

# EXCAVATIONS AT A BARROW AT ROYSTONE GRANGE, BALLIDON, DERBYSHIRE: 1993

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## INTRODUCTION

Excavations were undertaken in June 1993 at this small barrow above Roystone Grange, at SK20355710 (Figs. 1, 2). They took place in advance of rebuilding the early 19th century drystone wall which crosses the centre of the mound. As this wall is a property boundary it

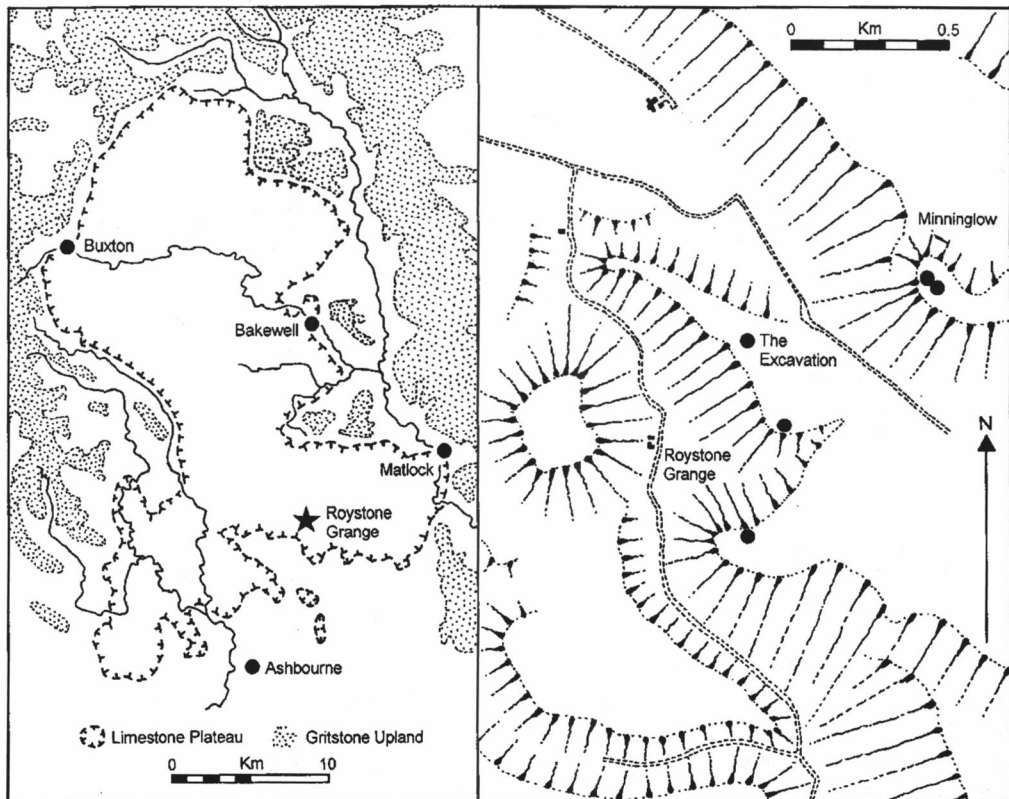


Fig. 1 Excavation at Roystone Grange: location of the barrows

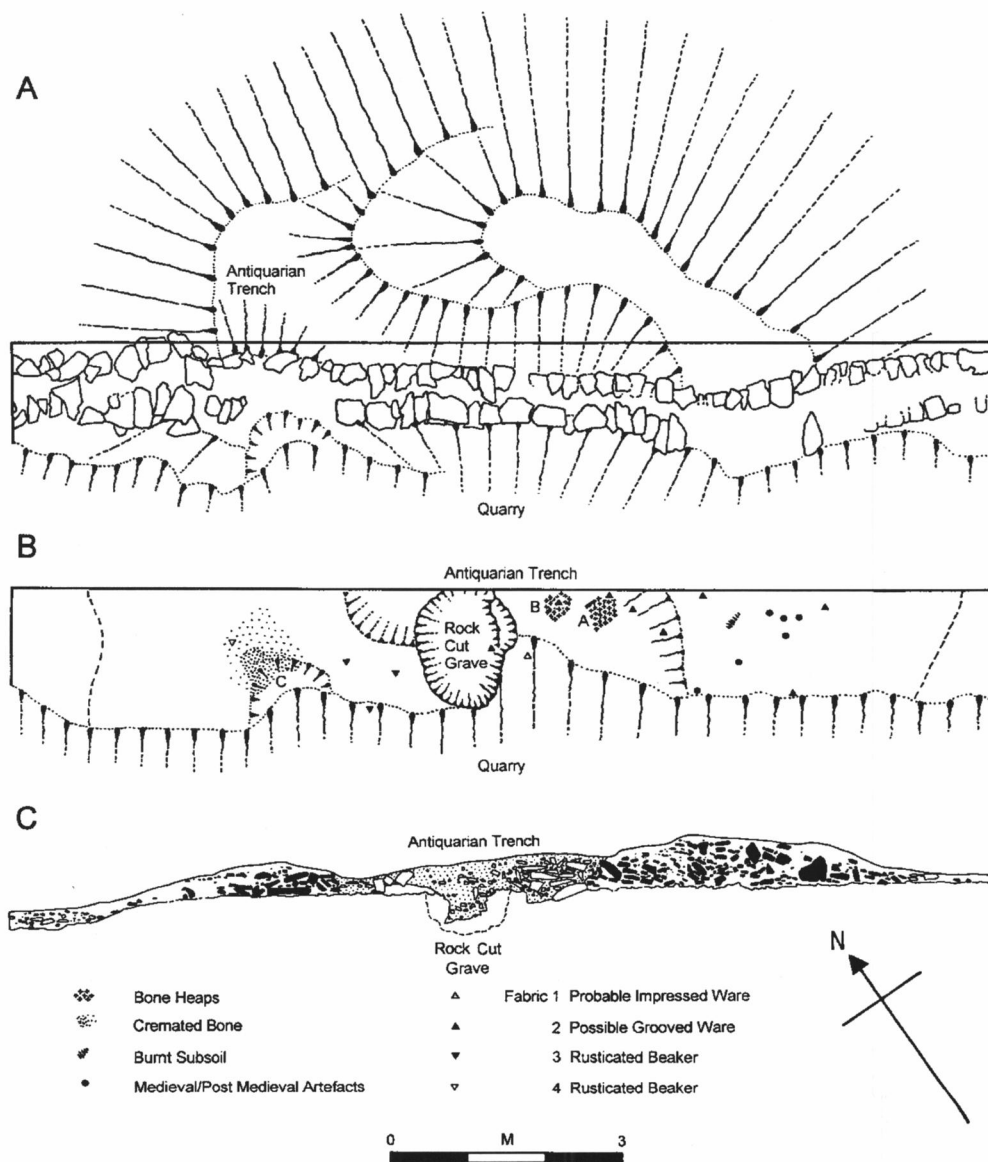


Fig. 2 Excavation at Roystone Grange: the barrow. A: Prior to excavation, with the early 19th century wall footings. B: The excavated features and selected artefact distributions. C: The excavated section.

needed to be brought back to good repair on its present line. The barrow had been removed on one side of the wall early this century by the digging of what was either a trial quarrying or an aborted access tramway to larger quarries nearby to the east. Subsequent erosion of the cutting side had de-stabilised the wall footings. Thus it was impractical to rebuild the wall across the barrow without removing a strip of the mound to provide a firm base from which to build. The foundation trench for the wall, therefore, was excavated archaeologically, removing a narrow

strip of barrow from the quarry edge back to a section against which the north-eastern face of the wall was to be built. This excavation took place as part of a programme of wall excavation around Roystone Grange, required by covenants on wall rebuilding by the Peak Park Joint Planning Board. Unlike the excavation reported here, these trenches have usually been undertaken to investigate the design and date of the walls themselves, as part of ongoing research into multi-period settlement and land use at Roystone Grange by Sheffield University (Hodges and Wildgoose 1981, 1991; Hodges et al. 1982, 1989; Hodges 1991; Wildgoose 1991).

The surviving north-eastern half of the barrow has a diameter of 11 m and is a little over 0.5 m high (Barnatt 1989; in press b, site 10:2; Hodges et al. 1989, barrow 1). The mound is sited on a ridgetop, at 333 m OD, flanking the eastern side of the steep Roystone Grange dry valley, at a point north-west of the highest point of the ridge. It is one of at least four barrows in the vicinity, all at similar altitudes above and to the east of the valley (Barnatt 1989; in press b, sites 10:2-4, 10:39; Hodges et al. 1989). These are overlooked by the large Neolithic chambered barrow and satellite barrows on top of Minninglow (Marsden 1982a; Barnatt 1989; in press b, sites 10:5, 10:6, 10:56).

