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THE EXCAVATION OF A BEAKER BOWL BARROW AT PYECOMBE, WEST SUSSEX

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The position of a ploughed-out bowl barrow was re-established during a field survey project at Pyecombe. Excavation revealed a crouched male inhumation, together with a rich grave group dating from the beaker period, in a central burial pit.

INTRODUCTION

During the course of a fieldworking project on East and West Hills at Pyecombe, West Sussex (Butler 1988), the position of a bowl barrow which had been completely ploughed out was re-established at NGR TQ28341185 (Fig. 1). The barrow was originally recorded by Grinsell in his survey of Sussex Barrows (Grinsell 1934); at that time it was 11 paces in diameter and 2.5 ft high with a vague ditch. The Ordnance Survey in 1952 and again in 1972 (West Sussex SMR) recorded the barrow as being a 'grass covered mound 10.8 metres in diameter and 0.5 metres high, with a slight trace of a ditch on the north west side'. By the early 1980s the barrow had been completely ploughed out, the only clue to its existence being a vague circular spread of chalk rubble in the ploughsoil (Butler 1989).

The barrow was situated on a false crest on the east facing slope of the chalk Downs, now overlooking the village of Pyecombe, and a short distance from the South Downs Way. Direct views of the Weald to the north, and the Sea to the south can be seen from the barrow, together with Wolstonbury hill 2 km to the north east. Immediately to the west of the site at the top of East and West Hills is an outcrop of Clay-with-flints.

The excavation was carried out by members of the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team, under the direction of the author, during September and October 1988. The site was divided up into a two-metre grid, and a surface collection survey carried out prior to the removal of the ploughsoil. This was then removed by hand from the north east and south west quadrants and the sections recorded; the two remaining quadrants were then removed and the revealed features excavated. The barrow mound had been completely removed by recent ploughing, so that the only remaining features were those cut into the chalk subsoil. These features comprised an interrupted ditch around the barrow, a central burial pit, and various posthole and other features both inside and outside the ditch (Fig. 2).

The Ditch

The ditch was U-shaped in section, approximately 1 metre wide and 0.5 metre deep (Fig. 3). It was interrupted on the north-west side by a narrow causeway, one metre wide. The ditch was not uniform in width and depth, and appeared to have been cut in a series of sections.

The ditch contained two layers around most

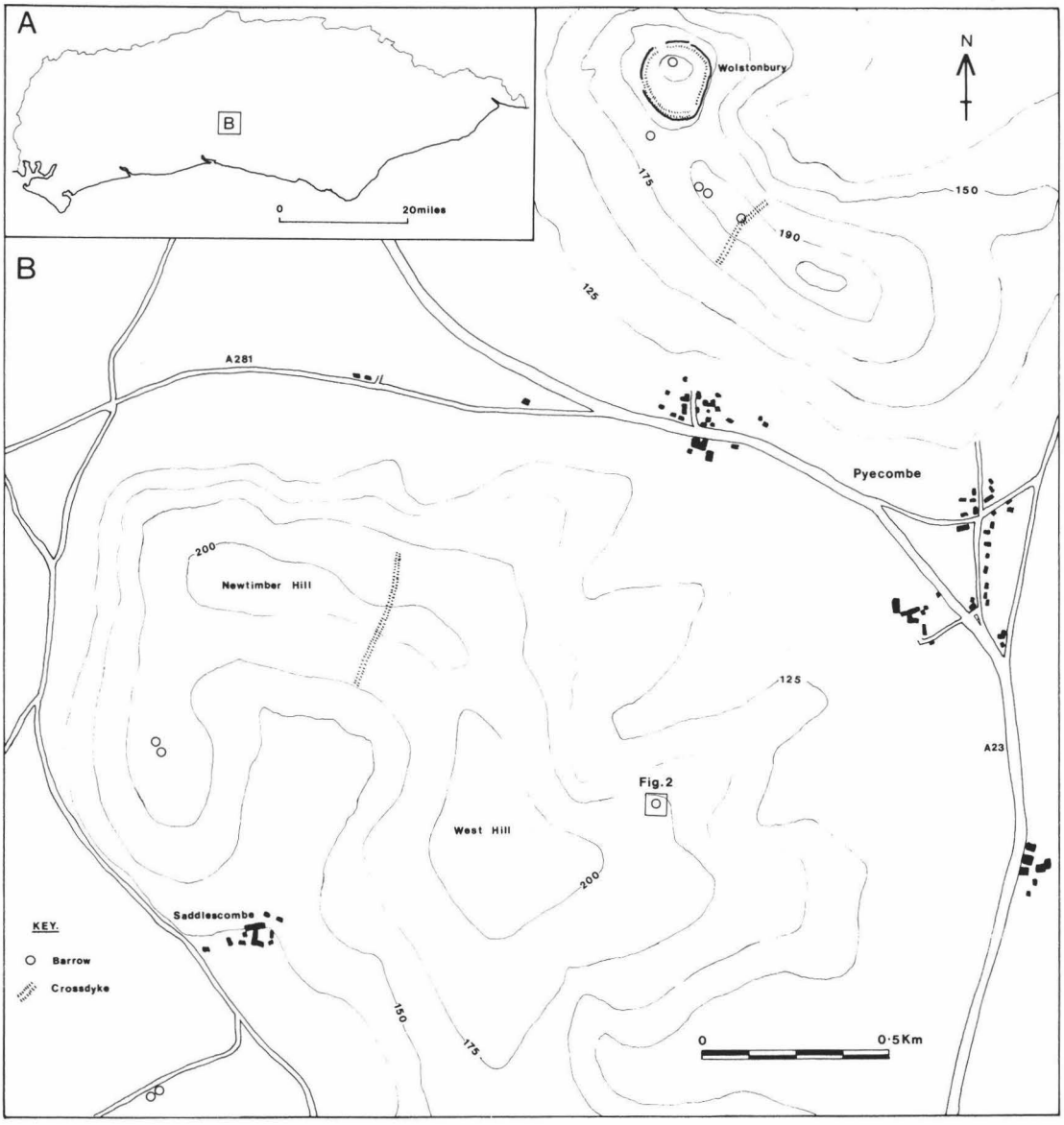

Fig. 1 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: Location maps; showing site and prehistoric landscape features.

of its circumference. The primary fill was a sticky red/brown clay averaging a depth of 10 cm., and appears to have accumulated fairly quickly after the barrow ditch had been dug. This layer contained few finds, although on the west side a crushed East Anglian beaker, and nearby a large amount of charcoal, was found.

The secondary fill comprised a friable reddish-brown loam with a large number of irregular sized flints, and appears to have accumulated over a much longer period. This fill contained large quantities of flint debitage and tools, together with fire fractured flint, pottery and daub. Although the fill appeared to be the

