to be, and one is reminded of the related cord-zone European Bell beaker sherds from West Keal, Lincolnshire, across the Fens. Marine oscillations and the drowning of the coastline from Lincolnshire to Kent have clearly robbed us of the important primary band of littoral beaker settlements—both All-Over-Cord and European Bell beaker—which are so well represented in the shell midden contexts of the stable coastline of the North and Scotland. The same lacuna is also apparent, for the same reasons, in the drowned coastal zone of the Low Countries.

The over-all importance of the Brampton 'maritime' beaker is the way in which this burial on the open water margins of the ancient Wash closely approaches the Mol burial just across the Channel. In this way the 'maritime' penetration of the Fens is directly linked with the arrival of Breton beakers in the Low Countries and the parallel infiltration of the creeks and lagoons of the Rhine Delta and Frisian Islands.

<sup>1</sup> *Helinium*, II (1962), pp. 3–243, III (1963), pp. 39–120.

<sup>2</sup> *Helinium*, II (1962), pp. 255–9.

<sup>3</sup> *Palaeohistoria*, IV (1955), p. 32.

## CONCLUSIONS

The barrow cemetery at Brampton, the first such site examined and recorded in Huntingdonshire, has shown that the area was important to Bronze Age settlement in Britain. The primary phase of the large barrow with its stake circle,<sup>1</sup> maritime beaker, and amber bead burial is more closely paralleled in the Low Countries than from other sites in Britain. This is startling proof that Huntingdonshire and the Ouse valley is no mere Bronze Age backwater, but may well be closely connected with the first waves of Beaker settlement in Britain. The Ouse is a very natural and direct route to the Wessex highlands from the Wash.

The significance of the Brampton Barrow is that of a sepulchral monument placed near an important line of communication and showing a continuity and significance from early to early middle Bronze Age. There is a primary phase marked by the existence of a Bell Beaker, with its associated finds, surrounded by a 'palisade' protecting the 'temenos' and the outer of the larger ditches. A secondary phase is represented by the cinerary urn buried in the geometrical centre of the area surrounded by the inner ring ditch. There are other presumed burial pits and the post holes in the mound, making the monument a very interesting complex.

Multiple-period barrows have recently been considered in detail by Christie.<sup>2</sup> On account of their rarity, reconstruction of burial mounds cannot have been an established or common Bronze Age practice. In several instances it may have been a natural thing to build a barrow and carry out the attendant ritual on an apparently natural hillock, although it is clear that the upper part of the outer ring ditch of the Brampton Barrow was purposely backfilled with gravel. In conclusion it is disappointing that restriction by the owners of the land prevented a complete investigation of this interesting barrow complex. Complete excavation of all pits and posts, and large sectors of the ditches would have been needed to do a thorough job on this barrow. The time-honoured quadrant method would have missed so much on this site.

## THE RECTANGULAR ENCLOSURE

This is very clearly shown on the left-hand side of the aerial photograph (Plate I), and its position is shown in the general plan (Fig. 2, no. 1). The field boundary cut the enclosure from north-east to south-west so that only about one-half was available for examination; the other part lies under the field to the west. The surrounding ditch measures about 150 ft from north to south and the eastern part of this ditch is 75 ft east of the field boundary. It shows a clear entrance in the northern stretch of the ditch, lying close to the north-eastern corner. The northern half of the enclosure is studded with a large number of features but the southern half appears completely barren. The disposition of cropmarks suggested that the site would be best tackled by cutting a long 10-ft-wide trench (Fig. 8, A), near to and parallel with

<sup>1</sup> Van Giffen, *P.P.S.* IV (1938), p. 258.

