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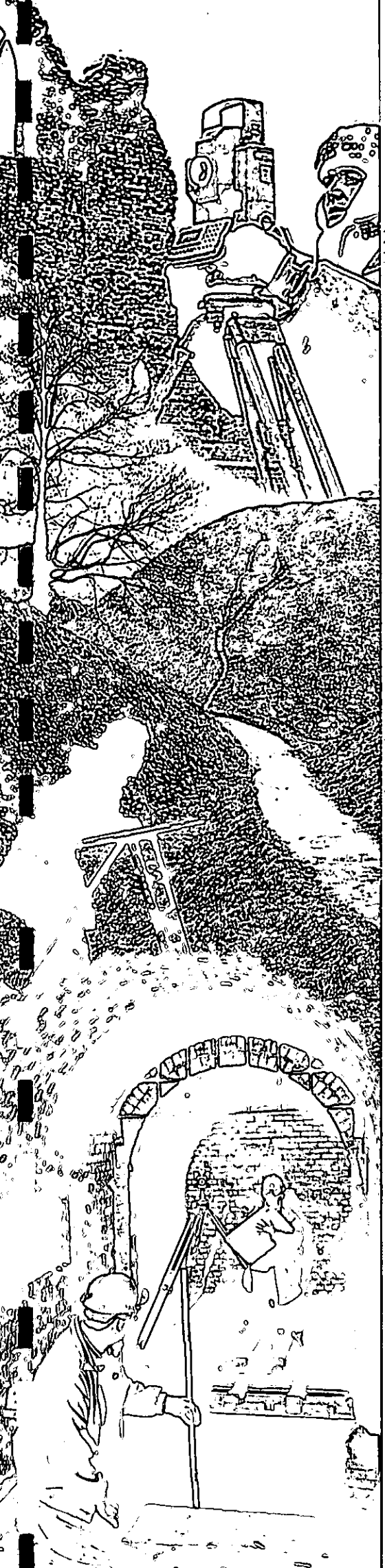

ENGLISH HERITAGE

LONG LOW BANK BARROW
Ilam, Staffordshire

David McOmish and Cathy Tuck

SURVEY REPORT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION SERIES

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LONG LOW BANK BARROW, ILAM, STAFFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION REPORT SERIES 41/2002
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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY

During the winter of 2001, English Heritage carried out a field investigation of a suspected bank barrow and its immediate environs on Long Low near Wetton in Staffordshire. The site lies 2km to the south-west of the village of Milldale in the parish of Ilam and the district of Staffordshire Moorlands, and the barrow on which the investigation focussed is centred at National Grid Reference SK 1213 5390. In addition, it lies within but close to the southern limit of the Peak District National Park (whose help with the survey and other information is gratefully acknowledged here). The analytical field survey was undertaken as part of the first phase of work associated with the Cursus Enclosures and Bank Barrows: Britain and Beyond project (CEBAB). The aim of this is to '*better the understanding of the nature of the specific monument type*' (Exploring Our Past, 1998, 35), in particular cursus enclosures, but also bank barrows which present an obvious shared morphology. The project is aimed at providing a research and interpretation based overview of these allied and poorly understood monument classes and addresses a wide variety of related issues including monument condition, vulnerability, management and protection. As well as this, the project will support the work of the Monuments Protection Programme by providing data that will help to define and refine constraint areas for scheduling and future management.

The principal monument under review here is the barrow on Long Low. This clearly comprises three main parts: one round barrow/cairn on the north-east; a tail extending from this to the south-west; and a terminal mound at the south-western limit. Despite this the site is given only one listing in the National Monuments Record as SK 15 SW 1. It is protected as Scheduled Ancient Monument, Staffs 151 and is site number 00156 on the Staffordshire Sites and Monuments register. In addition to the barrow, the survey identified one other potential burial mound SK 15 SW 99, as well as the extensive remains of surface quarrying SK 15 SW 100.

2. GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND LAND USE

The Peak District is a geologically diverse area dominated in places by carboniferous limestone, part of a strata that extends south beyond the boundary of the National Park and northwards through the northern Peak District and on to the Pennines. These rocks where encountered give rise to a very distinctive topography, one that is typified by shelf-like edges, shallow upper valley basins and narrow deeply incised river valleys, as well as small areas of upland plateaux and isolated outcrops of stone. Dry valleys are another common feature as are low rounded hills on the lower slopes and areas away from the High Peaks. The soils are now thin and poor on these slopes and are generally given over to pasture rather than arable but the slight traces of ridge-and-furrow cultivation that can occasionally be seen, as well as ridged and enclosed fields, suggests that cultivation did once take place on these higher slopes.

The site of Long Low is located on the south-east facing slope of a low domed knoll at 320m above Ordnance Datum. The knoll is oval in outline with a long axis oriented roughly north to south but the monument lies across this and follows a more north-east to south-west alignment. The north-eastern end of the barrow sits at the highest point on the knoll but the south-western end drifts to a position just off the crest of the ridge. The natural slope of the knoll dips sharply on the north-west and south-east but less precipitously on the north-east. It sits to the south, and at the head, of a re-entrant valley that extends north-eastwards to the village of Hopedale some 1km distant. From here the valley feeds into a tributary leading to the Dove Dale gorge. Like so many similar topographical features in the area, the knolls or 'Lows', as they are known locally, present themselves as low rounded features. To the south-west of the monuments the topography flattens out somewhat and is 'plateau-like' with small benches of land reaching to the north and south. The land slopes-off steeply 300m to the south-west, on the wooded terrain above the valley of the River Manifold, which is not visible from the barrow or any point in the close vicinity. The site has been constructed in an interesting location in topographical terms; it is not the highest point in the landscape, and is overlooked by higher ground on the north-west. Here, another knoll rises to 329m above Ordnance Datum and this is a much more pronounced natural rise. This stretch of higher land lies in close proximity to the monuments and creates a strong visual presence when visiting the site. It restricts long views to the north-west and creates an amphitheatrical backdrop with Long Low set within what looks like a natural bowl surrounded by (or enfolded within) a range of higher hills.

It is a relatively arid environment; the solid geology is permeable and so results in easy seepage of groundwater, consequently caves and rock fissures are a common feature

especially at the limestone plateau edges and on the flanks of river valleys. Long Low lies 1.5km to the east of the junction between the south-flowing River Manifold and its tributary to the west, the River Hamps. Further to the east is the gorge-like valley of the River Dove which flows southwards to a junction with the Manifold near the village of Ilam. Elsewhere, there are numerous dry valleys attesting to former watercourses and in recent times the lack of water has been addressed by the construction of a (now concrete-lined) dew pond (not surveyed) lying to the south-west of the bank barrow. In addition, a small metal water tank has been built into the south-western end of the barrow.

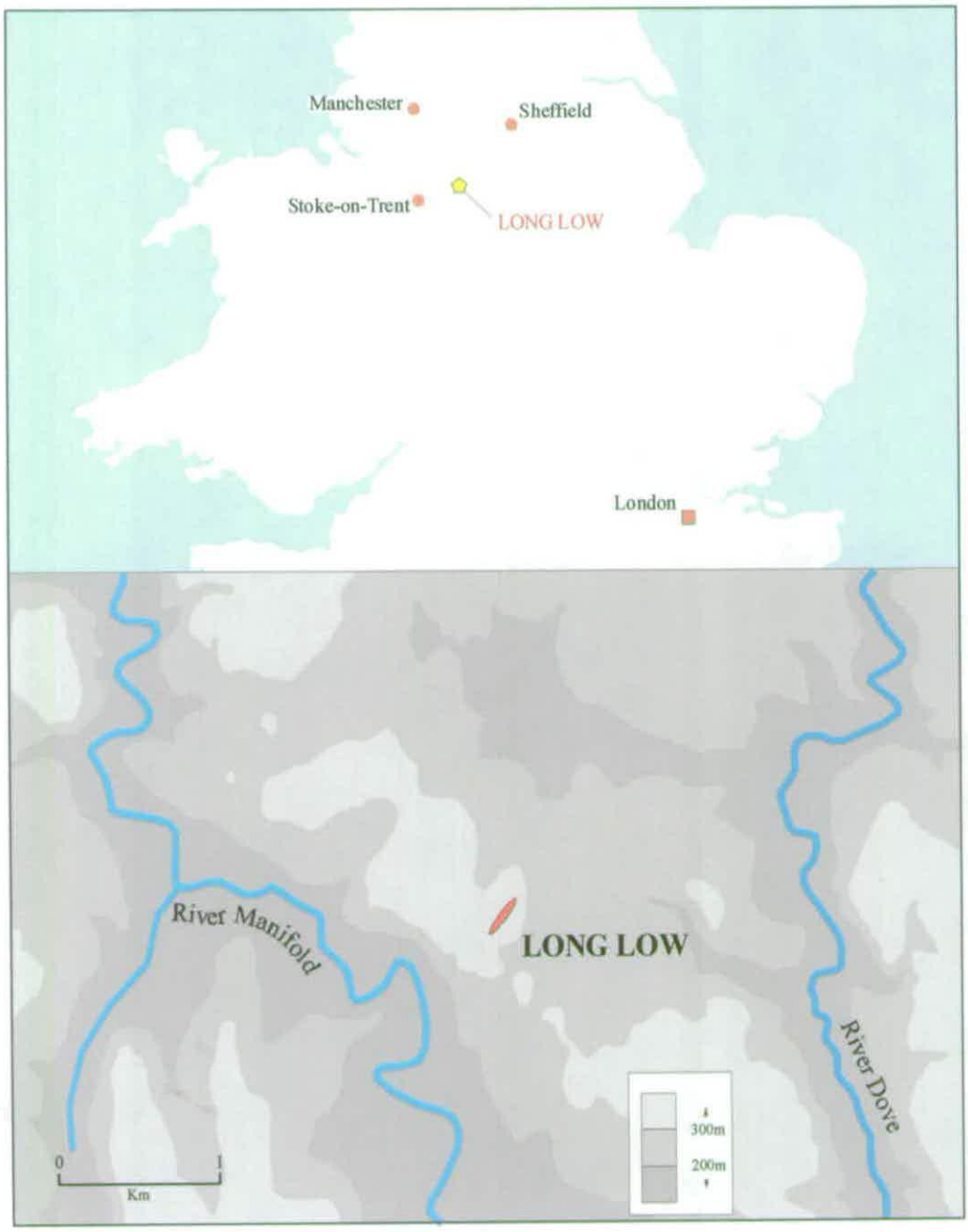


Figure 1:
Map showing location of the Bank barrow at Long Low, Staffs.

