

THE EXCAVATION OF A BRONZE AGE BARROW ON HADDON GROVE FARM, LATHKILL DALE, DERBYSHIRE

By BARRY M. MARSDEN

THE Haddon Grove barrow (SK 177658) is situated on the carboniferous limestone east of Monyash at a height of 900 ft. above sea level. In 1963 it appeared as a low grassy mound in the north-western corner of a large field, south of a plantation on Haddon Grove farm. The field slopes down quite steeply from the barrow to the dale. The barrow on the highest land in the vicinity was formerly used for a trig. station. It is not easy to see, hidden in the corner of the field and masked by fieldwalls to the north and the east. The presence of lead-mining hillocks in the field to the east may have led many to believe the barrow itself to be merely another spoil heap. Its probable sepulchral character has been known for a number of years, but no attempt seems to have been made at excavation. The apparent lack of disturbance raised hopes of finding intact burials.

The excavation was carried out between October 1963 and September 1964, mainly at week-ends. Work began on the north-western area where two quadrant trenches were marked out, one from the west and one from the north to the presumed barrow centre (Fig. 2).

The north quadrant trench

After removing the turf and the topsoil a large deposit of human bones was found, only 6 in. below the surface, immediately above the presumed centre of the mound and extending into the west quadrant. The bones were heaped together in disorder; many were split and broken, and the whole mass suggested a disinterred inhumation roughly reburied. Two animal bones represented the hoof of a *Bos primigenius*. Twelve human teeth, found near the bone-deposit, and the bones proved to belong to one person, most probably a male, on the evidence of the teeth between forty and forty-five at the time of death. Most of the teeth showed evidence of attrition consistent with the diet of prehistoric man. This collection of bones proved that part at least of the barrow had been disturbed by former excavators.

The exposed cairn showed a mixture of small stones and soil caused by such disturbance. Towards the centre the stones became much larger, but were piled together without any order. Throughout the sections scattered