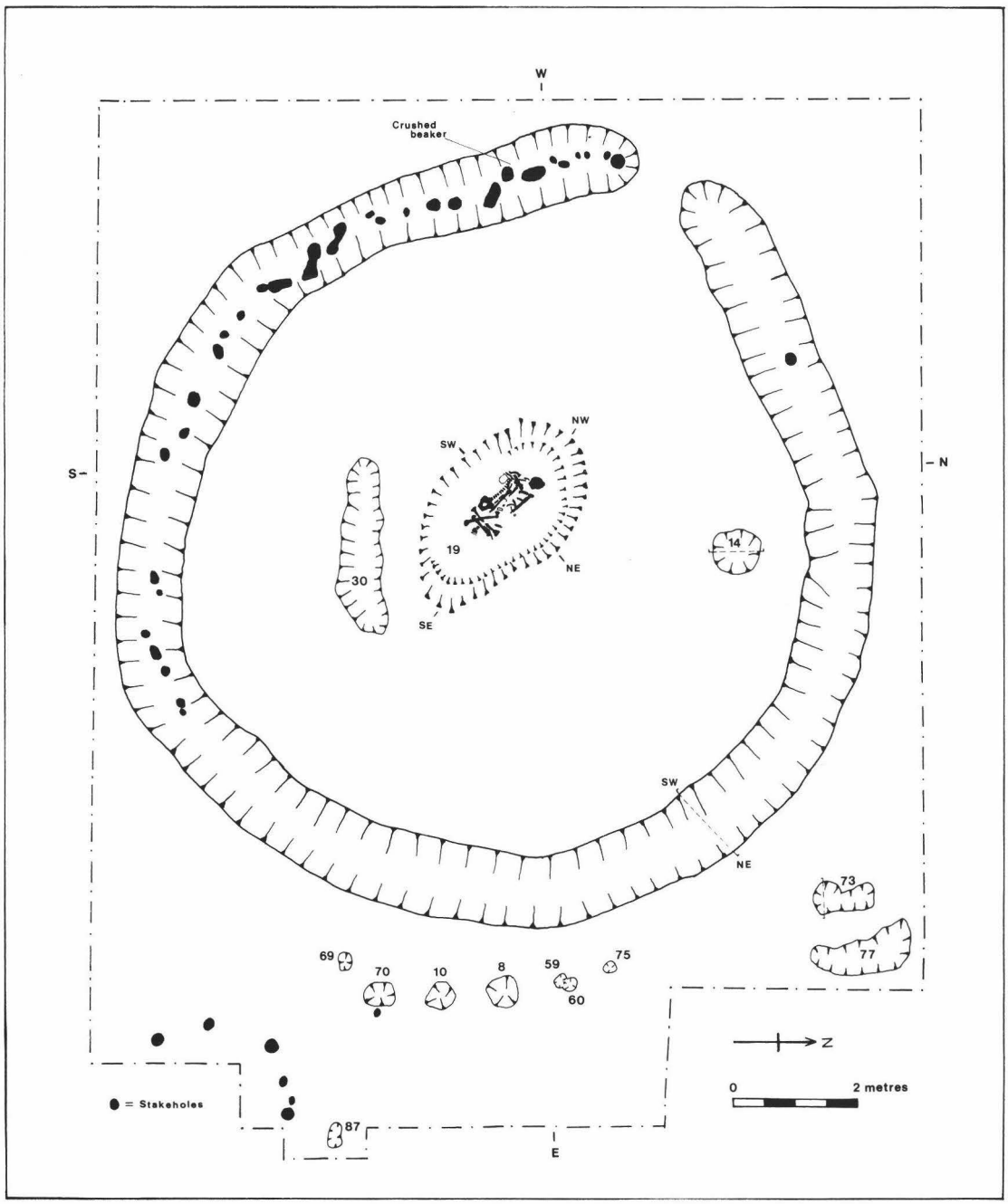

Fig. 2 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: Site Plan.

Fig. 3 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: Main Barrow Sections.

same, it contained early Bronze Age material in its lower levels and Romano-British pottery towards the top. In a number of places around the ditch, there was a sterile shallow layer partially overlying the secondary fill. This was interpreted as modern plough soil that had filled the extant ditch when the barrow was ploughed out. On the north-eastern side of the barrow, the ditch fill consisted of just a single layer of unabraded chalk and flint with a dark red-brown friable loam (context 61). There was no primary fill in this part of the ditch, suggesting that this material, which was probably surplus material from the mound construction, had been used to backfill this part of the ditch immediately after the ditch had been dug.

There were two areas in the secondary ditch fill (contexts 31 and 57) which may have been the sites of hearths or fires. Both features comprised a small area of blackened soil with a quantity of charcoal and some fire fractured flint. Elsewhere in the secondary fill there were very large quantities of fire fractured flint (Fig. 9, D).

In the bottom of the ditch itself, on the south and south-west sides, was a series of stake holes (see Fig. 2). Some 30 stake holes were located, all roughly similar in diameter but with different depths. Some appeared to be cut by others, suggesting that they belong to at least two phases. Each hole was filled with the same red-brown clay deposit that formed the primary fill in the ditch but, apart from some fire fractured flint, no finds were located in the stakeholes. The purpose of these stakeholes is unclear, although they must have supported some sort of structure or framework running around this part of the ditch. Being on the uphill side of the barrow it is unlikely that this structure was a revetment for the barrow mound; however, it may have been a windbreak or it could have served some other ritual purpose.

The Burial Pit

The burial pit (Fig. 4) was situated in the centre of the barrow, it was oval in shape, 3.55 metres long 2.2 metres wide and had been dug into the chalk to a depth of 1.1 metres. The pit was orientated along its longest axis north west/south east. In the bottom of the pit was a crouched inhumation, orientated on the same axis as the burial pit, and lying on its left side, facing north. Lying behind and against the spine of the inhumation was a complete East Anglian beaker. The weight of the pit fill had compressed its shape, and it was in a very fragile condition; however, it was successfully lifted, and has subsequently been consolidated. Close to the right lower arm, and lying parallel to it, a stone wristguard was found, and next to the left arm was the bone pommel end of a dagger. Some fragments of copper lying in a patch of darker soil amongst the ribs were also found and probably come from the dagger blade.

There was no evidence for a coffin or shroud although, as the floor of the pit was level and smooth, some care had obviously been exercised in digging the burial pit. The inhumation appeared to be slightly disarticulated. Although the majority of the bones were in the expected position, a number had been displaced, including the skull which was some 30 cm. from the top of the spine; the lower jaw, though, was in its original position.

The burial pit had been backfilled, initially with a light brown soil containing chalk and occasional flint pieces around the body. Once the body had been covered with this finer material, the rest of the pit was filled with a chalk and flint rubble. This latter material was unabraded and contained very few finds.

Other Features Inside the Ditch

Feature 14: (Fig. 5) a possible pit, roughly circular in shape, 68 cm. in diameter and 20 cm. deep with sloping sides. It was filled with a red-brown clayey loam. The only finds were two flint flakes. As this feature would have been below the barrow mound, it probably predates the construction of the barrow.

Features 18 and 100: two shallow irregular shaped features, probably natural, adjacent to the barrow ditch. A number of flint flakes was found in each of these features, but may be residual.

Feature 30: an oblong 'D' shaped feature, 2.65 metres in length and 0.8 metre wide. It was 0.36 metre deep with the

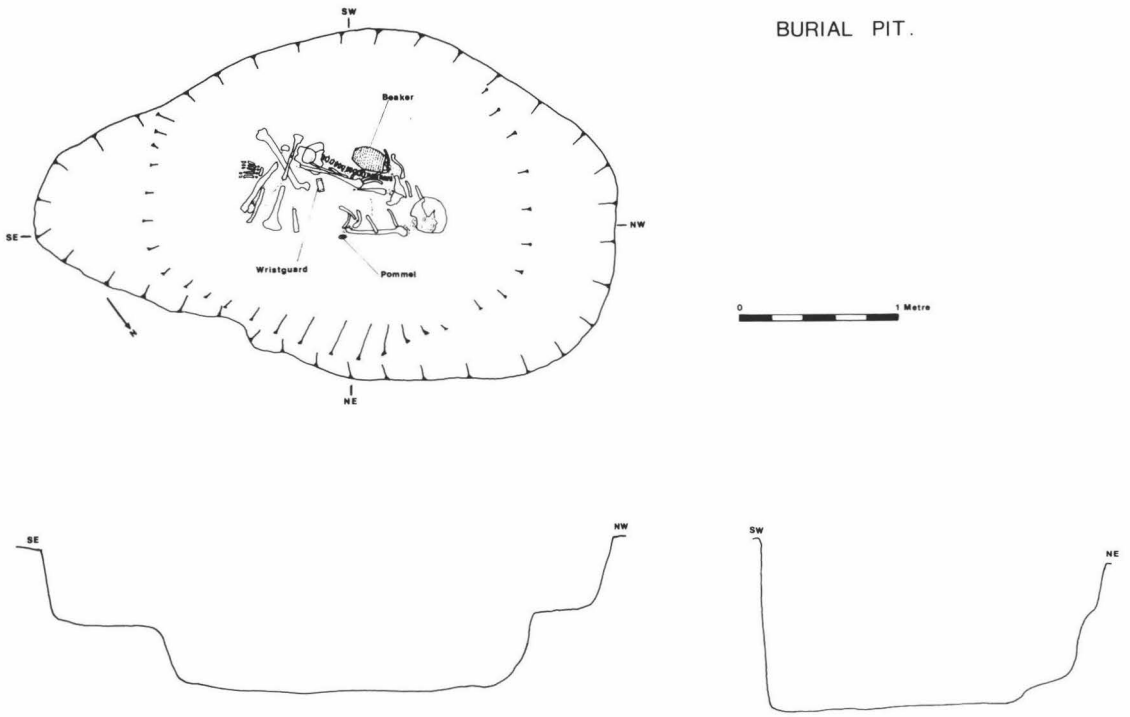

Fig. 4 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: Burial Pit; Plan and Sections.

southern side sloping to meet the almost vertical north side. The fill of this feature was a sterile red-brown clay with occasional flint and chalk inclusions. This appears to be natural tree hollow (Allen, this report).

Features Outside the Ditch

A series of possible post and stake holes (see Figs. 2 & 5) ran in a line from north to south past the eastern side of the barrow.

Posthole 8: a roughly circular hole with a diameter of 59 cm. dug into the chalk subsoil to a depth of 35 cm. There was only one fill (context 9): a red-brown clay with flints, with evidence for larger flints having been used as packing around the top of the posthole. A single large flint was placed in the bottom of the hole, and there were numerous worked flints and fire fractured flints found in the fill.