<sup>2</sup> *P.P.S.* xxxiii, p. 336.

the west field boundary to obtain a complete section across the enclosure. The northern half of the area would then be stripped in two large trenches (Fig. 8, B and C) so that a full examination of the complex of cropmarks could be made. To complete a

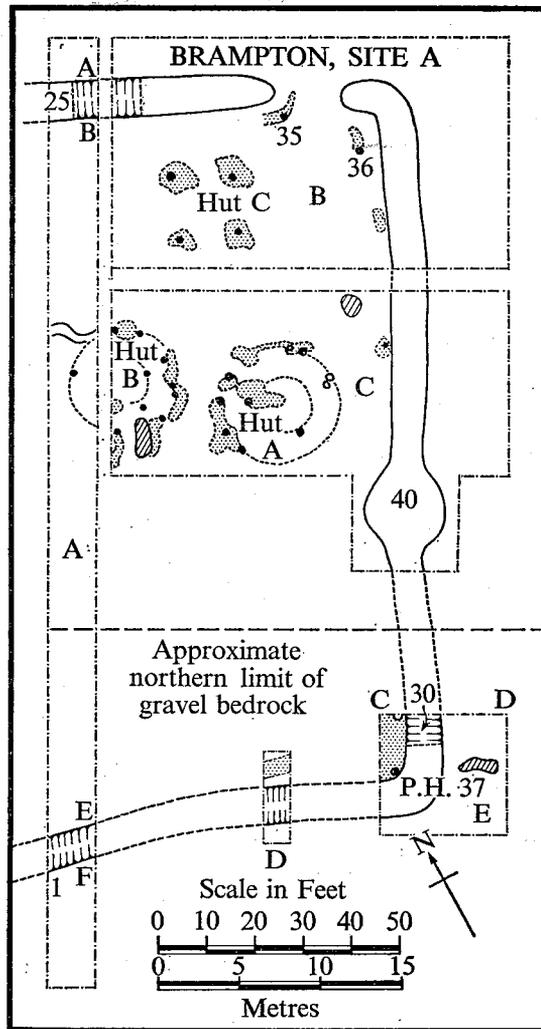


Fig. 8

comprehensive excavation a further section was cut across the southern part of the boundary ditch (Fig. 8, D) and an area stripped over the south-east corner (Fig. 8, E). The stipulation about deep trenches very much limited the scope of the work and was a more serious drawback in excavating here than in the examination of the barrows.

## THE BOUNDARY DITCH AND ENTRANCE

Stripping the topsoil from trench A revealed that the bedrock varied over the area of the enclosure. To the south there is a firm gravel, but this gives way to a soft dark sand and patches of clay about forty feet from the southern enclosure ditch (Fig. 8). The dotted line on the figure gives the approximate position for the change. There is no indication of the change in the aerial photograph. However, the Geological Survey reports that 'the northern boundary of the area coincides with the outcrop of alluvium laid down by Alconbury Brook'.<sup>1</sup> This is the probable cause of the change in bedrock.

In order to speed up the examination of this area of the boundary ditch, its line was easily traced using a probe, and three trenches were cut across it (Fig. 8, A, no. 1, D and E). The section of cutting (Fig. 8, no. 1) is shown in Fig. 10, no. 1, and it is clear that the soft upper fill could readily be detected against the gravel edges of the ditch. The point marked P in the hard primary fill marks the position of the pot (Fig. 11, no. 1) which gives a good dating evidence for the construction of the ditch. The section cut across the ditch (Fig. 8, D) showed that the ditch had similar dimensions, 7 ft wide and 4 ft deep, though there were slight traces of a low bank about 4 ft wide just inside the enclosure. This gravel bank is seen much more clearly in Fig. 10, no. 2, which is a section of the ditch near the corner (Fig. 8, E). The ditch is slightly shallower at this point, being only 3 ft deep, and its fill contained a few sherds of pottery, some sheep's teeth and charcoal specks.

The gravel bank continued round the inside of the ditch and at the corner remains of a post were found (Fig. 8, no. 37). This was 12 in. in diameter and 8 in. deep. There was trace of a ghost hole (Fig. 10, no. 37). It is one of a series of posts found in the gravel bank and may be part of a support framework for a 'palisade', traces of which have since been destroyed by ploughing. Just across the ditch a small oval pit 8 ft  $\times$  3 ft and 2 ft deep was cleared out. It contained soft brown earth but nothing of any archaeological significance. One could hypothesize that it contained an inhumation burial and that the bones and any metal or organic object buried in it have since been dissolved away by the acidity of the soil. In the northern half of the enclosure only one section was cut across the boundary ditch (Fig. 8, no. 25 section, Fig. 10, no. 3). The topsoil here was very deep, almost 20 in., and the bedrock was a dark soft sand. The fill of the ditch was cut 2 ft into the sand and was only slightly darker even a little harder than the sand bedrock, with a few tip lines. Some animal teeth, charcoal and potsherds were found in the lower part of the fill.