The only previously recorded excavation of the barrow reported here took place on the 13th of August 1849 under the direction of Thomas Bateman (Bateman 1861, 61-2; n.d., 130). However, the 1993 excavation demonstrated that an undocumented antiquarian excavation had also taken place prior to this date (see below). Bateman dug at the centre of the mound to either side of the drystone wall, complaining it greatly impeded his operations. On one side of the wall (see below – north-east) he found many disturbed human and animal bones, including dog teeth. Nearby, at about one foot from the surface, was an intact child inhumation. On the other side of the wall (south-west) he found an iron knife, ‘of the usual Saxon shape’, about a foot from the surface. On the old ground surface below was a deposit of cremated bones with at least one incomplete bone pin (see below) (Fig. 3). Bateman also undercut the wall at the centre, into a predominantly earthen part of the barrow, where he found a sherd of rusticated Beaker (Fig. 3).

The iron knife, bone pin and Beaker sherd were retained and are now in Sheffield City Museum (SCM J93.699). A second incomplete bone pin (Fig. 3), a broken flint point and a flint flake are also retained, and provenanced to this barrow. These are not mentioned in Bateman’s text, but the bone pin is illustrated in one of his unpublished manuscripts (Bateman n.d.). Bateman’s trenches were carefully backfilled, as was his normal practice (Barnatt in press a), and were not visible prior to excavation in 1993.

In the 1980s the site was examined as part of the Roystone Grange project (Hodges et al. 1989). The section exposed in the quarry side was drawn and various finds recovered. At a point north-west of centre, disturbed by animals, was cremated bone spilling out of the exposed section (see below — cremation C). Associated with this was a burnt plano-convex knife found in 1986, and a pair of iron tweezers of relatively modern date, found in 1980 ‘close to the exposed part of the barrow’.