Posthole 10: another circular hole, 45 cm. in diameter and 37 cm. deep. This hole had a primary fill of a red-brown clay, and a secondary red-brown friable loam with flints. Again, the only finds were flint flakes and a fire fractured flint from the secondary fill (context 11).

Features 59 and 60: a stakehole (59) 17 cm. deep and 18 cm. in diameter cutting an earlier posthole (60) which was 15 cm. deep and 26 cm. in diameter. There was no apparent difference in the fill of the two features, which was a friable dark red-brown loam with flint. Some charcoal and worked flints were found in the fill.

Feature 69: a shallow circular feature 10 cm. deep and 30 cm. in diameter adjacent to feature 70 containing a friable red-brown loam with chalk and flint fill. A single flint flake was found in this feature.

Feature 70: a circular hole, 50 cm. in diameter and 23 cm. deep. It contained a primary red-brown clay fill with no finds below a secondary red-brown friable loam with flints main fill (context 71). A single flint was placed in the bottom of the hole, with other large flints as possible packing. Worked flints and a tooth fragment were found in the secondary fill.

Feature 73: a possible double posthole, with an overall length of 1.05 metres, width of 58 cm. and depth of 20 cm. containing a red brown clay with flints fill. A single mollusc was the only find from this feature.

Feature 75: a posthole, 19 cm. deep with a circumference of 26 cm. it was filled with a dark red-brown friable loam and flint fill (context 76). Two worked flints and a single tooth fragment were found in this feature.

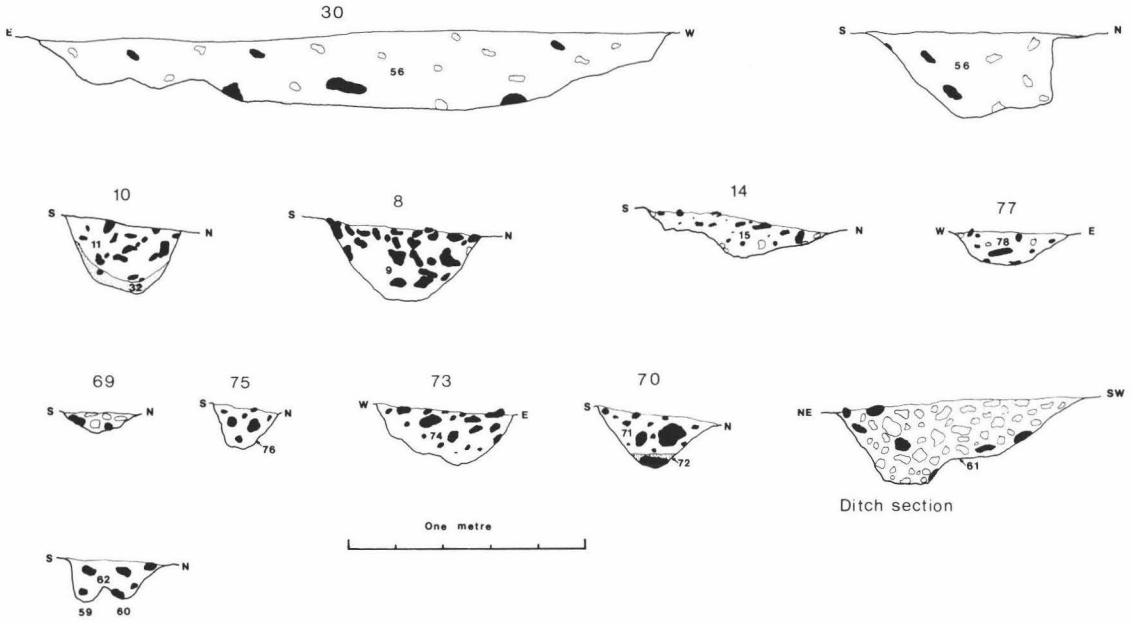

Fig. 5 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: Sections from other Features.

Two pits were found on the northern edge of the excavation, outside the barrow ditch.

Feature 77: this pit was 1.37 metres long, 53 cm. wide and 16 cm. deep, with a red-brown clay and flint fill (context 78). The only finds in this feature were numerous mollusc fragments and some charcoal.

Feature 79: an irregular shaped pit; this was 1.16 metres long and 14 cm. deep with a friable grey to red-brown loam and flints fill (context 80). A small number of worked flints was found in this feature.

In the south-east corner of the excavation was a small semi-circular group of six stakeholes (features 81 to 86), all roughly the same size, cut into the chalk subsoil. Nearby a small feature (87) 46 cm. long and 26 cm. wide was found, possibly associated with the stakeholes. Unfortunately there was insufficient time to investigate whether or not the stakeholes were part of a larger structure.

Most of these features appear to date from the Early Bronze age or earlier, as indicated by the flintwork found in them, however there is nothing to directly link them to the barrow.

THE GRAVE GROUP

The finds associated with the inhumation in the burial pit make this particular grave group amongst the richest so far found in Sussex. The grave group comprised a beaker, wristguard and remains of a copper dagger, and is considered in more detail below.

The Beaker

The beaker (Fig. 6, No. 1) is a short-necked East Anglian beaker, 17.1 cm. high, 6 cm. in diameter at the base and 11 cm. in diameter at the rim. It has all-over-combed decoration in a simple horizontal line pattern.

A single comb tool appears to have been used in decorating the beaker. The comb had seven teeth, those at either end being smaller than the other five. It had an overall length of 2.24 cm. with a maximum width of 0.18 cm. Over most of the beaker the decoration had been applied in a continuous horizontal pattern by overlapping. However less care seems to have been used on the lower half of the beaker where the continuity of the pattern is lost and it becomes very irregular.

The beaker is red-brown/buff in colour, in fabric 1 (see below), with a reduced core. The wall thickness is generally 4–5 mm. but becomes thinner in some areas. When excavated, the beaker appeared scorched in places, and a number of small flecks of charcoal were found on and around the vessel. The fabric type suggests that the beaker may have been made in the immediate vicinity of the barrow. It gives the impression of having been placed in the grave soon after being fired, probably having been specifically made for the burial ritual.

Of the other 17 complete Sussex beakers (Table 1), only four have been East Anglian beakers and none of those were associated with other finds apart from one found with a contracted inhumation at Slonk Hill, Shoreham (Grinsell 1931). East Anglian beakers have been found on over 70 sites in England, the majority (over 70 per cent) in East Anglia and most of the rest distributed in South East England (Clarke 1970). Of these East Anglian beakers only two were associated with other finds: that from Rudstone in Yorkshire with two bronze awls and flint implements (although the association is uncertain); and that from Brandon Fields, Suffolk where two East Anglian beakers were associated with a type B2/3 wristguard.

The Wristguard

The wristguard (Fig. 6, No. 2) measures 7.69 cm. in length, is 3.09 cm. in width, has a thickness of 0.22 cm., and weighs 22 grams. The sides are straight, with gently rounded corners, two of which have been damaged in antiquity. In section the wristguard is flat on one side, the

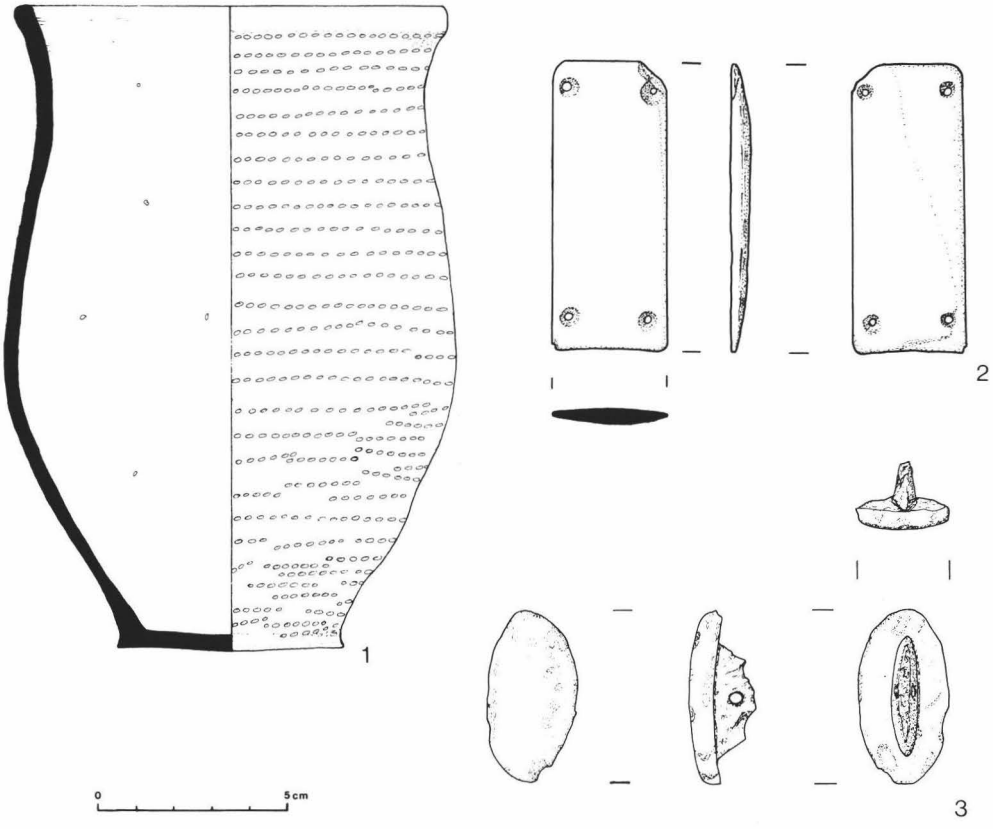

Fig. 6 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: Grave Group; 1: Beaker, 2: Wristguard, 3: Bone Pommel.

