

Recent discoveries south of Tyrrell's Wood golf course, near Leatherhead

Recent work by R Poulton and M G O'Connell of the Conservation and Archaeology Section, Surrey County Council, has resulted in the discovery of two possible barrows (? Bronze Age) and observations of a section cut through Stane Street. The initial work took place in advance of the construction of the oil pipeline from Longford to Gatwick, and was generously financed by the British Pipeline Agency. We are also grateful to Maxwell Aitken of the Cherkeley Court Estate for permission to survey the possible barrows on his land.

The Possible Barrows

The first edition O.S. 25 inch map (Sheet XXV, 4) surveyed in 1870 marks four barrows in this area (fig 1). In 1903 (Johnson & Wright 1903, 68–9) two of these (B and C) were destroyed and only vestiges of a third (D) remained, in the vicinity of which coarse flint gritted sherds were found. No trace of D can now be found but the fourth barrow, A, still survives in reasonable condition. It was opened c 1928 by St John's School, Leatherhead, but nothing of interest was apparently found (Grinsell 1934, 50–1). A note on the first edition OS 25 inch map states, however, that 'Early British [presumably Bronze Age] Sepulchral Urns' were found nearby in 1868. These do not seem to have survived.

Recent tree felling has now revealed the sites of two more possible barrows (fig 2). No 1 is the more substantial, rising about a metre above ground level at maximum, while no 2 has a maximum elevation of c 0.70m. Both seem oval rather than circular, with maximum diameters of c 20m, but their edges are not well defined. This irregularity means that their identification as barrows cannot be unequivocal, but their relationship to the other barrows, with all of them occupying a broad east-west spur of high ground, is strong circumstantial evidence.

Stane Street

The section cut through Stane Street by the pipe trench at Tyrrells Wood revealed that the Roman Road had been quite simply constructed at this point (fig 3). The agger (6) survived to a width of 5.60m and height of 0.40m and consisted apparently of one layer of water worn pebbles of gravel laid directly on to the natural chalk subsoil. About 4m to the east of the agger a roadside ditch (8) was noted which was U-shaped in profile and contained a fill of chalk with brown soil (5). No complementary ditch was found to the west, however, but presumably the sharp drop in the ground level on this side obviated the need for one.

A layer of large flints in a brown/black soil matrix (2) sealed the roadside ditch and partially covered the agger. A thin layer of topsoil (1) overlay (2) and the remains of the road surface. A recent trench (3) carrying an electricity cable had destroyed part of the Roman Road.