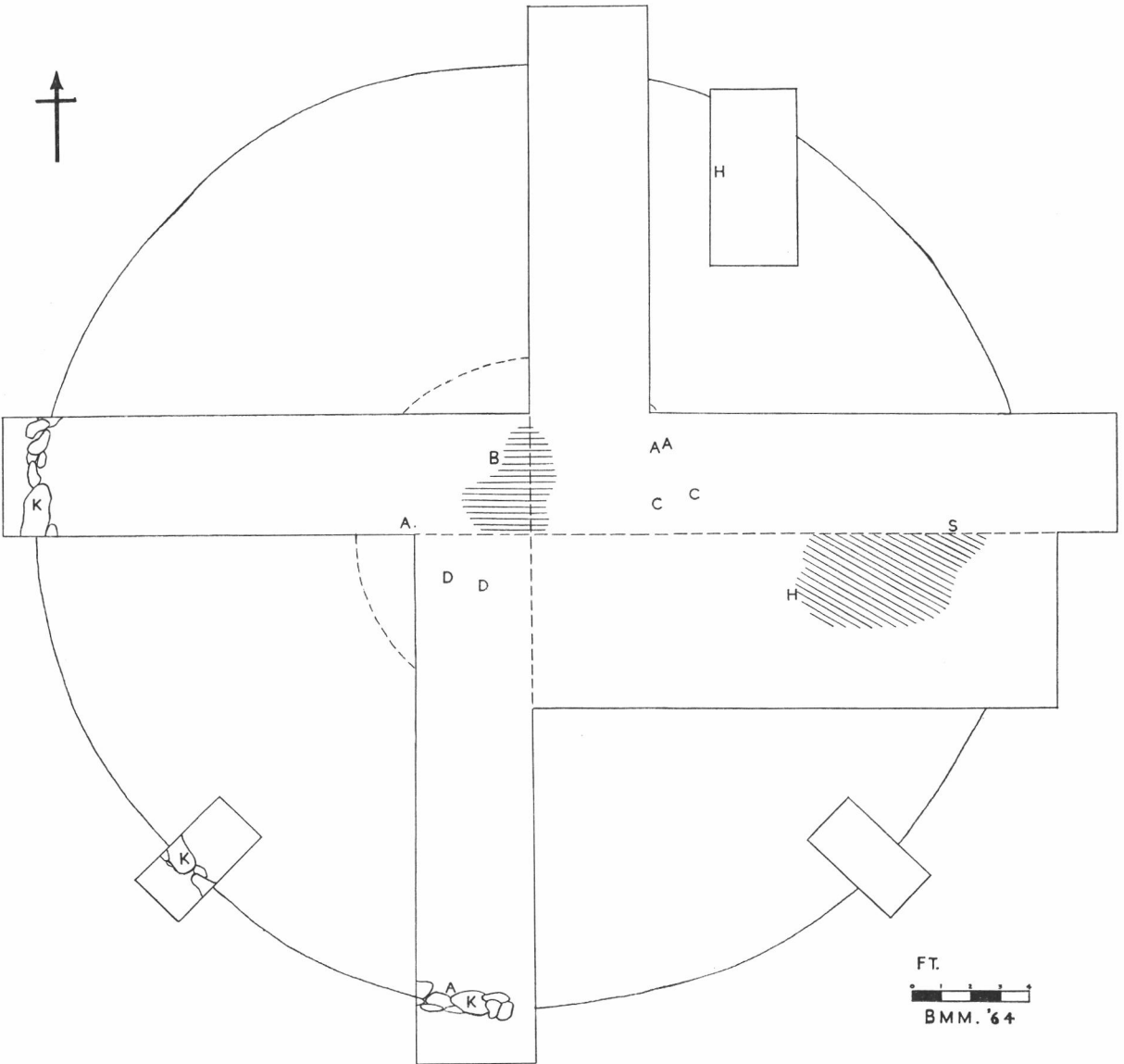


FIG. 2. Plan of Haddon Grove barrow.

- A Position of undisturbed Neolithic flints.
- B Deposit of disturbed human bones.
- C Sherds of collared urn.
- D Beaker sherds.
- H Scatter of human bones.
- K Kerb.
- S Frontal bone of human skull.

human bones appeared, together with remains of the water vole and the incisor of a cat. Flints were found in the lower sections (see Figs. 4, 5). Section 2 produced a white flint serrated down one edge and flaked along another (6), a flake knife (16), a tanged chert thumb scraper (7) and three flints. In section 3 another flint knife (17) and four more flints were found. Section 4, immediately above the bedrock, proved sterile. On this bedrock here and over all the pre-barrow surface was a layer of cherty gravel about 6 in. thick.

The west quadrant trench (Fig. 3)

Below the turf again were small limestones and soil, except towards the western edge which appeared undisturbed and showed evidence of a retaining kerb. Two sherds of Romano-British pottery were found, one light red, the other with a grey exterior and red inner core. Section 1 produced little of note, while sections 2 and 3 disclosed only scattered human and water vole bones. Near the centre in shallow crevices in the rock floor were two flints, one a typical Secondary Neolithic end scraper (1), the other a large flake with a percussion bulb showing that it had been struck from a larger core.

The south quadrant trench

Near the barrow centre there was disturbance but towards the periphery an intact area. The kerb found on the west continued in this cutting. It consisted of a layer of large bouldered limestones placed together, obviously positioned to prevent the cairn from sliding down the rather steep slope. Section 1 produced a flint flake and section 2 a long flint, triangular in section, of the type classed as a fabricator (19) and a beautifully worked plano-convex knife $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. long (10). Other flints included a large partly calcined flake (18), a

