EXCAVATION AND LANDSCAPE SURVEY OF A PLOUGHED-OUT PREHISTORIC BURIAL MOUND AT STANLOW, IN THE PEAK DISTRICT

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SUMMARY

In recent years, relatively few prehistoric burial sites have been excavated in the Peak District where it has been possible to apply modern archaeological techniques. Stanlow, although the site of a ploughed-out barrow, offered a rare opportunity to gain a greater understanding of social groups acting across the Peak District during prehistory. The site had been ascribed to the Bronze Age; however, of the 781 artefacts recorded, a small number offered diagnostic possibilities suggesting multi-period activity from the Early Neolithic and into the Bronze Age. A number of disarticulated human remains were found and during the final phase of excavation, a single inhumation in an earth-cut grave was discovered. Selected samples from this and the disarticulated remains were submitted for radiocarbon dating. Dates for the disarticulated remains were obtained ranging from the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age, and dates from the Anglian period were obtained for the single inhumation.

BACKGROUND

Whilst undertaking a field walking project near to Little Hucklow in April 2002, the archaeological group ARTEAMUS discovered a scatter of flint in close proximity to the site of a previously recorded, but now ploughed-out prehistoric burial mound (Plate 1). The lithic finds were subsequently reviewed and commented upon by Dr Mark Edmonds at the University of Sheffield.

The landowner, Mr S. Sidebottom, advised that the site had been ploughed on a regular basis and that an ongoing programme of ploughing was planned. John Barnatt, Senior Survey Archaeologist for the Peak National Park Authority, had earlier carried out a survey, noting that 'future ploughing' was a threat (1989, 3:4). With this in mind it was thought that an excavation project would offer a timely opportunity to record and salvage any remains which may still exist.

The Peak District is an area with a substantial range of prehistoric archaeological remains and there is a long and plentiful record of excavation but few barrows have been excavated with the advantage of applying modern excavation techniques. Research issues for Peak District barrows have been discussed recently and objectives for further work proposed,

...the design of mounds and the nature of rituals undertaken and the organisation of the burials made reflected how societies viewed themselves and the world around them. All such aspects can be studied by asking critical questions of the archaeological record (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 3).



Plate 1: Looking northwards across the mound, pre-excavation.

This project offered a rare opportunity to gain a greater understanding of how prehistoric social groups operated across the Peak District and complemented then ongoing research such as the Gardom's Edge project (Barnatt *et al.* 1995-9). As the excavation developed, with the late 7th to early 8th century date for the single inhumation, there was also a prospect of gaining some insight into how prehistoric burial mounds were sometimes utilised by later social groups. This was a period in the Peak District when Anglian settlement is known to have been taking place and when British enclaves may still have been present (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 83). With the absence of grave goods a specific social group for these remains cannot be determined so the general term 'Anglian' will be used. Just two Anglian burial sites have been formally excavated in the Peak District during the recent past with only Stanlow having the benefit of radiocarbon dates. An unpublished possible Anglian burial is also known to have been excavated at Chelmorton Thorn (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 124).

The site is not scheduled and the landowner Mr S. Sidebottom was most supportive of the project. The Archaeology Service of the Peak National Park Authority was consulted at pre-excavation stage and were of the opinion that this would be an extremely useful project. The English Heritage officer for the region, Jon Humble, was also notified and he indicated that English Heritage had an initiative in place investigating the effects of ploughing upon archaeological sites, and expressed an interest in the results of plough damage at the Stanlow site.

SITE LOCATION

Stanlow is on the north-eastern fringe of the Peak District Limestone Plateau, at SK1691 7923. It lies within a field of improved pasture at an elevation of 265m OD, on land which generally slopes down towards the east into Stanlow Dale. It is overlooked and somewhat dominated by nearby higher ground, except to the north, where there is a limited but dramatic distant view to the gritstone outcrop at the summit of Win Hill.

Significant evidence of prehistoric activity lies within view of Stanlow, in particular burial sites; the Coplow round barrow is on slightly higher ground 300m to the west (Barnatt and

Collis 1996, 185); a kilometre to the east on significantly higher ground there is a possible round barrow at Durham Edge (*ibid.*, 259); and a kilometre to the north there are two round barrows at Hazlebadge Hall. When the larger of these two was excavated during the 19th century 30 inhumations and cremations were recorded; the greatest number found at a barrow in the region (Bagshawe 1866/1868; Barnatt 1996 and Collis, 13; Evans 2004). At Hartle Dale, a short distance to the north-west, there are caves where evidence of Neolithic habitation has been discovered, along with Late Neolithic burials and an assemblage of artefacts dating from the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (Pill 1963a; Pill 1963b; Gilks 1990; Gilks 2003). Just out of view, on higher ground 2.5 km to the south-west, is the Neolithic barrow at Tideslow (Radley and Plant 1968/9; Barnatt and Collis 1996) (Fig. 1) and within close proximity several possible destroyed or lost barrow sites have been noted (Barnatt 1996 and Collis 184-185).

Relatively little Anglian activity is recorded in close proximity. However, the significant Dark Age site of Grey Ditch is situated 2 km to the north (Guilbert and Taylor 1992; Guilbert 2013), and a possible 'sub-Roman' cist burial is recorded at Bradwell (Salt 1898); Hart notes that details of this site are somewhat lacking (1981,100). Later Saxon crosses can be found at Eyam and Hope. The site is overlooked by the monument at Burr Tor which for many years was recorded as an Iron Age fort (Fig. 1) but in 1994 was reassessed by English Heritage as a prehistoric stock enclosure (National Monument UID 23317). A fine example of prehistoric rock art was found there in 1854 (Barnatt and Reeder 1982).



Fig. 1: Sites near to Stanlow.

Whilst there are no recorded Anglian associations with Burr Tor and, exercising caution when using place name evidence, it is possible that the 'Burr' element of the name derives from the Anglian word burh (Gelling 2005, 134-137). There are many locations throughout England where the burh/Burr development is believed to have taken place; when discussing this aspect, Millward and Robinson refer specifically to Burr Tor (1975, 119). The name Stanlow itself may also offer Anglian associations, the 'low' element of the name is thought to develop from the Anglian term hlaew (Gelling *op. cit.*). There are a number of 'low' sites in the vicinity and from Anglo-Saxon charters it has been noted that hlaew is often used to describe barrows (Speake 1989, 121). Grinsell further notes that the hlaew element may specifically refer to barrows of the pagan Saxon period (1959, 60-3). However, re-iterating the caution noted above, across the Peak District there are many places where the hlaew term or its derivatives occur where no barrows or Anglian associations are recorded and it is possible that the 'low' element refers to a natural feature (Cameron 1959, 705). An area 3km to the north is known as Eccles (Fig. 1) and whilst Gelling notes that this may have earlier origins, she also postulates the possibility that it may give an Anglian period link (*op. cit.*).

HISTORY OF THE SITE

There is no known record of any formal excavation at Stanlow. It is shown on the current OS maps and entered into the Derbyshire County Council Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Record, SMR Number 7617-DR 1814. The vigorously active local antiquarian, Thomas Bateman, referred to a barrow at Stan Low Moor near Great Hucklow but offered little descriptive detail (1861, 295). In 1908, whilst investigating Derbyshire barrow names the author Addy, who lived nearby, noted that the site had been damaged, 'half of it has been destroyed to provide stones to mend the road' (1908,137). In 1932, Tudor, whilst working for H. M. Commissioners of Works intending to schedule the site, recorded that the site had been destroyed before this could be carried out. He noted the presence of two 'chambers' and that 'before the formalities were complete the occupier of the farm destroyed it for the material' (Tudor 1932, 101).

The 1880 edition of the OS map shows a wall crossing the eastern edge of the site; the landowner advised that this had been dismantled in the recent past.

GEOLOGY AND SITE CONDITIONS

The site sits upon a sequence of Eyam limestone, at a point where the eroded crest of a limestone knoll-reef is located just beneath the present ground surface (Fig. 2), and the site's layout aligns along the strike of the reef in a north-south direction. The western half of the excavation trench (i.e. Quadrant 1 [Q1] and Q4) is generally level but the eastern half (i.e. Q3 and Q2) (Fig. 4) dips towards the south-east. The bedrock shows a number of bedding planes and a small number of grey coloured chert bands all striking generally in a north-south direction. Many fossils are contained in the variably weathered bedrock surface; predominately crinoids across the western half of the trench and brachiopods across the eastern, with a small area of rugrose coral in Q2.

