

THE BRONZE AGE ROUND BARROW AT SWARKESTON.

By MERRICK POSNANSKY,
with a report on the Anglo-Saxon remains by
R. D. ABBOTT.

Part. I. THE EXCAVATION AND FINDS.

THE barrow whose excavation is described below lies five miles south of Derby in the parish of Swarkeston (National Grid reference SK 365 295).

The site was chosen for excavation as part of a planned series of prehistoric excavations in the Middle Trent Valley which would elucidate problems vital to prehistoric research in the area. The absence of scientifically conducted excavations in the Middle Trent meant that no evidence at all was available concerning the environmental background of prehistoric man and that the museums of the area were lacking in culturally associated material. The Swarkeston Lowes were themselves chosen as being the only barrow group. From Air Ministry aerial photographs revealing ring ditches, from the actual number of barrows and the lack of contrary local stories, there was little doubt as to their true nature as burial barrows.

The barrow was excavated between 2nd and 30th July 1955 by volunteer helpers.

A series of training week-ends in prehistoric archæology was organised by the Extra-Mural Department of the University of Nottingham at which instruction was given to seventeen students by Dr. R. C. Coates, Dr. M. C. Pearson and Mr. K. Osbeldiston of the University of Nottingham and Mr. R. D. Abbott of Leicester Museum.

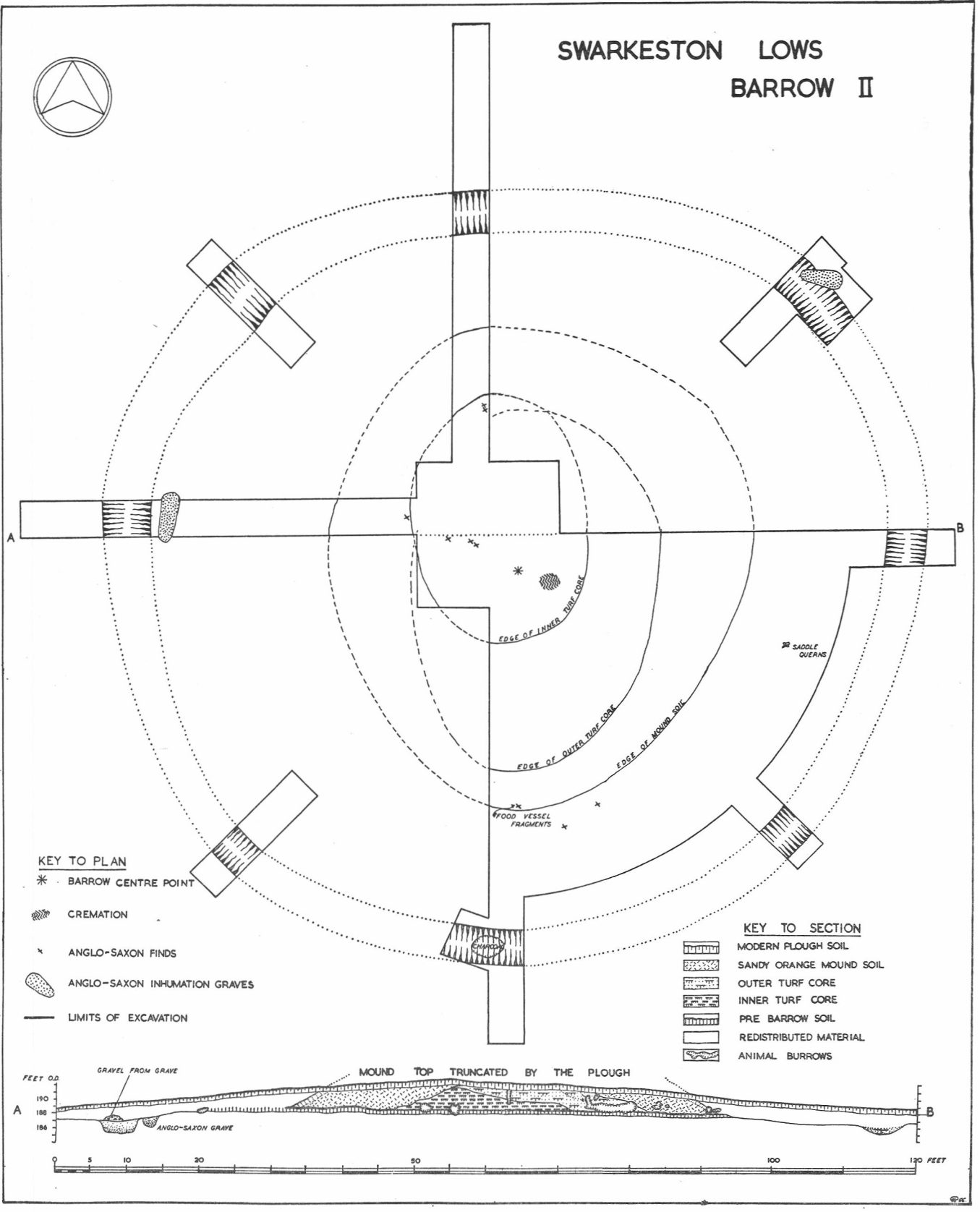


FIG. I.—PLAN OF THE EXCAVATED BARROW AND EAST-WEST SECTION.

The Site (see map).