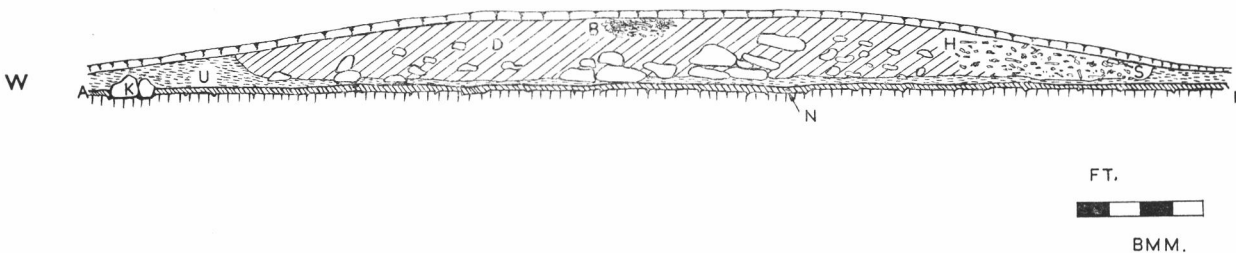


FIG. 3. Diametric section of Haddon Grove barrow.

- A Layer of cherty gravel.
- B Deposit of disturbed human bones.
- D Disturbed area.
- H Scatter of human bones.
- K Kerb.
- L Natural limestone surface.
- N Neolithic scraper (projected into section).
- U Undisturbed area.
- S Frontal bone of human skull.

convex scraper partly broken and steeply flaked round the end (4), and a knife or scraper of grey flint or chert (13). In section 3 were two human molars, one a child's. The most interesting find here was the lower pre-molar of a beaver still in its socket in a piece of the jaw. This animal has not previously been recognized in a Derbyshire barrow. Two thin reddish pottery sherds were found close to the centre, each incised with three parallel lines and probably of beaker or some allied ware. Alongside one of the kerbstones on the natural surface was another fine scraper of the horseshoe type (3).

The east quadrant trench (Fig. 3)

This was the richest in finds. At first 4 ft. wide, it was eventually widened by 6 ft. Towards the barrow centre there was much disturbance, but the surface of the cairn looked undisturbed over much of the eastern end. The centre surface in particular yielded many scattered human bones and bone fragments, including a complete sacrum. In section 1 were three sherds of Derbyshire ware, two with rolled rims, as well as a fragment similar to the second sherd found in the west cutting. Flint flakes, a small scraper (8) and some animal bones, including the incisor of a *Bos longifrons*, were also found.

Towards the barrow edge were seven lower molar teeth of the *Bos longifrons* in close proximity, obviously from a jaw which had decayed away. This section also produced a flint flake and other pieces of flint, together with teeth and bones including a human pre-molar, the incisor of a stoat and the molar of a red deer. Water vole bones and a few pieces of charcoal were also noted. Section 3 produced a thick sherd of cinerary urn type with punch decoration near the barrow centre and some feet away a rim sherd probably from the same pot; the outer part of the rim was impressed with rough slashed lines, but the inside had more carefully produced comb-like incisions. The depth at which rolled rim sherds of Derbyshire ware were found proved the extent to which the mound had been disturbed. Human bone fragments appeared in scattered quantities; two pieces were calcined. Two flints were found, one a carefully worked side-scraper (5), the other triangular with one edge chipped (15).

In the south edge of this section, 15 ft. from the barrow centre, was a small heap of human bones comprising the complete frontal bone of a skull, the upper shaft pieces and articulations of both femurs, two other shaft fragments from the same bones, part of a pelvis and a canine tooth. At the mound centre in the clay just above the bedrock was a third scraper of Neolithic type (2), with a large square flint trimmed down one edge nearby (14). No kerb was found in this cutting.

The eastern extension

The four excavated quadrant trenches gave complete sections across the barrow. They showed the construction to be mainly of small stones and soil, with larger stones towards the centre. The maximum height was 2 ft. 6 in. and the diameter 36 ft. In order to see if there were other skull fragments

near to the frontal bone found in the east cutting, the trench was widened by 6 ft. towards the south along its whole length. Human bones, including vertebral, pelvic and long bones, occurred throughout all levels of this extension. There was much disturbance over the whole cutting down to the natural surface. In section 1 were found a leaf-arrowhead worked on both faces (12),¹ the whole upper jaw and much of the mandible of a human skull (close to where the frontal bone was found), and many fragments of human crania extending over an area 6 ft. long and 3 ft. wide. Many teeth in both jaws were still in position; others were found with the skull fragments (Fig. 6).