Excavation exposed the eroded end-section of several sloping limestone beds, generally aligning along the central north-south zone of the trench, these create a series of stepped edges which form 'v' shaped gullies (C and D in Fig. 3). In the southern area of the trench they are up to 1m in depth and the gullies are filled with light coloured head deposits



Fig. 2: Geology around Stanlow.

overlying levels of chert and limestone solifluction debris, the fill creating a level surface with the adjoining bedrock. At the lowest level of the gullies, narrow veins of black chert were noted in section. This is a soil profile not uncommon across the limestone outcrops of the Peak District (Stevenson and Gaunt 1971, 333-334). Eroded sections of the relatively thin limestone bedding planes tend to fracture easily and a number of 'naturally' eroded slabs and many fragments of limestone and chert were evident throughout the trench.

The landowner advised that the site had been 'more or less' ploughed flat in the recent past and that plough shares had started to catch the bedrock around the area of the mound, i.e. the crest of the knoll-reef, sometimes lifting off large limestone slabs and breaking shares in the process. To overcome this problem he describes enhancing the mound by tipping up to '100 tonnes' of imported material across the area. Three broken plough shares were found during the excavation along with a number of freshly broken slabs; one large slab was found in close association to a broken modern plough share. Prior to excavation the site comprised a long low oval mound measuring approximately 22m x 8m across and 0.5m high.

On excavation, it was clear that the site had been a focal point for a range of agricultural and industrial activities over a number of years. A lens of burnt lime was found within the plough zone at the mound centre, it was not possible to determine if this had been burnt *in situ*. Samples were subjected to spectrographic analysis which determined that the material was the product of limestone burning using uncontrolled conditions such as an open fire. The 19th century barrow digger, Thomas Bateman, recorded a number of burial mounds across the region which had been adapted as limekilns (1861). It is also possible that this may be



Fig. 3: Bedrock features.

the residue of a lime heap used during agricultural 'liming' of the surrounding fields. The site does occupy the highest point in the adjacent fields and is alongside a gate between the fields making it a convenient place for this activity. Alternatively, it may also be part of the imported material tipped across the site by the current landowner (noted above).

A short distance from the burnt lime, a sub-circular pit approximately 3m across and 1m deep had been cut (A in Fig. 3). This had a thin lining of lime and a mixed fill of debris which included the partial skeletons of both a horse and a cow, comprising a horse skull and a cow missing a skull. A sherd of 18th century pottery was found immediately beneath these remains. This unusual arrangement bears comparison with results of excavations carried out at 17th century limekilns in the Yorkshire Dales, where partial horse skeletons were discovered within abandoned lime kilns and the excavators suggested that this may comprise a 'closure ritual' (Johnson 2007, 44). The possibility that some long lost, field limekiln had been present in the locality of Stanlow cannot be ruled out.

Across the east central zone of Q2 and Q3, what appears to be a 'casual' quarry measuring approximately 12m x 5m x 1m deep had been cut (B in Fig. 3); here the bedding planes and joints would have made it relatively easy to lever off limestone slabs. The quarry had been infilled with limestone rubble, described by the present tenant of the land as looking like 'field pickings' from ploughing. This fill contained small amounts of relatively modern debris and a number of sheep skeletons were found scattered in the upper levels; some showing evidence of illness such as rickets (Andrew Chamberlain *pers. comm.*).

What appeared to be a 'cartload' of building demolition rubble, containing 19th and 20th century material had been tipped onto the floor of the quarry. A small amount of flint debitage

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was also recorded within the infill, and whilst the quarry could have been a source of material for barrow construction, no formal evidence was found to support that possibility. In general the floor, walls and cuts of the quarry void appeared to be unweathered and the contents suggest that it was a relatively recent development.

Most of the central area of Q2 had been disturbed and remains of a small bonfire containing modern nails and machined timber sections were found resting on bedrock. At a number of other places in Q2 sherds of 19th and 20th century pottery and building debris were also found on the bedrock. Two shallow sub-rectangular shaped hollows had been 'pecked' into the bedrock (Plate 2), one in Q2 and one in Q3 (E in Fig. 3), both located below disturbed areas of the trench. They were similar in appearance both measuring approximately 750mm x 500mm across with varying depths of between and 50mm -100mm (see also 'cist' discussion below).

THE EXCAVATION

A 25m x 25m excavation trench centred on the existing visible mound was cut and the site was excavated in quadrants. Initially a 1m wide evaluation trench was cut from the mound centre towards the west, across quadrant one (Q1) and to the east across Q2, and then extended a further 5m beyond the trench limit (Fig. 4). The evaluation trench was cut to explore the possibility of an encircling ditch or kerb and at the same time investigate if any barrow structure had been preserved beneath the now dismantled wall (noted above); none of these options was apparent. Q1 was fully excavated manually and the subsequent three quadrants were machine de-turfed prior to manual excavation.



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Recording of the excavation was carried out using the guidelines set by the Peak National Park Archaeology Service (1996). A contour survey was conducted prior to excavation (Fig. 4). A resistivity and magnetometer survey were carried out, with inconclusive results. After excavation the site was reinstated to the pre-excavation form and profile.





During the initial stages of excavation it was apparent that a significant proportion of the mound was a product of recent agricultural reconstruction and that much of the original site had been disturbed or destroyed. The stratigraphy was somewhat confused and difficult to understand and in an attempt to gain some clarification two 1m x 1m test trenches were cut down to bedrock, one at the south-east corner of Q1 and one at the south-west corner of Q2; i.e. at the mound's centre. These confirmed the high level of disturbance, however, at the lowest level set upon the bedrock a compacted old ground surface was identified along with a small amount of cairn material.

Across the site, a thin root matt had developed and below this was a disturbed level of soil and rubble mixed with a variety of debris, which included some modern industrial components and sherds of 20th century pot; modern debris was more evident above the mound area. This level generally overlaid and in parts was integrated with a layer of pulped paper waste; a residue of papermaking used locally for soil conditioning. In section, the peaks and valleys of plough activity could be seen in these upper levels directed east-west.

These levels grade into a lower level which again appears to have been disturbed in the recent past. Less 'artefact debris' was apparent than in the level above, and comprised predominately 19th to early 20th century pot sherds in a thin level of soil loosely integrated with varying amounts of mixed limestone rubble. The rubble was randomly distributed across the trench, in approximate equal quantities of both angular and rounded pieces, and included a small number of chert fragments. Generally, the rubble was little more than a 'single course' in depth with stone sizes ranging from small fragments to pieces 200mm across. Beneath this level, around the north central zone of the trench, a compacted and relatively undisturbed soil level was found set upon the bedrock; this was interpreted as remains of the old ground surface (OGS in Fig. 5). Due to natural variation in the bedrock surface beneath this level, the buried soil here varied in depth, in general from 3-10cm deep.

Three discrete groups of stones were found set upon the OGS (Fig. 5). These were interpreted as *in situ* barrow structure. Each group comprised a 'single course' of angular pieces of limestone ranging in size from 75mm to 300mm across. Initially the groups appeared to be relatively undisturbed and were generally orientated on a 'level' plane. The larger of two groups in Q2 offered no diagnostic material, whereas a burnt flint thumbnail scraper was found beneath the smaller group.

However, at the larger 'triangular' shaped group in Q4 a small amount of flint debitage and disarticulated human remains were found within the interstices of the stones, particularly within the west vector space of the 'triangle'. On the OGS around this group a small number of lithic artefacts were found, including two polished stone axe fragments, six microliths, a core, two thumbnail scrapers and a leaf-shaped arrowhead. As this group was excavated and cleared, a small area of more rounded stones projecting from the ground at shallow angles was noted (stippled within circle at Fig. 6). These were encircled by an area of darker soil extending a metre to the south (Fig. 5) which was found to be the edge and fill of a grave which had been



Fig. 5: Plan showing in situ features.



Fig. 6: Stone group in Q4, with angled stones circled.

cut through the OGS and the buried soils beneath onto the bedrock. It enclosed a skeleton (Fig. 7) covered by flat stones which appeared to have been placed along the torso; one stone above the femur had slipped sideways, possibly during *post mortem* decomposition (Plate 15).