TABLE 1
Beakers in Sussex

Location	*Burial*	*Beaker*	*Other finds*
Burpham	?	N2 (L)	None
Church Hill, Brighton	Adult & Child	S2 (W) + S2 (W)	None
Church Hill, Findon	Cremation	BW	2 ovate flint axe roughouts
Cissbury	Skeleton	E. Ang.	None
Cissbury	No record	BW?	None
Devils Dyke	Contracted female	W/MR	Dagger with 2 rivets, bronze pin, necklace of bronze & lignite beads
Falmer, Ditchling Road	Contracted male	BW	1 barbed and tanged arrowhead
Hassocks	None	W/MR	None
Kingston Buci	Crouched	E. Ang.	None
Money Mound	None survived	?sherds	1 barbed and tanged arrowhead, bronze rivets
Park Brow, Sompting	No record	S2 (E) + S2 (W)	None
Rodmell, Heathy Brow	Contracted	W/MR	None
Selsey	No record	W/MR	None
Shoreham	Crouched	E. Ang.	None
Slonk Hill, Shoreham	Contracted	E. Ang.	None
Telscombe Tye	Contracted	S2 (E)	None

other side being slightly convex in shape. The edges have been carefully ground to shape. There are four holes, one in each corner, which have been bored from both sides and probably used to facilitate fastening.

The stone used for the wristguard is fine grained, and green-grey in colour. It appears to be similar to the material used for other wristguards as noted by Clarke (1970, 98) and others. The wristguard was shown to John Cooper of the Booth Museum, Brighton. He suggested that the stone was probably polished slate, although it did not seem to be absolutely typical of slate. An acid test confirmed that no calcium carbonate was present. A likely source for the material was suggested as south-west England or possibly France.

The wristguard can be assigned to type B2, which is defined as being generally rectangular in plan with a flat or slightly bi-convex cross section and four holes (Clarke 1970). No other wristguard has been recorded as being found in Sussex, although over 70 examples are known from Britain. Only four other type B2 wristguards are known from grave groups: from Roundway, Wiltshire; Sewell, Bedfordshire; Brandon Fields, Suffolk (Clarke 1970); and Gravelly Guy, Oxfordshire (Roe, forthcoming). Of these, only that from Brandon Fields is associated with an East Anglian beaker.

The Copper Dagger

Unfortunately the metal had completely decomposed, apart from a number of small fragments from the blade tip which were submitted to Mike Heyworth at the Ancient Monuments Laboratory, English Heritage, for XRF analysis. All the fragments were of the same composition: a pure copper with only a tiny trace (< 1 per cent) of lead and no traces of zinc or tin.

The major indication that a dagger had been present in the grave group was the presence of a bone pommel (Fig. 6, No. 3) found by the left arm of the inhumation. The pommel is 'T' shaped in section, and has been carved from one piece of bone. The top has a smooth finish and gently curving profile. Below this is a hafting plate with a single hole carefully bored through it. It is possible

that the hafting plate may have originally been longer with a further hole or holes in it.

Other Sussex barrows to have produced evidence for Early Bronze Age daggers are Devils Dyke; the Hove Tumulus (Grinsell 1931); Money Mound, Lower Beeding (Beckensall 1967); and Chanctonbury Hill (Ratcliffe-Densham 1968). Of these, only Devils Dyke produced a complete beaker, although beaker fragments were found at Money Mound (see Table 1).

Outside Sussex numerous examples of copper daggers have been found, although none have been associated with East Anglian beakers. However in two cases tanged copper daggers, wristguards with four holes and W/MR beakers have been found in association with one another, at Roundway in Wiltshire and Dorchester in Oxfordshire (Gerloff 1975). There are also numerous examples of bone pommels being found in association with copper daggers: for example, barrow G at Shrewton, Wiltshire. Here a tanged copper dagger with a 'T' shaped bone pommel was found in association with an N2 beaker (Clarke 1970, 347). Another example at Eynsham, Oxfordshire (Case 1977, Fig 4:6) also produced a one piece bone pommel in association with a later style beaker and a Type Butterworth Dagger (Gerloff 1975).

THE POTTERY

Introduction

This report covers all of the pottery found in the excavation, including that from the surface collection and topsoil (see Table 2). The pottery was divided into fabric groups, and is described further below.

Fabric types

Fabric 1 (Grog-tempered with occasional flint and chalk inclusions). The fabric is grog-tempered (measuring 2–3 mm.) with calcinated flint (coarse to medium size and of occasional abundance) and the occasional fragment of chalk. Red brown/buff in colour with a reduced core. Sherd section is 4–5 mm. thick. Late Beaker.

Fabric 2 (Grog and flint tempered). Mainly grog-tempered with calcinated flint inclusions of medium abundance. The grog is 2–3 mm. in size, and the flint is of medium and fine size grades. Red brown to buff in colour; cores are often reduced. Sherd sections are 4–5 mm. thick. Late Beaker.

Fabric 3 (Grog-tempered with flint inclusions). The fabric is grog-tempered with calcinated flint inclusions (medium and fine size grade of occasional abundance). Red brown to buff in colour; cores are sometimes reduced. Sherd sections vary from 4 to 10 mm. thick. Late Beaker.

Fabric 4 (Grog-tempered). This fabric appears to be only grog-tempered, but could be sherds of Fabric 3 with no flint inclusions present. Medium abundance grog measuring 2–3 mm. Red brown, buff and black in colour. Sherd sections are 4 to 10 mm. thick. Late Beaker.

Fabric 5 (Grog and flint tempered). Both the grog (generally about 1 mm. in size) and the calcinated flint (coarse and medium size grade) are of occassional abundance. Red brown in colour with a reduced core. Sherd sections are 6 mm. thick. Late Beaker.

Fabric 6 (Grog-tempered with fine quartz sand). The fabric is grog-tempered in medium abundance with fine size grade quartz sand inclusions, perhaps natural to the clay. Red brown to buff in colour; cores are sometimes reduced. Sherd sections are 5 to 9 mm. thick. Late Beaker.

Fabric 7 (Sand tempered). The fabric is quartz sand tempered, of medium and fine size grade in medium abundance. Red brown in colour with a reduced core. Sherd section is 5 mm. thick. Iron Age.

Fabric 8 (Iron Oxide inclusions). This fabric has easily visible Iron Oxide inclusions. Some sherds

TABLE 2
Pottery Sherds by Fabric and Context

Context	*Fabrics*											
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*Total*
Ditch												
Primary fill	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
Secondary fill	0	23	122	27	1	40	1	14	1	13	187	429
Hearth (31)	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	30
Hearth (57)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	6
Ditch Total	0	23	142	27	1	41	1	14	1	13	219	482
Topsoil	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	3	5	0	2	15
TOTAL	0	23	144	27	2	42	2	17	6	13	221	497

Not included in this table are the complete beaker from the burial pit, and the smashed beaker from the primary fill of the ditch

have quartz sand (fine size grade), and calcinated flint (medium to fine size grade) inclusions, and small voids resulting from burnt out organic matter. Various colours from black to grey. Sherd section is 5–9 mm. thick. Iron Age.

Fabric 9 (Grog-tempered). The fabric is grog-tempered (2–3 mm. in size). Buff, brown, grey and black in colour. Sherd section is 6 mm. thick. Commonly described as 'East Sussex Ware' and dates from *c.* 50 B.C. to A.D. 400+.

Fabric 10 (Sand-tempered). The fabric is sand tempered of medium to fine size grade. Light grey in colour. Sherd section is 7 mm. thick. Roman sand tempered 'greyware', 2nd/4th century A.D.