Halfway down the eastern sector of the enclosure ditch, there is a large pit (Fig. 8, no. 40). This feature is plainly visible in the aerial photograph. When the topsoil was cleaned down the pit was shown to be approximately 20 ft in diameter and a few specks of charcoal and one small sherd were found in the top scrapings. The limitation on depth precluded any further work on this feature. Apart from two small features (Fig. 9, nos. 33 and 41) this was the only pit found in the area of the enclosure.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Geological Survey, 21 July 1966.

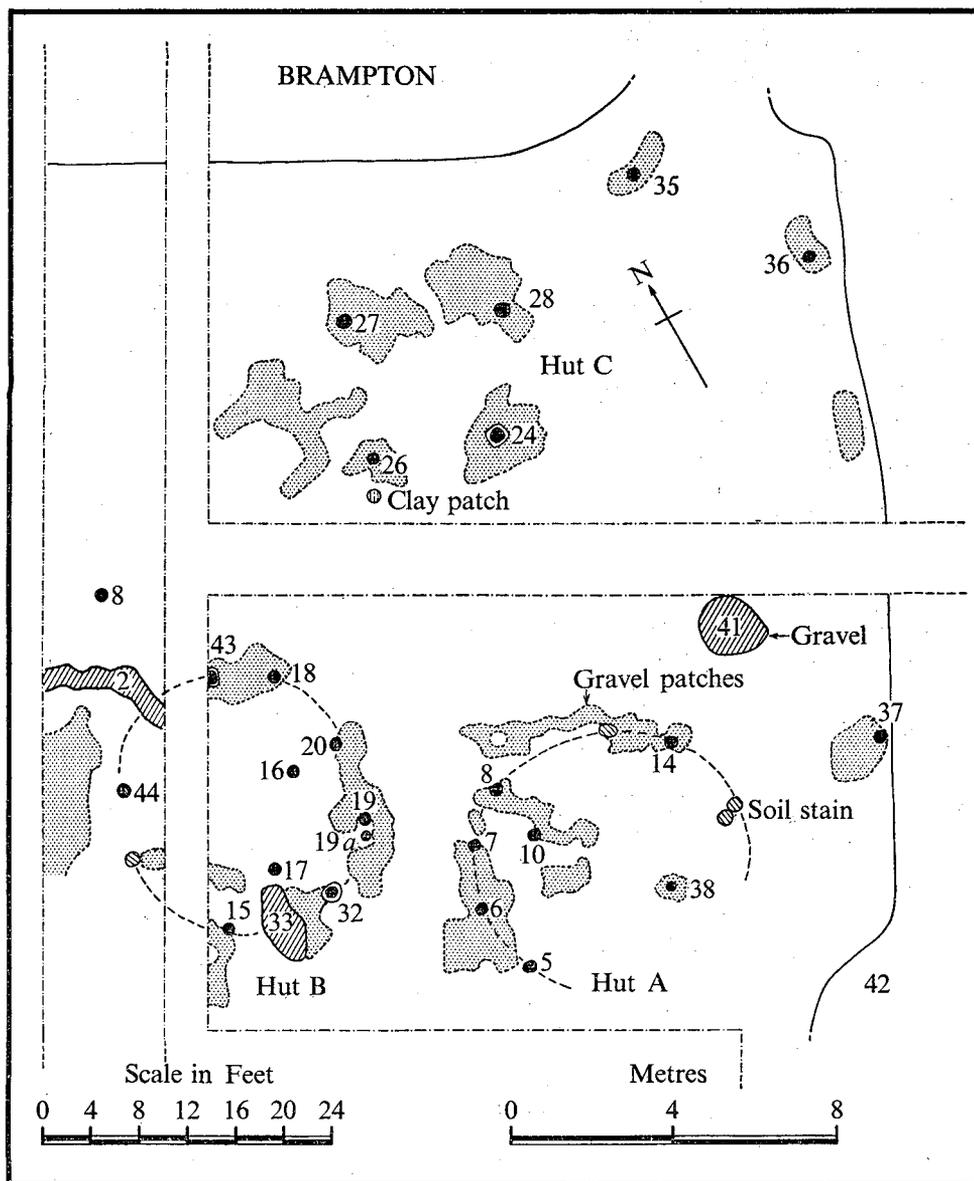


Fig. 9

The entrance in the north-eastern corner is shown in Figs. 8 and 9. The eastern enclosure ditch curves round slightly to protect the corner of the area, whilst the northern ditch ends in a simple curve. Two post holes, Figs. 8, 9, nos. 35 and 36 were found close to the ditches and their sections are shown in Fig. 10, nos. 35 and 36. No. 35 