The skeleton was extended with the long bones slightly flexed, lying on its right side, aligned north-south and facing east. Sometime after burial there had been considerable damage and some displacement of the skull and cervical vertebrae, the grave fill around these elements showing signs of having been disturbed (see below and Plate 14). At the time of excavation extensive erosion and exfoliation of the bone surface was noted. A dark brown stain was observed on the distal end of the right tibia (Plate 3). The skeleton was excavated using guidelines set by McKinley and Roberts (1993).

SKELETON

The remains were removed from the site under conditions stipulated within the Home Office Licence No 29580 and were placed in the care of Andrew Chamberlain at the Department of Prehistory, Sheffield University. Here Christie Cox completed an extensive examination to determine completeness, preservation, pathology, stature, dental condition, age at death and sex (Cox 2005). A sample from the skeleton was submitted for radiocarbon dating to the

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Fig. 7: Skeleton and grave cut.



Plate 3: Stain on right tibia of skeleton, cm scale (Bloxam).

Plate 4: Mandible and mandibular dentifion of the skeleton, showing inflammation (arrows) and chipping to anterior teeth (circled where visible) on scale (Blogam).

University of Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit and the following results, calibrated at 2 sigma, were obtained AD 644-718 and 743-769 (Bronk Ramsey *et al.* 2009, 324-325).

Referring to Mays (2002), Cox assesses completeness of the skeleton at between 76% and 100%. Referring to Brickley and McKinley (2004), Cox assesses preservation at '5+', noting that adverse biological and chemical conditions had eroded all but a small piece of bone cortex on the right femur. These conditions had modified the bone profile to such an extent that any traces of surface pathology had been lost. Cox and Chamberlain consider that the individual was of gracile rather than robust build with long narrow limb bones. Only the humerus, tibia and femur of the right side were complete enough for measurement and calculations from the regression equations of Trotter and Glesser (1952) suggest a stature of 1.746m (5ft 9ins).

On the teeth, there were three carious lesions, one on the left upper third molar, one on the left lower third molar and one on the right lower third molar, all on the occlusial surface. There was a minimal amount of wear on the molars and only a slight trace of calculus.

In a later assessment by Bloxam (2014), an unusual pattern of dental wear was noted to both the upper and lower dentition, with small chips and 'grazes' to the enamel of the incisors, canines, and premolars on the labial (lip-facing) surfaces and interproximally (between the teeth) – these are circled where they are visible in (Plate 4). This is likely the result of the individual using her teeth as a tool or 'third hand'; similar examples are noted by Scott & Winn (2011).



Plate 4: Mandible and mandibular dentition of the skeleton, showing inflammation (arrows) and chipping to anterior teeth (circled where visible) cm scale (Bloxam).

Isotope analysis of the right second molar was undertaken at the University by Pam McPherson. Results suggest that the individual, an omnivore, had always been a 'local inhabitant of the Derbyshire area' and had consumed mainly terrestrial protein, roots and tubers and probably cheese or milk (Cox 2005, 3). Age at death was based on the dental attrition, Miles (1963); the degree of closure in the cranial structures, Meindl and Lovejoy (1985); and the state of epiphysial union, Schwartz (1995). The auricular surfaces of the pelvis were severely eroded and could not be used.

Cox suggests that the skeleton is of a young adult (early to mid-twenties). The minor degree of occlusial dental attrition supports this suggestion.

The ectocranial suture analysis produced an estimated age of 43 years; however, the accepted adjustment of + or -20 years encompasses the suggested age. Possibly more conclusive was the evidence of incomplete fusion of the S1 and S2 vertebrae in the sacrum (normally fused at the age of twenty five in modern populations). Biological sex is estimated through the morphological characteristics of the pelvis and the skull, (Schwartz 1995; Ferembrach 1980; Phenice 1969). The estimates are based on modern populations as no references are available for the gracile skeleton. Many of the diagnostic indicators are missing from the Stanlow skeleton and Cox suggested a probable male assessment. However, the later assessment by Bloxam suggests a probable female.

OTHER FINDS

Lithics

214 lithic artefacts and debitage were recorded. These were predominantly flint along with some chert and two ground stone axe fragments. The assemblage also included a small number of complete diagnostic artefacts. Finds were distributed across the trench with a discrete concentration in the north central zone (Fig. 8). Many were from disturbed contexts and it is possible that some may have been imported on to site along with the material used to enhance the mound (see above). However, only a small number were recorded within upper levels of the mound and, in general, imported material appeared to have been brought from relatively modern sources and comprised industrial, farming and domestic refuse. This may suggest that little, if any, of the flint found at Stanlow had been imported onto site during the modern era

Flint is not naturally sourced within the Peak District but there are a number of locations from where it is known to have been imported. These include the chalk regions of the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Wolds and areas further to the south along with the Trent River Valley gravels, south of the Peak District and to the west across the Cheshire Plain. Chert is found on site at Stanlow and across much of the limestone plateau (Stevenson and Gaunt 1971). The flint could derive from any of the above sources, and possibly others, and attributing sources can be problematic (Wilson and Barnatt 2002, 51-53). A possible exception is 'Wolds Flint' which often shows a distinctive mottled light colour; this was used for 18% of the flint recorded. The 'Other Flint' category comprised 64% with 'Translucent Flint' at 4%. Perhaps somewhat surprising, considering its availability on site, 'Black Derbyshire Chert' represented only 9% and 'Other Chert' only 4%. 'Flakes, chips and chunks', made up 74% of the total artefact type and various 'blades' totalled 12%. Only 5% of the totals were 'burnt' (Table 1).

Up to six microliths (Fig. 9: 253, 086) were found; usually synonymous with the Mesolithic or possibly overlapping into the Early Neolithic, these maybe 'natural losses', or residual finds:



Fig. 8: Trench plan of lithic distribution.

The common association of Earlier Neolithic leaf-shaped arrowheads with Later Mesolithic surface scatters...places that had been important in earlier times (Edmonds 1995, 35).

A two platform core (Fig. 9: 275) was found on the OGS, a type of artefact used for blade production and normally associated with the Later Mesolithic or earlier Neolithic period (Edmonds 1995, 25-37). The edge of the striking platform shows a number of small flake scars at the curved end, which may be evidence of core preparation/rejuvenation, or an indication that the artefact had been utilised in other tool formats,

...cores may have had other functions...it would not be unthinkable to find cores...used as cutting or scraping tools (Andrefsky 2005, 155).

A burnt thumbnail scraper found on the OGS beneath the smaller of the three groups of remaining cairn structure, is a form of artefact consistent with a Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date (Fig. 9: 298). Few of the flakes, chunks or chips were of a great size, generally under 30mm across. It is possible that some of this material is the residue of flint knapping carried out at some time during prehistory, presumably, at, or within the general vicinity of the site. Again the blades were relatively small and a few were broken (Fig. 9: 244, 307), the largest unbroken example measured 41mm x 15mm.

	Translucent Flint	Wolds Flint	Other Flint		Black Derbys Chert		Other Chert		Stone
B=burnt U=unburnt	U	U	В	U	В	U	В	U	U
Thumbnail scrapers			1	1					
Leaf shaped arrowhead	1								
Blades		3		9		1			
Above broken	2	2		5	1				
Retouched blade		1		1					
Flakes	1	8	2	25		2			
Above broken		19	3	51		6			
Retouched flake		1							
Above broken	1			3		1			
Broken used glossed flake				1					
Core/fragment		1		5	1	1		1	
Axe fragments									2
Chunk or chip	1	2	1	25		5	1	6	
Miscellaneous Scraper						2			
Above broken			1						
End and side scraper			1						
Microlith	1	1		1					
Above broken	1			2					

Table 1: Lithic types and material used.

Arrowhead

A leaf-shaped arrowhead was found on the OGS in Q4 (Fig. 9: 078) and whilst Kinnes suggests that these should not be taken as an 'infallible' indication of a Neolithic context (1979, 70), he does later describe this form of artefact as a 'type-fossil' of the earlier Neolithic (Kinnes 1992, 109). Edmonds also identifies leaf-shaped arrowheads as markers of the earlier Neolithic (1999, 18). Reviewing the adjacent county of Yorkshire, Pierpoint notes that these are a common artefact found by fieldworkers and although not normally with burials, he does state that when found with burials, they are usually adult burials (1980, 182) and in particular when relatively finely worked most probably with male burials (*ibid.*, 222). The production of leaf-shaped arrowheads may also have formed part of a more complex ritual activity.