3. HISTORY OF RESEARCH

The earliest documented investigations at Long Low were undertaken by Carrington during excavation of the site (and others) for Thomas Bateman (1861) (fig.2). Carrington's survey of the barrow is the earliest known and shows what appear to be two terminal cairns, that on the north-east is largest, connected by a narrow bank. His plan also indicates the location of the excavation trenches and the most significant discoveries, notably walls and cists. In addition, Carrington observed that:

'...[the barrow] is of unusual form, and the discoveries which have from time to time been made within it by myself...are very remarkable and worthy of being put together in a collected form'.

Carrington 1865, 27

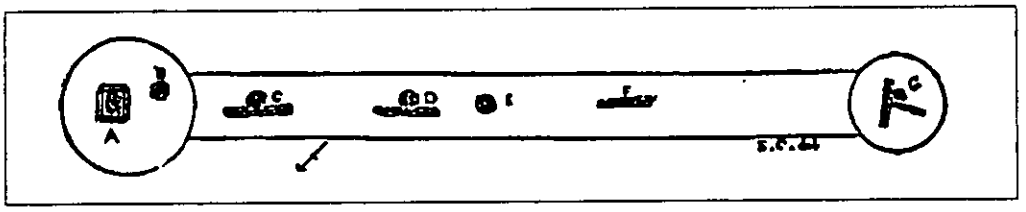


Figure 2: *Carrington's plan of the excavated remains at Long Low showing the exposed lengths of walling as well as cists and the locations of the main burial deposits. (Carrington 1865, 27)*

The barrow had long been thought to be a mine rake and there is a valuable commentary on the monument condition at the time of his work between 1849 and 1851. The north-eastern cairn had been heavily disturbed as had much of the remainder of the barrow:

'Various attempts have been made from time to time by lead miners to find a shaft by removing certain portions of the mound; a shaft had, in fact, been sunk very near the barrow.'

Carrington, ibid

These earlier diggings severely hindered the progress of Carrington's excavations and, consequently, attempts to interpret the main discoveries. The stone walls that can be seen today were also in evidence at this time and Carrington speculated that the raw material for these may have been plundered from the core of the barrow or from adjacent quarries.

The barrow extends in a straight line along the highest part of the land and a strong wall, separating the fields, is built along its axis. The stone for this, like other field walls in the vicinity, appears to have been robbed from the bank of the tumulus, which, with the exception of some parts of the surface, is formed of large flat stones. These too, have evidently been procured in the immediate neighbourhood, where the surface of the land is lowered to a considerable extent.

Carrington, ibid

Carrington's excavation report provides an unfortunately (and tantalisingly) brief analysis of the complex remains found within the main components of the composite barrow – the north-eastern cairn, the inter-connecting bank and the south-western mound. The most prominent feature found was a low wall that was intermittently observed along the whole length of the bank barrow and against this, on both sides, other large slabs had been placed thus providing a secure footing for the construction of the enlarged barrow. On at least three occasions, interments were uncovered within the connecting bank; two of these lay close to and east of the wall. One skeleton found in the bank had been crushed into small fragments, another grave had been cut into the bank and its sides and bottoms were found to have been burned to lime. All of these discoveries were regarded as being secondary to the construction of the mound. Only a very summary description of the wall is given by Carrington but it is unlikely to have stood to more than a height of 1 m by way of comparison with other similar stone features within the make-up of the bank barrow:

Against this [the wall], large flat stones, with their tops reclining against the wall, are placed, thus leaving many vacancies, and showing an economical way of raising the mound at less expenditure of labour and materials.

Carrington 1865, 28

At the south-western end of the mound and evidently below the postulated round mound, there appears to be an unusual intersection of two low walls (fig.3). Two ground plans are evident. The first of these shows two alignments of walling that cross one another.

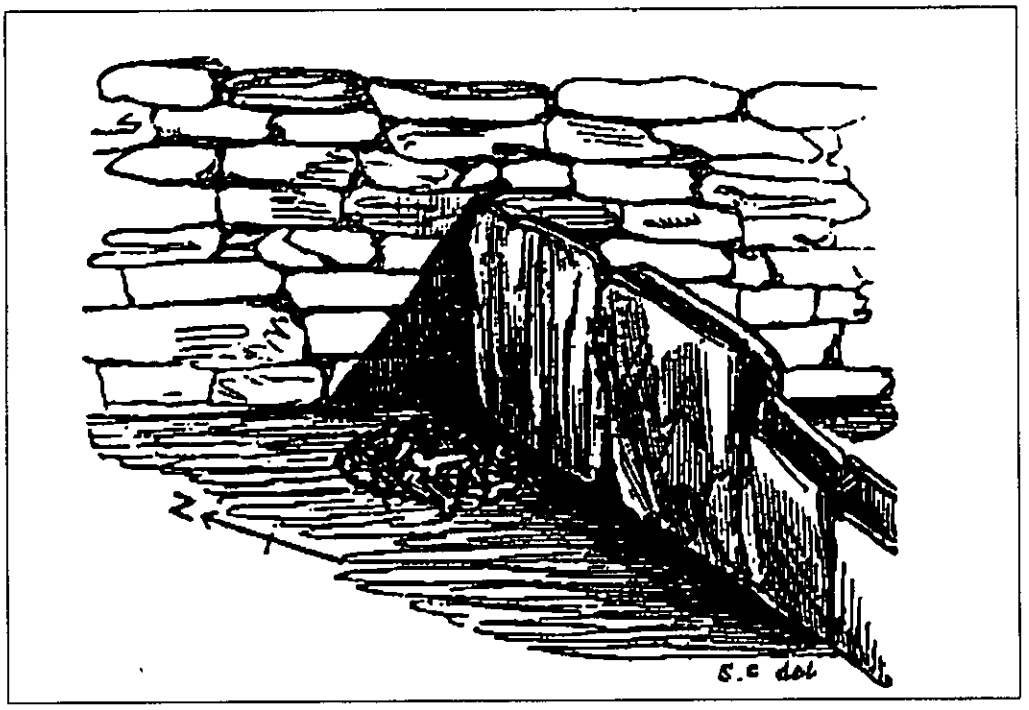


Figure 3: *Detail sketch of the T-shaped junction of walling within the south-western terminal of the Bank barrow. (Carrington 1865, 30)*

Another near contemporary plan suggests that a T-shaped junction of walls was present. The larger and more substantial of the two, lies at right angles to the main axis of the barrow on a south-east to north-west alignment, and survived after excavation to a height of 3 feet (0.9m). Another, slighter, wall sprang almost perpendicularly from this to the south and burnt bones were found in the western angle between these two walls. Carrington noted that these bones may have been secondary deposits as they were distributed throughout the wall matrix. The mound itself seems to comprise loose stone and soil capped by large stone slabs which inclined towards the centre.

A different pattern of use was revealed within the north-eastern cairn. Here, a large cist or chamber was discovered near the centre of the mound on 8th July 1849. The exact form of this cist is not clear as the antiquarian accounts provided by Bateman and Carrington are contradictory. Both are agreed, however, that it comprised four immense stones and enclosed an area 6ft long (1.8m), 5ft wide (1.5m) and about 4ft deep (1.2m). The chamber was defined by two vertical side slabs and was furnished with a paved limestone floor. No *in-situ* capstone was evident. Instead, there were two additional stones; one large slab 6ft (1.8m) in length and 5ft wide (1.5m) which lay at an angle on top of the deposits within the cist, and a second stone immediately to the north, 7ft (2.1m) by 5ft (1.5m), which had apparently broken in half longitudinally. These stones might represent the former end stone and the collapsed capstone. The cist appears to have been open on the south-east and contained at least 13 inhumations; it is not clear if these were articulated or disarticulated, the description suggests the former in at least some instances (possibly as contracted inhumations) in that they were observed lying in the 'primitive' position and crossing each other in all directions. The finds from these early excavations included two leaf-shaped arrowheads, two scrapers, one bone point, two antler tines, and 1 serrated blade as well as the bones of ox, pig, deer and dog. Two well preserved skulls were found intermixed with the remains of another skeleton on one side of the cist and close by at least two other skulls were uncovered – an adult female and juvenile female. One of the well-preserved skulls attracted the attention of Dr J Barnard Davis and was displayed by him in his publication 'Crania Britannica'.

'...remarkably regular, narrow, and long; of good shape, medium thickness, and presenting few of the harsh peculiarities of the ancient British race; on the contrary, there is about it an air of slenderness and refinement....It belongs, in an eminent degree, to the class of dolicho-cephalic skulls, and is the cranium of a man of about 40 years of age.'

Carrington 1865, footnote, 29

Secondary depositions higher up in the make-up of the mound included a skeleton minus the head, apparently imbedded in gravel, and associated with rats' bones (probably vole), and charcoal.

Kinnes (1979) describes Long Low as a round cairn, part of a distinct Peak District grouping, with a long tail added to the south-west to an overall length of 201m. The structural details derived from Carrington's antiquarian account led Kinnes to speculate that the stone chamber concealed within the north-eastern cairn was probably unroofed (therefore, the displaced stones noted by Carrington would not have been part of a collapsed capstone) and had been filled independently of the main mound material.

By far the most comprehensive pre-existing survey of Long Low is that by Barnatt (1989; 1996, fig 1.8, 000). This includes a detailed topographical survey at a scale of 1:200 (fig. 4), extensive field notes and a thorough re-appraisal of the antiquarian record relating to the site. The earthwork plan corroborates well with that produced during the most recent survey and Barnatt's major conclusions concerning the form, constructional sequence, and chronology of the site are upheld here. Barnatt confirmed the existence of three components to the monument, but noted that damage to the barrow impeded a full analysis of each.