was a very large substantial post and set in a patch of gravel. Both post holes had a few pieces of charcoal in their filling and the position suggests that they are gateposts. A general view of the gateway area can be seen in Plate IIc.

*Structures inside the Enclosure (Plate II c, d)*

The northern half of the enclosure contains the partial remains of several structures and the area corresponds with a high density of cropmarks in Plate I. There appear to be three complexes of post holes which will be referred to as structure A, B or C (Fig. 9). The post holes are mainly set into the gravel patches and are similar to the post holes around the entrance (Fig. 9, nos. 35 and 36). Several of the post-hole

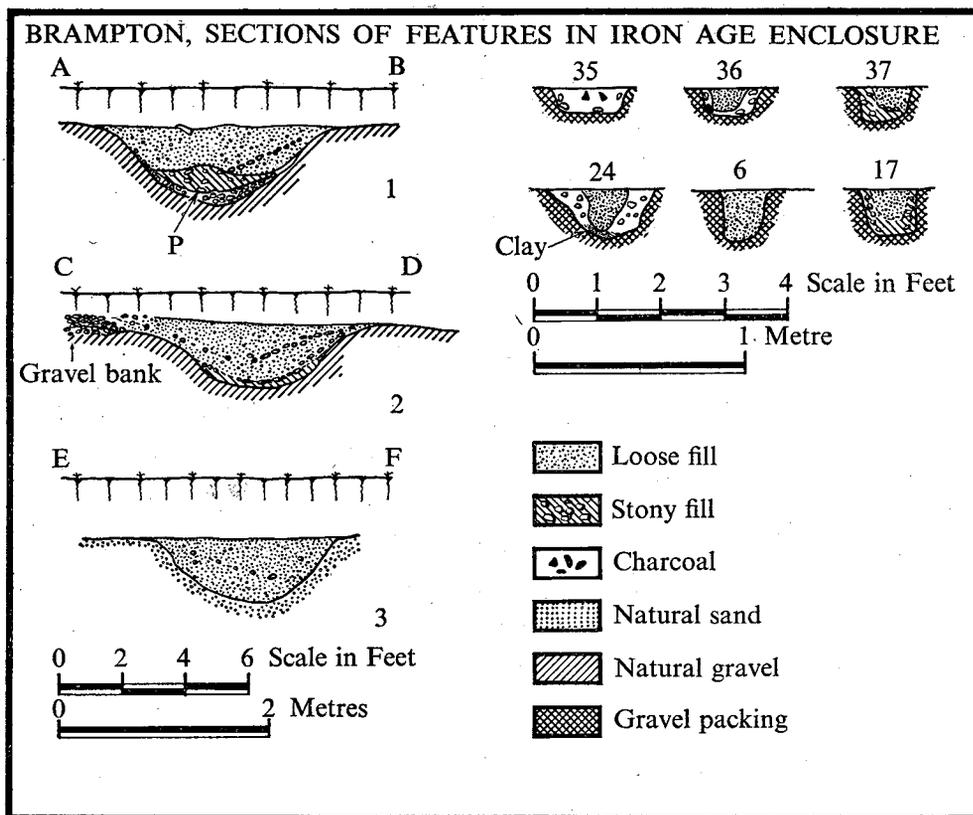


Fig. 10

sections are shown in Fig. 10. The post-hole numbers correspond to the numbers given in Fig. 9. Two small pits (Fig. 9, nos. 33 and 41) and a small trench (Fig. 9, no. 2) were also found in this area, but not cleared.