Section 2 disclosed further skull fragments in the same general area. Flint finds were a carefully worked plano-convex knife (11), a roughly chipped end scraper (9) and a few flakes. Animal remains consisted of the left and right third molars of *Bos longifrons*, found together, an eroded incisor from the same animal and two metatarsals of a medium-sized dog. The lowest sections produced only split pieces of human and animal bone.

Kerb cuttings

Small cuttings were opened in the south-west and south-east to locate the kerb which disappeared between the south and east quadrant trenches. Two cuttings 4 ft. long and 2 ft. wide uncovered large revetment stones in the south-west, but not in the south-east. Two feet outside the former trench on the natural surface was found a large quartzite pebble, with both ends battered by use as a hammerstone. In the latter cutting was part of the tine of a red deer's antler. It seems that the kerb was not continuous, but only constructed round that part of the barrow where slide might occur.

North-east trench

A trench, 6 ft. long and 3 ft. wide, was opened to the east of the north quadrant trench to test whether the barrow disturbance extended across this area. Section 2 produced ten fragments of skull, a small piece of pelvis and two shaft pieces of a femur, all human. They were together close to a pottery fragment, most probably of a cinerary urn.

Conclusions

The hopes of an undisturbed barrow were soon disappointed. So many broken human bones haphazardly distributed through the mound suggest a most careless and destructive opening typical of 18th- or early 19th-century operations. Some damage could be attributed to lead miners, and other disturbance may have been caused by the erection of a trig-point on the barrow.

The finding of a number of Secondary Neolithic type flint implements on the pre-barrow surface points indubitably to the fact that the area chosen for the barrow must have been used, in however desultory a fashion, as a Neolithic habitation site of some description. There is other evidence of

¹ Similar to one found in Seven Ways Cave, Manifold Valley, *D.A.J.*, LXIX (1959), 109; *P.A.S. Newsletter*, X (1954), 6.

Neolithic occupation of the Lathkill area. Much surface material has been found on both sides of the river; in nearby Calling Low Dale, Harris discovered a rock-shelter with cist-burials containing both articulated and disarticulated skeletons with Peterborough ware²; to the north-west of the barrow lie the badly damaged remains of Ringham Low, an elongated cairn containing Neolithic burials in closed cists.³ West of the barrow recent potholers disturbed disarticulated bones representing three burials of Neolithic date in a small fissure cave.⁴ The barrow site seems therefore to have served as a transient occupation area and the flints to represent the scatter from the living-space. The barrow was erected in the early Bronze Age.

The disordered state of the barrow makes interpretation difficult, but at least three interments seem to be represented. From its position the primary burial appears to be the heap of bones uncovered in the early stages of the excavation. The skull and other bone fragments in the north-east cutting may be from this same man. A probable subsequent primary burial is represented by the skull and many scattered bones of a young female found in the east quadrant trench. The bones could have been disturbed by digging as the wide scatter suggests, but the long-term action of rabbits and moles has also to be considered. Rabbits were once abundant here, and there are still many moles. The burial may have been dug out in antiquity to provide room for a later interment, but there is no positive evidence of this. A third inhumation is suggested by the fragments of a thicker skull in the east trench mixed with the bones of the female. The only grave-goods that may have accompanied the female were the plano-convex knife and the scraper found near the bones. No rock-graves or other burial structures were found, so it appears reasonable to assume that the burials were deposited on the natural surface. A secondary interment is suggested by two sherds of collared urn, pieces of calcined bone and possibly the calcined flint in the south trench. This indicates that an urn-cremation of the later Bronze Age completed the burial sequence.

All the finds from the site are at present in the possession of the writer.

Thanks are extended to Mr. J. Finney of Haddon Grove farm for permission to excavate, and to students of Thornbridge Hall Training College for help with the excavation.

² *P.P.S.*, XIX (1954), 229.