Fabric 11 (Burnt clay). Fabric 12 is a burnt clay with occasional grog and flint inclusions of coarse to medium size grade. Red brown to buff in colour. Probably daub, of any date but possibly Late Beaker from context.

The Beaker pottery

Some comments can be made on the fabrics assigned to the Late Beaker period based on the diagnostic form of sherds within those fabric groups. All of the Late Beaker fabric groups have inclusions which suggest they were made in the area of their use.

Fabric 1: The only pottery with this fabric came from the beaker buried with the inhumation in the burial pit (Fig. 6, No. 1). This fabric differs from numbers 2 to 5 in that it has chalk inclusions.

Fabrics 2 to 5: These fabrics are so similar, they could be grouped together into one category, however they have been separated out into the different fabrics based on the sherds found. They comprise the majority of the Late Beaker pottery found (see Table 2), and originate almost entirely from ditch contexts. Both fine beaker and domestic beaker forms were present. Of the 193 sherds from the ditch in these fabrics, 58 could be assigned to fine beakers and 34 to domestic beaker forms, the remainder could not be assigned to either category with any degree of certainty. In addition to these, a crushed, but incomplete beaker (Fig. 7, No. 1) in fabric 2 was found in the ditch.

The fine beakers were generally thin walled (4–6 mm. thick). A large proportion of the fine beaker sherds had combed decoration of various designs, and from these it is possible to estimate that fragments from a minimum of four fine

beakers were deposited in the ditch. Three of these were late style East Anglian beakers, and one a late Southern style beaker, (Clarke 1970). A number of similar East Anglian beakers have been previously found in Sussex, (eg Musson 1954, Fig. 1, No. 071).

The rusticated beaker domestic ware sherds were generally slightly thicker (5–7 mm.), and were mainly of fabric 3. Decoration was of either fingertip impression, fingernail impression or a combination of the two. From the different decoration styles, there were sherds from a minimum of 3 separate vessels deposited in the ditch.

Fabric 6: Forty one sherds of this fabric were found in the ditch, of these only 8 could be assigned as fine beaker sherds. With the quartz inclusions, it is unlikely that this pottery was made on the Downs. However such inclusions occur naturally in clays originating from the Greensand belt just to the north of the Downs, or in clays from the Coastal plain, 2–3 km. to the south.

The Later Pottery

Fabrics 7 and 8: One sherd of fabric 7, and 14 of fabric 8 were found in the upper levels of the ditch, with further examples in the topsoil. They were typical of local Iron Age wares, with the sherds containing Iron Oxide inclusions (Fabric 8) probably originating from a Wealden source.

Fabric 9: One sherd of this fabric was found in the ditch, and along with five from the topsoil, are typical of the handmade grog-tempered 'East Sussex Ware'. One sherd is a rim from a jar.

Fabric 10: Thirteen sherds, all from the same vessel, were found together in the upper ditch fill. The vessel, probably a jar, had a zone of incised lattice decoration below a horizontal groove, and dates from the 2nd/4th Century A.D.

Fabric 11: A variety of burnt clay fragments were recovered from the ditch, totalling 219 fragments, and weighing 185 grams. They could be of any date, but derive in the main from Late Beaker contexts in the ditch.

Discussion

Late Beaker Period

After the burial pit had been dug, a complete East Anglian style beaker was deposited with the inhumation, along with other grave goods. The burial pit was then back filled and a ditch surrounding it dug to provide material for the barrow mound. Ritual deposits may have been made in the ditch shortly after this as a broken, although incomplete, East Anglian beaker was found in the primary ditch fill. Later there is evidence for further 'Late Beaker' activity around the barrow, with sherds from fine beakers together with beaker domestic wares and daub in the secondary ditch fill, mainly on the northern side. This could indicate that a Late Beaker settlement was situated nearby, or that the barrow remained a place of ritual or other importance after its initial use for burial. A number of the sherds were abraded, suggesting that the land around the barrow was under cultivation during this time.

Later Periods

There is no ceramic evidence for activity in the later Bronze Age. However in the Iron Age and Romano-British periods activity increased again, with a number of abraded sherds found in the topsoil and upper levels of the ditch, showing that the land around the barrow was probably once again under cultivation.

In the top of the ditch, one cluster of sherds (probably all from the same vessel) and isolated sherds probably result from the use of the ditch, which must have been visible as a shallow depression, for dumping rubbish. Since Roman times, there appears to have been no activity which left any ceramic evidence in the vicinity of the barrow.

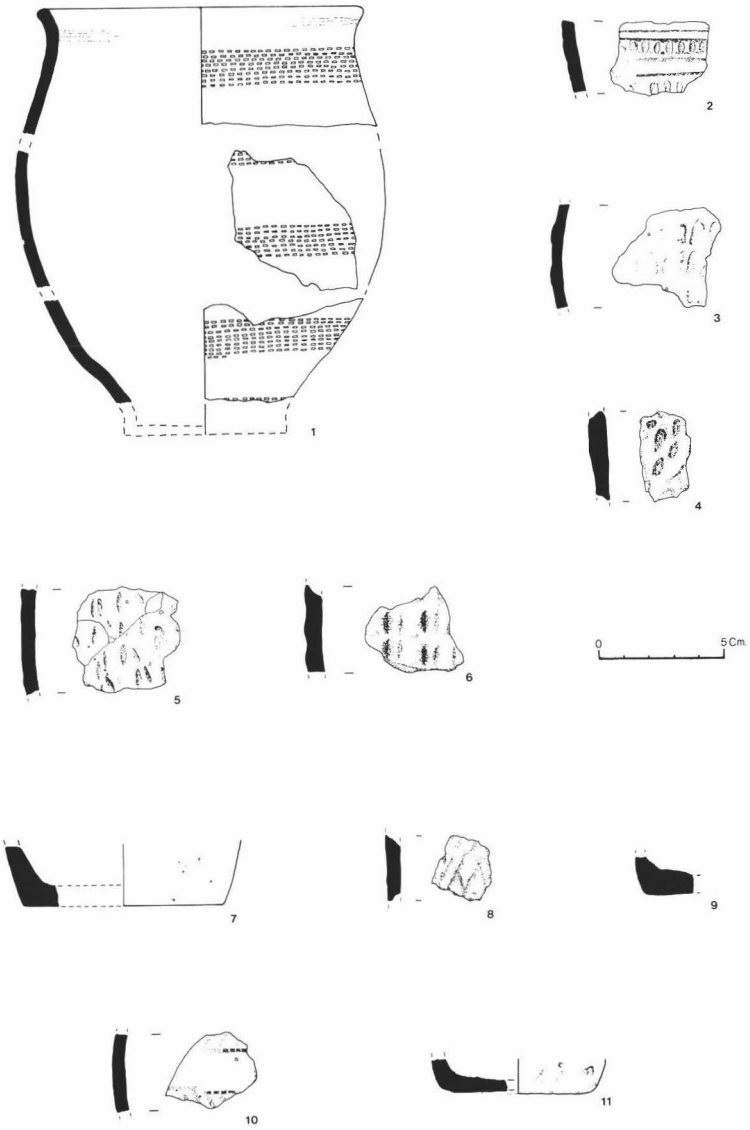

Fig. 7 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: Pottery; see text for description.

Acknowledgements

Peter Drewett identified and commented on the Beaker pottery, and David Rudling commented on the Iron Age and Roman pottery.

The Illustrated Pottery (Fig. 7).

1: East Anglian beaker. Zoned combed decoration. Fabric 2. Red-brown in colour, core not reduced. This vessel was found incomplete, and crushed in the primary ditch fill.

2: East Anglian beaker. Rim sherd from ditch secondary fill. Combed decoration. Fabric 3.
3: East Anglian beaker. Sherd from ditch secondary fill. Combed decoration. Fabric 2.
4: Rusticated beaker domestic ware. Sherd from ditch secondary fill. Fingertip impression. Fabric 3.
5: Rusticated beaker domestic ware. Sherd from ditch secondary fill. Fingernail impression. Fabric 2.
6: Rusticated beaker domestic ware. Sherd from ditch secondary fill. Fingertip and nail impression. Fabric 3.
7: Beaker. Base sherd from ditch secondary fill. Fabric 2.
8: Late Southern Style beaker. Sherd from ditch secondary fill. Lozenge shaped combed decoration. Fabric 3.
9: Possible beaker base sherd from ditch secondary fill. Fabric 6.
10: Beaker body sherd from ditch secondary fill. Combed decoration. Fabric 3.
11: Beaker base sherd from ditch secondary fill. Fabric 2.

THE FLINT (by Robin Holgate)

Surface collection and excavation produced a total of 2603 humanly-struck flints (Table 3), 74 per cent of which came from the secondary fills of the barrow ditch (Fig. 9, B). The flints from the surface collection, topsoil and some of the secondary ditch fills were identified by Chris Butler.