The arrowhead measures 29mm x 18mm x 2mm at the thickest point. Whilst this testifies to the skill of the flint knapper, it does appear to be a rather delicate implement if intended for an aggressive act such as hunting or warfare; it is possible that during the Late Neolithic Early Bronze Age some arrowheads may have been manufactured to serve a non- aggressive function:

Often found in funerary contexts, many of these wafer thin points may have been made for display or for the occasion (Edmonds 1995, 143).



Fig. 9: Flint work.



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Figs 10 and 11: Stone axe fragments.

Fragmentation

Fragments from two ground greenstone axes manufactured from material sourced in the Lake District were found on the OGS in Q4 (Figs 10 and 11); these may imply a Neolithic association. In particular, axes appearing to have been deliberately broken, are often found associated with earlier Neolithic burials (Bradley and Edmonds 1993, 204). The act of deliberate fragmentation may have a role to play in ritual activity, such as 'purposive deposition', or as a discrete element of the burial ritual itself (Bradley and Edmonds 1993, 204; Edmonds 1999, 124; 2004, 43).

The fragments could also be random losses, or breakages caused during 'normal' usage, such as food preparation, carpentry, use as weapons or during woodland clearance. Thomas noting that such finds may be a residue of earlier usage of a location (1999, 134), cites the excavation at Wayland's Smithy (Whittle 1991, 70) where stone axe fragments sourced from a distance were found on the old ground surface, and he suggests these offer evidence that the location had been used prior to monument construction. The form of the larger fragment (Fig. 11) may suggest that it had been re-worked, or utilised to produce a smaller axe (Mark Edmonds *pers. comm.*).

On the subject of 'fragmentation', Chapman offers five explanations for what he describes as a 'surprisingly widespread phenomenon' (2000, 23), three of which include the possibility of ritual activity. Grinsell further notes that fragmented tools and weapons which often appear to have been deliberately broken, are found at burial sites across a range of periods throughout Europe, and he describes fragmentation as 'killing' the artefact (1973, 112-3). Broken axes figure significantly at many sites across Britain and Mark Edmonds describes a number of earlier Neolithic sites where axe fragments have been found in association with burials and other deposits, and where the breakage appears to have been deliberate,

...artefacts such as axes were consumed on these sites: reworked, smashed and placed in pits or other formal deposits. Examples include Maiden Castle, Etton and Hambledon Hill (1995, 71).

Pottery

No complete pots were found. A few sherds of late 18th century material were recovered, but the majority of finds were predominantly 19th and 20th century. Only twelve small abraded fragments of prehistoric pottery were recovered but none offered diagnostic possibilities. However, the fabric characteristics of some fragments did suggest possible origins in the Early Neolithic and the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (Beswick 2009).

Disarticulated human remains

83 pieces of disarticulated bone and 52 teeth were recovered; these were generally distributed across the central zone of the trench, with two discrete concentrations around the grave cut and in the southern area of Q4. Two samples of disarticulated bone were submitted for radiocarbon dating to the University of Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit. One sample gave results, calibrated at 2 sigma, of 2188-2184 and 2141-1945 cal BC, the other sample; 2134-2080 and 2061-1911 cal BC (Bronk Ramsey *et al.* 2009, 324-325).

Cox has identified between nine and thirteen individuals and Bloxam six (Cox 2005; Bloxam 2014). A cut mark was noted by Cox on a piece of disarticulated tibia which appeared to have been made immediately before, or soon after death (Plate 5), and the patterning of the cut is consistent with what may be expected from a flint implement (Cox *pers. comm.*). It is

relatively unusual to find cut marks on human remains and when found they may suggest that de-fleshing had taken place. De-fleshing has been recorded at other prehistoric burial sites in Britain, in particular at sites attributed to the Neolithic (Chamberlain 1999)



Plate 5: Possible cut mark on a disarticulated tibia fragment, cm scale (Cox).

Faunal remains

Besides the articulated remains of three sheep, one cow without a skull and a horse skull noted above, there were many other disarticulated remains (Bloxam 2014). Some of the smaller bones were broken and may be the residue of owl pellets. The only faunal remains found in a secure context (i.e. the grave cut) were water vole.

Environmental evidence

A number of environmental samples were examined but the range of material was limited. Generally mollusc remains suggest that these samples had derived from 'a well vegetated area with tall herbaceous growth. There are no species associated purely with woodland or grazed areas' (Wagner 2006).

DISCUSSION

With the level of destruction at Stanlow and a paucity of archival records it may never be possible to fully understand the true morphology of the site. However, the project presents an opportunity to construct a range of interpretative options. While a number of artefacts offer associations from across the Neolithic, we cannot rule out the possibility that some may be residual finds from pre-barrow activity of a non-funerary nature, such as that witnessed at Wigber Low (Collis 1983, 93) (see below).

There are some 20,000 prehistoric burial sites in Britain but relatively few have been

excavated in a manner that gives insight into their full meaning, function and purpose. Kinnes suggested that only around 2000 show reasonable standards of excavation (1979, 45) and when reviewing the unchambered Neolithic round barrows of Britain, he accepted that only 88 of the sites excavated offered good Neolithic context (*ibid.*). Throughout England around 25,000 graves and cremations from the Early Anglian period have been excavated (Hodges 1989, 38) and some have been found in purpose built mounds, and others as insertions into mounds or structures from earlier periods (Williams 1998, 94).

Neolithic burials are found in different forms including flat graves, rock shelters, caves and mounds. Where mound construction was used, various combinations of long, oval and round shapes can be found. In the Peak District, chronology and interpretation of Neolithic burial monuments can be difficult because there are few diagnostic artefacts with secure contexts. Long barrows are normally associated with the Neolithic, but round barrows also appear in the Neolithic and continue in use for a further 2 to 3 millennia.

A barrow mound may seal evidence of earlier funerary or non-funerary activity and a variety of burial rites further complicates interpretation. It is known that communal, and or, disarticulated burial took place throughout much of the Neolithic and into the Bronze Age and that single inhumation and cremation also took place from the Neolithic onwards (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 34-40). Multi-period use at some sites can add to problems of interpretation. Insertion of later burials can change a barrow's size and layout, sometimes disturbing the earlier burials (Barrett and Kinnes 1988, 40). Analysis of prehistoric burial can be difficult:

Practically all the generalizations made about the burial practices of the period prove, on closer examination, to be hopelessly misleading (Burgess 2001, 296).

An illustration of the complexity at some Peak District burial sites was seen at Wigber Low (Collis1983). A Bronze Age burial mound had been built over an area of Neolithic occupation and structural changes had been made to the site during the later Bronze Age, after which there was evidence of Iron Age and Roman activity. The funerary sequence concluded when six or seven inhumation burials were inserted in the Anglo Saxon period. A later rabbit warren cut through part of the structure, the site was used for lead smelting in the medieval period and a poorly recorded excavation was carried out in the 19th century.

Between six and eleven Neolithic long barrows are documented across the Peak District but due to an absence of excavation and high level of mutilation, only three can be described as chambered. A further eight to sixteen chambered cairns and probably 187 unchambered round cairns date from the later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age. It can be reasonably assumed that the balance of undated round barrows are unchambered (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 21-26). Of these between three and seventeen can be demonstrated to be Neolithic. However, over 65% of burials within barrows cannot be dated due to a lack of associated diagnostic grave goods (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 128).

John Barnatt also records between 38 and 63 (66) Anglian burials within barrows across the Peak District; 12 to 21(22) of these within Anglian barrows and between 20 to 27 burials inserted into earlier barrows. A further nine prehistoric barrows contain Anglian artefacts, but these may not represent grave goods. Ten insertions were set high in the barrow mound with only one within a rock cut grave; a further six at Wigber Low are described as burial within pits (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 57-61). A detailed study of the region by Howard Jones (1997) identified between 60 and 70 burials from the Anglian period and showed a more complex picture than thought previously.