The Swarkeston Lowes lie on a gravel terrace, part of the Lower Hilton terrace at 60 ft. above the flood plain alluvium, on the north side of the river. Less than half a mile to the immediate south, the A.514 from Derby to Melbourne crosses the Trent flood plain by the mile long medieval bridge. There are four barrows in the group. The most westerly, lying in a narrow field known as "The Racecourse" immediately to the east of Lowes Farm, still retains the bulk of its height. The other three, in a 23-acre field, are all in the process of being ploughed out. The destruction by the plough, accelerated during the war years, was commented on as early as 1846 by J. J. Briggs in his *History of Melbourne*. Three barrows have double ring ditches on the aerial photographs, the excavated barrow with a single ring ditch is the second barrow to the east of the farm. The underlying natural is sand and gravel rich in quartzites and a cherty grey flint, but with a noticeable absence of black flint.

The Excavation.

A quadrant method of excavation was adopted. Prior to the excavation a series of auger holes was sunk around the periphery of the mound to establish the approximate position of the ditch, which was found to have a diameter of 105 ft. A preliminary contour of the site indicated that the barrow had been spread by ploughing to form a low spreading mound 200 ft. in diameter and four and a half feet in height above the general field level. The whole of the SE. quadrant was removed and quadrant trenches excavated in the NW. quadrant to provide intersecting cross-sections. These showed the barrow to be of the bell variety with a core of turves heaped up over a primary Bronze Age cremation. A central square of 20 ft. was dug to clear the bulk of the turf core. Further excavation was undertaken to provide cuttings across the ditch at eight points and to make extensions of the existing cuttings, where Anglo-Saxon inhumation graves were found. Iron Age pottery was found in the ditch silting

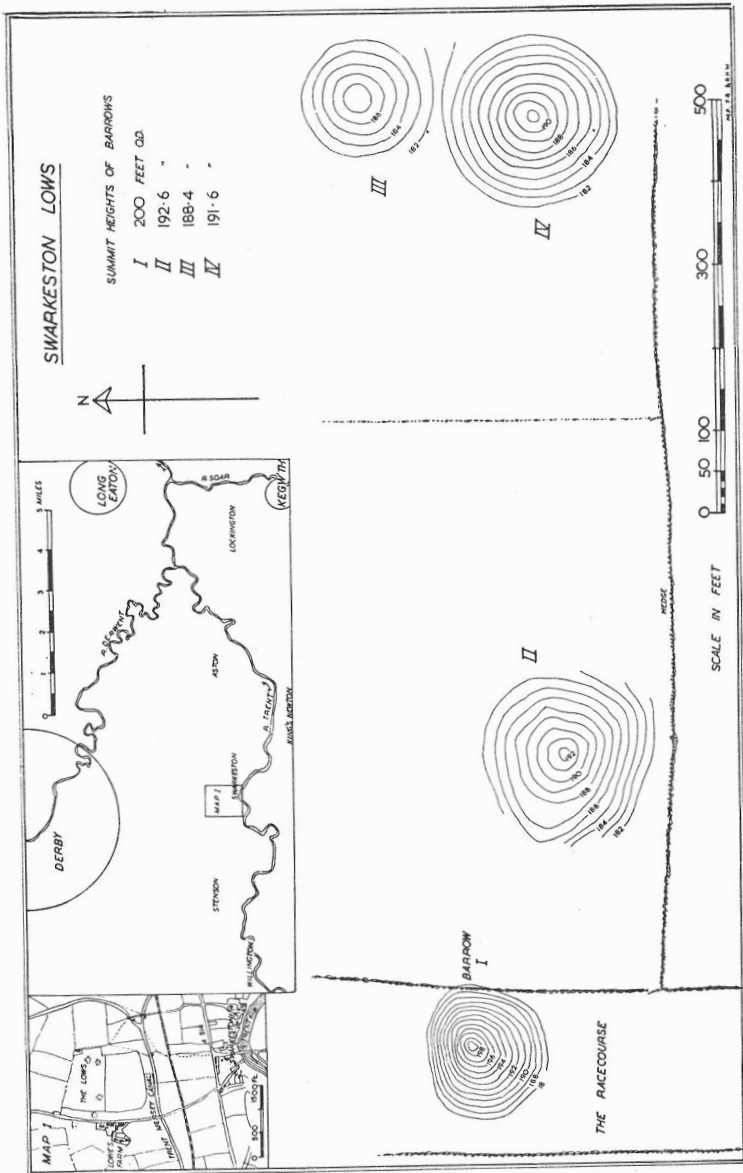


FIG. II.—Contoured plan of the Swarkeston Lows with inset maps of the immediate and general area.
 (Based upon the Ordnance Survey and reproduced by permission).

whilst remains of other Anglo-Saxon interments were found in the material redistributed from the top of the mound by ploughing.

The Bronze Age Barrow (see plan).