*Structure A:* This consists of six post holes (nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, 14 and 38), and two probable ones which form an outside circle 23 ft in diameter. The south-easterly segment of this ring is not well represented but this may be caused by the proximity of the large pit (Fig. 9, no. 42). Inside this ring there are two other posts set into gravel, nos. 10 and 38. The posts were 6–10 in. in diameter and 7–12 in. in depth,

but none had evidence of ghost holes, suggesting that the structure had been dismantled, a view which is further strengthened by the disturbance caused by pit 42 (Fig. 9 and Plate II *d*).

*Structure B*: This is similar to structure A. There are eight, possibly nine, post holes in an approximate circle, 22 ft in diameter (Fig. 9, nos. 15, 32, 19, 20, 18, 43 and 44). There are two internal posts, nos. 17 and 16, and other internal ones could be under the baulk. Most of the post holes of this structure contained evidence of ghost holes.

*Structure C*: This is represented by four posts, nos. 24, 26, 27 and 28 in an approximate square of side 11 ft. The posts are slightly larger than those of the other two structures, approximately 12 in. in diameter. It is not clear what these represent; tethering posts, or hay drying racks are two suggestions.

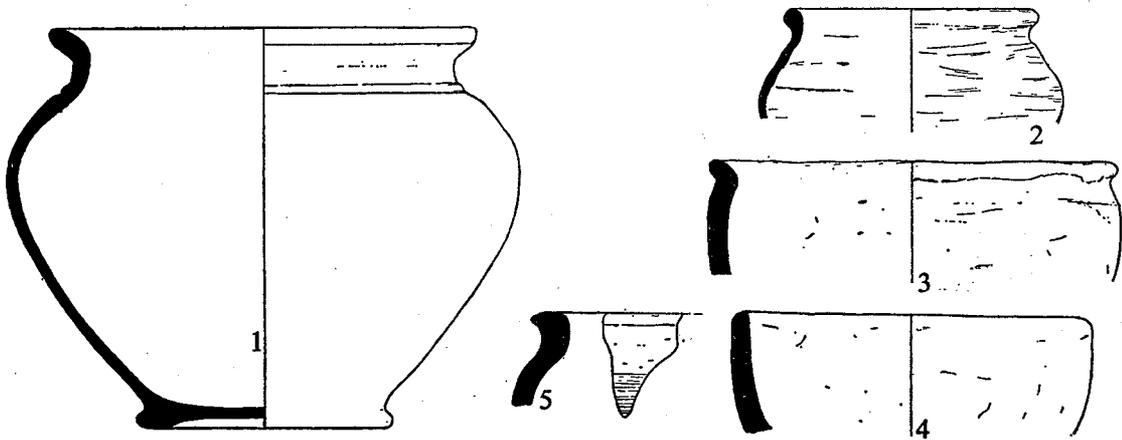


Fig. 11. Brampton: Iron Age pottery (scale 1/3).

### *Pottery from Iron Age Enclosure (Fig. 11)*

1. Wheel-turned jar with bead and roll rim in brown fabric with flint grits and ring base (from the south-west corner of the enclosure ditch). This is a typical Belgic form found generally in southern England, for instance at Maiden Castle,<sup>1</sup> Bagendon<sup>2</sup> and Langford Downs.<sup>3</sup> Fragments of two other ring bases were found at other parts of the site.