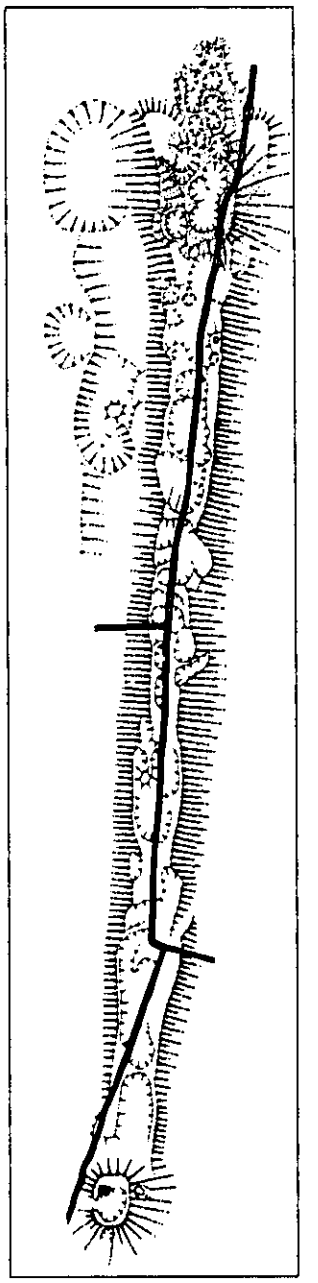


Figure 4: *John Barnatt's survey of Long Low Bank barrow. Reproduced here by kind permission of the author and the Derbyshire Archaeological Advisory Committee.*

In his discussion on the form of the barrow, Barnatt has questioned the simple presumption that the north-eastern cairn is a round barrow. Instead, he has drawn attention to the paired bulges on the north-eastern arc of the barrow, resembling the horns of a long cairn, and to the fact that the barrow is significantly higher here. His summary succinctly characterises the most probable morphological variables -

- The whole is a single-phased structure – being part of the bank barrow – which here was made broader and taller at one end and possibly had a horned forecourt.

- The site has two phases: a round barrow with circular chamber at its centre; and a bank barrow 'tail' added to the south-west.

- The site has two phases: the bank barrow, with horned end and chamber within the mound; and a round barrow superimposed at the north-east end of the bank barrow.

- complex options – the possibility that the site may have started life as a horned oval or long barrow (as at Green How or Ringham Low), that was later converted to a bank barrow.

Barnatt also expressed concern at the classification of the south-western terminal as another, possibly later, round barrow addition. Noting that the bank width is wider here and that there is an increased height too, he sought to present alternative interpretations for the mound at this end.

- *The terminal bulge is fortuitous.*
- *The bulge is of the same phase as the bank barrow, but was built larger here to emphasise the terminal.*
- *The end of the bank barrow has had a round barrow superimposed upon it.*

The surviving lengths of side ditch flanking the northern end and on the western side, were also recorded with an acknowledgement that, rather than being a continuous feature the ditch may have comprised a number of irregular scoops. The deleterious impact of more recent quarrying, stone robbing, and cultivation was also assessed.

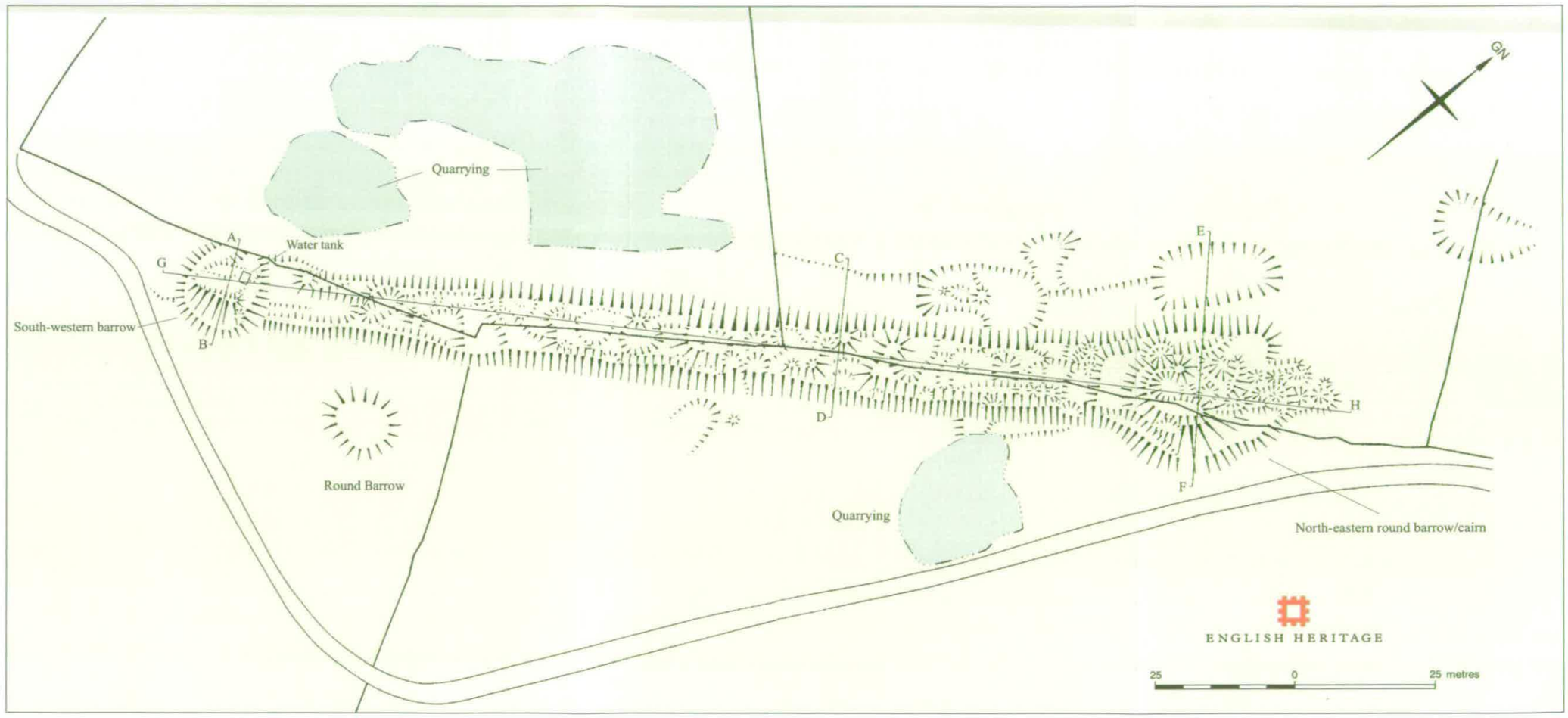


Figure 5:
Hachured plan of the earthworks at Long Low.

4. THE MONUMENTS

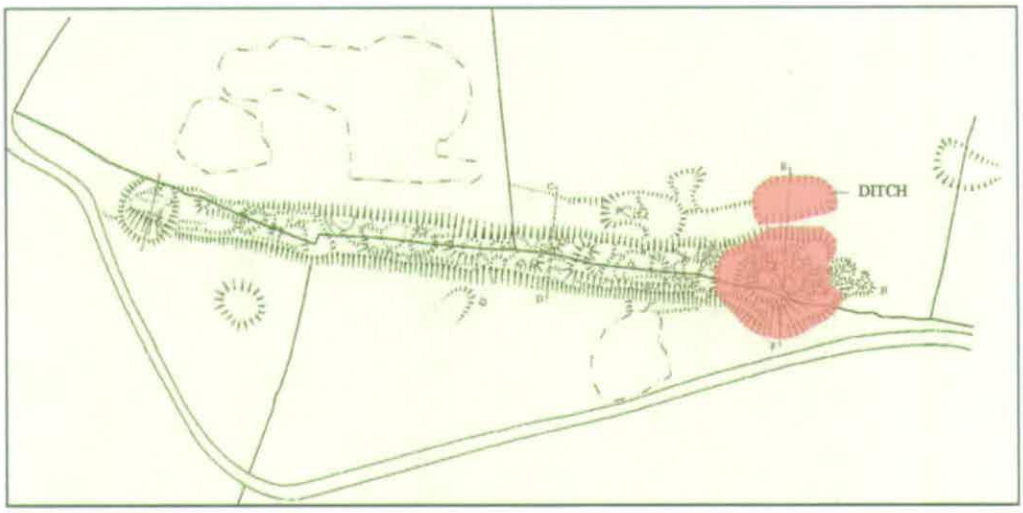
Summary

The barrow on Long Low appears to consist of at least two, probably three, main components: a large cairn at the north-eastern end and an embanked tail extending to the south-west for a distance of 166m. Previous surveys show a terminal cairn at the south-western end and this survey did, indeed, record a significant swelling in the mound here. However, this most recent analysis also suggests that the mound, noted initially by Carrington and so, therefore, in existence before the middle of the 19th century, may owe its current prominence to the effects of earthmoving associated with the 19th century excavations and the subsequent creation of the water reservoir here. Another, smaller, circular mound was recorded lying adjacent, and to the east of the south-western terminal of the bank. Traces of a flanking side ditch can be seen close to the north-eastern end of the linear barrow and elsewhere there are extensive remains of surface quarrying. This has encroached upon the mound most noticeably on the north-eastern cairn and what appears to be stone robbing has taken place along the ridge of the tail. The monuments and the surrounding fields, which lie in permanent pasture, have not been cultivated in recent memory (Mr Gilman, tenant farmer, pers comm) and a stone-built field wall, in existence certainly by the middle of the 19th century, extends along the central ridge of the bank barrow/tail. Two other stone walls abut this at right angles, on the east and west.

a) The North-eastern cairn

NGR: SK 1218 5395

NMR: SK 15 SW 1



This cairn marks the north-eastern terminal of the presumed bank barrow and its summit stands to a height of 1.5m above the line of the tail that extends to the south-west. It is immediately apparent that the location for this cairn has been carefully selected in that it occupies the highest point on the knoll. From here there are extensive views in all directions but with more of a focus, perhaps, on those areas to the south and east. The cairn has been badly mutilated through a combination of antiquarian investigation, quarrying and mining but its oval outline can still be ascertained, with a diameter of 30m at the base on a (roughly) north-west to south-east alignment. The longer, north-east to south-west, alignment is less easy to determine due to the impact of later digging but a basal diameter of at least 40m is probable. The foot of the mound prescribes a smooth arcing ellipse on the east but on the west the outer edge follows a more flattened trajectory. This may be due largely to the effect of later damage or to the impact of refurbishing the barrow by the addition of a tail, but it is worth considering that the current morphology reflects the original constructional form. With this in mind, it is noteworthy that the base of the mound spills out in a shallow loop along the north-western sector and a similar looping can be seen at the same point on the north-east. Both loops emerge from the core of the barrow at a point where there is a marked step-up in the profile of the mound (possibly due to upcast from the central disturbances) and they flank a lower-lying levelled area close to the base of the cairn. Again, all of this might relate to damage from later activity or may simply be the result of spoil-dumping on the edge of the quarrying but taken together they both appear to be part of some sort of intentional structural device that suggests a complexity beyond that of a simple circular round barrow or cairn. Instead, it is proposed here that the paired loops may be part of an

original 'horned' forecourt arrangement as at Green Low or Ringham Low (Barnatt 1996, 23, fig 1.10).