The whole site was covered by a modern plough soil of 9 ins. in thickness. The original barrow, oval in plan, was 56 ft. (E.-W.)-67 ft. (N.-S.) in diameter and was surrounded by a berm between 13 and 25 ft. broad. The surrounding ditch, irregular in plan, was of an average width of 6-7 ft. and nowhere more than 2 ft. in depth with a "U"-shaped ditch bottom. The mound covered an old ground surface beneath which lay 6 ins. of stoneless leached grey soil. An unaccompanied cremation had been placed directly on the old ground surface towards the centre of the area inside the ditch. The bones,¹ finely comminuted and fused together, showed evidence of intense firing. Little charcoal accompanied the bone and there was no sign of heat discoloration in the immediately underlying soil. It is clearly evident that no pyre had been erected on the site. A mound of turves (Plate II—bottom), up to 3 ft. high and containing 13 layers of turf in its greatest thickness, was thrown on top of the cremation from the NW. side in such a way that the cremation lay under its SE. corner. Above this carefully constructed turf core was heaped a poorer turf mound from the south-east, which though primarily of turves also included lenses of clay soil and gravel. The turves of this outer core were less regular in shape and much thicker, being mostly more than 5 ins. in thickness. Each turf had been laid grass side uppermost in both cores and consisted of a tripartite banding, a thin black line representing the original vegetative cover enriched by mineral salts leached from the upper turves and mound soil, an orange sandy soil rich in mineral salts and a grey soil leached of most of its mineral constituents. The surface of the inner turf core was covered by a thin orange discoloration, interpreted as a mineral pan. Above the double turf core was thrown an orange sandy and pebbly soil clearly derived from the surrounding ditch, though

¹ See Appendix I for report by Professor A. J. E. Cave on the bones.

including lenses of blue and red clay not immediately local to the barrow.

The original surface of the barrow was evident in the section and showed the central parts of both the outer turf core and the mound soil to have been truncated by ploughing, leaving the original barrow slope intact for only the outer 4 ft. It would appear that the surface had been covered by upwards of 6 ins. of turf.

The old ground surface, enriched by a reddish black layer of mineral deposit up to 1 in. thick beneath the mound soil, was represented by the merest black line beneath the turf cores. Each turf would appear to have served as a separate level for mineral deposit in such a way that little was redeposited on the old ground surface beneath the turf core. This layer of mineral deposit is absent from the pre-barrow soil of the berm. Only the inner part of the berm was covered by this pre-barrow soil, the outer part having either been ploughed away, or, more probably, dug away for the construction of the barrow.

From the old ground surface, the turf core, the mound soil and berm numerous waste flakes, mostly of black flint, several scrapers and a broken leaf-shaped arrow head were found. On the berm, parts of three saddle querns were found, whilst two sherds of Bronze Age pottery were found in the mound soil.

Secondary Burials.

Several pieces of Iron Age A pottery with affinities to that from the nearby hill-fort of Breedon-on-the-Hill were found in the filling of the ditch and on the surface of the berm and indicate settlement on the terrace gravels by Iron Age A peoples. In the material redistributed from the truncated top of the barrow were several pieces of Anglo-Saxon cinerary ceramic including one small piece bearing an impressed bone decoration, numerous fragments of cremated comminuted bone and a green glass bead. It is probable that this material derived from early pagan Anglo-Saxon burials inserted in the top of the mound and disturbed by the plough.

The whole of the mound was riddled by animal burrows of various sizes. In several parts of a large one of these, towards the centre of the barrow, were found various Anglo-Saxon remains² including a shield boss, the handle of a second shield boss in three parts and several rivets. Other metal Anglo-Saxon objects were found in similar positions elsewhere. It is probable that these objects, some of which are at the level of the pre-barrow soil, worked down from the surface and must be derived from inhumation burials.

A layer containing large quantities of charcoal³ was found towards the top of the silting of the ditch at several places, particularly in the north and south cuttings. This charcoal layer post-dates the Iron Age pottery found in the lower part of the silting. Cutting obliquely across the outer edge of the ditch and through the ditch filling in the north-east cutting, and across the berm in the west cutting, were pagan Anglo-Saxon inhumation graves. The gravel from the excavation of these graves had been thrown on top of the ditch silting. The fact that the layer of charcoal occurred towards the top of the ditch silting is suggestive that the layer dates from a period not long before the digging of the inhumation graves. Whether the burning could be related to Anglo-Saxon cremations cannot be proved.

Though only two inhumation graves were excavated, other graves in a similar position must probably have existed, since less than a seventh of the ditch area was excavated in the eight cuttings. Each grave was a little over 6 ft. 6 ins. in length, 2 ft. 6 ins. in width at one end and 1 ft. 6 ins. at the other. The western grave was 2 ft. 6 ins. deep and the north-eastern 2 ft. deep with a dark silting towards the bottom. Both had a small amount of compacted clay lining them. In the western grave only a small iron object was found. The north-eastern grave was much richer and contained a bronze cruciform brooch, two iron ring brooches, a bronze buckle, an iron buckle or clasp, a knife and five beads together with some broken

² See report by Mr. R. D. Abbott who kindly cleaned and preserved the Anglo-Saxon material.

³ See Appendix II by Mr. J. F. Levy on the charcoals.

fragments of pottery. The metal objects and beads were towards the head of the grave and the pottery at the foot of the grave. The incomplete nature of the pot and the disordered array of the grave goods indicated that the grave had been disturbed in some way subsequent to the burial. The bodies had completely disintegrated in both graves, a feature which is not uncommon with inhumations in gravel soils. The western grave was oriented north-south, the north-eastern grave east-west.

Conclusions and General Considerations.