2. Hand-made jar from the south-eastern corner in dark grey fabric with small grit and slightly burnished on the outside. This form seems derived from earlier in the Iron Age but apparently occurs in a Belgic context at Bagendon.<sup>4</sup>

3. Handmade cooking pot from northern sector of enclosure ditch. In reddish gritted ware. This form occurs at Wheathampstead.<sup>5</sup> Locally a similar type of vessel was found at Wyboston.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. E. M. Wheeler, *Res. Comm. Soc. Antiq.* XII (1943), p. 236, no. 213.

<sup>2</sup> E. M. Clifford, *Bagendon* (1961), fig. 65, no. 116.

<sup>3</sup> *Oxoniensia*, XI and XII, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> E. M. Clifford, *op. cit.* fig. 55, no. 9.

<sup>5</sup> R. E. M. Wheeler, *Res. Comm. Soc. Antiq.* XI (1936), p. 150, no. 22.

<sup>6</sup> C. F. Tebbutt, *Proc. C.A.S. L* (1957), p. 81, no. 5.

4. Hand-made bowl in Black fabric from south-eastern corner of ditch. Like form 2 this form has a pre-Belgic ancestry, but a similar vessel occurs at Colchester.<sup>1</sup>

5. Fragments of rim from northern sector of Enclosure ditch in grey fabric with horizontal rilling, which is a typically Belgic pattern. Jars with similar ornamentation come from many Belgic sites, for instance Verulamium.<sup>2</sup>

A Belgic date for this small group seems fairly certain, though more datable sherds would have given more definite evidence. The absence of foreign imports such as butt-beakers may be due to the fact that a reasonable sample of pottery could not be obtained. It is also evidence that the enclosure at Brampton may date from the early part of the Belgic period as is advanced for dating of the Wheathampstead Oppidum.<sup>3</sup> Imported wares are found at Wyboston<sup>4</sup> so that their occurrence at Brampton in an early Belgic site is not expected. Wyboston continued as an occupied site into the Roman period whereas there is no Roman occupation at Brampton. On balance it appears that Brampton with a large proportion of hand-made wares may be a primary settlement dating from the early part of the Belgic period. Evidence though is not conclusive.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The enclosure and internal structure form part of a late Iron Age settlement. Rectangular or kite-shaped Iron Age enclosures are known in Wiltshire, for instance at Tollard Royal.<sup>5</sup> There are several other sites of similar age in the Ouse valley at Wyboston,<sup>6</sup> near St Ives<sup>7</sup> and near Buckden.<sup>8</sup> The settlement at Brampton does not continue into the Roman period as does that at Wyboston; the only Roman pottery here is a small sherd of colour-coat ware found in the topsoil close to the large barrow. No field system seems to be immediately attached to the settlement, although cropmarks of a field system appear in the field immediately to the north, and these could have been cultivated by people who lived behind the protective bank of the enclosure. Little more can be said about their economy, since the acidity of the soil has removed most traces of animal bones.

There is evidence of two huts in the enclosure; these, however, are small compared with the considerable structure found on earlier Iron Age sites such as the Little Woodbury house<sup>9</sup> and West Harling.<sup>10</sup> The structures at Brampton are much simpler, having large wall uprights every 6 ft and a roof supported on two or three central uprights. There is a close parallel to these huts from another Belgic site at Standlake Downs,<sup>11</sup> where three huts about 24 ft in diameter were found; there again, as at Brampton, there were no centre posts.

Such evidence as there is suggests that Structure A may have been dismantled.

<sup>1</sup> C. F. C. Hawkes and M. R. Hull, *Res. Comm. Soc. Antiq.* xiv (1947), type 255A.

<sup>2</sup> R. E. M. Wheeler, *Res. Comm. Soc. Antiq.* xi, p. 166, type 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> C. F. Tebbutt, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Information given by Dr G. J. Wainwright.

<sup>6</sup> *Proc. C.A.S.* L, p. 75.

<sup>7</sup> O.S. Map of Southern Britain in the Iron Age.

<sup>8</sup> Information given by Mr B. Richards.

<sup>9</sup> *P.P.S.* vi, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> Clark, *P.P.S.* xix, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Oxoniensia*, xi and xii, p. 27 (1946).