Various observations on the barrow were made, on the basis of superficial examination, which the 1993 excavations show to be wrong. These include the hypotheses that the cremation was almost certainly within a cist; that it was primary; that there was an Anglian barrow enlargement added to the south-east after disturbance of the prehistoric barrow in Roman or early Anglo-Saxon times; and that Bateman removed and then rebuilt the central section of the drystone wall. Taking these in turn, the exposed ‘cist’ was an area of fortuitously arranged stones in a generally stony barrow make-up. The cremation deposit was mixed with these stones rather than being under them. The central disturbance was probably Post-Medieval in date and the

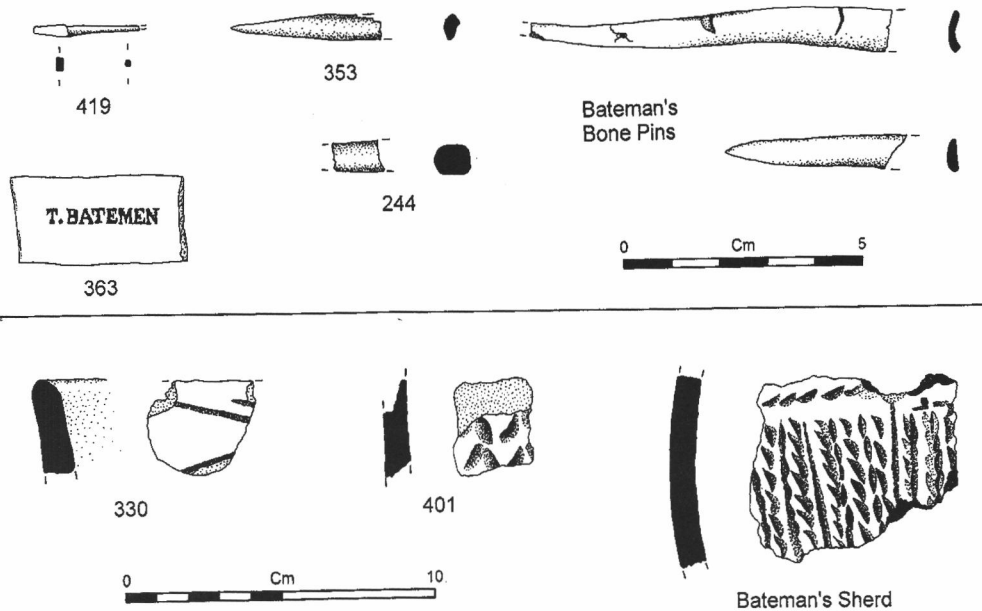


Fig. 3 Excavation at Roystone Grange: selected artefacts found during the excavations of 1849 and 1993.

barrow to the south-east was probably prehistoric, forming one side of a mound surrounding a central rock-cut grave. The rebuilt wall section was typical of casual wall rebuilds found very commonly throughout the region and refurbishment could have taken place at any date in the 19th or 20th century; the early 19th century wall footings remained throughout the full excavated stretch across the barrow.

#### THE EXCAVATION

After the wall was removed to its footings, an excavation trench measuring 12.7m long and up to c. 2m wide was opened (Fig. 2A). The barrow, to either side of a central disturbance under a thin topsoil, was made up of piled limestones and earth. The number of stones varied, they were commonly densely packed, with soil in the interstices, but at the other extreme there were small patches of soil with no stones. The main signs of layering were tip lines of stones around a central disturbed focus. There were no obvious signs that the barrow was multi-phased. However, this would probably have been difficult to detect given the nature of construction and the small area excavated. The limestones all appeared to have been surface-gathered rather than quarried. The soil was a compact, orange-brown, sandy loam.

In the north-western part of the barrow, partly truncated by the eroded quarry face, was a relatively discrete cremation deposit (Fig. 2B – deposit C). The cremation, while found in a restricted area, was not in an identifiable pit cut into the mound, but was scattered amongst the soil-filled interstices between the stones of the barrow, through a vertical depth of c. 0.1m about half way down the mound profile. Mixed with the cremated bones were seven unburnt human teeth, together with a few other unburnt bones. A small sherd of rusticated Beaker and three waste flint flakes were found in the peripheral parts of the deposit where there were fewer



cremated bones. The cremation was that of an adult of 30+ years, possibly female, and was accompanied by a copper-alloy awl (Fig. 3: 419), and the plano-convex knife found in 1986 (see above). It is not clear if the deposit has been disturbed (in addition to the erosion); the presence of stray unburnt bones and the mixing with the barrow rubble suggests it has. The lack of humic-rich topsoil in the deposit may suggest any disturbance is not recent. Although Bateman found a cremation, deposit C is unlikely to be the reinterred bones of his find, as C was located under the drystone wall, which Bateman noted he undercut in a part of the mound that was stone-free.

The barrow's central area had been disturbed by antiquarian excavation. Prior to the 1993 excavation it was clear that at the centre was an antiquarian trench which had not been backfilled and was likely to pre-date the early 19th century wall. This trench also extended to the north-north-west. Bateman's excavation trenches are not usually visible as generally he backfilled carefully (Barnatt 1989; in press a). That he dug into a site which had been trenched previously is suggested by the jumbled nature of most of the finds he made. These observations were confirmed by the 1993 excavation. The whole area had a jumbled fill, most parts of which were very stony, with limestones at all angles, and a soil with varying amounts of dark humus. Only at the south-eastern edge was the extent of the disturbance indistinct and hard to define exactly. Unfortunately the edges of Bateman's recut within this earlier disturbance could not be detected. At the base of the disturbance, at its centre, was a small heap of reinterred bones (Fig. 2B – deposit B) with a lead plaque inscribed 'T. Batemen' (Fig. 3: 363): a type found at several barrows where Bateman trenches have been re-excavated. This bone heap included the unburnt remains from at least two adults, a juvenile and an infant. These are probably the bones described by him as scattered, but do not include the intact child inhumation he found, as only a few non-adult bones were present in the reinterred heap. Close-by there was a second bone heap (Fig. 2B – deposit A), comprising a 'discrete' deposit of adult bones, probably from one individual, possibly male (further bones of which may be within heap B). These remains are not consistent with anything described by Bateman. There is a rock-cut grave to the north-west of Bateman's bone heap, just beyond the centre of the barrow, which again was not noted by Bateman. This had been emptied, probably during the earlier antiquarian excavations. Presumably bone heap A was also deposited at this time. The perpetrator of this early antiquarian investigation is not known, although a date in the 18th or early 19th century seems most likely. The oval rock-cut grave measured 1.3m by c. 1.9m and was 0.6m deep; a small part of one end ran into the section and was not excavated. At its base, small areas of unremoved fill in shallow fissures in the bedrock contained the tip of a bone pin (Fig. 3: 353) and teeth and hand bones of an adult inhumation. Scattered through the disturbed fill of the central area were bones of at least two adult inhumations, one of which may well not have been represented in heaps A and B, and a few bones of a juvenile. There were also scattered cremated bones and a fragment of a burnt bone pin (Fig. 3: 244). It is not clear which of these burials came from the rock-cut grave, and which from elsewhere in the disturbed area.