The earthen bell barrow dates from a period when the immediate area was partially or wholly grass covered, the turf core being suggestive that the terrace gravels in the immediate area of the barrow had been cleared of forest. Barrows of a similar construction in the south of England are usually assigned to a late Early or Middle Bronze Age date.⁴ The factor of cremation points to a Middle Bronze Age date, whilst the further factor of an unaccompanied primary cremation would strengthen this view. The inclusion of lenses of red and blue clay in the mound make up would bear out Grinsell's⁵ view of basketfuls of earth brought from afar by kinsfolk of the departed. The large number of flint flakes on the old ground surface, the broken pieces of saddle quern and grinders on the berm, besides the multiplicity of the barrows are all suggestive of settlement during the Bronze Age and the succeeding period on the gravel terrace. The lower Hilton terrace on the north side of the Trent forms an extensive zone of light soils easily cleared by slash and burn methods of nomadic cultivators with the Trent as a routeway immediately to the south. Barrows are relatively numerous on the terrace gravels including those in the immediate vicinity at Aston, Etwell, Hilton and Hoon, whilst cinerary urns have been found in gravel workings at Stenson⁶ and Willington.⁷ The

⁴ The increasing use of turves in mound structures could possibly be connected with the onset of drier conditions during the Bronze age.

⁵ L. V. Grinsell, 1953, *Ancient Burial Mounds of England*, pp. 49-52.

⁶ Pottery in University Museum, Nottingham.

⁷ W. H. Hanbury, *D.A.J.* 1938, LIX, p. 95.

absence of settlement sites is not surprising in view of the intensive agricultural activities since Anglo-Saxon times.

*The Finds.*⁸

Flint-work (fig. 1). Altogether 250 pieces of worked flint were found, of which 98 were from the ploughed surface layers and the remainder from the mound make up, the turves and the old ground surface and soil. Of these 250, 18 (7.2%) were of the poorer cherty grey flint found locally in the river gravels and the rest of the black or smoky variety of flint which is not found in abundance north of the Trent. Altogether eleven pieces (4.4%) showed signs of usage, consisting of six scrapers (nos. 2-6, 11), one broken leaf-shaped arrowhead (no. 1) and four other worked pieces. There were eight (3.2%) cores and core spalls and one hammerstone. Of the waste flakes 133 (57%) retained larger or smaller amounts of cortex and it was apparent that the raw material used was obtained from pebbles. There were no bladlets and no indication of microlithism,⁹ and though 15 blades were found it would seem from the primary flakes that the production of small flattish squat flakes suitable for making small round scrapers was the aim of the flint-workers. The cores, with the exception of a small blade core (no. 7) a surface find, and the scrapers bear this out. Of the scrapers nos. 2-4 with their simple form and steep flaking to form the scraper edge¹⁰ are typical of Middle to Late Bronze Age flint assemblages as is the absence of the larger, symmetrical scrapers, like the horseshoe and kite shapes with their carefully pressure-flaked edges.¹¹ The square scraper (no. 5) and the hollow scraper (no. 11) are specialized forms but nevertheless have fairly steep flaking consistent with a Middle Bronze Age dating. The broken leaf-shaped arrowhead and the possible rough-out for a plano-convex knife (no. 9) are both from

⁸ Presented to Derby Museum.

⁹ A survival of microlithic forms was observed from the Early-Middle bronze age barrow at Lockington (*Trans. Leic. Arch. and Hist. Soc.*, XXXI, p. 22) and at other sites of the Early Bronze age in the Middle Trent.

¹⁰ J. F. S. Stone, 1941, *Proc. Prehistoric Soc.*, VII, p. 131.

¹¹ J. G. D. Clark, 1936, *Ant. J.*, XV, p. 47.

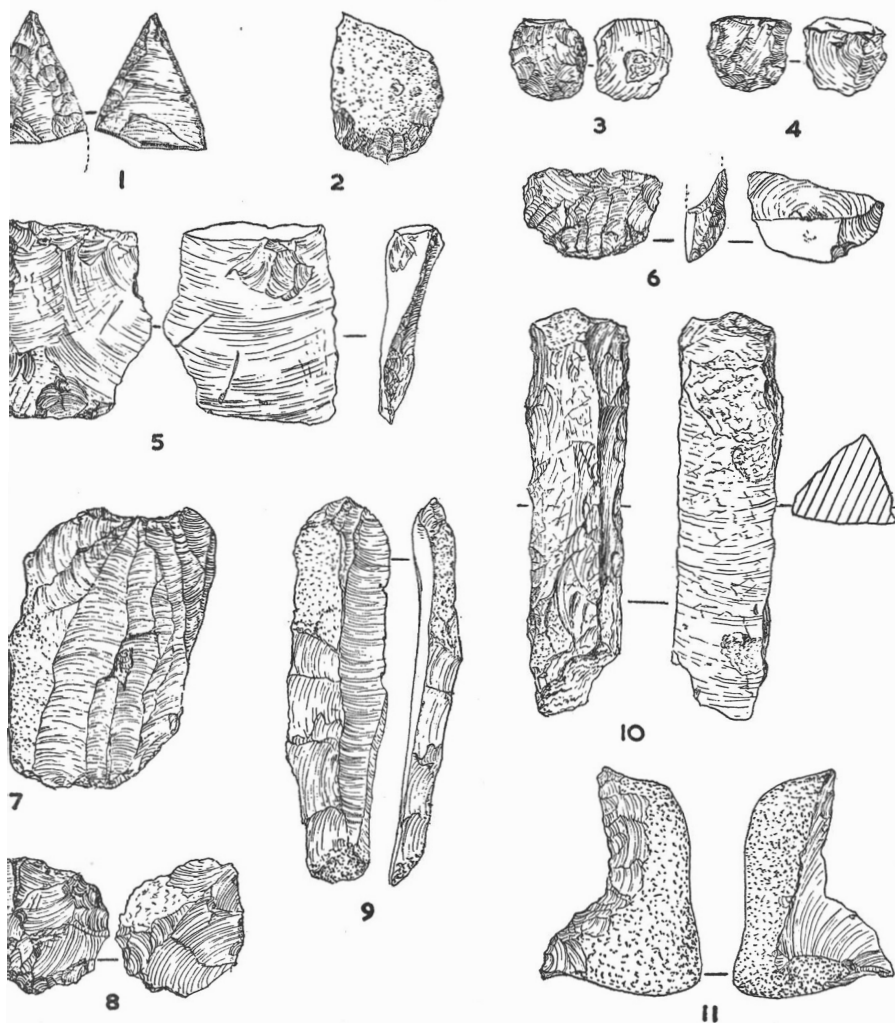


FIG. I.—FLINT WORK.