Raw Material

The assemblage was produced using nodular flint obtained from the Chalk. The cortex was fresh and unabraded on a number of pieces from the secondary ditch fills, suggesting that some of the nodules used for flaking had probably been extracted from in situ flint seams. Rich seams of nodular flint are known to outcrop on this area of downland, particularly around Newtimber Hill. It is therefore likely that the flint was obtained from the vicinity of the site. All pieces in the assemblage had acquired a white or blue-white patination or cortication.

Technology and typology

Nearly 96 per cent of the assemblage consists of debitage. The majority of flakes and blades had been detached from cores using flint hammerstones; platforms were not prepared before detaching each removal and butt widths usually exceed 2 mm. Five of the cores had one platform, whilst the other two cores had two and three platforms respectively.

None of the flints from the primary ditch fill or the various features both inside and outside the penannular ditch could be refitted, but some of the flint clusters recovered from the secondary ditch fills (Fig. 9, B) contained a few pieces which could be refitted, e.g. five flakes from context 1606/5. The method of flaking appears to have been relatively simple: nodules of flint were worked from a flattish surface without prior preparation to detach a series of flakes, with little attention being paid to ensuring the removal of consistently shaped pieces. If a new platform for flaking was required, the core might be rotated until another surface suitable for use as a platform was located; otherwise, the core was discarded and flaking started on a fresh nodule. This core reduction strategy was commonly used during the later Neolithic-Bronze Age in Sussex.

Just over 4 per cent of the pieces in the assemblage had been flaked or retouched into implements. Of the identifiable types of implement, scrapers predominated followed by notched flakes (Table 3). Eight of the scrapers from the secondary ditch fills had invasive retouch (Fig. 8, 1–5), propably executed using a soft hammer. Scrapers fashioned in this way occur on later Neolithic and Bronze Age sites in Sussex, for example Bullock Down (Holgate 1988, 26).

TABLE 3
Flintwork by Context and type

Context	*Flakes*	*Blades*	*Shattered Pieces*	*Flake Cores*	*Miscellaneous Retouched Pieces*	*End Scrapers*	*Side Scrapers*	*Hollow Scrapers*	*Piercers*	*Knives*	*Cutting Flakes/Blades*	*Notched Flakes/Blades*	*Rod*	*Chopping Tool*	*Total*	*Fire-fractured Flints*
Surface Collection																
	106	8	20	—	8	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	146	136
Topsoil																
	331	27	63	—	17	4	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	444	241
Burial Pit																
33	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	2
35	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	2
in beaker	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Primary Ditchfill																
24	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	3
25	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	135
54	22	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	23	14
61	33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	33	5
53	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Secondary Ditchfill																
5	487	8	5	3	4	6	4	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	520	461
22	946	20	15	3	17	4	1	2	—	1	1	1	1	—	1012	111
23	280	12	16	—	13	—	1	—	2	—	1	6	—	—	331	1268
7	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
31	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9	2
57	17	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	20	6
Internal Features																
14	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
18	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—
100	2	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	4	—
External Features																
8	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	3
10	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	1
20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
59	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
60	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
69	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
70	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
75	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
79	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	1
Total	2290	76	120	7	60	20	8	2	3	2	4	9	1	1	2603	2027

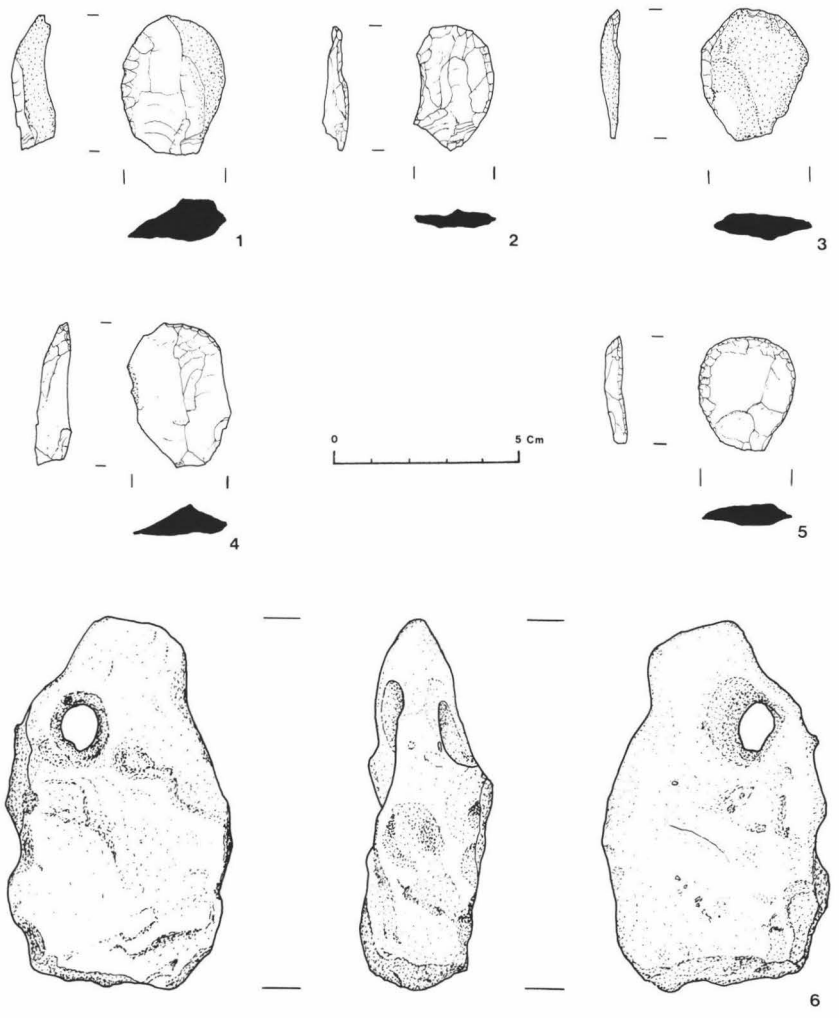

Fig. 8 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: Other Finds; 1–5; Nest of Flint Scrapers, 6; Chalk Object.

Discussion

The flints recovered from the burial pit, the internal and external features, and the primary ditch fill mainly consist of undiagnostic hard hammer-struck flakes (Table 3). These pieces might have been deliberately deposited in the fill of these features, but it is also possible that they represent residual finds. There is thus no definite evidence for the use or deposition of flintwork at the time of the Beaker burial.

The flints from the secondary ditch fills were clustered on the north and east sides of the ditch. They appear to represent the debris from several flaking episodes, probably undertaken adjacent to the burial mound, which had been gathered up and placed in the ditch. Amongst this material was a variety of implements (Table 3; Fig. 9, C). It is not clear whether any of these implements were used, as none of the pieces were suitable for use wear analysis. However, the group of five invasively retouched scrapers found together in grid unit 0810 (Fig. 9, C) consist of a carefully