The barrow rested directly on a thin orange-brown, clayey-loam with frequent limestone cobbles and occasional slabs, both of which comprised fragmented and worn but in situ bedrock. With depth, as the loam content decreased, the stones rapidly became solid limestone. There was no sign of a discrete buried topsoil. In parts the buried soil lay over lenses of natural dolomitic sand and gravel, while elsewhere solid bedrock occurred almost immediately under the barrow. A small patch of the buried soil surface was discoloured pink and contained a small quantity of charcoal, and it may be that burning took place above. This patch was close to where late Medieval and early Post-Medieval metalwork and two sherds of a Medieval jug were found (Fig. 2B). Although this small concentration of finds clearly post-dated the barrow and were found

in and under the mound, during excavation the latter did not appear obviously disturbed at this point. Thus the extent of activity indicated by the small finds was not defined, but it is unlikely to have been large, given the undisturbed barrow tip lines in the adjacent section (Fig. 2C).

A number of small finds recovered from under and in undisturbed parts of the barrow may derive from pre-barrow activity (some of which were redeposited in the barrow when it was built). Some of these small finds may pre-date the monument by a significant period and be associated with non-ritual activity, while others may be residual elements of rituals that took place prior to the mound being added. The former interpretation may well apply to sherds of probable Neolithic Impressed Ware and possible Grooved Ware in the centre and south-eastern half of the site (Fig. 2B); to sherds of rusticated Beaker, from two vessels, in a cluster in the north-western part of the barrow (Fig. 2B); and to the lithic debitage across the site. All the pottery was within rather than under the barrow and the relatively discrete clustering suggests the soil used in barrow construction came from contexts where sherds from specific vessels occurred together. Two relatively large human bones were found low in the barrow just beyond the central disturbance. They are too large to be likely to have migrated far down the profile through bioturbation and thus their position may suggest that there was scattered human bone on site in prehistory, either scattered prior to the barrow being built, or disturbed when burials were inserted into the mound. A small number of animal bones found in the barrow and central disturbance are of uncertain date and interpretation.

The following reports on human and animal bones, and those on small finds, are summaries of analyses and full reports and illustrations are retained in the site archive. Copies of this are deposited in the Peak Park Joint Planning Board archaeological archive, the Derbyshire SMR, and with the finds in Sheffield City Museum.

## THE HUMAN AND ANIMAL REMAINS

### **The human inhumations (GS)**

Unburnt human bone from the site derived from two discrete bone heaps and numerous small scattered deposits. Differential preservation had occurred and, as a result, not all parts of bodies were equally represented. In particular there was marked loss of, or damage to, those bones or parts of bone consisting mainly of trabecular bone, such as the bones of the torso and longbone ends.

#### *Bone heap A (Fig. 2B)*

Apart from a single deciduous molar, this deposit would appear to represent the remains of one adult, possibly male, based on the morphology of the supraorbital ridges and features of the temporal bone. While it was not possible to say with certainty that all the bones were from the same individual, due to their fragmentary condition and the redeposited nature of the bone heap, there was no clear evidence of duplication of identifiable bones. Not all parts of the body were equally represented. Parts of the cranium, arms, hands and legs were present, but the mandible, spine, ribs, pelvis and feet were absent.

#### *Bone heap B (Fig. 2B)*

This deposit, placed here by Bateman in 1849, was more mixed than A, and included the remains of a minimum of two adults, a juvenile of c. 2-10 years and an infant. Only a few bones of the juvenile were present, comprising fragments of femur, humerus and ulna. The infant was represented by an incomplete temporal bone only. While some of the adult bones may have originated from the same individual as that in bone heap A, for example two parts of a mandible, others, such as the femoral and tibial shafts, clearly indicate the presence of a second adult. No

match could be made between any of the fragments in B with those in A, therefore the possibility that the total number of adult individuals in A and B is three rather than two cannot be fully discounted. However, given the nature of the two deposits, it would not be surprising if some of the bones in B are part of the same individual as that in A.

#### *Other contexts*

Many fragments of human bone were found scattered throughout the central disturbed part of the barrow. This material included adult and a few juvenile remains, the latter in the form of cranial and long bone fragments, as well as two teeth, one a recently erupted maxillary first molar of an individual of c. 6-7 years. Femoral and tibial shaft fragments from these contexts may also represent a further adult not identified in heaps A and B, although with all diagnostic long bone ends missing this must be a tentative conclusion. However, the presence of this adult was also supported by the dental remains, where three left maxillary central incisors were identified, two amongst the central bone scatter, the other with cremation C.

Ten unburnt teeth were found associated with cremation C, the majority of which were in much poorer condition than other teeth recovered from the site. The exceptions, three maxillary incisors, were almost certainly from the same individual. The other 7 teeth appeared rather smaller and may represent a different individual.