Leaf-shaped arrowhead (broken). 2-6, 11. Scrapers. 7. Core. 8. Core utilised as scraper.
9. ? Partly made plano-convex knife. 10. Flaked piece.

the pre-barrow soil. The nature of a flaked and calcined piece (no. 10) of flint with a triangular section cannot be determined, though it may have been used as a fabricator. The general lack of sophistication and of microlithic tendencies and the obtuse angle between the striking platform and the flake surface of the squat primary flakes are consistent with the bulk of the flint-work being assigned to a date not earlier than a developed stage of the Middle Bronze Age.

Pottery (fig. 2). Bronze Age no. 5. Two fragments of the rim of a small pot (rim diam. 4.5 ins.) were found in the mound soil on the south side of the barrow. The absence of other fragments and of associated bones would suggest that the fragments were displaced from the soil from which the barrow was constructed. The fabric is gritty, poorly fired with a smoothed buff exterior, buff interior and black core. In form the rim fragments suggest a small bowl of the Food Vessel class or a pygmy cup. The decoration, which is fairly simple, consists of a single horizontal deeply impressed cord line below the lip with cord impressed transverse lines running away from it. The internal bevel also carries oblique cord impressed decoration. Parallels for the pot are difficult to find, though the cord impression and fabric clearly show it to be Bronze Age. Its simple form and meagre decoration is rather unusual for a Food Vessel though not unknown,¹² whilst the internal bevel can be found on both Food Vessels and pygmy cups. Its shallow depth, indicated by the angle of the rim, is possibly more suggestive of a simple pygmy cup. Childe¹³ has suggested that some pygmy cups are miniature Food Vessels. We can conclude that the fragments are part of some Middle Bronze or possibly Early Bronze age ceramic form, very possibly a debased form of Food Vessel.

Iron Age (nos. 1-2). A base of a pot, part of a second, part of a rim and a body piece were found in the redis-

¹² J. Abercromby, 1912, *A Study of the Bronze-Age Pottery of Great Britain and Ireland*, illustrates several vessels of his Type 5 truncated cone, including ones from Arbor Low (Vol. I, Pl. XLII, No. 215) and Cross Low, Parwich (Vol. I, Pl. XXXII, No. 67) of a similar simple form. He also describes (p. 113) how Mortimer found fragments of similar ware scattered in barrows in East Yorkshire and suggests that they could represent a domestic ware.

¹³ V. G. Childe, 1949, *Prehistoric Communities of the British Isles*, p. 148.

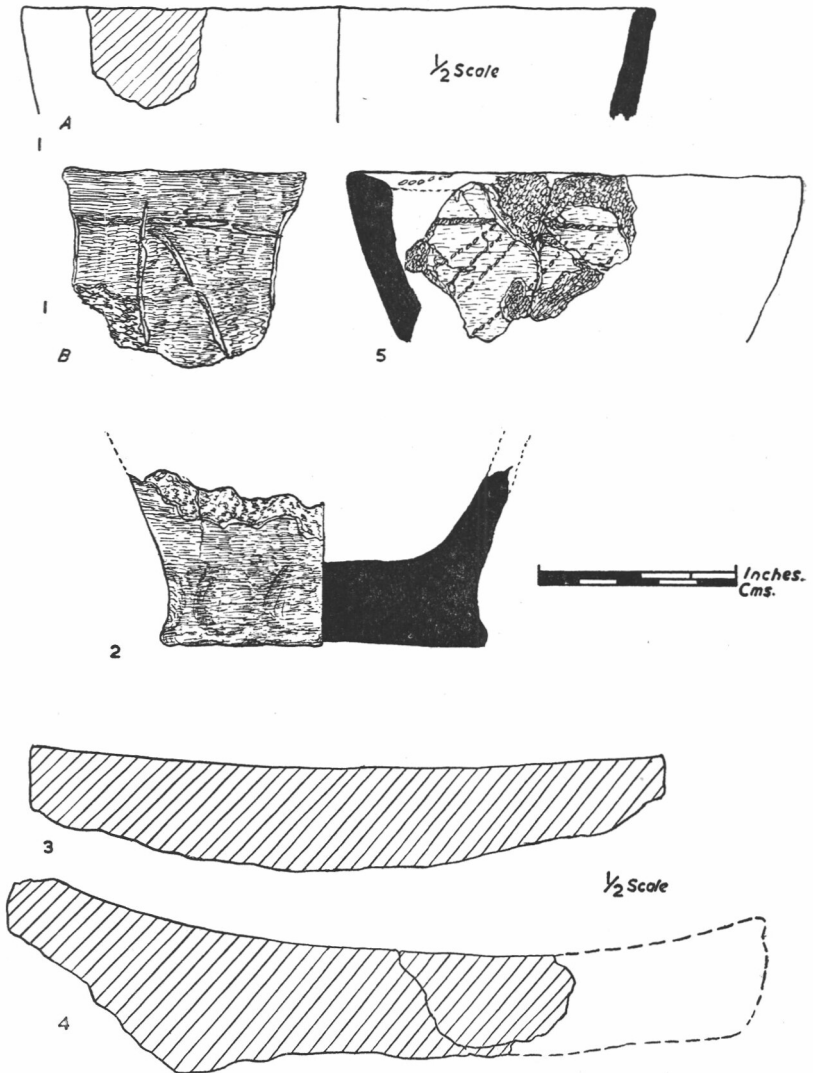


FIG. 2.—POTTERY AND SADDLE QUERNS.