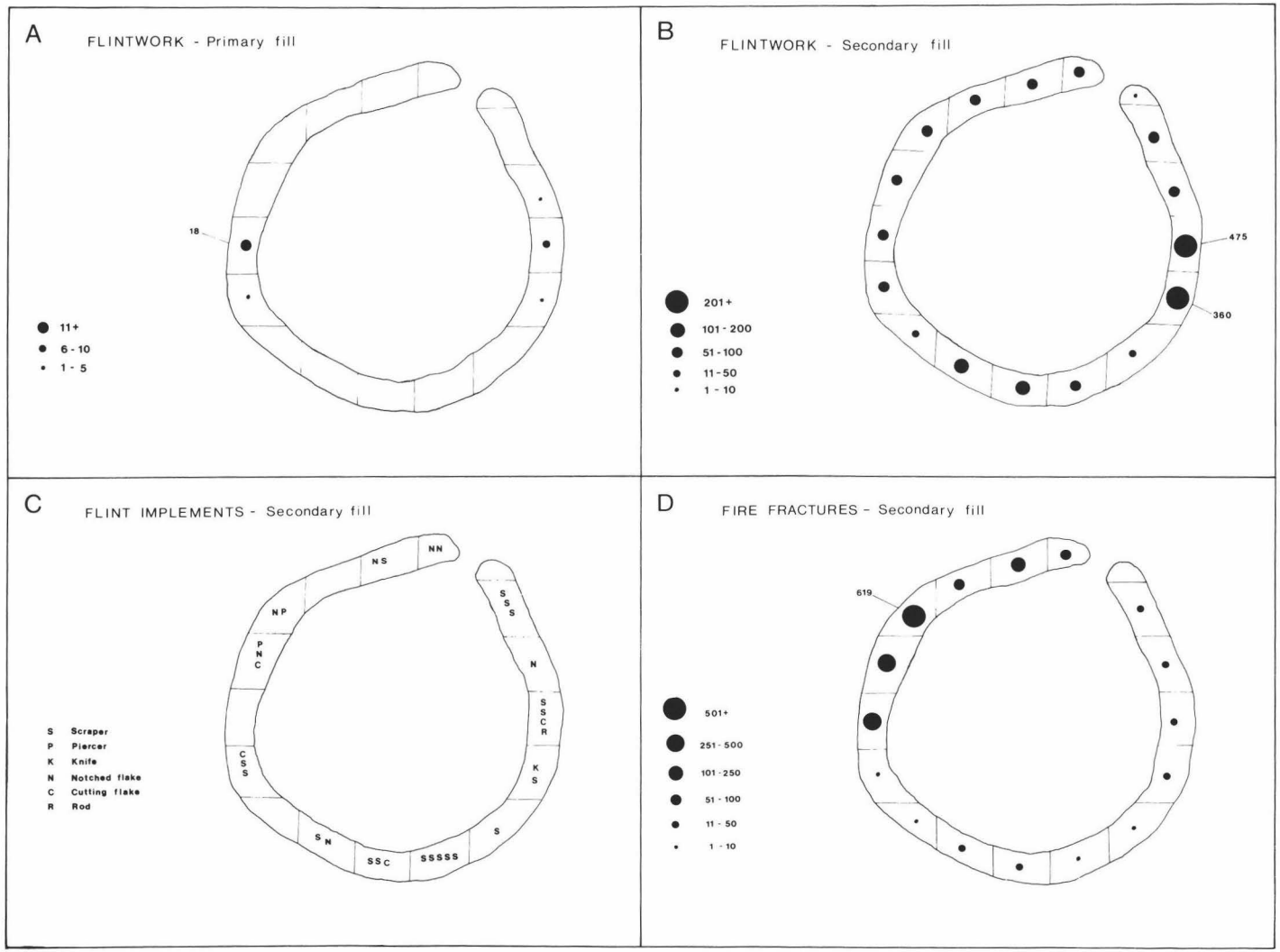

Fig. 9 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: Distribution of A: Humanly struck flint from the Primary ditch fills; B: Humanly struck flint from the Secondary ditch fills; C: Flint implements from the Secondary ditch fills; and D: Fire-fractured flint from the Secondary ditch fills.

arranged deposit of possibly unused implements. Although the flints from the secondary ditch fills could relate to domestic or agricultural activity carried out in the vicinity of the burial mound, it is also possible that these flints result from activities or ceremonies, perhaps of a funerary or commemorative nature, associated with the continued use of the barrow in the earlier Bronze Age.

THE INHUMATION (by Elizabeth M Sanderson)

Introduction

The skeletal remains had been cleaned with the exception of the skull which needed further cleaning to assist in ageing the skeleton. Many of the skeletal elements were submitted in a broken condition and had to be reconstructed before they could be studied and measured. Otherwise the skeleton was in a good state of preservation and no conservation was done.

Description

Figure 10 shows the bones recovered. The following items are worth particular mention.

Sex

The bones are robust with well developed muscle attachments. The mastoid processes are well developed and the sciatic notch is relatively narrow.

Cranium

The brow ridge area has a vermiculate pattern similar to that described by Tappen (1978). The cranial index is 76 (see Table 4 below).

Stature

TABLE 4
Skeletal Indices

	Anterior/ Posterior mm.	*Transverse mm.*	*Index*	
Skull	188[1]	143	76	Mesocephalic
Femur				
Left	280	316	88.6	Eurymeria
Right	265	311	85.2	Eurymeria
Tibia				
Left	393	229	58.3	Platycnemia
Right	393	230	58.5	Platycnemia

[1]An estimate as Glabella is broken.

The stature is estimated (Trotter & Gleser 1952, 1958) at about 1.79 metres (5 ft 10 ins) from the measurements below.

TABLE 5
Maximum Lengths of Limb Bones

	Left mm.	*Right mm.*
Humerus	343	346
Ulna	281	285
Radius	263	264
Femur	485	485
Tibia	392	388
Fibula[1]	—	—

[1]Both Fibulae were broken

Dentition

	/	/								/		AX	A*	A/#		
	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
R																L
	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
					/			X							A+	A+

/ tooth missing but socket present
X tooth lost ante-mortem
A abscess
* root remaining
# single root remaining, tooth probably lost post mortem
\+ loose in gum—gingiveal abscess

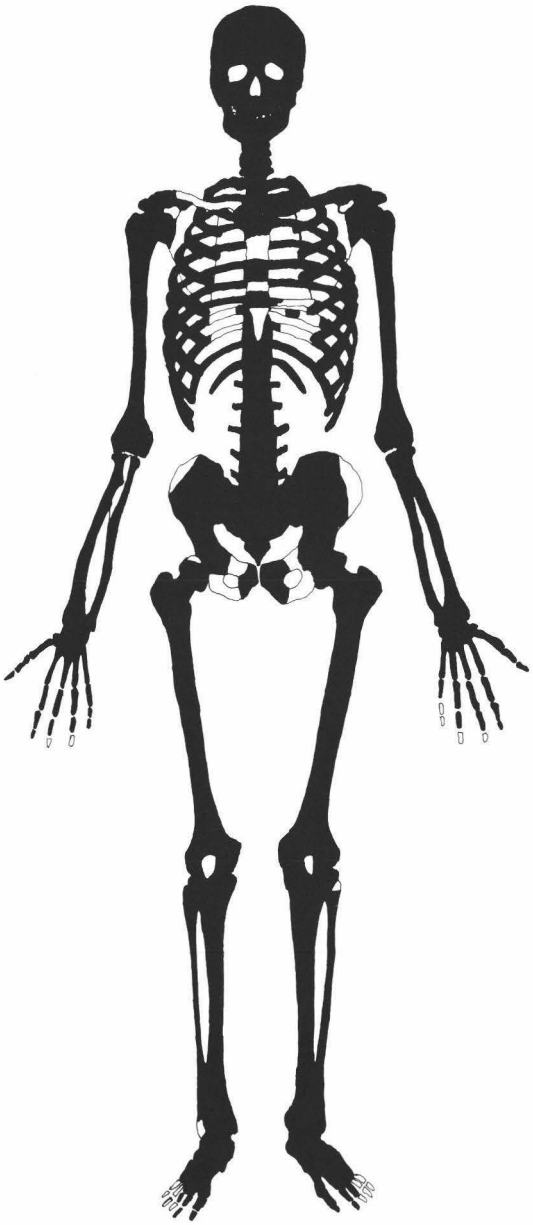

Fig. 10 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: The Inhumation—showing bones recovered.

Build

The skeleton has prominent muscle attachments and large articular surfaces, both of which can provide some indication of the physical activities of the man.

(a) In the right humerus the pectoralis major, which adducts, flexes and rotates the arm medially, is well developed, as is the lateral head of the triceps, which extends the forearm.

(b) The tubercle on the proximal end of the left and right radius is large: this flexes and supinates the forearm and flexes and rotates the arm medially.

(c) In the femur, the adductor magnus and the gluteus maximus are very prominent. The former adducts the thigh and aids in flexion, extension and lateral rotation. The latter extends the thigh and rotates it laterally.

(d) The attachment of the Achilles tendon is most pronounced indicating much flexing of the leg and extending, adduction and inversion of the foot.

(e) The popliteal surface of the femur is extended which has been an indication of a squatting posture, but squatting facets are not discernable on the tibia.

(f) The distal articular surface of both first metatarsals is large dorso-ventrally, indicating much bending of the toes, perhaps in a kneeling position (Ubelaker 1979).

Pathology and Degenerative Disease

Dentition

The individual had poor dental health with two abscesses and considerable alveolar resorption due to periodontal disease. There is moderate calculus on the right side. The 28 is slightly impacted. The level of wear, as classified by Brothwell (1981, 72) is;

16: 5; 46: 5+; 36: 5+; 47: 3+; 27: 4+; 37: 3+; 48: 2; 28: 2+; 38: 2.

The pattern of attrition on the second and third molars is undoubtedly due to the abscesses which, when the infection was active, would have been so painful that he avoided chewing at the back of the mouth.

Vertebrae

The lumbar, thoracic and cervical vertebrae show evidence of arthritis on the bodies and the joints.

Clavicle

The right clavicle has a healed fracture showing trebeculation typical of more than six months, probably in excess of one year. The healed area is enlarged and the bone somewhat deformed.

Ulna

The left ulna has a healed fracture towards the epiphysis, of the type known as a 'Parry fracture'. The bone is not noticeably shorter than the right ulna, but the styloid process is turned further medially than that of the right ulna. The fracture of the ulna may have taken place after the clavicle was fractured.