Recorded Anglian burials in the Peak District are located mainly in the central and southern part of the limestone plateau (Barnatt and Smith 2004, 54-55). The single inhumation at Stanlow is the most northerly example recorded so far. It is not known exactly when Anglian groups first colonised the region, but Ozanne, referring to the Pecsaetan or Peak Dwellers of the Tribal Hidage, dates their arrival in the Peak to the mid to late 7th century (1962-63, 47). Excavations carried out by Bateman in the 19th century (1848; 1861) are the main source of evidence for this period, with the Wigber Low excavation (Collis 1983) a recent addition.

Nearly 500 existing barrows are recorded in the Peak District and a further 200 or so sites are known to have been destroyed or the location is lost (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 5). At many of these sites it is difficult to deduce from surface observation the materials used in their construction. Antiquarian accounts and excavation suggest that both stone and earthen mounds are common across the Limestone Plateaux, along with many examples where both materials are used. Relatively little stone structure was found during the Stanlow excavation, which may suggest a barrow predominantly of earthen construction. However, the name Stanlow may suggest a stony mound, using the Old English word for stone, stan, and the Anglo Saxon word for mound, hlaw. In 1908 Addy recorded that half the barrow had been removed to provide stones for road repairs (137) and in 1932 Tudor recorded that the landowner had 'destroyed it for the material' (101).

The current landowner recalls that in the recent past stone has been removed from the site and used as hardcore, and that a wall which aligned across the eastern limit of the site had been dismantled and taken away; no trace of this wall was found during excavation. The only evidence of *in situ* barrow structure discovered was two stone groups in Q2 and a larger group in Q4, beneath which the single inhumation was found. All of the above suggests that the site had been predominantly stone built (Figs 5 and 6). Pre-excavation, the mound's elongated shape superficially suggested a small long barrow or long cairn. However, excavation established that the mound had been reconstructed in recent years to facilitate ploughing and that the orientation appears to follow the linear exposed reef knoll. It is unlikely, therefore, that pre-excavation shape is a guide to the shape of the original structure.

Excavation revealed burial evidence comprising a single inhumation within a shallow earth-cut grave; and across the site disarticulated remains from at least 6 other individuals; a small quantity of cremated bone; and a fragment of long bone, which possibly displayed evidence of defleshing (Plate 5). The disarticulated remains were found generally within disturbed contexts across the central zone. They may represent the ploughed-out remains of multiple burials, or a number of single burials. Radiocarbon dates from the Late Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age were obtained for the disarticulated remains and the single inhumation was dated to the early Anglian period.

Multiple burials and the presence of disarticulated human remains is a tradition well attested at Neolithic sites. For example, the earlier Neolithic site excavated at Whitwell in Derbyshire found a single inhumation under an oval cairn which later was incorporated in a rectangular cairn with a mortuary area containing a total of 724 human skeletal fragments (Wall 2005; Vyner and Wall 2011). At Tideslow, a short distance from Stanlow, the excavators found a number of free-standing stone cists or 'chambers', from which it was thought that human skeletal remains had been removed to be replaced by later burials. This site was described as relatively complex and showed evidence for more than one period of use (Radley and Plant 1971, 28). Generally, multiple burials at Neolithic chambered sites across the Peak District are poorly recorded and often found to have been disturbed but a maximum of up to eighteen individuals have been found at such sites. Also as many as 30 individuals have been recorded at later prehistoric 'unchambered' sites, for example at Hazlebadge, a site near to and in view from Stanlow (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 13).

Bateman refers to Stanlow only in an appendix of barrow place names, stating simply 'Stan Low Moor...Great Hucklow' (1861, 295). A lack of detailed comment may suggest that the site was architecturally insignificant, and or, that he had not visited. Tudor compared what he called two chambers at Stanlow with Stanton Moor examples (see below), which might suggest that the site was a round barrow with burial cists (1932, 101). Cist type mortuary structures (see 'cists' below) are a common arrangement in round barrows across the Peak District and one that would fit comfortably with the radiocarbon dates obtained. On the Limestone Plateau the majority of prehistoric barrows fall within a diametric range of 10m to 25m (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 26), and whilst a high destruction level at Stanlow prevents a precise estimate of size, the spread of artefacts and features suggests a mound diameter within this range.

Cists

Tudor noted that the site was of the chambered type and that it 'contained two chambers in fair condition and was of similar construction to those on Stanton Moor' (1932, 101).

It is reasonable to assume that Tudor had viewed the barrows with cists on Stanton Moor and so his visual comparison is likely to be reliable and in this context a distinction between chamber and cist could be easily transposed. Both terms refer to stone structures designed to contain human remains. At Tideslow the excavators use the term 'cist' for mortuary components of the site (Radley and Plant 1971) with an internal area which falls significantly above that of the largest cist, and above the average area of chambers recorded in the Peak District (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 130-133). The only cist recorded today on Stanton Moor (*ibid.*, 132) is a cist in Barrow T2 which falls within the upper size range of cists recorded across the Peak District and within the smallest range for chambers.

Different forms of cists, chambers, rock-cut and or earth-cut graves were used across the Peak District to contain human remains. Ovoid and rectangular cists are common (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 28), these can be found below ground, on the ground or within the barrow structure. Chambers can be passage type or closed, and grave cuts can be stone-lined. Burials can also be found within a barrow structure, or on the ground surface and different forms can be found in close association at many sites.

No *in situ* chamber or cist was found during the excavation. The two 'pecked' hollows (Plate 2) may have related to cist structures but there were no visible 'stone-working' cut marks at either of these features and the shallow depth to width ratio would suggest that they were unlikely to have functioned as 'stand alone' supporting sockets for vertical elements. It is possible that the pecked surface acted as a prepared structural platform and also possible that it played a part in the ritual where the pecking action created a surface cleansed to receive human remains, a practice noted at other prehistoric burial sites elsewhere in Britain (Owoc 2007, 121; Field 2006, 79).

A shallow rock-cut grave encircled by a rectangular framework of stones was excavated by Ashbee at Kildale Moor, Yorkshire (1957, 183). The bedrock-cut, whilst larger, does have some similarity with the pecked hollows at Stanlow (Plate 6).



Plates 6 and 7: Rock-cut grave at Kildale Moor, Yorkshire, scale in feet (left); Gritstone assemblage, Stanlow, cm scale (right).

A further possible cist structure is a close linked assemblage of gritstone 'slab' pieces set upon and partially integrated with undisturbed levels of the OGS in Q4 (Plate 7). The varying patina and thickness of the pieces suggests they had not formed a single discrete 'slab' and a number were set vertically, or near vertically. Given the prehistoric evidence at Stanlow, it is possible that this feature may have formed part of a disturbed cist and, although the site is located on limestone, it is not unknown to find material sourced from elsewhere in burial mound structures (Ashbee 1960, 92).

Bateman notes several sites, where materials not immediately local were used. Specifically, he records a barrow at Middleton with 'sandstone and some quartz pebbles...neither...found in the neighbourhood' (1848, 54); a mound at Church Sterndale built mainly of gritstone but incorporating a few pieces of limestone: 'which must have been carried a mile or two' (1861, 38); and near Deepdale on the limestone plateau, 'sandstone boulders not indigenous to the soil' (*ibid.*, 115). When John Collis excavated a barrow at Hognaston on the Millstone Grit, he found a single flat limestone slab (Collis 1996a, 144) and John Barnatt, re-excavating a barrow at Liffs Low on the Carboniferous Limestone, discovered blocks of Dolomitic Limestone, and noted that the nearest natural source lay some 4 km away (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 111).

In Yorkshire, Greenwell gives only one example of a cist utilising materials found several miles away (1877, 5-6), but, when discussing cist construction in limestone areas appears to accept that this as a relatively common practice, 'a hollow has first been made in the limestone rock, and then lined with slabs of sandstone' (*ibid.*, 242-3). Also he records a Neolithic round barrow at Copt Hill near Sunderland, containing 'limestone and sandstone blocks' (Kinnes 1979, 10). Mortimer records several sites in east Yorkshire where cists of 'foreign rock', in particular sandstone, had been constructed (1905, xxi) and Pennington refers to 'foreign' rock in a Derbyshire barrow (1877, 28).

The above examples suggest that the gritstone slab pieces at Stanlow could relate to one of the cists noted by Tudor (1933, 131) and compared with gritstone cists at Stanton Moor. While Stanlow is only a half kilometre from the nearest gritstone, convenience may not have been the only consideration. Thomas postulates that foreign material may form part of a complex burial ritual 'manipulating materials that were representative of the surrounding landscape' (1999, 134), or, as Bradley speculates, they were utilising 'pieces of places' (2000,

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88). Lewis notes that 'everyday' artefacts, e.g. quern-stones and whet-stones manufactured from gritstone, were often deposited at prehistoric burial sites, suggesting that the material, or its source, may have been especially significant for prehistoric social groups operating on the limestone (2007, 72-82).