The mound rises to a height of 2.5m above ground level (fig. 6, 'E-F'; Plate 1) and although the summit has been heavily disturbed it is likely to have been in the order of 15m in diameter originally. A slight step in the mound profile on the south (at its intersection with the bank barrow) mirrors the levelling off associated with the suggested looped forecourt and may point to a heightening of the mound at some stage, possibly with material derivied from the shaft sinking or mining waste – the profile steepens above the break in slope.

Plate 1: *View of the north-eastern terminal of the bank barrow from the north. The mounded nature of this terminal shows clearly as do the surface mutilations.*

b) Remains of lead mining on the cairn

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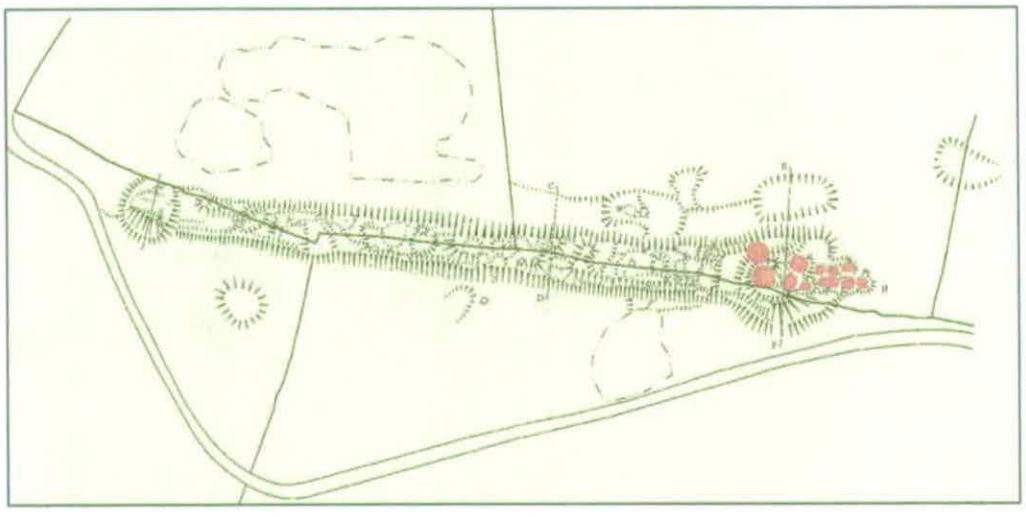
NMR: SK 15 SW 1



Two rows of shallow pits, 1m to 3m apart, have been excavated into the core of the north-eastern round barrow/cairn and have severely degraded the earlier feature. The pitting is first observable approximately 10m to the north-east of the mound and continues for 32m towards and over the summit of the cairn. The easternmost line consists of six extraction hollows each associated with a narrow lip of spoil usually located on the downslope of the digging. The hollows are circular in outline 2.5m to 4.0m in diameter at their openings and between 0.2m to 0.4m in depth. Four, possibly five, extraction pits flank this line on the west. These are less regularly placed with a closely set group of three accompanied with two others further up the slope of the round barrow. These pits are similarly shallow features no more than 4.0m in diameter and 0.3m deep accompanied by a low band of spoil 0.2m high and 2.0m wide on the west.

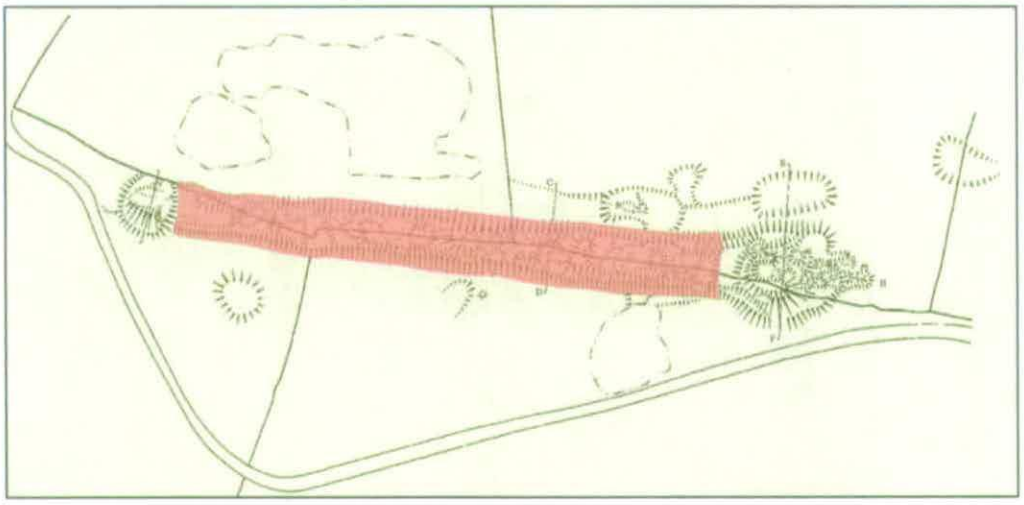
The two southernmost pits in this line are on a different alignment and are incorporated within a generally disturbed area on the flanks of the mound. The summit of the mound has been heavily cratered and there is good surface evidence for at least one very large pit. This disturbance might mark the position of Carrington's excavation trench and the resulting hollow is on a much larger scale than the pitting noted elsewhere on the round barrow. The pit is oval in outline 9.0m in length on its longest axis narrowing to a width of 5.0m on the north-east to south-west line and depth of 0.5m. A large band of upcast or spoil enfolds it on the south and east and there is another substantial cone of spoil with a basal diameter of 5.5m to a height of 0.7m above the pit, on its north-western rim. This may well be a stone-getting pit similar to those along the main bank of the barrow. A hint of some sort of sequence in digging or extraction is apparent in that another shallow pit

has been cut into this mound of spoil. The pit lies to the west of this and is circular in shape to a maximum depth of 0.5m. The profile of this pit is markedly asymmetrical, clearly a response to its location on the steep slopes of a round barrow, and the resulting debris from digging spreads in a short arc downhill from the pit. Rather than belonging to a separate phase of mining it seems plausible that this belongs with the phase(s) of exploitation represented by the double row of pits further to the north-west. There are additional areas of damage on the slope of the round barrow, most prominently, the two shallow terraced scars on the south-eastern side. Again, these may result from later damage, most likely due to the encroachment of ploughing in recent times.

c) The Bank barrow or tail

NGR: SK 1215 5393

NMR: SK 15 SW 1



A broad spread bank extends to the south-west of the cairn for a distance of at least 166m (Plate 2). It is a largely uniform structure but with a bulbous southern terminal. Its chronological relationship with the northern cairn is ill-defined due to the effects of later damage and digging. The elongated bank follows a generally straight course on an axis of 40° to the east of north though a slight deviation to this line can be seen *c* 45m from the southern terminal. This alteration in its course may, however, result from the encroachment of cultivation at some stage. In cross-section the linear mound can be seen to be broad based with a flattened top – the crest has, however, been extensively mutilated during the episodes of stone-robbing (fig. 6, 'C-D'). The basal width of the mound varies between 18.5m and 13.0m and the larger dimensions are noted close to its connection with the round barrow. The mound survives to a height varying between 1.2m and 1.8m along the western flank but its carefully chosen position, at the break of slope on the eastern side of a knoll, ensures that the ground drops off sharply along this side.

Consequently, the eastern face of the bank barrow is more prominent standing to a height, at best, of 2m above ground level. A prominent break of slope is also apparent 1.2m above the base along the eastern elevation of the mound. It is plausible that this relates to a phase of rebuilding/refurbishment of the mound but it is more likely to derive from the activities associated with stone-robbing along the barrow crest. The summit of the mound varies between 7m and 9m in width and the longitudinal profile reveals that it slopes down from a high point close to the northern cairn. The overall drop in height is close to 3.5m and whilst this reflects the general underlying topographical trend, it is of a much greater magnitude than expected and thus makes it clear that the northern end was built on a grander scale.

Later damage masks any sequencing in the construction of the mound but a slight step in the line 40m to the south of the round barrow hints at former partition. This may be the junction between a core element of the mound close to the barrow and a subsequent addition.

Plate 2: *View looking south-west along the line of the Bank barrow. The pitted surface, the result of stone robbing, can be seen clearly.*