Nos. 1-2, Iron Age A. 5, Bronze Age.

tributed material over the flanks of the barrow and in the silting of the ditch below the level containing large amounts of charcoal. The base (no. 2) and a further fragment of base are of a very coarse black ware with a brown-buff exterior. The foot is splayed and the finger impressions of the shaping of the base are very evident and give a slightly beaded effect at the junction of the wall and the flat base. The paste has a marked quartzitic pebble content. The rim (no. 1 A & B) and the body sherd are of a very hard black ware of a fine paste, but also containing tiny quartzite pebbles. The rim is flat and must be from a large situlate jar, similar to those at Breedon, and has a rim diameter of 12.6 ins. The decoration is of the deep and ragged scored variety with a discontinuous horizontal line towards the top and vertical and transverse lines below. It is impossible to say whether the scoring conforms to some pattern or is completely haphazard. The features of both the base and the rim can be paralleled from the nearby hill-fort of Breedon-on-the-Hill,¹⁴ a site yielding Iron Age A pottery. This is the first time that the spread of Iron Age A pottery has been noticed to the north of the Trent in this part of the Midlands and indicates settlement on the gravel terraces.

Other pottery. Some small sherds of Roman pottery of grey and brown fabrics and a single sherd of Terra Sigillata were found in the uppermost part of the ditch silting and in the ploughed surface layer and in the redistributed material. A practically complete 17th century "tyg" was found in the ploughed surface layer.

Querns (fig. 2). Nos. 3 & 4. One whole quern (no. 3), two parts of a second (no. 4) and two other fragments were found in the ancient soil on the berm. In form they are typical of pre-Halstatt¹⁵ saddle querns to which no exact date can be assigned. Macroscopic examination in the Department of Geology of the University of Nottingham indicated them to be made of local rocks, no. 3 of Keuper sandstone and no. 4 of Millstone grit.

¹⁴ K. M. Kenyon, *Trans. Leic. Arch. Soc.*, XXVI.

¹⁵ O. G. S. Crawford and J. Röder, 1955, *Antiquity* XXIX, pp. 69-70, suggest that on the continent the simple saddle querns were not replaced by the round and keeled types until Halstatt (Early Iron Age) times.

Both are roughly rectangular in shape. No definite "riders" or rubbing stones were found, though one of the two stones found with the querns could have served this purpose.

Anglo-Saxon Finds.

The use by the Anglo-Saxons of burial-mounds of pre-historic date is already well-known, the practice being particularly prevalent in the Wold country of Yorkshire and the Peak District of Derbyshire.¹⁶

The area in which Swarkeston lies is particularly favoured by the convergence of early routes of Anglian penetration both along the main valley of the Trent itself and by a north-westerly penetration along the valley of the tributary Soar, which skirts the inhospitable Charnwood Forest area to the west. The Soar valley has produced Anglian material from many places along its length and it is probable that it was colonised very soon after the earliest waves of settlers had reached this part of the Midlands by way of the Welland valley.

The early cemeteries at King's Newton¹⁷ and Stapenhill¹⁸ are already well-known and there seems to be no reason for not attributing the burials at Swarkeston a few miles away to the same period.

It is unfortunate that the material from the excavated north-eastern grave was in such a badly corroded condition, but what has survived, by its very typicality presents no reason for a change in the general attribution. Similar trappings, brooch, buckles, beads, and a small knife can be paralleled from a number of burials throughout the East Midlands and elsewhere.

The only object which displays any noteworthy characteristics is the cruciform brooch (Plate I, 1), and here again any conclusions drawn must be somewhat tentative in the absence of the side-knobs and much of the foot. From the surviving features the brooch cannot be much later than 500, and an interesting link with the areas of earliest Anglian penetration is provided by the

¹⁶ L. V. Grinsell, *The Ancient Burial-mounds of England*, p. 29. T. Bateman, *Vestiges of the Antiquities of Derbyshire and Ten Years' Digging*, *passim*.

¹⁷ *The Reliquary and Illustrated Archæologist*, viii, 2.

¹⁸ *Trans. Burton-on-Trent Nat. Hist. and Arch. Soc.*, Vol. I (1889), 156. See also this Volume pp. 1-19.

close resemblance between the decorative roundels of the Swarkeston brooch and those on a similar brooch from Lakenheath, Cambridgeshire (Plate I, 2). However, the longevity which these brooches seem to have enjoyed must be considered and the presence of amber beads, which are more characteristic of burials later in the pagan period suggests that the interment should more properly be dated to the second half of the sixth century.