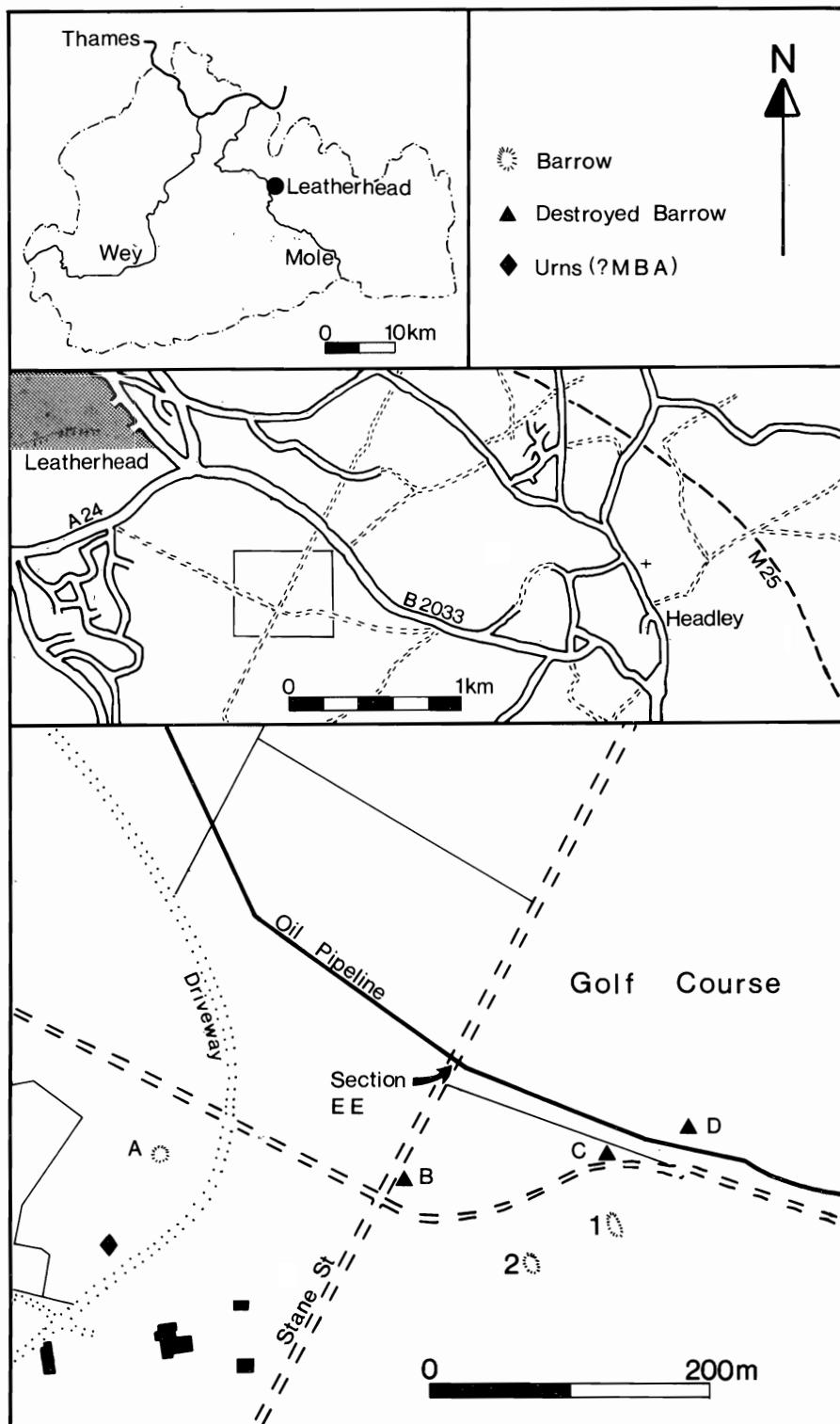


Fig 1. Tyrrell's Wood: Site Location.