³ T. Bateman, *Vestiges*, 103; *Ten Years' Diggings*, 93.

⁴ Information from D. Bramwell.

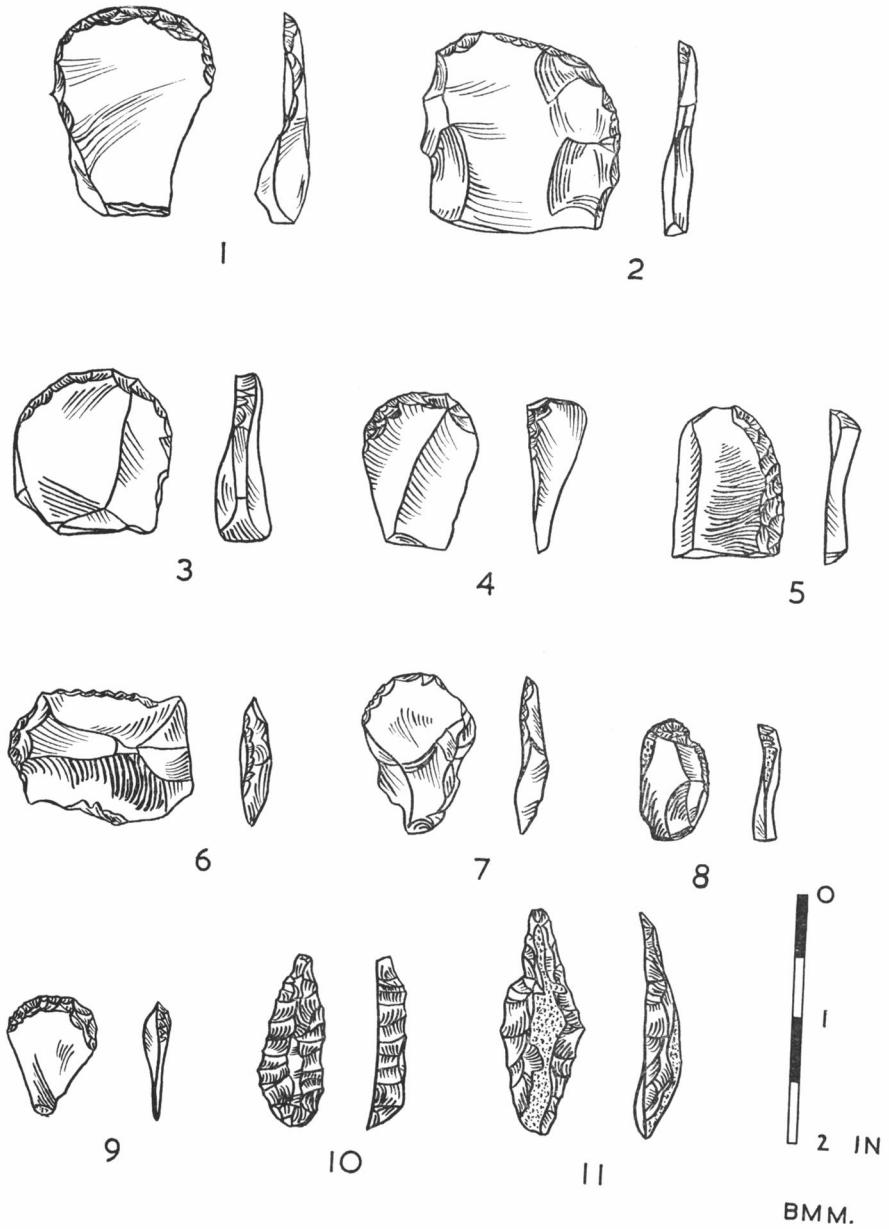


FIG. 4. Flints from Haddon Grove barrow.