In the small amount of undisturbed fill at the base of the rock-cut grave, below the disturbed layers containing the scatter of bones just summarised, there were bone fragments from an adult inhumation, comprising one tooth (left maxillary lateral incisor), a tooth root and parts of four hand bones (metacarpal and three phalanges).

Two relatively large bone fragments, of adult femur and tibia, were found low in the barrow make-up at the south-eastern edge of the central spread of scattered bones, in what may well be a context undisturbed since prehistory.

#### *Conclusions*

The unburnt human bone represents a minimum of three adults, one of whom was possibly male. Seven unburnt teeth were found with cremation burial C in an apparently undisturbed deposit. While it cannot be demonstrated that they do not belong to one of the disturbed deposits at the centre of the site, given the context, they may be from a fourth individual. There is also at least one juvenile, possibly aged 6-7 years on the basis of a tooth; and an infant represented by one bone only.

#### **The human cremations (JM)**

The cremated bone comprised one disturbed cremation burial (Fig. 2B – deposit C) from the north-western part of the barrow and a scatter of bone in the central disturbed area (Fig. 2B).

#### *Methods*

The bone was analysed according to the writer's standard procedure described elsewhere (McKinley 1989; 1994a). Age was assessed from the stage of epiphyseal bone and cranial suture fusion (McMinn and Hutchings 1985) and the general degree of degenerative changes to the bone. Sex was assessed from the sexually dimorphic traits of the skeleton (Bass 1987; Gejvall 1981).

#### *Results*

Full details are present in the archive. Total bone weights for cremation burial C and the central scatter were respectively 475.5g and 193.6g. The bone was generally worn, some of that from cremation burial C very much so. Most of the bone was buff/white in colour indicating efficient cremation. However, several fragments of long bone from the central scatter were blue/black, suggesting either oxygen deprivation and/or insufficient time for full cremation (McKinley

1989; 1994a). The degree of fragmentation was not such to suggest any deliberate breakage of the bone prior to burial (McKinley 1994b). Comment on the quantity of bone collected for burial is precluded as both deposits were disturbed. There does not appear to have been any deliberate bias in the skeletal elements collected for burial.

One older mature/older adult (30 years +), possibly female, was identified in cremation burial C. The bone from the central scatter could also derive from cremation burial C, or may represent the remains of a second disturbed cremation burial; the spatial separation of the two deposits are argued by the excavator to favour them being from two separate individuals. There is no duplication of bones from any of the contexts and the age range is the same. However, vault thickness (see Gejvall 1981) from fragments in the central scatter are consistently greater than in cremation burial C, and some of the fragments of femur shaft from the central scatter show blue/black coloration whereas those from cremation burial C do not.

Pathological lesions noted included indications of periodontal disease and osteoarthritis in a thoracic vertebra from cremation burial C, and degenerative disc disease in the individual in the central scatter.

Blue staining, possibly indicative of the presence of copper-alloy, was noted on a fragment of long bone shaft from cremation burial C and may derive from the copper alloy awl found with the deposit.

#### **The animal bones (JB)**

A small number of animal bones and teeth was found scattered in and around the central disturbance. Identifications were provided by Paul Halstead, demonstrating that species included cow, horse, sheep or goat, pig, fox and hare. It is not clear on stratigraphic grounds if these bones derive from prehistoric pre-barrow or barrow contexts, or whether they have been introduced in recent times.

### THE SMALL FINDS

#### **The bone pin (JP)**

The bone pin fragment (Fig. 3:353), from the base of the rock-cut grave (Fig. 2B) is 33mm long with a maximum width of 5mm. It is cut from compact tissue, derived from the wall of a long bone shaft. One end is cut to a point, the other is broken away. Two incomplete pins of similar form (Fig. 3) were recovered from Bateman's excavation of the same barrow, one at least accompanying a cremation. The larger of the two has been cracked and distorted by heating.

A fragment of a calcined antler/bone pin or peg (Fig. 3: 244) was found in the disturbed central area, perhaps associated with the scattered cremated bone in the central area. The surviving piece is 11mm long with a maximum diameter of 7mm, tapering to 5mm.

The pins from the Roystone barrow are similar to numerous examples recovered from burial contexts in the Later Neolithic and Earlier Bronze Age periods. Both perforated and unperforated bone pins have been found in the Peak District in association with Beaker, Food Vessel and urn burials (Barnatt in press b).

#### **The copper alloy awl (JP)**

Amongst the bones of cremation C was a copper-alloy awl (Fig. 3: 419). The shank is of circular section which expands to form a square-sectioned central swelling with a chisel-shaped tang. The tip and part of the tang are broken away. The remaining portion measures 22mm. The tang is 2mm wide and the point just 1.5mm in diameter. Filing marks are visible on the tang, while the point is highly polished with an unusual turquoise patina, possibly derived from wear.

Pearce identifies a similarly shaped group of awls from the south-west of Britain which she

describes as having a flattened tang (Pearce 1983, 42). These, according to Pearce's chronology, are introduced in the Trenovissick/Wessex I phase, starting around 2000 BC. A similar copper-alloy awl, from northern Britain, was found in a round barrow at Rudston, Humberside. Both the awl and a Food Vessel accompanied an inhumation, possibly female (Kinnes and Longworth 1985, 61).

The closest Peak District parallel for the awl comes from a barrow at Hasling Houses, Stakor Hill near Buxton (Bateman 1861, 67). In this case the awl was found behind 'walling' within or above a rock-cut grave which contained three or more inhumations; unfortunately there is no additional dating evidence.