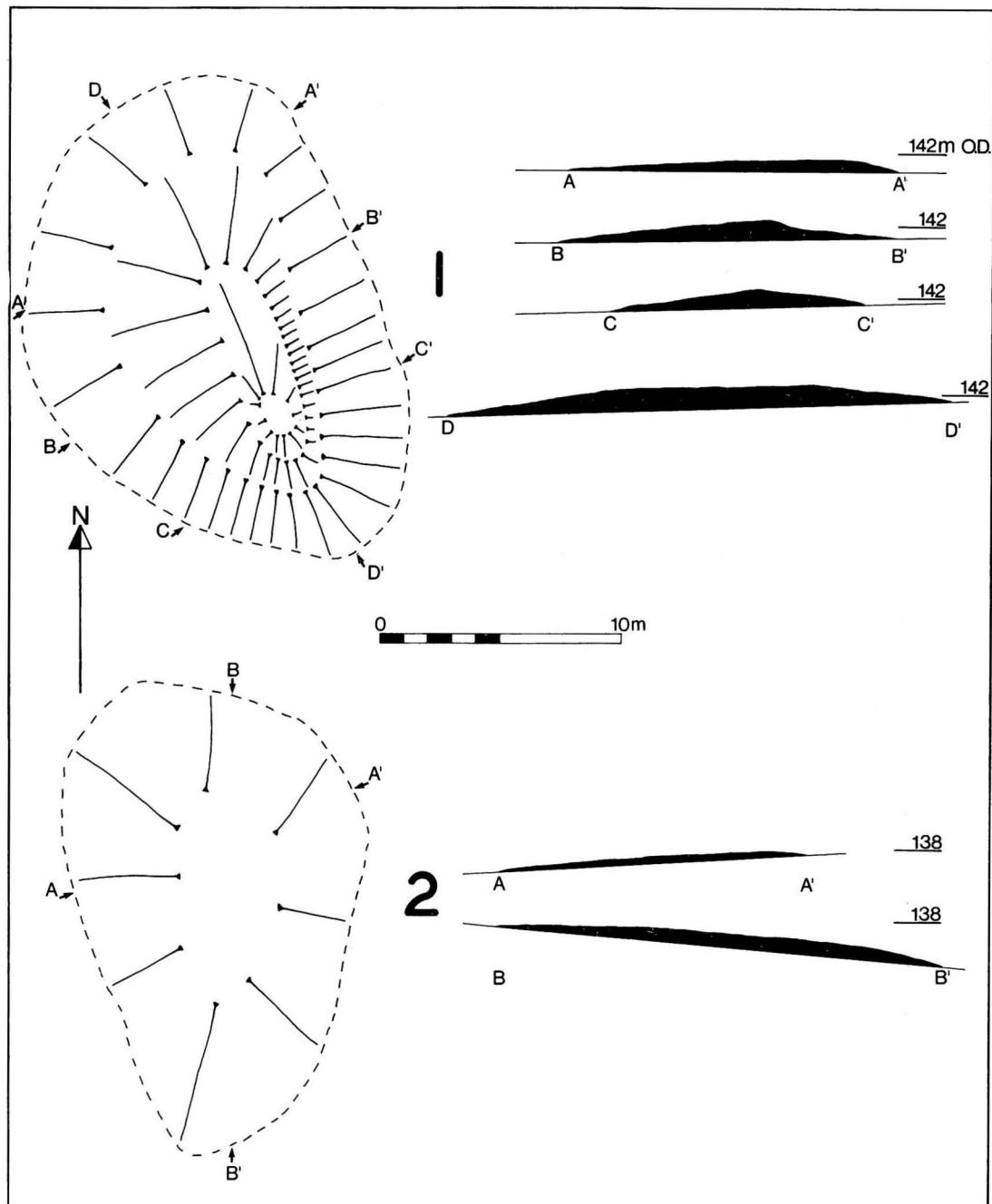


Fig 2. Tyrrell's Wood: Contour plan and elevations of two new possible barrows

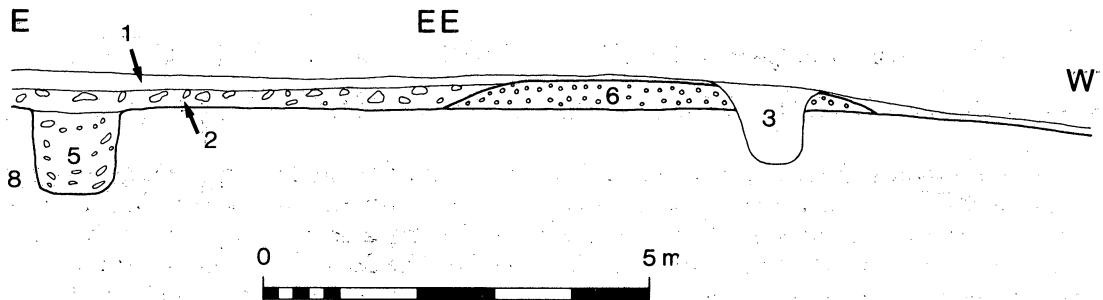


Fig 3. Tyrrell's Wood: Section E-E through Stane Street.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Johnson, W, & Wright W, 1903 *Neolithic man in north-east Surrey*

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