It is also possible that the material used in cist construction played a part in the ritual. Lynch notes that the colour variation between dissimilar stones may have given a 'visible artistic effect' (1998, 63) and Jones suggests that the colour variation found in the construction of Neolithic tombs on Arran may have served a symbolic function (1997, 6). The colour variation at Stanlow would have been apparent only during earlier stages of construction and use, i.e. prior to the final mound covering.

THE LANDSCAPE SETTING AND RITUAL ASSOCIATIONS: PREHISTORIC CONTEXT

The idea of the existence of 'ritual landscapes' in prehistory is now wellestablished, and from ethnographic records we know that many nonwestern societies regard the whole landscape as imbued with sacred or mythological significance (Field 1999).

Today, Stanlow offers little in the way of upstanding structure and it may never be possible to construct a full picture of how it interfaced with the surrounding landscape, therefore interpretations will be tentative. Aspects, however, suggest that the choice of location was not random.

Stanlow sits within a natural 'amphitheatre' and to an observer standing at the centre, facing south, east or west, the view is restricted. In the viewing arc, looking in these directions, nearby higher ground is at least 200m higher and limits visibility to a distance of approximately half a kilometre across what is mainly a limestone landscape. To the north, however, there is a 'break' in the encircling higher ground, giving a dramatic long range view of the gritstone outcrop on the summit of Win Hill, 6km away (Plate 8).



Plate 8: Looking to the north from Stanlow, with Win Hill on the skyline.

Higher Ground

Recent research has focussed increasingly on the relationship some ancient monuments appear to have with their natural landscape. It is thought that prehistoric groups may have attributed higher ground, in particular, with a symbolic or spiritual significance. The notion of a 'sacred mountain' has been a fundamental component of many ancient and modern religions (Field 1999; Tacon 1999, 37-38; Pennick 2000, 9; Bearnbaum 2001; Goodman 2002, 93).

UNESCO now identifies categories of cultural landscape which include sacred high places, 'associative cultural landscapes are identified by such features as sacred promontories' (Ashmore and Knapp 1999, 9).

It is not inconceivable that prehistoric social groups in the Peak District, some 5 to 4,000 years ago, may also have considered high places suitable arenas for ritual activity. In this respect, it is possible that the visual relationship between Stanlow and Win Hill was significant.

Mimic

Bradley notes that some monuments appear to have been constructed in a form which mimics the appearance of nearby natural features (2000, 104). Scarre describes this phenomenon, as a 'resonance' between constructed monuments and natural landscape features (2002, 4). The outcrop at Win Hill could be said to take on the general appearance of a distant barrow either of round or long form (Plate 8). Barnatt notes that in the Peak District some prehistoric standing stones often mirror the shape of the horizon beyond, citing the Hordren Edge stone circle, where the largest stone mirrors the profile of Win Hill, some 3km away to the west (1978, 56).

Win Hill: A place of special significance?

There is a limited record of prehistoric activity near the summit of Win Hill. Bateman notes the removal in the 18th century of what could have been a barrow, which he describes as containing 'an ill-baked urn'. He further notes another find near the summit, 'some fragments of a very fine urn' (1848, 21-27) with a drawing (1861, 255) and that it contained, 'pieces of human bones'. Kinnes suggested this may have been a Grooved Ware vessel, now lost, dating to the late Neolithic (1979, 67), but Barnatt (Barnatt and Collis 1996,135) and Marsden (1994,10) question this and suggest that an Early Bronze Age Food Vessel is more likely. The vessel, however, supports the notion of prehistoric activity in the vicinity, a notion further supported by the author's discovery of a scatter of flint in an eroded area at the summit and by Pennington's comments, 'arrow-head...Many flint flakes found on this hill...a large barrow existed at the top...also a broken arrow-head' (1877, 63).

Many inscriptions cut into the rock outcrop, some worn and indistinct and some relatively recent (Plate 9), suggest that historically the summit has been a place with special significance.

Two small brass plaques have also been fixed recently on to rock faces at the summit (Plate 10). One with two names cast into its surface; the other is a memorial plaque to a much loved father, dated 2006. Both of these plaques have been professionally made and screwed onto the rock, acts calling for significant effort. Win Hill has continued to be a special place into the modern era.

Bradley notes that 'rock art' found at striking natural features is thought to have a ritual significance (2000, 36-39) and today, rock art sites are powerful places to Australian Aboriginal people (Layton 1992, 38). Examples of conventional prehistoric rock art have not been recorded at Win Hill but the summit is peppered with up to 20 naturally weathered



Plate 9: Examples of the inscriptions found at the summit of Win Hill.



Plate 10: Plaques fixed to rock faces at Win Hill summit.

bowls, ranging in size from a few centimetres to a metre across (Plate 11). During an early stage of their development these could have been small cups, similar to prehistoric 'cupmarks' (Plate 12). It is possible that prehistoric groups viewed these 'natural' cups as examples of rock art created by some powerful unknown force and attributed special significance to the place.

Intervisibility, alignments and aesthetics.

Aesthetic considerations may have been a motive for the location of some prehistoric monuments; Lynch notes 'the fact that prehistoric builders had an appreciation of natural beauty around them' (1975, 124). In this respect the view to Win Hill from Stanlow offers an aspect of dramatic natural beauty. Tilley develops this argument, stating that many Neolithic burial sites are positioned to draw attention to, and relate to, prominent or striking natural topographic features such as mountains, rocky outcrops and rivers, which thereby become part of a sacred landscape (1995, 54). In Wales and the south-west of England, Cummings notes that,

...many Early Neolithic monuments appear to have been deliberately placed so that distinctive rock outcrops are visible on the horizon' (2002, 104)



Plate 11: Weathered hollows (bowls) at the Win Hill summit.



Plate 12: Prehistoric cupmark, Eyam Moor (left); weathered cupmark, Win Hill summit (right). Diameters *c*. 75mm.

and locally this is echoed by Barnatt, 'natural features regarded as sacred places...views of... distant places...such as Win Hill' (2000, 47).

Barrows are also often located on prominent ridges, or hilltops, possibly to maximise visual impact. The Peak District is no exception, large barrows in particular are often in elevated positions (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 69); and, he notes barrows sometimes are also located just behind ridges, creating a 'false crest' effect when approached from lower ground, the location orchestrating a sense of mystery on approach and arrival (Barnatt 1998, 96). William Stukeley described this 'false crest' phenomenon as far back as the 18th century (Hadingham 1978, 75).

In prehistory intervisibility could have been restricted by tree cover. In the uplands of north-west England evidence suggests that widespread destruction of forest had taken place by the Early Neolithic (Pennington 1975, 85). Hawke-Smith, however, states that at the beginning of the Neolithic, tree cover would have been present across most of the Peak District apart from the gritstone uplands above 400m, but that by 2000 BC forest had been eliminated in particular on the higher levels of the limestone plateau (1981, 58). Where any tree cover remained, the restricting effect on visibility would have been reduced on a seasonal basis, and it has been suggested that the variable landscape view this created may have played a fundamental part in any associated ritual (Cummings and Whittle 2003).

Prehistoric groups utilising this landscape operated subsistence agriculture and seasonal change would been a fundamental aspect of everyday life and key to their survival, so it is not impossible that the seasonality of vegetation growth was the subject of their most important

rituals. The two polished stone axe fragments discovered on the OGS at Stanlow may have been random losses or ritual deposits (see below), and it is also possible that they are from axes used to clear vegetation from the burial site prior to use, an act of architectural groundwork or even 'ritual cleansing'. Stanlow's location at a false crest reduces the opportunity for selfgerminating species of vegetation to take hold because the crest presents an open face to cross-winds, creating a scouring effect and dispersing windblown seeds and pollen, thus making conditions for the growth and development of taller species less favourable along the crest's edge.