### **The prehistoric pottery (PB)**

The prehistoric pottery found in 1993 comprises 16 sherds weighing 47g. They represent a minimum of four vessels, and include three pottery types, current in the Later Neolithic. On the basis of the excavation evidence they probably pre-date the mound. All the sherds are small (10-38mm across), and except for a single rim sherd, all are abraded to some degree. In contrast, the rusticated Beaker sherd found by Bateman in 1849 is larger (75x58mm), heavier (40g) and fresher. This could imply that this Beaker possibly accompanied one of the original burials.

#### *Fabric 1 — probable Neolithic Impressed Ware*

Soft coarse fabric, due to a moderate number of ill-sorted, angular, quartz inclusions, ranging in size from 0.5 to 5mm. External surface 'red' (near Munsell 2.5 YR 5/6) and internal surface and core 'very dark grey' (5 YR 3/1).

This fabric is represented by one sherd only, found in the disturbed central area (Fig. 2B). It is a very weathered body sherd bearing faint traces of possible cord maggot impressions. The fabric and the possible decoration are characteristics of Peterborough Ware pottery of the Neolithic impressed ware tradition, particularly in the Mortlake style, which has been recognised from a number of sites in the Peak District (e.g. Garton and Beswick 1983, 19, 21, 24, table 3; Gilks 1990, 11-15). Current, reliable radiocarbon dates (Gibson 1994, 175) suggest an earlier development than was previously envisaged for this ceramic tradition which appears now to start at least in the fourth millennium BC, in calendar years, as well as continuing well into the third millennium.

#### *Fabric 2 — possible Grooved Ware*

Soft, smooth fabric in a fine clay containing iron and mica with a few large inclusions added, mainly of grog, average size 3mm. The type sherd's (Fig. 3: 330) external surface is a 'weak red' (2.5 YR 4/2), the internal surface 'dark grey' (5 YR 4/1) and the core 'very dark grey' (5 YR 3/1).

Eleven sherds assigned to this fabric were found in the south-eastern part of the barrow make-up and the disturbed central area (Fig. 2B). At least one vessel, but possibly more, are represented on the basis of minor fabric variations. The largest sherd (Fig. 3: 330) is relatively fresh, has a slightly pointed and internally bevelled rim, is burnished internally and externally, and bears lightly scored grooved lines, possibly forming an open lozenge design. Traces of grooved lines, criss-crossed on one example, are visible on three other sherds but all are very abraded.

The combination of rim form (compare Form 18 from Durrington Walls, Wainwright and Longworth 1971, 56-7), a fine, mica-rich fabric (occasional occurrences in Wessex, Cleal 1991, 137, 142), and the decoration, are found in Late Neolithic Grooved Ware of the Durrington Walls sub-style. However, light grooving or incision in geometric designs also occurs on Early Bronze Age urns, and because of the small size of the sherds an alternative identification cannot be entirely ruled out, although the balance of probability lies with Grooved Ware.

Grooved Ware is typically found on ritual or communal sites, such as henges, or in domestic

contexts, but not usually with burials (Wainwright and Longworth 1971, 250). Where incorporated into burial mounds it is interpreted as having been usually derived accidentally from an earlier domestic site or occasionally added deliberately. The relatively few local finds of Grooved Ware, summarised recently (Garton and Beswick 1983, 20), includes examples in the Durrington Walls sub-style from Willington in the Trent valley (Wheeler 1979, 147-8), found in association with rusticated Beakers and occupation evidence. New finds, probably in the same sub-style, include a grooved rim sherd from Staden, near Buxton (Makepeace 1987, 29, fig. 5:6) and two sherds from barrow sites at Low Farm and Low Bent in the Staffordshire Peak (Wilson and Cleverdon 1987, 8, 19-20, fig.9:1,3). A radiocarbon date of 4220+/-180 BP (HAR-4302) from the turf stack of the Low Farm barrow could be contemporary with the sherd which was recovered from the old ground surface below the mound. A large piece of Grooved Ware of Durrington Walls sub-style, with an external cordon and internal grooved decoration, was recovered in 1994 from test pitting close to Roystone Grange (Beswick in Coutts unpublished). The Grooved Ware found locally which compares most closely with the material from the Roystone barrow comprises two sherds from ploughsoil scatters on the limestone plateau, 3km to the north-west, at Aleck Low Site 1 (Hart 1985, 67, fig. 3.9:1, 2), where subsequent excavation recovered possible house structures. The sherds from both sites have fine fabrics and lightly grooved decoration, perhaps better termed incision. This may suggest a late version of the Durrington Walls sub-style. In 1971 Wainwright and Longworth (241-2) speculated on possible stratigraphical evidence for a move from grooved towards incised decoration at Durrington Walls during the 300 to 400 years represented by the earlier silting of the enclosure ditch. Later Irish Grooved Ware, described as 'restrained', also includes simple linear incision (A. Brindley pers. comm.). It would be unwise, however, to speculate further at this stage, given the scarcity of Grooved Ware locally and the absence generally of published, stratified assemblages.

*Fabric 3 — rusticated Beaker*

Soft, soapy fabric, distinguished by abundant, ill-sorted inclusions chiefly of grog ranging in size from 0.25 to 2mm. External surfaces 'weak red' (10 R 4/3), interior brown (2.5 YR 5/4) and core 'dark reddish grey' (10 R 4/1).

Three body sherds, all with paired fingernail impressions (Fig. 3: 401), were found close together north-west of the central disturbance (Fig. 2B). All are from the same vessel, a rusticated Beaker, and their significance is discussed further in conjunction with fabric 4.

*Fabric 4 — rusticated Beaker*

Soft, smooth fabric in a sandy, iron-rich clay with sparse and well-sorted inclusions of black and red iron ore, quartz and occasional grog. External surface 'reddish brown' (5 YR 4/5), internal surface 'dark reddish grey' (5 YR 4/2) and core 'black' (2.5 YR/0).