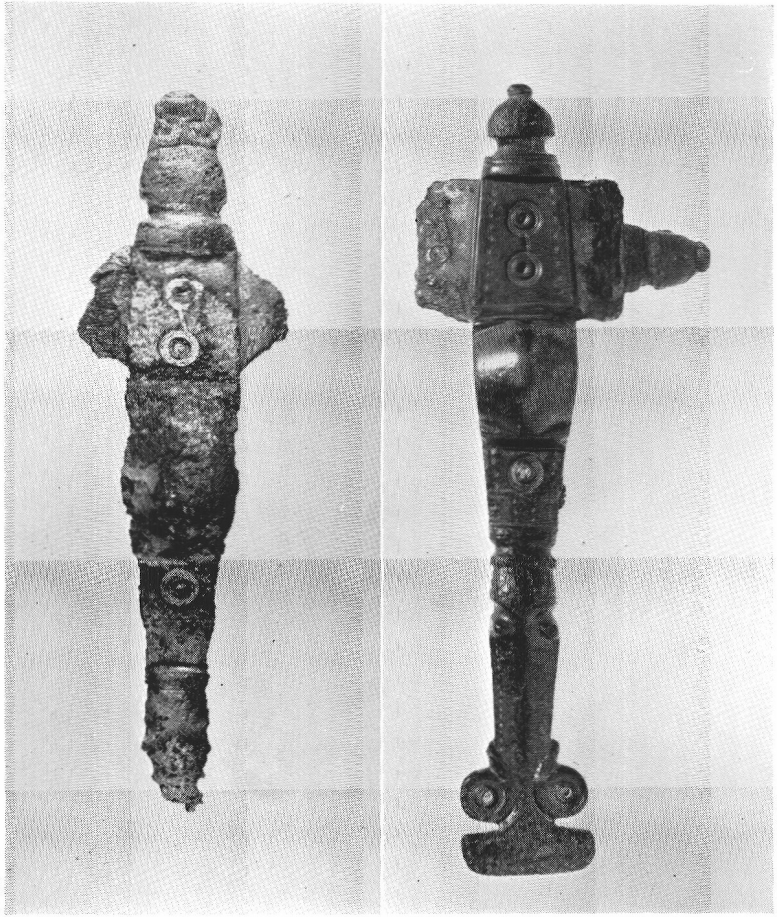
It may be assumed that the finds made in the barrow-mound are the displaced grave-goods from inhumations which have been disturbed by the burrowing activities of animals.

Grave-goods from North-Eastern Grave.

1. A pair of iron ring brooches, badly corroded.
Diameter: 0.03 m.
2. Fragment of a circular bronze buckle with remains of iron pin attached. The buckle is decorated with two rows of punch-marks.
Original diameter: *c.* 0.045 m.
3. Iron knife. Blade and part of handle survive. The handle appears to have been of wood rivetted to the blade.
Present length: 0.107 m.
4. Fragmentary remains of iron buckle or clasp.
5. Beads, three of amber, one of dark-brown pottery decorated with two cordons in blue and white hatching. One very small bead of plain glass.
6. Cruciform brooch. Present length: 0.12 m. The head-plate terminates in an animal-head, of which the upper part with well-defined eye motif survives. The side terminals have completely disappeared but enough of the foot remains to indicate that this probably terminated in a similar animal-head design. The face of the brooch is decorated with three roundels inlaid with white enamel in centre dot and outer ring.

In cleaning, a fragment of textile was found attached to the corrosion of the iron pin. The material was well preserved and of a golden-brown colour.

This fragment was submitted to Mrs. G. M. Crowfoot for examination and I am indebted to her for the following information:



(i)

(ii)

PLATE I.—Cruciform brooches: (i) Swarkeston, Derbys. (ii) Lakenheath, Cambs.

Photo: R. D. Abbott. Photo: University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology Cambridge.

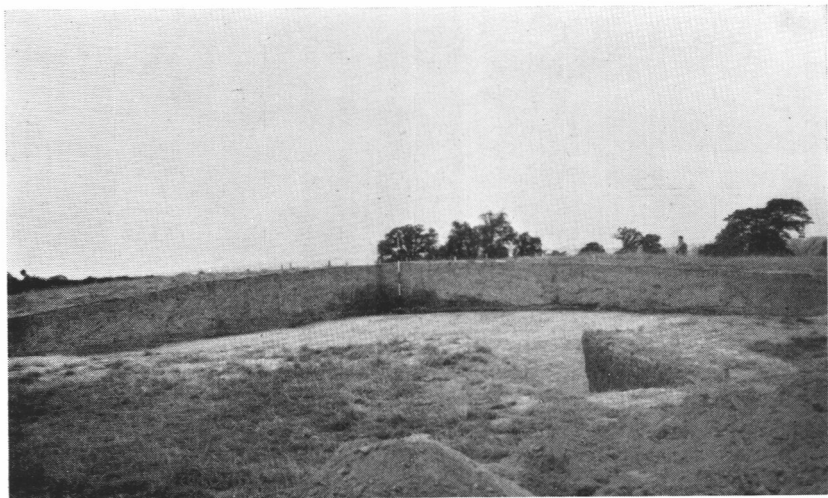


PLATE II.—Top: General view of excavated south-west quadrant showing section. Old ground clearly visible. Bottom: Turves of the turf core.

Material: Wool.

Spinning: The thread is similar in both systems, Z-spun, even.

Weave: 2 x 2 twill, a fine regular piece of weaving.

Count, 15-16 x 11-12 threads per cm.

7. A number of small sherds from a plain urn with fairly thick sides, gritty paste, poorly fired.

Finds from Barrow Mound.

1. Umbo. Incomplete, portion of flange corroded away. The flange retains two rivets for attachment of hand-grip. Fragments of wood¹⁹ from the shield adhere to under surface of flange.