At 265m OD Stanlow is set at a relatively high level, however, the site is overlooked and enclosed by higher ground to the south, east and west, thereby preventing long distance views to and from these directions. At a distance from the north it is likely to merge into the backdrop of the higher ground, and on close approach is hidden behind a false crest. Beyond the crest is a small plateau of flattish land which slopes gently down to the south-east and from this restricted area the barrow would have been clearly visible, indeed the profile would have been enhanced against the open sky to the north.

When viewing from Stanlow towards the north, this enclosed aspect is replaced by an open view, through and beyond Bradwell Dale. The valley sides of the Dale funnel the view onto the prominent gritstone outcrop at Win Hill on the northern horizon. This line of intervisibility is into another geological zone across the geographical barrier of the River Noe in the valley bottom. It also passes over the location of several springs at the point where Bradwell Brook resurges, and then follows the general line of Bradwell Brook close to its confluence with the River Noe (Fig. 12). Stanlow's enclosed aspect may also suggest that, 'the views from the site...(were)...more important than its visibility' (Barnatt 1998, 103) and, 'It is tempting... to think of the views as important to the ' ancestors' or spirits' (Barnatt 2000, 55).

Around Stanlow: the approach and watery places

John Barnatt notes that the sighting of barrows across the landscape is not simplistic (2000, 45) and that on the limestone plateau, whilst barrows are much in evidence, the relationship to other prehistoric settlement or agricultural areas cannot be easily ascertained because of destruction caused by later land use. He notes, however, that comparison can be made with gritstone areas where significant prehistoric cultivation zones survive, and suggests that, 'these areas were indeed the foci of settlement in the Later Neolithic and Bronze Age' (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 69), and goes on to note,

The round barrows of the East Moors are of a similar size range and morphology to the rest of the Peak District... The grave goods and character of burial on the East Moors barrows appear to be comparable to those from the limestone plateaux (2000, 44).

Several prehistoric burial sites are located relatively close to Stanlow (Figs 1 and 12). The site also overlooks and is within close proximity to a number of springs, a swallet and a water resurgence. Barnatt notes that barrows are often sited near to 'watersheds' (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 66) (2000, 45, 47, 65, 78).

Much of the immediately surrounding landscape has steep inclines, rocky outcrops and deep ravines, a topography probably unattractive to prehistoric cultivators. The burial grouping may suggest that prehistoric groups utilized this zone specifically for funerary and ritual purposes, separating the land of the living from that of the dead, a characteristic observed in other prehistoric landscapes (Barnatt 2000, 45, 83) (Parker Pearson 2005, 25);



Fig. 12: Water sources and axe deposition.

a place 'inhabited by spirits and ancestors' (Barnatt 1998, 97). However, it is not known if Stanlow was sited on the edge, within, or away from settlement or cultivation, or if other

EXCAVATION OF A PREHISTORIC BURIAL MOUND AT STANLOW

burial mounds and burial sites existed nearby in the past. John Barnatt, categorised monument relationships to cultivation zones across the East Moors and he compared 17 different areas (Barnatt 2000, 81). In summary; 35% of areas had barrows within fields, in 47% barrows were at the edge or near, whereas in 71% (or possibly 76%) barrows were sited at a distance, with 35% (or possibly 45%) within specific funerary areas. This may suggest a greater possibility that the Stanlow barrow was 'set apart'.

The River Noe, a tributary of the River Derwent, flows west to east along the wide flat valley bottom and is joined by the Bradwell Brook flowing north from the direction of Stanlow towards Win Hill (Fig. 12). John Barnatt observed that in the northern gritstone areas of the Derwent Valley, barrows are located on high shelves above rivers where agriculture may have been less viable, and that agriculture was more likely focussed in the valleys (1999, 24). Evidence of Bronze Age cultivation on the gritstone moors adjacent to Bradwell Dale appears to have been relatively short-lived and it is possible that much of today's well-established cultivation in the valley bottoms may have originated during prehistory (Barnatt 2000, 8).

Prehistoric farmers in the Hope Valley would have been aware of the dominant summit of Win Hill, which contrasts with the surrounding rocky edges or rounded and vegetation covered peaks.

The Kinderscout Grit bedrock exposed at the Win Hill summit in what appears to be a discrete cone, is striking when viewed from a distance (Plate 13). Today, gaining the summit on foot can be a challenge, calling for a reasonable level of fitness or determination, a challenge which once achieved rewards with inspiring vistas. The summit is isolated from the surrounding landscape and at the same time offers magnificent distant views. For an observer standing at the summit it is difficult to avoid the sensation of 'being at the centre of the universe' or at a place 'where the earth meets the sky.

To prehistoric groups, this 'unusual' summit and the difficulties and sensory perceptions experienced once there, may have been important factors in the creation of myths about this landscape. The summit has been credited with a number of significant alignments incorporating several prehistoric ritual monuments across the Peak District (Barnatt 1978, 56-181) and the distinctive topography alone may have acted as a focal point for prehistoric barrow builders (Barnatt, 2000, 45).



Plate 13: Win Hill viewed from 5km to the south-west (left) and from 500m to the north-west (right).

To journey away from Win Hill towards Stanlow, i.e. away from possible areas of settlement in the valley bottoms around the River Noe, and towards the funerary zone, would have offered a range of ritual possibilities. Such a journey would have involved a steady ascent from the confluence of the two rivers following the winding course of Bradwell Brook, to where it issues from the ground at the south end of Bradwell. This section of the journey passes through an area of significant axe deposition (Fig. 12; see below) and the site at Stanlow would have been in view only in the very final stages.

The route would have proceeded through the narrow limestone gorge of Bradwell Dale (now modified by quarrying and a modern road) which, after a kilometre, opens out into a small open area where there are several springs, a swallet and a water resurgence (Fig. 12). From here there were two possible approaches to Stanlow. One was a steep climb directly to the barrow, when the mound would have come into view suddenly on reaching the false crest. The alternative approach was to continue through a second limestone gorge at Stanlow Dale, effectively bypassing Stanlow, and enter the 'natural ampitheatre' south of the barrow. On turning to the west here, the barrow would have been highlighted against the false crest and the outcrop at Win Hill would have come into view gradually as the barrow was approached.

Bradley has suggested that landscape features such as springs and fissures can often appear to be route markers leading to prehistoric monuments (1991, 137). A high frequency of Bronze Age barrows located near to water sources and, at the same time, set within well a drained landscape has been noted by Field, who also refers to a centuries old tradition in China that sees this arrangement allowing 'the life force to drain away' (1999). The relatively high incidence of water features in Bradwell Dale today may have been greater during the Neolithic. Intense historic mining activity in the region is thought to have lowered the water table by up to 100m (Makepeace 1998, 95);

(In) the Neolithic environment...such effects would have been especially apparent at the swallow holes and resurgence springs that litter the northern and western fringes of the White Peak' (Kitchen 2000, 59).

It is also possible that more permanent streams existed at that time, such as in the dry valley to the east of Stanlow which may have had some water activity, albeit, on a seasonal basis (John Barnatt *pers. comm.*).

The journey postulated above, respecting a range of water features, passing through gorges and by possible ritual deposition sites from possible settlement areas to a possible 'set apart' location, would meet with criteria for a 'Procession/Arrival' sequence such as that described by Barnatt (1998, 96).

Axe Deposition

Other than the fragments of two stone axes found at Stanlow and the complete axe found at nearby Hartle Dale (Pill 1963a; Pill 1963b; Gilks 1990; Gilks 2003), seven complete axes have been recorded in a discrete 1km² zone alongside Bradwell Brook, a short distance to the north of Stanlow. Two of these axes were found placed together, reducing the possibility that they were casual losses. All seven axes were found in the area of the approach to Stanlow described above; a zone marked by the confluence of the two rivers and the resurgence of Bradwell Brook (Fig. 12).

Hawke-Smith noted the average density of stone axes found across the East Midlands as 2.8 axes per 100km² (1979, 123). He described several areas with average densities of

between 5 and 10 axes per 100km², along with two 'hotspots' showing 'exceptionally high densities' in excess of 10 axes per 100km². One 'hotspot' was close to the mouth of the River Trent, the other, an area on the limestone plateaux between the Rivers Dove and Derwent. Hawke-Smith suggested that high densities of stone axes occur where agricultural activity has taken place, but does not appear to consider ritual deposition or association with water as possible factors. Vine, reviewing an area covering part of the southern Peak District, found an average density of 2.6 axes per 100km² (1982, 1-6), similar to Hawke-Smith. He observed that axe distribution indicates areas of forest clearance (*ibid*, 86), but did not consider other possible factors such as ritual deposition or even military activities. Cummins examined the distribution density of stone axes across England and Wales, calculating the number of stone axes per 10km² (1979, 5). To compare the level of axe deposition found by the writers above with the Bradwell Brook finds (7 axes per 1km²); the highest density from Hawke-Smith was above 0.1 axes; Vine's average was 0.026; and Cummin's highest density was 6.4 to 12.7. Deposition levels at Bradwell Brook, therefore, fall within the highest levels recorded by Cummins.