The huts may not have been inhabited at the same time and others may lie under the field to the west of the enclosure. In the absence of any other evidence it is probable that the enclosure represents the settlement of one family or family group; neither of the huts could have provided shelter for more than ten people.

### *Acknowledgements*

I am grateful to the Huntingdon R.D.C. for permission to excavate, to Miss R. Powers of the British Museum for the report on the cremated remains; to Miss D. Reeves, Mr G. C. Morgan, Mr D. Neale and illustrators, all of the M.P.B.W. staff, respectively, for pottery restoration, charcoal identification, and for redrawing the *plans and sections*. I am indebted to Dr D. L. Clarke for his note on the beaker and to the Norris Museum at St Ives for storing the site notes and finds. Finally I acknowledge the debt owed to those engaged in the field work; Dr J. K. St. Joseph for his work in discovering and recording the site from the air; to my assistant Mr W. N. Watterson; and to the volunteers and workmen for their patience and hard work in excavating on the difficult subsoil.

## APPENDIX A

### REPORTS ON CREMATED HUMAN BONE

MISS R. POWERS

*British Museum (N.H.), Sub-Department of Anthropology*

A. *Brampton 1966. Cremation 06.17.1412. 40.67.0.0. Fe 14*  
*Level 3 B.B.66.50. MOW AM 660343*

(Cremation found in urn—Fig. 4, no. 14)

The cremation was washed, and some flint gravel and sand separated out. It was of an adult in the prime of life, most probably a female (age  $33 \pm 5$  years). All the bone was thoroughly burned, grey with an outer layer of white. Thermal distortion was considerable and prevented reconstruction of some lengths of femur and tibia shaft which showed contact. The recognizable fragments were as follows:

#### *Skull*

Mandibular condyle and glenoid fossa, with fragments of the temporal including zygoma and one petrous part. Part of the mandible with sockets for 3 molars and a premolar; the roots of one molar are in place and 3 loose roots probably come from the other sockets. A fragment of orbital margin, the area of bregma, and several occipital and parietal fragments are present, and show that the coronal sagittal sutures are fused while the lambdoid suture remains open at least around asterion. The mandibular joint and the alveolar margins are healthy.

#### *Skeleton*

Tibia, femur and other long bones are represented by their densest portions. Some of the left ilium survives including part of the sacral articulation but unfortunately lacking the sciatic

notch (which would help determine the sex). Fragments of vertebrae include a cervical body, showing no osteoarthritic changes. The bones are comparatively smooth (if the heat distortion is disregarded) with no noticeable ridges for muscle attachment.

B. *A.M. 660261. Brampton 1966. Cremated bone separated from burial urn*

(From secondary burial in small ring ditch—Fig. 3, no. 5)

The material was embedded in a sandy-coloured matrix, so hard that it was necessary to wash it. What bone remained was white and porcellaneous, with many fine cracks but only a little distortion. It was identified as follows:

*Skull*

Twelve fragments of the skull vault remain. In most of them the inner and outer tables have split apart. Although both petrous areas are usually preserved in cremated material, only one small fragment of one remains. Part of the frontal bone including glabella and most of the right supra-orbital ridge is represented by the outer table only. The metopic suture is obliterated. The extent of the frontal sinus is unknown. A small area from near asterion retains both tables and shows open sutures. The remaining fragments are unidentifiable.

*Post-cranial bones*

These are mostly portions of long-bone shaft, probably including femur, tibia and forearm fragments. Two pieces of cancellar bone appear to represent parts of the knee joint. There are also three pieces of vertebral body, two of which contact to form the body of the first sacral segment. No obvious osteoarthritic changes are present.

*Conclusion*

The cremation was that of an adult individual, whose age and sex cannot be ascertained from the meagre remaining fragments.