The type sherd is the rusticated Beaker sherd found by Thomas Bateman in 1849 (Fig. 3). In 1993 one fragment in the same fabric was found in the barrow, loosely associated with cremation C (Fig. 2B). Bateman's sherd is covered in vertical lines of fingernail impressions, some paired and some separated by finger-pinched ribs, topped by a single line of fingernail impressions.

Rusticated Beakers, so-called because of their characteristic fingernail or fingertip impressions, are most commonly found on domestic sites together with fine ware Beakers (Gibson 1982), better known from burial contexts. However, occasionally rusticated Beakers occur with burials and there are two Peak District examples, one from Stakor Hill, Buxton (Clarke 1970, 391(910), 478(122)) and the other from Shacklow, Ashford in the Water (Vine 1982, 219, fig. 337: 344). The possibility therefore that the rusticated Beakers at the Roystone barrow were originally deposited with burials, subsequently disturbed by antiquarian activity, cannot be ruled



out. The sherd found by Bateman (together with the fragment found in 1993), because of its size and condition, is perhaps the most likely candidate.

Rusticated Beakers from non-grave contexts are rare in the Peak and Beakers in general are noticeable by their absence from plough soil scatters (Garton and Beswick 1983, 20), although there is one probable example in a very weathered state from Aleck Low Site 1 (Hart 1985, 67, fig. 3.9: 4). The Grooved Ware referred to above was found in the same scatter and this Beaker sherd has been described previously as Grooved Ware, but the combination of vertical and horizontal ridged panels is closer to rusticated Beakers and to the sherd found by Bateman at Roystone.

A few rusticated Beakers are known also from the region immediately surrounding the Peak. There is a particularly fine Beaker domestic assemblage from a pit found during excavations of the Roman fort at Castleshaw, close to the north-west boundary of High Peak (Thompson 1967, 13-17, fig. 23: 2, 4-5). Among the five vessels identified from over a hundred sherds, two bore finger-pinched rustication and one spatula-made herringbone, similar to fingernail rustication. In the density and styles of their rustication all three provide good parallels for the Beakers from the Roystone barrow. To the east of the Peak, Beaker cave finds from Pin Hole Cave, Creswell Crags (Gilks 1974, 12-13) included a rusticated Beaker, possibly associated with domestic occupation from which charcoal gave a radiocarbon date of 3910 $\pm$ 160BP (BM-438); and at Swarkeston in the Trent valley, to the south, rusticated sherds were incorporated in a Beaker occupation layer sealed below Barrow 4 (Greenfield 1960, 11-37).

#### *Conclusions*

The prehistoric pottery from the Roystone barrow includes two rusticated Beakers, sherds of Grooved Ware and a single sherd probably of Neolithic impressed ware, possibly of the Mortlake style.

All three styles were current in the Later Neolithic but appear successively and their exact chronological positions and length of use are not firmly established. Peterborough Ware of Mortlake style was the earliest but Grooved Ware had emerged alongside by the early third millennium BC, in calendar years, and survived to the turn of the millennium. However, the two styles are rarely found together and the very weathered state of the Mortlake sherd from the Roystone barrow, compared with the Grooved Ware sherds, could imply greater residuality and an earlier date for the Mortlake sherd. Beakers appear later, probably around the middle of the third millennium BC, and persisted well into the first half of the second (Case 1993). Rustication seems to be present in north Britain from the earliest phase (Case 1993, 254), and could have been current with the Grooved Ware from the Roystone barrow late in the third millennium BC.

It is interesting to note that none of the pottery types present is normally found in grave contexts and that they were not necessarily all in use at the same time. Similar spreads of sherds of differing ages, often small and abraded and predating the monument, are common from under barrows. Other regional examples include Wigber Low, only 5km to the south (Collis 1983, 53-7), where Peterborough Ware and Abingdon/Mildenhall related pottery was identified, and Swarkeston Barrow 4, where both the Beaker occupation layer, which included rusticated Beaker sherds and Peterborough Ware, and a spread of early Neolithic Grimston Ware, were sealed below the mound (Greenfield 1960, 11-37). Many such finds relate to domestic activities (Gibson 1982, 35-8, 47), but for others a ritual interpretation may be more appropriate. At the Roystone barrow the limited extent of the excavation and the scale of previous disturbance prevent any meaningful interpretation of the nature of the pre-barrow activities that may be represented by the pottery sherds.

### **The lithics (AM)**

Of the 24 pieces of debitage from the excavation only 23 were identified for raw material: 14 are of flint and just 9 of chert. Six pieces came from the buried soils under the barrow, while there were ten scattered through the undisturbed barrow, some at least presumably being residual. None of the individual pieces are chronologically diagnostic. Only one piece, coming from the soil of the undisturbed barrow, was retouched. This piece was quite distinctive in its patination. It is a core rejuvenation product from an apparently bladed technology which suggests that it could derive from Mesolithic or Earlier Neolithic activity. There is, however, a poor representation of blades in the assemblage. It is even less clear when the piece might have been retouched.

### **Medieval and Post-Medieval finds (HJ-iron and pottery; JP-jetton)**

A number of Medieval or Post-Medieval finds was found in the south-eastern part of the barrow, all in the same small area, at 2.0-2.5m from the barrow edge (Fig. 2B).