Ritual stone axe deposition during the Neolithic is a practice noted at many sites and, when found close to water in particular, the significance may be very powerful (Bradley and Edmonds 1993, 204; Edmonds 1995, 133). It is possible that the relatively high incidence of axe deposition around Bradwell Brook may be an important aspect of a sophisticated prehistoric ritual landscape.

LANDSCAPE SETTING AND RITUAL ASSOCIATIONS: ANGLIAN CONTEXT.

Reuse of earlier period sites for burial is a practice well attested during the Anglian period and over 330 potential examples have been recorded across England (Williams 1997, 4), representing 25% of all known Anglian burials. Bronze Age barrows appear to have been favoured for reuse, 61% of reused sites being of this period. Although isolated burials are the most common type, there are also sites where large burial groups have been found in close association with earlier monuments (Williams 1998, 92-93).

Anglian burials are also often sited near to land divisions or territorial boundaries. A detailed statistical study undertaken by Goodier (1984, 1-21) showed that 18% of known Anglo-Saxon burials in England were sited on, or near to boundaries and concluded that statistically this figure did not suggest a random occurrence of boundary burial. Furthermore, the figure for secondary burials was even higher at 30%. Reynolds refers to investigation carried out by Bonney in Wiltshire and notes that 29% of boundary burials were those of 'pagan' or 'heathen' Anglo- Saxons and that a further 13% lie near to or within 150m of a boundary, making a total of 42% burials with boundary relationships (Reynolds 2002, 171-194; Bonney 1984, 1-20; Bonney 1966, 25-30; Bonney 1976, 72-82). Reynolds notes also that 90% of recorded Anglian execution burials are found on 'hundred' boundaries (0000, 00).

The site at Stanlow lies only 100m from a parish boundary and some 300m from the junction of three present-day parish boundaries (Fig. 13), which it is possible were established much earlier;

The patterns of...boundaries ...of later centuries can often be shown to owe their roots to the period between the end of Roman Britain and the Norman Conquest (Williams 1998, 4).

Welch (1985) also notes the relatively high incidence of boundary burials, adding that a number of the boundaries are later Anglian boundaries which have used particular barrows as prominent landscape markers rather than making use of an existing boundary. It has also been noted, that Anglian burials are often located near to Roman roads and the route of a postulated Roman road (SMR 1327358) lies within clear view of Stanlow, only 500 metres to the east (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13: Proximity of Stanlow to parish boundaries and Roman roads.

When Stanlow was viewed from the immediate south, from around the junction of the three parish boundaries, a mound would have been highlighted against the open sky towards the north. Reynolds notes that the choice of elevated locations for execution burials and any associated hanging sites may have served to enhance the visual impact (1998, 8-9).

No grave goods were found with the burial but post mortem disturbance was evident around the head and neck, and it is possible that grave goods were once present. The skeleton was slightly flexed with the head aligned to the south, the torso facing east. The head had been decapitated and shattered and it is possible that some manual rearrangement of bone fragments had taken place. The left side of the mandible was found inside the dome of the cranium in what appeared unlikely to have been an accidental arrangement (Plate 14). Decapitated skeletons are found at some Anglian burial sites, and these are often thought to be victims of judiciary execution. A dark brown stain on the left femur was possibly a mark left by a shackle or metal restraint, which might suggest that the deceased had been a captive but there was no evidence of metal in the grave fill. It is equally possible that the stain was from some form of organic ornament or attachment (Plate 3).

Macroscopic osteological examination of the shattered components of the skeleton,



Plate 14: Left side of mandible located inside cranium of skeleton, cm scale.

showed no indication that decapitation had been the result of a violent traumatic ending such as beheading or hanging (Andrew Chamberlain *pers. comm.*) and although other forms of judicial execution, including drowning or suffocation cannot be ruled out, equally, neither can death by natural causes. It is just as possible that the skull was disturbed and broken accidentally during a later intrusion.

Decapitation is thought sometimes to have been undertaken in order to prevent the deceased returning from the dead, and the placing of heavy stones over a body is thought also to serve this purpose (Reynolds 1998). The burial at Stanlow appeared to have a discrete arrangement of flat stones placed along the torso and lower parts of the skeleton (Plate 15). These could not be described as heavy but apart from the one stone alongside the femur; which may have slipped during post mortem decomposition, they appeared to have been placed deliberately. Although token restraint of the deceased cannot be ruled out, it could also be seen as an act of care or protection for the departed. Rather than protecting the living from the dead they may equally have been perceived as protecting the dead from the living world.

Anglian graves display a variety of orientation with south-north and west-east alignments being widespread. The east facing aspect of the head here may have been to take account of sunrise. There are numerous instances, however, where early Anglian burials set around prehistoric monuments, have head alignments directed towards the central or highest point of the monument. At Stanlow, the head orientation also aligns towards the postulated highest point of the prehistoric mound, a very short distance away. Williams also notes that some isolated Anglian graves were placed deliberately at the central and highest point of the earlier monument (Williams 1998, 97).

The skeleton may be that of a native Briton, very few of which have been identified in the archaeological record. Whilst fifth century Anglo-Saxon invasions in eastern England most



Plate 15: Stones found on top of skeleton, cm scale.

probably brought about significant slaughter of the indigenous population, elsewhere in the seventh century arrangements were still being made within the legal system to accommodate Britons. Harke postulates that the absence of grave goods and weapons in burials of this period may suggest British ethnic origins (1995). In a Peak District context, Ozanne notes 'an appreciable survival of Romano-British elements in the population' (1962-63, 17). Moreover, isotope analysis suggests that this individual was a local inhabitant.

CONCLUSION

The site at Stanlow offered a rare opportunity to investigate aspects of prehistoric burial practice and how Anglian social groups utilised earlier structures. By reviewing the landscape setting and its possible influence on these two disparate groups, it would appear that different ritual and landscape considerations played important parts in the initial choice of location and in subsequent burial use.

Disarticulated remains from at least six individuals, all most probably dating from the prehistoric period were excavated. The survival of the later Anglian skeleton within a below ground grave-cut, suggests that the prehistoric remains, even if contained in stone cists (see above), were in shallow settings at ground level, or above and would, therefore, have been more vulnerable to the effects of ploughing and stone robbing.

A significant number of disarticulated human bones might suggest that these remains were the result of communal burial, a practice commonly associated with the Neolithic period rather than the Bronze Age, conventionally identified with a single burial tradition (Barrett 1996, 398). However, evidence for multiple burials continuing into the Early Bronze Age has been recorded in both Yorkshire (Petersen 1972, 22-55) and the Peak District (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 34-41).

A dramatic landscape setting and potential for an associated ritualised landscape is not unique to Stanlow. It is shared in part by the barrow at Coplow, the burial caves at Hartle Dale, the barrows at Hazlebadge and a number of destroyed and possible prehistoric burial sites nearby (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 185). The adoption of a prehistoric site by subsequent Anglian groups has not been explored yet in great detail across the Peak District but John Barnatt records a number of locations where earlier monuments have been utilised for Anglian or later burials (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 81).

Barnatt has also commented on the absence of Anglian graves in the north of the Peak District, and in particular the Hope Valley (Barnatt and Collis 1996, 83), leading him to propose that possibly there may have been a British enclave in the locale. The pre-Anglian place name Eccles is still in use nearby and the Grey Ditch (Fig. 1) may have been a boundary between Anglian settlement south in the Hope Valley and British settlement beyond (Barnatt and Smith 2004,54; Guilbert 2013, 8). If utilised burial sites do exist in the locale, investigation into these may help answer this question and possibly also give greater insight into the function of the Grey Ditch earthwork. These are all Peak District issues into which it is hoped the Stanlow project will encourage future discussion and research.

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