## APPENDIX B

### *Charcoal Samples from Excavations*

(All are from small fragments unless otherwise stated)

*Site B. Barrow*

<i>Location</i>	<i>Charcoal Present</i>
Fig. 4, no. 18 (post hole)	<i>Quercus robur</i> (Oak) at least 2 in. diameter
Fig. 4, no. 14 (with urn burial)	<i>Quercus robur</i>
Fig. 3A (rubble above turf line of outer ring ditch)	<i>Crataegus</i> spp. (probably Hawthorn)

*Site A. Iron Age Enclosure*

Fig. 8, no. 1 (S.W. sector of enclosure ditch)	<i>Crataegus</i> spp.
Fig. 9, no. 33 (small pit)	<i>Betula</i> spp. (Birch)
Fig. 8, no. 30 (from fill of S.W. corner of enclosure ditch)	<i>Populus</i> spp.
Fig. 8, no. 29 (N. sector of enclosure ditch)	<i>Acer campestre</i> (Field Maple)

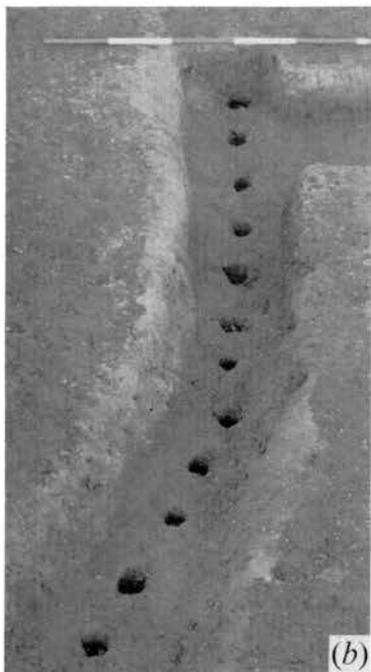


Brampton, Hunts.: the site from the air.

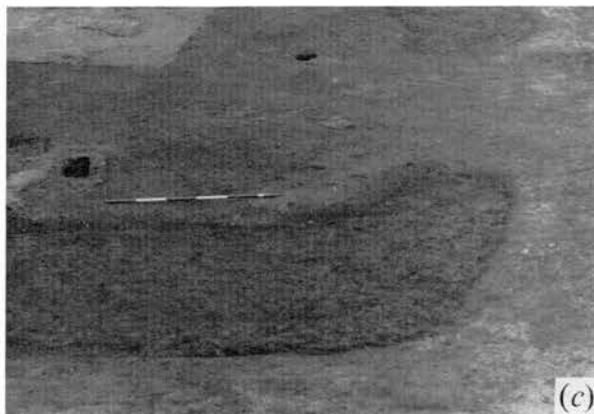
*Photo by J. K. St Joseph, Cambridge University collections: copyright reserved.*



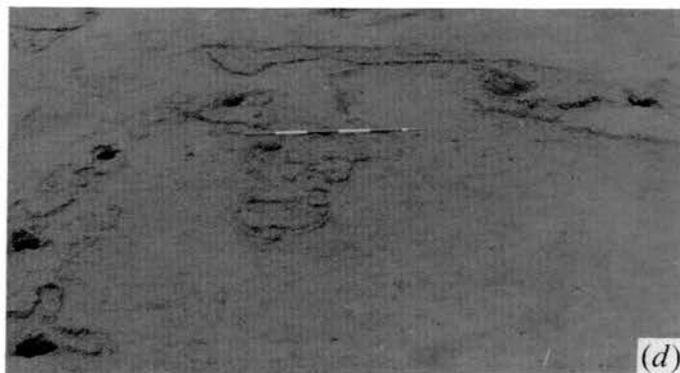
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

## Brampton:

- (a) View of barrow from SE.  
 (b) Detail of stake ring in barrow.  
 (c) Entrance of Iron Age enclosure from East.  
 (d) Iron Age Hut A from South.

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**Abbreviations.** Vol. xv, App. XV, no. 15, pl. XV, p. 15, l. 15, n. 15—for volume, appendix, number, plate, page, line and note respectively. Abbreviated titles of Journals can be found in the *World List of Scientific Publications*, 3rd ed. (1952), but any self-explanatory abbreviation may be adopted: *Ant.*, *Ant. J.*, *Arch.*, *Arch. J.*, *B.M.C.*, *J.R.S.*, *P.P.S.*, *Proc. C.A.S.* are frequently recurring examples.

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