Diameter: 0.16 m.

2. Shield Grip. Slightly curved with turned over flange at either side, the channel containing fragments of wood²⁰ with which the grip was backed. Secured to shield by a single rivet at either end.

Length: 0.14 m.

R. D. ABBOTT.

APPENDIX I.

CREMATED REMAINS.²¹

Professor A. J. E. Cave of the Department of Anatomy, St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College, examined the remains and contributes the following note:

"The osseous material from this barrow is typical of Bronze Age cremations. Surviving bone-fragments of any size show the customary splintering, warping and fissuration which are evidence of subjection to intense fire heat. Following burning of the surface, the individual bones have been deliberately pounded into the most minute chips, flakes and particles — down to mere bone dust — and the majority are admixed with earth, small stones and pieces of charcoal. The extremely fragmentary nature of this osseous material renders identification of the bulk of it impossible: only a few of the comminuted chips and splinters retain any recognizable morphological feature. The degree of post-mortem comminution of the skeleton in this instance exceeds anything seen previously. It results, inevitably, in the absence of all certain criteria concerning the number, age, sex, stature and racial affinities of the individual(s) so

^{19/20} See Appendix II for report on the Wood by J. F. Levy.

²¹ The bones and the individual bone identifications are now in Derby Museum.

represented. The relatively few recognizable fragments, however, and the general impression gained from scrutiny of all the material, suggest that these remains are those of a single individual, probably youngish woman or youth, of smallish build. The phalangeal remnants indicate a 'delicate' hand skeleton, and other osteological evidence suggests the gracile skeleton of the female. Not every part of the skeleton is represented, i.e. it would seem that only selected bones were removed from the original funeral pyre and pounded into minute and multiple fragments for burial. More than this it is not possible to say."

APPENDIX II.

Samples of charcoals from the cremation deposit, the old ground surface, the barrow berm, the ditch infill and the north-eastern Anglo-Saxon grave, and samples of wood from the Anglo-Saxon shield boss and shield grip were examined by Mr. J. F. Levy of The Department of Botany, Imperial College, London University, who kindly contributes the following notes:

Charcoals.

1. Sample from cremation deposit.

Largely fragments of bones, some of which appear almost black in colour and at a cursory glance resemble wood charcoal. Of the charcoal present all formed from pieces of Oak, some of which has undergone considerable pressure, also one fragment of Ash. Several pieces of a substance like tar or pitch that has undergone considerable heat—resembles almost minute fragments of coke.

2. Sample from the old ground surface.

One small fragment from a twig of Hazel, all the remainder Oak.

3. Samples from ancient soil of the berm.

All of Oak, great variation in the growth rates, some showing very slow growth.

4. Sample from the ditch infill (see p. 128).

Considerable quantity of charcoal. It all appears to belong to the same species, Box. It seems a great deal of Box, a not too plentiful species,²² though it is possible it all came from the same tree. It is all from twigs and branches of quite small dimensions—say not more than 1.5 ins. in diameter.

²² Box is a tree native in beech woods and scrub on chalk and oolitic limestone (Clapham, Tooting and Warburg, *British Flora*, 1952, Cambridge, p. 406) whose distribution has been shown to lie to the south and east of the Fenlands (C. D. Piggott and S. M. Walters in *The Changing Flora of Britain*, ed. J. E. Lousley 1953, London pp. 184-7). The plant was well known in Anglo-Saxon times and many Anglo-Saxon names are compounded of the name Box. The sample could possibly have been brought by the Anglo-Saxons in their passage through the Fenlands, its use possibly having some unknown ritual significance. It certainly cannot have been native in the Middle Trent valley.

5. Samples from the infilling soil of the north-eastern Anglo-Saxon grave.

All fragments small, none larger than $3/4$ cm. on longest axis. About thirty fragments in all, each of which appears to be from twigs of small diameter (1-2 ins. at most). Various species represented in roughly equal amounts. Woods identified were Ash, Birch, *Pyrus* type, and probably Hazel.

Woods.

1. From the shield grip. Wood is Ash.²³ Material impregnated with reddish substance similar to that produced by contact with iron.
2. From shield boss. Wood is Birch. Material impregnated in a similar manner to 1.

Part II of this report will comprise the results of the soil and pollen samples which are being examined by Dr. I. W. Cornwall of the Institute of Archæology and Dr. M. C. Pearson of the University of Nottingham respectively, together with a regional survey of the pre-history of South Derbyshire.

The excavation was conducted with the co-operation and active support of the Derbyshire Archæological Society. Thanks are due to the owner Mr. Winstanley and to the Ministry of Works for permission to excavate, and to the farmer Mr. J. E. Prince for the help and interest shown by him and his employees during the course of the work. Help in kind and transport facilities were provided by the County Borough of Derby Surveyor's department, Messrs. Ford & Weston Ltd., and the University of Nottingham. The site was generously backfilled by Messrs. R. C. Cripps of Nottingham. A grant was made by Derby Museum towards the expenses of the work. Active assistance in the field was given by helpers too numerous to mention by name. Mr. J. Booth and Mr. D. H. Williamson were responsible for the greater part of the surveying of the site.

²³ Ash is a wood frequently used for spear shafts, &c. The Anglo-Saxon word for Ash is *æsc* a word also used for spear or lance. (J. Bosworth, 1882, *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, Oxford, p. 19). A survey of the wood obtained from Bronze Age spearheads also shows a preference for use of Ash for spear shafts &c.