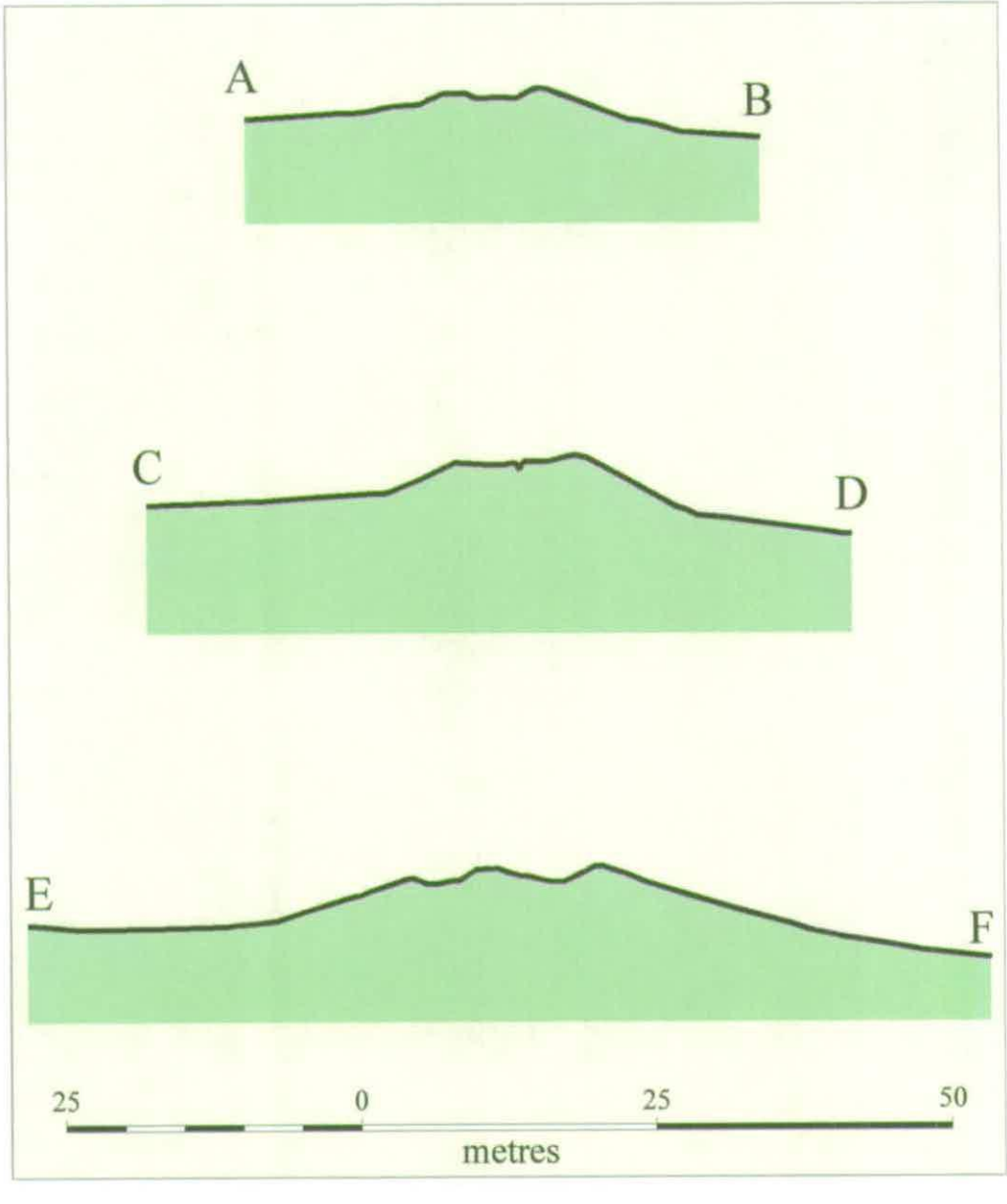
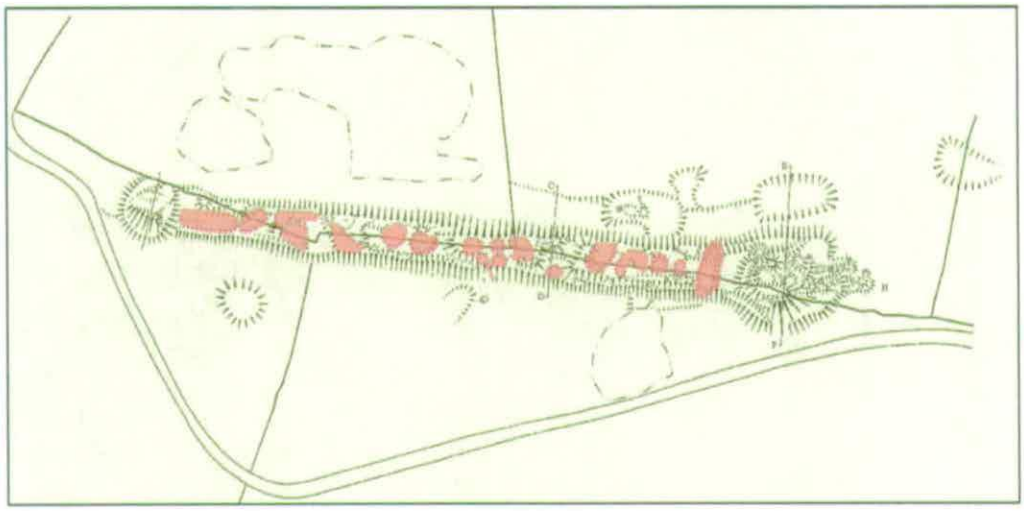


Figure 6:
Sections across the monument - South-western terminal (A-B); central portion of the linear bank (C-D); and the north-eastern barrow (E-F).

d) Stone-robbing pits along the course of the Bank barrow

NGR: SK 1215 5393

NMR: SK 15 SW 1

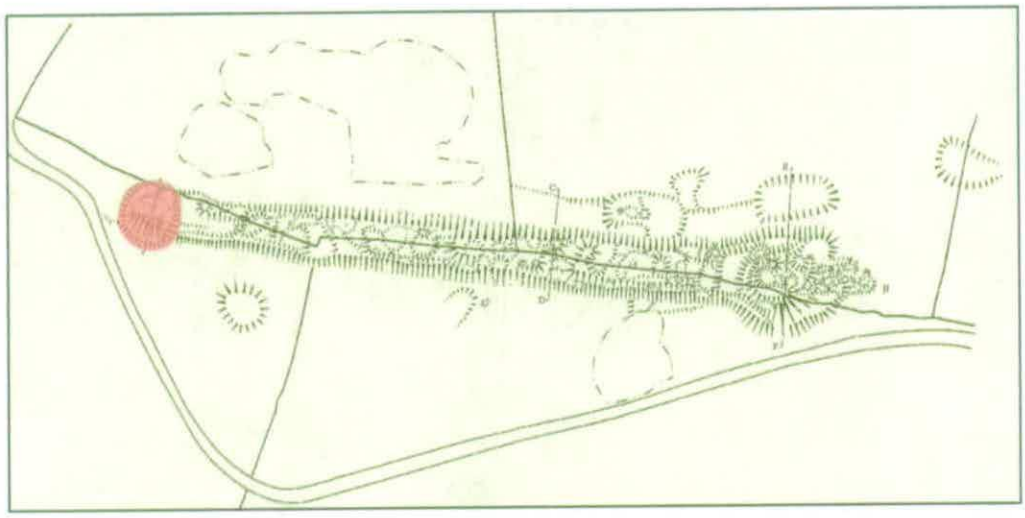


The remains of stone-robbing extend along the complete length of the bank barrow but only the deeper pits are indicated on the plan above. These robber trenches are irregular in outline but predominantly curvilinear in shape and varying between 1 and 9m in diameter. The pits, on first impression, are haphazardly arranged with no apparent patterning but on closer inspection clusters of holes, each possibly relating to individual episodes of extraction, are evident. The first of these can be seen along the summit of the putative core mound where there are a number of rectilinear hollows and associated spoil tips. These hollows are sharply defined with a maximum overall length of 6m and reaching a depth of 0.6m. Towards the southern terminal of the bank barrow, the stone-robbing is represented by linear trenches that follow the main axis of the mound. These robber trenches extend for lengths varying between 6m and 18m and survive to a depth of 0.4m. Interestingly, there is little in the way of associated waste debris with this stone extraction. The mid-section stone robbing is typified by shallow circular holes ranging from 3m to 8m in diameter. The holes here are shallow at a depth of, at best, 0.2m and, again, very little left-over spoil is apparent on the surface.

e) The south-western terminal of the bank barrow

NGR: SK 1210 5385

NMR: SK 15 SW 1



This mound is located at the southern terminal of the bank barrow and has long been recognised as a separate component superimposed upon an earlier linear mound (fig. 6, 'A-B'; Plate 3). Carrington provides the earliest mention of this barrow and its integrity has been confirmed by every commentator since then. The southern end of the bank barrow lies at a lower altitude than the northern end and there is a drop-off of nearly 3.5m from north to south along the line of the monument. Therefore, the southern end presents itself as a much less prominent section of the earthwork. Nonetheless, it does stand proud and lateral views of the mound do emphasise the peaked nature of either terminal. In terms of scale and monumentality, however, the southern mound does not match its northern neighbour and stands, at best, to a height of 1.6m above ground level. The slope down to the bank barrow is very slight indeed with a step 0.3m high marking their elision. The mound is very clearly later than the elongated section of the barrow and there are hints that it also overlies the disturbance left after the episodes of stone-robbing. If so, this would certainly cast some doubt on the antiquity of the terminal mound. It is circular in outline with a basal diameter of *c* 18m and the flat-topped, heavily disturbed, summit reaches a maximum diameter of 7m. A well defined ledge 1m wide and 1m above the base is apparent around the majority of the circumference of the mound but is absent on that sector which connects with the linear mound. The gradient of the barrow lessens somewhat below the ledge and this suggests that either it owes its origin to the encroachment of ploughing or that it has been rebuilt at some stage. A small rectangular water tank now occupies the summit of the mound and this has been placed here, presumably, to take advantage of this section of raised ground. It may be suggested that the construction of a small reservoir here required the further enhancement of the ground at this point but it is certain that the mound existed before the tank was installed as it lies

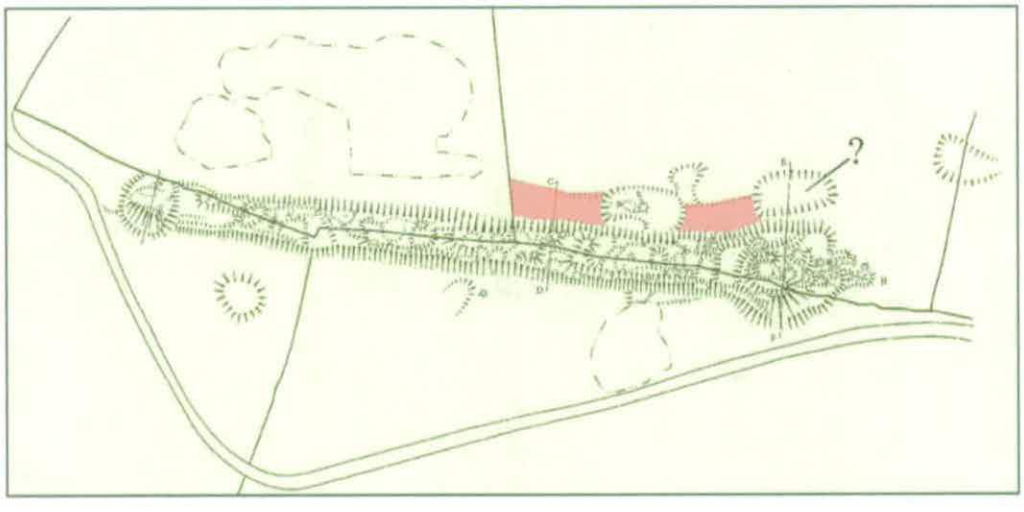
on the north-western edge of the mound top. The tank is approached from the south by a linear hollow 8.0m in length, 3.5m wide and 0.2m deep which, as well as providing easy access to the water, may mark the position of Carrington's trench through the mound. Two other slight indentations on the slope of the mound intimates that some low-key extraction may have been attempted here.