Near the barrow surface was a copper-alloy jetton in poor condition. Barnard illustrates a number of similar examples (1981, 211: 18-20) which were struck at Nuremberg in the period 1525-1625. Mass produced casting counters of this sort are found frequently in the archaeological record in Britain, confirming the scale of this trade during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Three corroded iron objects were found within the make-up of the barrow (see site archive for illustrations). One was a domed iron disc or boss, of 37mm maximum diameter with a central rivet, possibly of lead. The date and function are unknown. There was also an iron hinge or clasp, c. 43mm in length with a hinge plate tapering to a bar bent around the hinge bar. A radiograph revealed two pins on the central axis of the hinge plate, the latter having three lines of decoration, possibly inlaid. This may be a Post-Medieval book clasp (R. Alvey pers. comm.). The third object was a small dome-headed pin or tack, with a curved shaft, of uncertain date. All these objects have significantly less corrosion than Romano-British and Anglian iron objects from within Peak District barrows, suggesting a later date in the Medieval or Post-Medieval periods.

The badly corroded iron knife found by Bateman in 1849 is extant (Hodges et al. 1989, fig.3:7) and is comparable to examples excavated from the region's barrows with more diagnostic Anglian associations. However, with some exceptions (Manning 1985, 108-120), knives remain unreliable aids to dating, basic forms being common to Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods. The corrosion on the knife from the Roystone barrow could suggest the separation of the knife as earlier than the other ironwork noted above.

Two wheel-turned, interlocking sherds were recovered from under the barrow. These have a smooth fabric with grey core and white/cream surfaces, made from an iron-free clay with a source in the Coal Measures, and are from a small jug of Medieval date (R. Alvey pers. comm.).

A 106mm long, thin iron object, probably a drill bit of Post-Medieval date, was found in the fill of the central antiquarian robber pit. A Bateman lead tablet (Fig. 3:363) was found in bone heap B, placed here in 1849 when the bones he excavated were reinterred.

## DISCUSSION

The excavations in 1993 helped to demonstrate that the centre of the barrow had been excavated twice by antiquarians, Bateman's 1849 excavation having been preceded by a more extensive disturbance that included the emptying of a rock-cut grave. A disturbance on the south-east side of the barrow, presumably earlier still and probably limited in extent, led to the deposition of two Medieval sherds, a probable Post-Medieval book clasp, a domed plate or boss, and a domed pin; the interpretation of this deposit is obscure.

The central disturbance probably contained the bones of at least three adult inhumations, one



adult cremation, and a few unburnt bones of a juvenile and an infant. At least one of the adult inhumations was probably found intact during the first antiquarian excavation, as bone heap A appears to contain bones from only one individual. The rock-cut grave contained adult bones but it is not clear if this was the location of the intact inhumation just mentioned. A disturbed cremation of a second adult was found in the north-western side of the mound, together with teeth that may be from a fourth adult inhumation. In addition to the deposits just noted, Bateman recorded a child inhumation on the north-east side of the wall, and a cremation on the south-west side, both at or near the base of the barrow and implied by Bateman to be complete. In both cases the possibility should be considered that these burials were in fact partly disturbed and that the burnt bones and the juvenile unburnt bones found scattered in the central area in 1993 derive from these burials. In total, there is evidence the barrow contained 'intact' burials of at least one adult inhumation, one juvenile inhumation, and two adult cremations. The other individuals represented on site, two or three adult inhumations and one infant inhumation, may have been far from complete. There is some evidence that human bone had been scattered on site in prehistory. It is not unlikely that other undocumented burials took place on site, surviving in the unexcavated north-eastern portions of the mound, and destroyed by quarrying to the south-west.

Certainly identified grave and pyre goods included a bone pin in the rock-cut grave; one or two bone pins with a cremation; a copper-alloy awl and burnt-flint plano-convex knife with an adult cremation. None of the burials found in 1993 were undisturbed and hence the catalogue of grave goods for each should not be considered as necessarily complete. These finds, and possibly the rusticated Beaker and other sherds, suggest construction and use of the barrow in the Later Neolithic and/or Earlier Bronze Age.

The barrow excavated in 1993 is one of at least four on the shelf high above the Roystone Grange dry-valley to the east (Fig. 1) (Barnatt 1989; in press b, sites 10:2-4, 10:32; Hodges et al. 1989). Of the other three, only one, at SK20355650, has produced a number of documented burials (Marsden 1982b; Barnatt 1989, site 10:4). These include a total of 4 inhumations, 3 cremations and a deposit comprising 5 skulls. The majority, if not all, were of Bronze Age date and grave goods included a Food Vessel, two Collared Urns, and two plano-convex knives. Of the other barrows, that at SK20475686 has no recorded excavations (Barnatt 1989, site 10:3), while the fourth has now been lost (Barnatt 1989, site 10:39). Bateman described the latter as close to the barrow excavated in 1993, comprising a kerb or rim of a c. 23m diameter mound with an interior that had been removed previously (Bateman 1861, 62). A suggested site for this, at SK20365713 (Hodges et al. 1989, 9: barrow 2, fig. 2), is unconvincing (Barnatt in press b, site 10:H). Other mounds in the general vicinity suggested to be barrows (Hodges et al. 1989, 11-12: barrows 5-8), are more probably lead mining hillocks (Barnatt in press b, sites 10:D-G).

The number of burials recorded within the barrow excavated in 1993, at present standing at a minimum of four, with a few bones from at least a further three to four individuals, is consistent with data from the Peak District as a whole (Barnatt in press a). It is the norm for the region that round barrows of the Later Neolithic and Earlier Bronze Age have multiple burials, often with several burials of apparent equal importance in 'primary' positions under barrows. The majority of prehistoric burials in the region have simple grave goods, as at the 1993 barrow, rather than the rich Bronze Age artefacts traditionally associated with 'status' burial in areas like Wessex (Barnatt in press a).

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