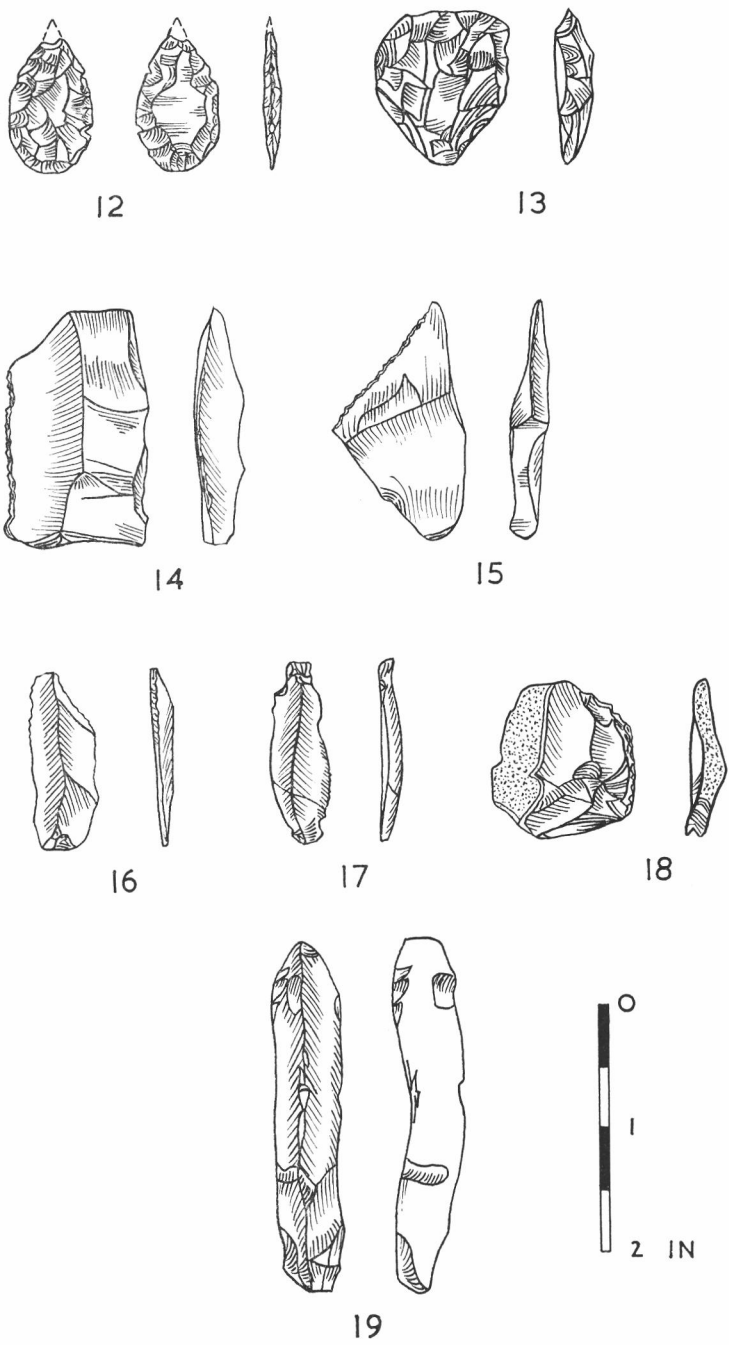


FIG. 5. Flints from Haddon Grove barrow.

Flint implements (Figs. 4, 5)

Most of the implements enumerated below are of white or grey flint, many with a bluish patina. Nos. 10 and 13 are different; the former is of glossy black flint, the latter of dark grey flint or chert.

1. Convex scraper.
2. Large convex scraper, steeply flaked.
3. Convex scraper.
4. Convex scraper, steeply flaked.
5. Side scraper or knife, partly broken. Carefully flaked.
6. Knife or saw, one edge serrated.
7. End scraper of chert. Tanged with slight retouch.
8. Small end scraper.
9. Small end scraper, finely worked.
10. Plano-convex knife, carefully worked. Black flint.
11. Plano-convex knife, cortex on upper face.
12. Leaf arrowhead, point missing. One face fully worked, the other with edge trimming.
13. Knife or convex scraper.
14. Large flake, one edge finely trimmed.
15. Triangular flint, one edge trimmed.
16. Flake blade, trimmed on part of one edge.
17. Flake blade, cream flint.
18. Thick flake, partly calcined.
19. Fabricator, white flint with bluish patina.