Plate 3: *View of the south-western terminal of the bank barrow from the south.*

f) Side ditches

NGR: SK 1215 5393

NMR: SK 15 SW 1

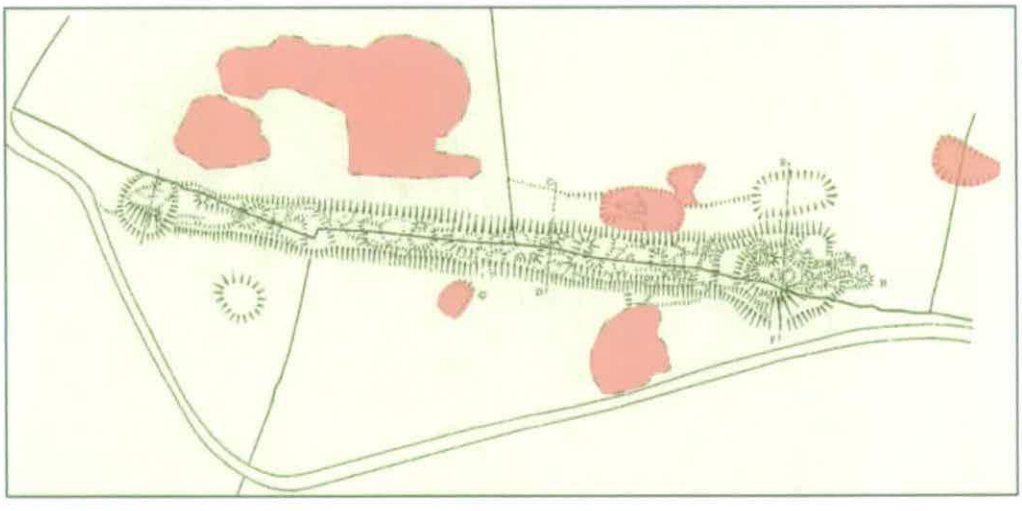


There are slight traces of an isolated length of shallow ditch on the western side of the Bank barrow in the vicinity of the large cairn at the northern end. One large sub-rectangular hollow can be seen but this now survives as a very shallow feature, 0.2m deep at best, and has clearly been overploughed in recent times. This hollow extends on a more northerly alignment but is restricted to that section of the monument occupied by the cairn, perhaps suggesting that it was either associated with the construction/rebuilding of this component of the monument or that, more likely, it was related to the stone extraction activity here. It is 23.5m in length and 12.2m wide and appears to truncate another length of shallower ditch on the south. This ditch runs parallel to the western flank of the bank barrow at a width of 7.0 to 10.5m. It is a slight feature surviving to a maximum depth of 0.2m where best preserved and has a shallow flat-bottomed profile much reduced by ploughing. This ditch has been interrupted at its midpoint by surface quarrying. The disturbance within the line of the ditch consists of an L-shaped trench within which there is at least one small pit with associated spoil heaps. Another, irregularly-shaped, area of surface quarrying lies on the outer lip of the ditch at this location. There is no surface indication of the ditch to the south of the intersection with the stone wall and no trace of any surviving ditch is observable along the eastern flank of the bank barrow – its absence here possibly due to infilling as a result of cultivation.

g) Surface quarrying

NGR: SK 1210 5393

NMR: SK 15 SW 100



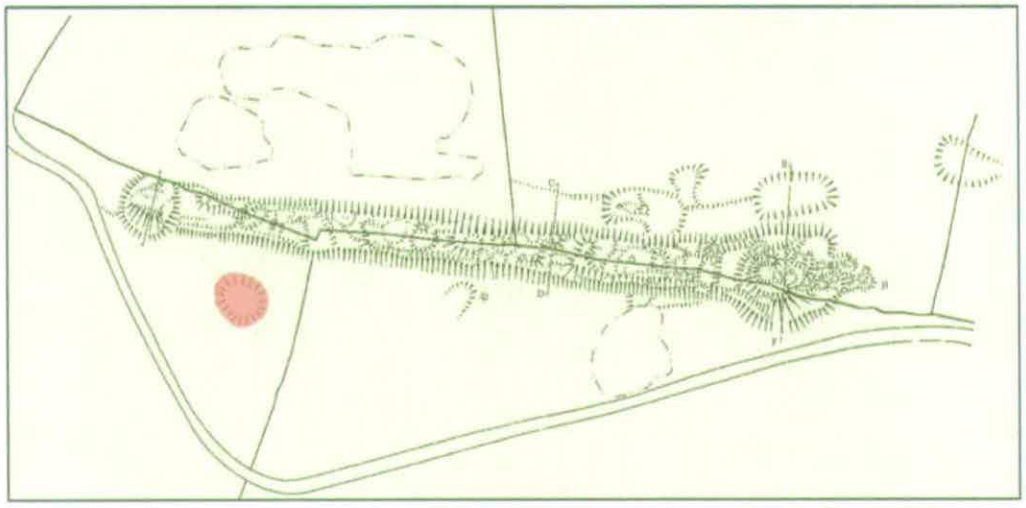
Other remains of quarrying survive on both the western and eastern sides of the mound, indeed, much of the surface of the knoll has been disturbed by digging. The largest area of quarrying can be seen on the slopes of the knoll adjacent to the southern terminal of the

bank barrow where shallow surface extraction, 0.1m deep, extends across an area of 1870 sq. m. Other, smaller, patches of quarrying lie to the east of the bank barrow at its midpoint and further north nearer to the cairn.

h) Round barrow

NGR: SK 1217 5387

NMR: SK 15 SW 99



During the course of the survey another possible round barrow was found, located 20m to the north-east of the southern terminal of the bank barrow. The newly discovered barrow has been heavily over-ploughed and survives now to a height of *c* 0.2m. The mound is oval in shape, with a maximum basal width of 17.5m on the east to west axis rising to a rounded crest 11m in diameter on the same axis. The barrow has been placed at the break of slope on the western side of the knoll and from here it offers good views to the surrounding countryside. This false-crest location also ensures that from the lower-lying ground to the south and east, the round barrow would have presented a prominent sight.

5. DISCUSSION

What is Long Low?

Perhaps the most pressing matter arising from this assessment (and also from Barnatt's earlier work) relates to the classification of the linear earthwork mound at Long Low. Barnatt has had no misgivings in referring to it as a Bank barrow, the massively stretched mound (much greater in scale than other long barrows) morphologically recalling other examples further afield, particularly those on the Wessex chalklands. There are, indeed, similarities between the monument on Long Low and those, for example, on Martin's Down, Long Bredy (NMR No: SY 59 SE 27; McOmish and Tuck 2001), and Broadmayne, (NMR No: SY 78 NW 7; McOmish and Tuck 2001) both Dorset. Principally so, in that they all appear to be composite monuments – each consisting of a core element that has been subsequently enlarged and transformed through a process of repeated refurbishment and reworking. That at Broadmayne, in particular, does recall the form observed at Long Low. At the former the bank barrow was augmented at both of its terminals by the addition of large round mounds. These are later constructions and were clearly part of a process of large-scale land re-organisation on the South Dorset Ridgeway that is characterised by the development of round barrow groupings, sometimes referred to as 'cemeteries' clustered around the major monumental foci. Much the same can be said for the morphology and context of the Long Low monument, although in this case the relative sequence is not as easy to resolve as it is at Broadmayne or Long Bredy. Further afield there are clear links to the sequence of development at a number of megalithic sites such as Bryn Yr Hen Bobl, Anglesey (Hemp 1953), Dyffryn Ardudwy, Merionethshire (Powell 1973) but particularly Tulach an t'Sionnaich, Caithness (Davidson & Henshall 1991) and Camster Long Cairn (ibid), Caithness. Long Low perhaps shows an even greater affinity with a small number of local sites whose constructional history appears as equally varied. At Minninglow (Barnatt 1996, 91), for example, the primary phase consisted of a small round mound converted into a long barrow with, ultimately, a large round mound superimposed upon this. In addition, there are several long barrows with superimposed round mounds, eg Gib Hill, Longstone Moor (J. Barnatt, pers. comm.).

The sequence of construction at Long Low

The barrow at Long Low is presently composed of three constituent parts heavily truncated by mining and quarrying, the most prominent of which is the large round

barrow that marks the north-eastern limit of the monument. The bank that extends to the south-west of this is certainly less monumental than the pronounced terminal, but it is, nonetheless, a significant earthwork and remains so even after the impact of stone-robbing. The chronological relationship between the large barrow and the lower linear bank cannot now be resolved by field survey alone - the junction between the two components has been heavily disturbed by digging and it is presumed that much of the bulk of the linear bank has been robbed. As a result there remains a suspicion that the apparent disproportionality between the two elements has no bearing on their relative chronological association. Indeed, perhaps the simplest interpretation of the barrow is that the cairn and tail were part of an elongated single-phase monument with a strong possibility that an earlier, pre-existing, chambered mound was incorporated within the enlarged structure.

There are hints, however, that the large round cairn, in its present form, post-dates the contiguous bank. The point on the south-east where the curve of the round barrow meets the line of the bank is notably angular and this awkward elision suggests that the round barrow is respecting a pre-existing structure. In addition, the height difference, although undoubtedly influenced by the effects of more recent stone extraction and mining, does give rise to the visual impression of the round mound spilling over the body of the linear bank, but this may have been influenced by the upcast from mining. Regardless, it is reasonable to presume that this north-eastern terminus marks the focus of either (or both) the linear bank or the round barrow – this is the highest point on the knoll and the most prominent location for the construction of a monument.

The mound at the southern terminal is by no means as well defined as its opposite partner. The mound in this case is very much less monumental but has again been heavily damaged by later activities, primarily antiquarian digging and the construction of a platform for a water tank. That this end of the bank barrow appeared enlarged in the mid-19th is beyond dispute given that Carrington's plan depicts a swollen south-western terminal, indeed, so much so that it was regarded by him as a separate entity. Again, no definitive answer is forthcoming on the question of relative chronology but surface indications suggest that the round mound post-dates the elongated bank. The mound is more sharply defined and appears to overlie the main bank, although their junction has been severely damaged by quarrying and digging. Carrington's excavations provide good evidence on the structural techniques employed in raising this mound, suggesting that it was faced with substantial, inward-facing, stone slabs. But the basal deposits that include stone walls are so similar to that found within the main bank that a common purpose and date must be presumed. If there is a physical and chronological connection then this implies that the round mound is not an isolated and free-standing monument but has been, instead, placed on top of the pre-existing linear bank. There is, of course, a good local analogy for the superimposition of barrows on to earlier monuments. At Arbor Low

henge, a round barrow has been built over the bank on the eastern side of the south-eastern entrance.

The preferred sequence of construction consists of a primary linear mound, here termed a Bank barrow, that extended for a length of 205m. Its position in many ways recalls that of Long Bredy, being carefully placed to take advantage of a rise in the local topography, with a focus on the north-eastern terminal that occupies the highest point on the knoll. There is a slight tapering from north-east to south-west which might indicate that the bank represented a tail added to a pre-existing round barrow. The long section (fig. 7) clearly shows that the mound was wedge-shaped in profile with a raised eastern element, thus recalling a number of long barrows in the Peak District such as Perryfoot or Longstone Moor, but further enhanced at Long Low due to the natural lie of the land. The crest of the linear mound, although heavily disturbed by later activity, is generally free of any pronounced peaks and troughs apart from the round mounds and the interruption noted 40m from the round barrow. This may mark the position of one of Carrington's excavation trenches or, alternatively, have been created as a result of the longevity and intensity of stone-robbing on this part of the mound.

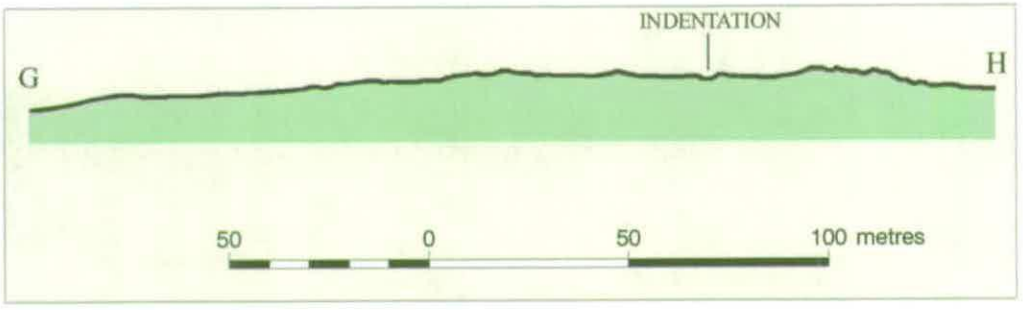


Figure 7: *Longitudinal profile of Long Low. This shows the heightened nature of both terminals as well as the potentially significant indentation c 40m from the north-eastern terminal.*

The long mound is flanked by an accompanying ditch along the north-western side but is absent elsewhere due largely to the impact of later cultivation. Two large pits are evident along its course and the southernmost is the remnant of surface quarrying for stone. The large rectangular crater that marks the northern limit of this line of ditch does not superficially resemble quarrying in that it has a rounded and smoothed outline. It is plausible, however, that it may be a recut ditch associated with a phase of rebuilding, conceivably that as part of the suggested re-organisation at the north-eastern end of the bank barrow and the construction of the large round barrow here. The impression given is that the original line of the ditch continued to the north-east and was overlain by the hollow, providing further corroboration that the linear mound (and its flanking ditch) extended beneath the superimposed barrow.

Barnatt's suggestion of a horned cairn arrangement has much to commend it and both his and the English Heritage earthwork survey, provide supporting evidence for the presence of paired flanking scarps at the north-eastern mound terminal but with a ditch in the north-western side only. The main body of the round barrow rests on top of these, which may indicate that this upper tier belongs to a later phase of re-building. If correct, the re-configured Long Low would most happily sit within the group of monuments known as long cairns.

It is suggested, therefore, that, in this instance, the large round mound at the north-eastern end of the mound and which dominates the monumental complex at Long Low, resulted from a re-working of the earlier monument. The round barrow is more substantial than the linear bank and stands to a greater height and thus creates a much stronger focus on this part of the complex. Barnatt suggests that Long Low was part of a regional tradition of diverse burial forms including long barrows, round barrows and cairns as well as larger examples of these termed 'great barrows' (1996, 24). Not all of the monuments are circular in plan and some, including Stoney Low, Pea Low and Minninglow are oval in form and have a long axis oriented roughly east to west.

The exact chronology of development at Long Low is impossible to gauge but it is likely that the mound at the south-western end of the bank barrow post-dates both it and the large round barrow on the north-east. The smaller round mound lacks the monumentality of its near neighbour, although Carrington's excavations show that it, too, was a substantially built structure faced with slabs of stone. The main core of this mound, however, is composed of stone and soil scraped up from the bank barrow as well as the surrounding area. The construction of the mound at the opposing terminal of the bank barrow is plausibly intentional and may have been intended to provide the final composite monument with a balanced symmetrical plan. This symmetry is visually striking, especially when viewed from a distance to the west and south.

Structural analysis and dating of the bank barrow and later monuments at Long Low

It is disappointing that Carrington's work has left little in the way of either a detailed constructional history for the main components at Long Low or an analysis of sequencing within the build-up of the north-eastern barrow. The various published summaries and interim reports point to a monument of great complexity, re-used and re-defined over, potentially, a long period of time. The central focus of the north-eastern round barrow is the stone chamber which held the remains of at least 13 individuals as well as good faunal remains and a number of leaf-shaped arrowheads. In this respect, Long Low fits into a

well defined local custom of chambered cairns which themselves display aspects of other non-local types better seen within the Severn-Cotswold and Clyde traditions. Barnatt has identified a minimum of 8, possibly as many as 16, such cairns and has sub-divided these into two groups; one consisting of cairns with passage graves and another comprising those monuments with closed chambers. Long Low perhaps belongs to this latter grouping, although it is differentiated from passage grave sites such as Minninglow, Green Low, and Five Wells in only having a single compartment, though future excavation may produce evidence for additional structures. The exact form of the burial chamber is unknown and the presence of a capstone has been disputed (Kinnes 1979, 15) but it does seem to have been 'open' on the south-western side. The numbers of bodies and their admixed condition also points to the potential that the chamber was accessible/or made accessible on a number of occasions. Barnatt speculated that these closed chamber sites were sometimes left as free-standing structures for the purposes of excarnation or to which bodies were added or other skeletal material introduced. This would certainly explain the discovery by Carrington of isolated skulls and cranial fragments. Other, less formal, burials within the body of the round barrow were identified by the excavator as being secondary and included a skeleton without its head accompanied by rats' bones (probably vole) and charcoal. The placing of secondary burials within the mound, clearly at some remove in time from the original interments, suggests a continued reverence for the place as well as an understanding, perhaps, that burial was a prime function of the site.

Carrington's other trenches (possibly as many as five) across the linear bank and the south-western protuberance produced good evidence for other, secondary, burials throughout the structural fill. Skeletal fragments were found in a number of positions within the matrix of the mound and at least one grave cut was uncovered, its sides burned to lime. His most intriguing discovery though was undoubtedly the medial wall exposed in three trenches that extends for at least 75% of the total bank length. This drystone wall was built of large boulders to a height varying between 4 (1.2m) and 6 ft (1.8m) and was augmented by flat slabs placed against it. A similar constructional technique was found at the south-western terminal but here one bank was placed at right angles to that within the linear mound and another wall set perpendicularly to this sprang off to the south. The similarities in architectural format and layout are apparent and imply that these walls formed part of a primary structural feature that acted as the spine for the bank barrow. The walls were buried in soil and stones in order to act as a framework for the superstructure but it is plausible that they may have pre-dated the bank by some considerable time. If so, it is worthwhile re-considering their origination and function. In some ways they resemble the linear spreads of sarsen stone and flint within the make-up of non-megalithic long barrows. Sites such as South Street (Ashbee *et al*, 1979) incorporate large quantities of broken stone and at this site a line of larger stones forms the longitudinal axis for the mound. It is worth speculating that this rubble represents linear clearance (although why the stones have been set upright is unknown), either as

part of continuing cultivation or as part of the preparation of the site in advance of the mound construction. Similarly, it seems plausible that the lengths of walling within the barrow(s) at Long Low are the fragmentary remains of an early field system that once extended beyond the limits of the monument. There is no evidence now, of course, of these walls in the fields surrounding the barrow or indeed, in the Peak District at large, but their context here, deep within a prehistoric burial mound, has ensured their preservation.

Barnatt has argued for more sustained agriculture during the Later Neolithic and Earl Bronze Age on the Peak but, generally, this notion of substantial field boundaries sits at odds with current interpretations of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods in the British Isles. The period between 3500 and 1500 BC is best characterised as being typified by fairly mobile, small-scale, groups of people. Although notions of territory and land tenure may have been important and developing themes in contemporary lifestyles, more sedentary and geographically fixed routines are implied by well-formed and substantial (?permanent) field boundaries. The processes involved in opening up the landscape as part of the earliest episodes of land division, and with it clearance and possibly cultivation, may have seemed like an act of transgression (usurping the natural order of things). The stones within the barrows may thus have taken on some symbolic (mnetonymic) qualities relating to this transformation in the physical environment.

The date of Long Low bank barrow or any of the other monuments attached to it are, at present, unknown. Barnatt (1996, 26) suggested a late 4th/early 3rd millennia BC date based largely on analogy with the examples of similar monuments in Wessex. No ceramics were retrieved from Carrington's excavations and the only other finds dateable, the leaf-shaped arrowheads, give an imprecise date range of several centuries between 4000 and 2500 calBC.