REPORT ON THE HUMAN BONES AND TEETH FROM HADDON GROVE

Central deposit

This mass of bones undoubtedly consists of the heaped-up remains of a disturbed inhumation. The skull and a few long bones are missing. The remaining bones are mainly broken and shattered and include vertebrae, fragments of the right and left innominate, pieces of broken rib, short lengths representing all the long bones, an astragalus and phalanges from the hands and feet. No skull or mandible fragments were present although a few of the former occurred in the north extension. On the evidence of the bones the individual represented here would seem to be a robust adult male.

East quadrant trench and eastern extension

Cranium fragments, the mandible and fragments of long bones, vertebrae, pelvis and ribs representing a young female adult were found here. The small size and comparative slenderness of these bones seem to indicate a delicate, small individual. The distal end of a tibia had the slight extension of the articular surface known as a "squatting facet".

Skull fragments made up the complete frontal bone, much of the parietal bone and part of the occipital bone. The cranium is rather thin and all the sutures are open. There are three wormian bones along the line of the lambdoid suture. The shape of the skull is markedly brachycephalic. The upper palate, found in two pieces, contained 8 teeth *in situ*; 4 pre-molars, and the first and second molars on both sides. 5 teeth found close by fitted some of the empty sockets; they were 2 incisors, 2 third molars and a canine tooth. Tooth-wear, according to Brothwell's tentative guide,⁵ indicates

⁵ D. Brothwell, *Digging Up Bones*, 1963. 69.

an age at death of 17 to 25. The molars are polished and slightly ground but no decay is evident. The incisors show wear occasioned by the "edge-to-edge" variety of bite.

The mandible lacks the right side. 9 teeth were *in situ* — 4 incisors (and space for a fifth), one canine, one pre-molar and 3 molars. The first 2 molars are polished, the first containing three small holes in the enamel. Other teeth in the section with the same colouring and wear could be from the missing part of the lower jaw. The teeth in the jaw show considerable alveolar bone resorption through periodontal disease (pyorrhoea) caused by mouth trouble and/or faulty diet.