The Local Context for Long Low

Long Low has been constructed in what is an important point in the local landscape. Most significantly it is located on a watershed between the river systems of the Manifold on the west and the Dove to the east. Barnatt's observation that the barrow lies in an optimum boundary position when viewed against 'traditional agricultural zones' does, indeed, reflect a location that provides easy access to a wide range of habitats and environments. As well as the fertile limestone plateau, the river valley and its slopes are close by. Little is known of the contemporary settlement pattern in the region but there is enough detail to suggest that these river valleys played host to a scatter of settlements. A number of the fissure caves and rock shelters recorded along the Manifold and Dove valleys, for example, have produced evidence of Neolithic settlement and ritual activity in the form

of pottery and flint scatters (e.g. SK 05 NE 19; SK 05 NE 20; SK 05 NE 23), and it is entirely plausible that the Long Low burial mound served this local community. It was, however, one of a number of similar monuments in this area and the distribution maps show a loose clustering of comparable sites in the fairly close vicinity. Although dating relies largely on the sometimes sketchy evidence from antiquarian accounts it is apparent that there are a number potentially contemporary monuments close by. The large round barrow at Stanshope (Bateman 1861), is of a scale that invites comparison with the north-eastern end of the Long Low barrow. Although no chamber was found during Carrington's excavations in 1852, the area below the mound was paved and above this the mound comprised an outer shell of stone slabs set on edge and tilting towards the centre, again recalling the form of the neighbouring barrow. The barrow at Brown's Low (SK 15 SW 53) also displayed many of the same constructional techniques but this site included the remains of multiple burials associated with lithics including leaf shaped arrowheads. In addition, there was potentially at least one other long barrow in the area around Long Low. The site though now destroyed and lost, lay within the parish of Wetton and was described by Bateman (1848, 86) as a long barrow. This is disputed by Barnatt who, instead, identified traits more suited to a disturbed round barrow (1996, 86). However,

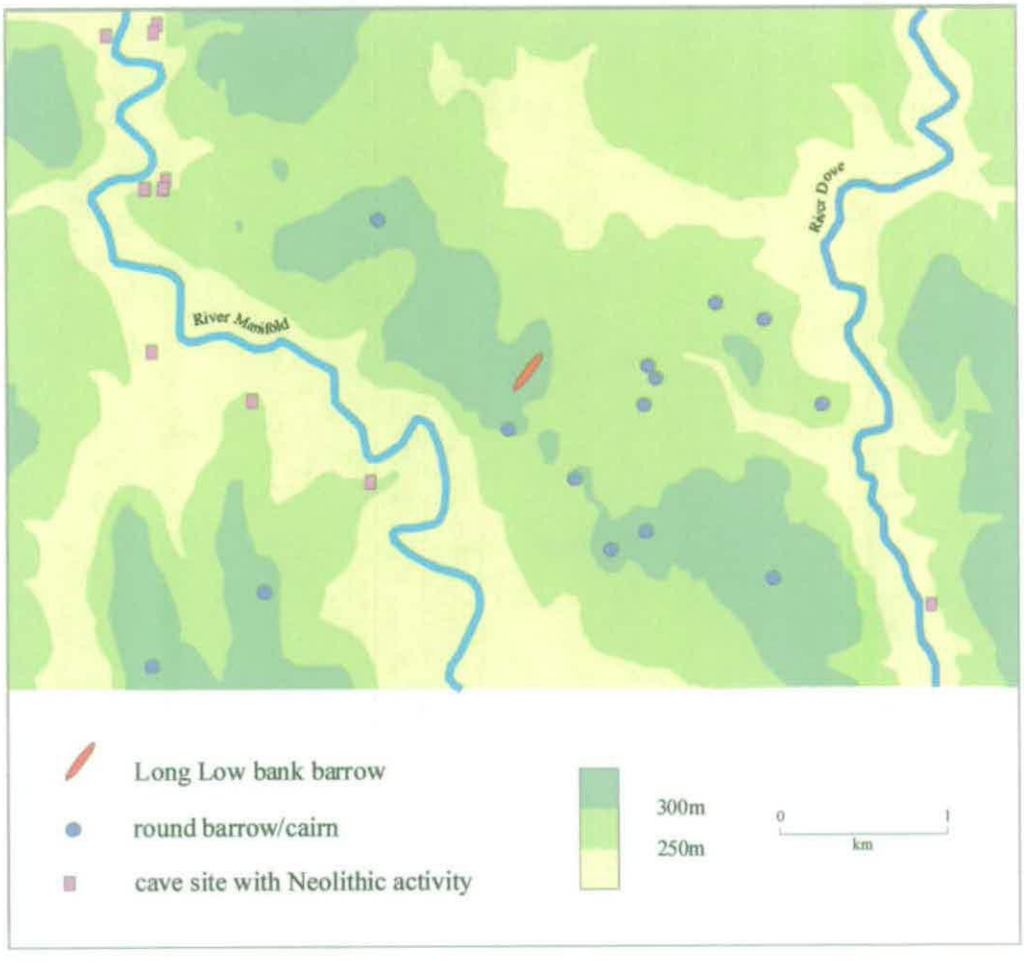


Figure 8: *Map showing distribution of Neolithic and Bronze Age sites in relation to the Long Low Bank barrow.*

the finds from the early excavations, including flint and the jaw of an ox, suggest that a Neolithic date may be appropriate.

In general, though, there is a concentration of round barrows and cairns in the area around Long Low and Barnatt has identified this area, together with that of neighbouring Pea Low, as forming part of a putative monument complex zone (1996, 65). In contrast to the bank barrows of Wessex where there is good evidence for the subsequent development of barrow cemeteries, very few later monuments cluster around the foci of earlier activity. Instead, it appears that the chosen locations of cairns and round barrows are topographically determined, at one level, and driven by the desire to utilise prominent natural high-points. Nonetheless, according to data published by Barnatt (ibid, 6, table 1.1) the area around Long Low hosts one of the densest concentration of round barrows on the limestone plateau of the Peak District. The areas between the Dove and Manifold valleys and that to the south of the Manifold and Hamps valleys contain at least 60 confirmed barrows with a larger number now destroyed, overploughed or known from antiquarian sources. The newly discovered round barrow adjacent to the Long Low bank barrow sits comfortably within the regional class of such monuments where the majority of round barrows have diameters ranging from 10m to 20m. In addition, the absence of a ditch is a common feature on the majority of upland barrows.

Many of the hilltops are dotted with cairns and other burial structures and the visual linkages between Long Low and these monuments are very clear indeed. The large round barrow (SK 1203 5355) that lies 250m to the south-west of the bank barrow at the southern limit of the Long Low ridge is a good example. This remains a prominent barrow even after centuries of over-ploughing and survives to a height of 2m above ground level. The Long Low barrow is not aligned on it, however, suggesting perhaps that it pre-dates the isolated round barrow. If there is an alignment between the bank barrow and another monument (or prominent landmark), it is with the distinctively pronounced knoll known as Liffs Low, 5km to the north-west.

The re-configuration of the north-eastern terminal of the Bank barrow into a massive round barrow or horned cairn may be construed as an attempt to draw upon the symbolic power of important components of the ancestral landscape. This monument would have been a well-known landmark to later communities its subsequent use, including secondary burial suggests, too, that there was an understanding of the site history at Long Low (i.e. it was recognised that burial was an important component in the 'function' of the site). As Barrett has pointed out with reference to monuments on the South Dorset Ridgeway:

'...lines of genealogical identity were constructed [by co-location]. The burial mounds emerged as...permanent points of reference to anyone wishing either to locate themselves in that landscape or to describe the setting [of the Ridgeway].'

Barrett 1994, 127

The possible alteration of the south-west terminal is part of this later manipulation of the social landscape though in this instance on a much less monumental scale. Both terminal mounds are visible from a distance away and would, themselves, have provided good viewing platforms across a wide area. The newly discovered round barrow does not share this level of prominence and is placed close to the flank of the bank barrow and is out of view for a large swathe to the north and west. On this occasion it would appear that the bank barrow has been used in the manner of a theatrical backdrop to the construction of the burial structure in front of it.

The alignment of the barrow is clearly significant also in terms of the solar cycle with an axis that is roughly fixed to both midsummer sunrise (north-east) and midwinter sunset (south-west). The elaborations witnessed at the terminals of Long Low accentuate this alignment and would have provided fixed points of reference in any cosmological ordering of space in which the barrows were incoporated.

6. METHODOLOGY

The field investigation was undertaken by David McOmish and Cathy Tuck during winter 2001. The measured survey of the Long Low bank barrow and adjacent round barrow was carried out entirely digitally by using a Leica T805 Electronic Theodolite with integral Electromagnetic Distance Measurement (EDM) from a baseline traverse of two stations. The resulting plan was plotted at 1:1000 scale via Key Terrafirma, AutoCAD and CorelDraw software.

All of the CAD-based drawings were completed using CorelDraw 9 software by David McOmish and the report was prepared in Adobe Pagemaker v7. The report was researched and written by David McOmish, commented upon by Cathy Tuck and edited by Peter Topping. Thanks also to John Barnatt for his extensive comments on the text and the Derbyshire Archaeological Advisory Committee for permission to reproduce their survey of Long Low.

The site archive and copies of this report have been deposited in the archive of English Heritage at the National Monuments Record Centre, Great Western Village, Kemble Drive, Swindon, SN2 2GZ, to where applications for copyright should be made and further enquiries directed.

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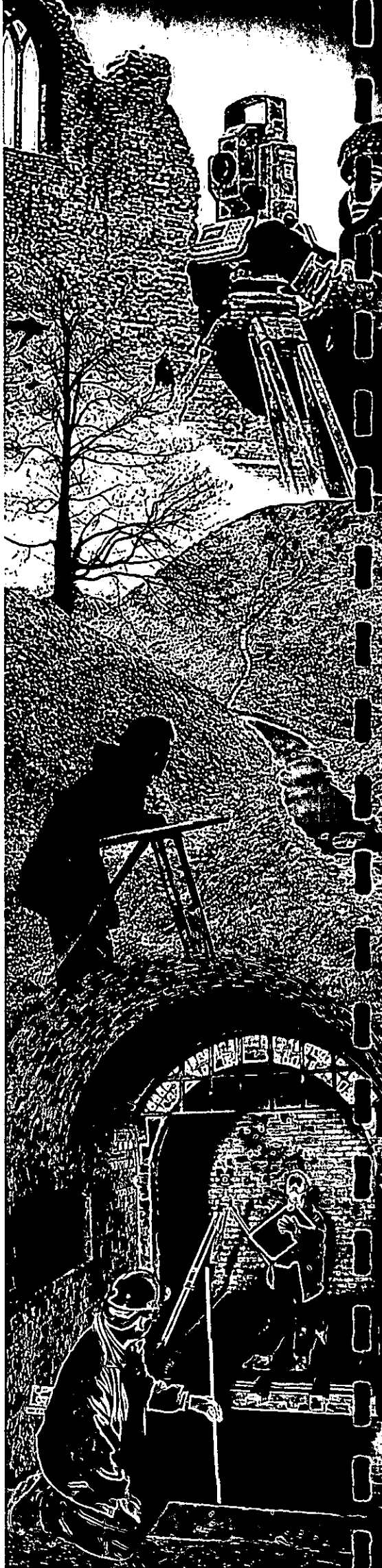

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