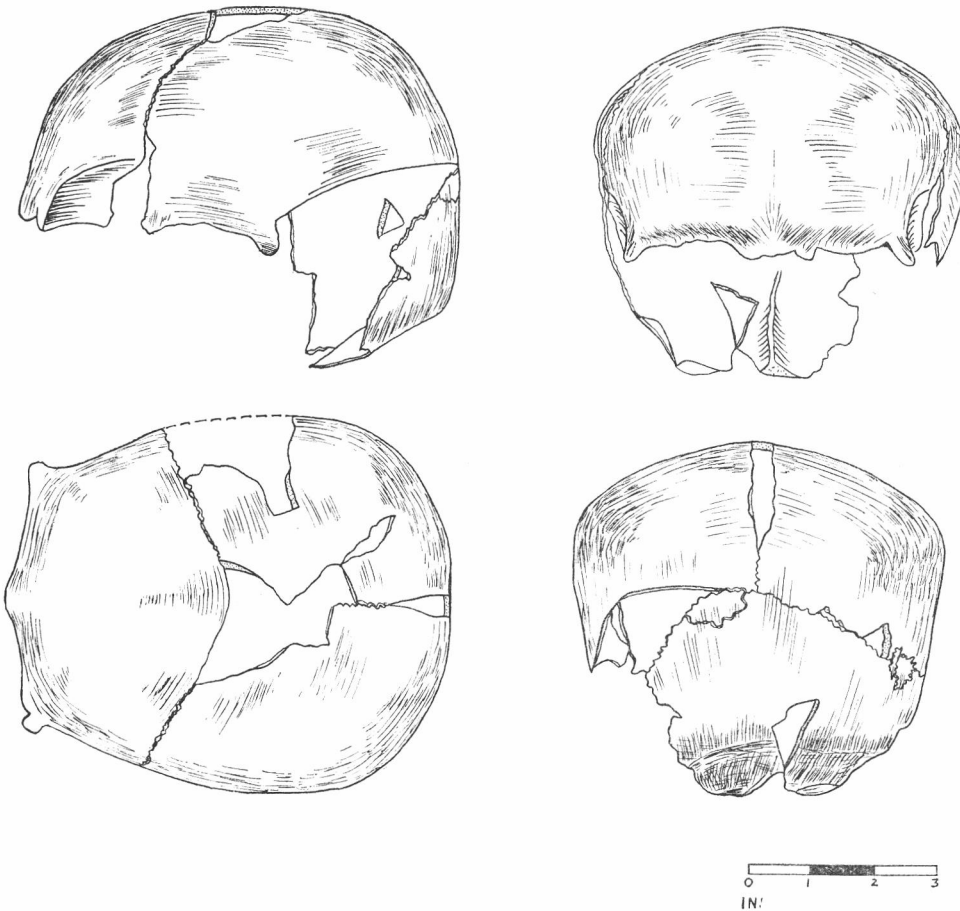


FIG. 6. The Haddon Grove skull
(for simplification the lines joining the fitted fragments are not shown).

Associated with the first bone-deposit were 12 teeth, 11 probably from the burial represented by the piled bones. They consist of 6 incisors, 3 canines and 3 molars. All the adult teeth show a degree of attrition consistent with an age of 40 to 45. The molars had hollowed-out crowns, one extending to the secondary dentine, and all the incisors have badly-worn biting surfaces.

REPORT ON THE ANIMAL BONES FROM HADDON GROVE

By D. BRAMWELL

The list includes forms which have already been regularly recorded by Bateman in his works, but the great care taken to collect even the smallest bones at Haddon Grove has added an important new species to the list of animal remains found in Derbyshire Bronze Age barrows.

Bones of domestic animals are scarce and can be summarized thus: parts of an adult small ox of the *Bos longifrons* Owen size, and parts of a slender-limbed adult sheep or goat and a small but adult pig. These remains came from the main barrow structure, together with incisor teeth from a stoat and a cat.

There were antler tines, teeth and broken limb-bones of a small adult red deer, and a lower molar tooth in a jaw-fragment of beaver *Castor fiber* L. This is the first record known to me of the occurrence of this rodent in a Derbyshire barrow, though teeth have been found in two caves and one open living site.⁶ One cave find was Neolithic, one Romano-British, and the open site late Neolithic or early Bronze Age.

Water vole remains were fairly plentiful throughout the barrow. Among the central human bone mass and probably dug up from a much lower level when the barrow was disturbed was a large bovine hoof core, which though damaged was as large in its existing parts as a hoof core of a *Bison priscus* from Windy Knoll fissure.⁷ It is clearly either the hoof of the Urus *Bos primigenius* Boj or the large form of long-horned domestic ox of Neolithic sites. Also from this earlier stratum of the barrow, judging from their state of preservation, were two metapodia of a medium-sized dog.

*Summary of Animal Remains**Domestic*

Ox (*Bos longifrons* Owen)
 Sheep or Goat (*Ovis* or *Capra*)
 Pig (*Sus scrofa domesticus*)
 Dog (*Canis* sp.)

Wild

Urus (*Bos primigenius*)
 Red deer (*Cervus elephas*)
 Beaver (*Castor fiber* L.)
 Cat (*Felis silvestris* Sch.)
 Stoat (*Mustela erminea* L.)
 Water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*)
 Field vole (*Microtus agrestis* L.)

⁶ The caves were Hartle Dale, near Bradwell (excavated by A. L. Pill), and Cressbrook (excavated by Orpheus Caving Club). The open living site is Shacklow off Taddington Dale.

⁷ R. Pennington and W. Boyd-Dawkins, in *Quarterly Journal of Geological Society*, May 1875, 241, and Nov. 1877, 724.