Tibia

The left tibia has cortical thickening in mid shaft, but this is not considered abnormal.

Interpretation and Discussion

Sex

There is little doubt that the individual was male, from the evidence of the skull and pelvis particularly, but which is substantiated throughout the skeleton.

Age

It is not possible to give the precise age of the skeleton, mainly because the evidence is conflicting. The inner sutures of the skull are closed and the outer sutures are at a stage consistent with a mid to late 30's year old (Acsadi & Nemeskeri 1970). The teeth generally support this (Brothwell 1981) if the anomalous wear is disregarded. Interpretation of the pubic symphysis is difficult, and the only reliable deduction is that the skeleton is mature. In fact, taking the whole skeleton into account and bearing in mind the unreliability of skeletal ageing, it is preferable to state that the skeleton is of a mature adult.

General

It can be seen that the man described above was tall and muscular. His skull shape would appear to fall within the large central grouping of mesocephalic to brachycephalic. His platycnemia and eurymeria would be in conformity with other burials mentioned, as would the suggestion of squatting facets, albeit not specifically on the tibia.

He must have been physically active. The Parry fracture of the left ulna suggests a defensive move; that is, he lifted his arm to ward off a blow which broke the arm. He must, therefore, as a mature adult, have been in a fight. Was this his regular occupation? nothing in the bones would deny this.

Acknowledgement

I would like to record my appreciation for all the excellent advice and tutoring Miss T. Molleson has given me, and I would like to thank Dr R. Burwood who X-rayed and commented on a number of the bones.

THE CHALK OBJECT

This roughly rectangular block of chalk (Fig. 8, No. 6) was found in the secondary fill of the ditch, on the north side of the barrow. It weighs 185 grams and is perforated near the top by a single circular hole which has been bored from both sides. Around the hole there are wear marks consistent with the chalk block having been suspended, presumably as a weight.

THE FOREIGN STONE (by Tim Gosden)

The foreign stone and fossils found during the excavation are summarised on microfiche. All of the foreign stone examples probably originate from the Wealden series of rocks, and none show any signs of having been worked. However a number of sandstone specimens from the ditch display a gradation which could be a natural diagenetic feature, or the effect of intense heat by human means. If this is due to the effect of intense heat, it could be that the stones were incorporated into a hearth (evidence for two possible hearths being found in the ditch), or some other fire, or were being utilised for iron extraction.

TABLE 6
Absolute numbers of terrestrial Mollusca

	Sample	*14*	*5*	*1*	*6*	*3*	*4*	*9*
	Feature	*OLS*	|		*19*		|	*Ditch*
	Context	—	*35*	*33*	*33*	*33*	*33*	*61*
MOLLUSCA	*Weight*	*984*	*680*	*1000*	*1000*	*695*	*756*	*798*
Pomatias elegans (Müller)					3	+		+
Carychium tridentatum (Risso)					1			17
Cochlicopa lubrica (Müller)								4
Cochlicopa spp.								6
Vertigo pygmaea (Draparnaud)		4						1
Vallonia excentrica Sterki		1						
Acanthinula aculeata (Müller)					1	1	1	
Discus rotundatus (Müller)			3	5	16	4	1	7
Vitrina pellucida (Müller)							1	
Vitrea contracta (Westerlund)		1	4	12	22	5		7
Nesovitrea hammonis (Ström)								2
Aegopinella pura (Alder)				1				8
Aegopinella nitidula (Draparnaud)			4					3
Oxychilus cellarius (Müller)			1	8	1	20	1	2
Limacidae								2
Cecilioides acicula (Müller)		32		1	1	13	2	11
Clausilia bidentata (Ström)				1		1		
Trichia hispida (Linnaeus)								3
Cepaea/Arianta spp.					+			+
	Taxa	3	4	5	7	6	4	13
	TOTAL	6	12	27	65	31	4	62

TABLE 7
Absolute numbers of hand picked Mollusca

	Feature	*19*	| — *ditch* — |		*73*	*77*
	Context	*33*	*61*	*61*	*61*	*74*	*78*
MOLLUSCA	*Co-ords*		*0606*	*0608*	*0610*		
Pomatias elegans (Müller)		43		5	4		
Discus rotundatus (Müller)		12		2			
Oxychilus cellarius (Müller)		48			6		
Trichia striolata (C. Pfeiffer)		7		14	7		
Arianta arbustorum (Linnaeus)		3					
Helicodonta obvoluta (Müller)		1		2			
Helicigona lapicida (Linnaeus)		5					
Cepaea nemoralis (Linnaeus)		20		2	3	1	
Cepaea hortensis (Müller)					8	5	
Cepaea spp.		13	1	3	2		
Helix aspersa (Müller)							1
			|		|		
	TOTAL	152		64		1	1

LANDSCAPE HISTORY OF THE PYECOMBE BARROW (by Mike Allen)

The analysis of the soil samples and molluscan evidence from the burial pit, ditch deposits and other features is presented on microfiche pages 12 to 15, and in tables 6 and 7.

Site environmental history

Although the assemblages were depauperate and not from ideal contexts, the information is good enough to construct an hypothesis for the site, if not landscape, history. It is possible that some clearance of woodland had occurred prior to the first activity recorded here and that open downland existed in the immediate vicinity at least. The woodland probably existed close by and it is likely that only a relatively restricted area was cleared.

The occurrence of three specimens of *Helicodonta obvoluta* is of considerable interest. It is an extremely rare relict species whose present limited distribution in southern Britain is almost totally restricted to the western end of the South Downs (Cameron 1973; Kerney 1976) where it only occurs in a few old woodland habitats (Cameron 1972). Although now it survives in leaf-litter in ancient, particularly beech, woodland (Ellis 1969; 218–219) it is likely that its distribution was more wide spread in the past, though still predominantly confined to woodlands and decaying plant material beneath the leaf-litter. Its rarity is in part due to the species being anthropophobic, shunning habitats disturbed by humans (Evans 1972), and thus its association with ancient beech woodland today is due to the fact that they offer the only suitable habitat rather than the species preference for beech (Cameron 1973). In the archaeological record *H. obvoluta* has been mainly recorded from Neolithic flint mines; Easton Down, Wilts. (Kennard 1933), Stoke Down, West Sussex (Wade 1923), Cissbury and Church Hill, West Sussex (Evans and Jones 1981) and the Middle Bronze Age site at Stockbridge, Hants. (Kennard 1938). The record of *H. obvoluta* from Pyecombe is therefore significant, especially insofar as it derived from Bronze Age contexts and represents one of the later archaeological records of this species and is recorded about 30 miles east of its present distribution.

It is possible, in view of the presence of the anthropophobe *H. obvoluta,* and the proximity of woodland (as also indicated by the shade-loving molluscs in the burial pit and ditch fill) that the woodland surviving prior to and immediately post barrow construction was not previously subject to significant human intervention. The site, especially the grave, became a refuge for voles and shrew after it was covered indicating a hiatus in the activities of the disposal of the body and of the formal construction of the mound. Once the mound had been constructed, there may have been a comparatively rapid regeneration of vegetation possibly, although this cannot be stated with certitude, shrubs and woody species. The proximity of woodland to the barrow precludes extensive occupation in the immediate vicinity, and it is likely that any settlement associated with this burial probably lies in the valley from which this barrow is 'false-crested'. Such an hypothesis is presented by Allen for the majority of Beaker activity sites on the chalk downland (Allen 1988; 1990).

These hypotheses produce two main interpretations for further consideration; the environmental and landscape history, and the disposal of the dead and ritual in the early Bronze Age.

Landscape history

The evidence from the Pyecombe barrow indicates limited Neolithic activity in the area and only localised and selective woodland clearance in the later Neolithic. This trait can be seen in the earlier Neolithic causewayed enclosures at Offham to the east (Thomas 1977) and Bury Hill to the west (Thomas 1982). Thomas shows that localised deforestation and rapid regeneration occurred in all the Sussex causewayed enclosures (1982) thus indicating that by the later Neolithic large-scale woodland

clearance had not occurred. Indeed Allen (1988, 84) postulates that 'major permanent clearance . . . seems to have occurred in the early Bronze Age (Beaker period) or middle Bronze Age'. However, at Pyecombe at least, clearance was not extensive in the early Bronze Age and it is unfortunate that no evidence was available in the upper ditch fills which would certainly have encompassed the middle Bronze Age.

Disposal of the dead

The molluscan evidence certainly points to a significant hiatus between the disposal of the body and the erection of a mound over the grave. Therefore two distinct ceremonial or ritual activities can be postulated. That of the disposal of the body and that involved with the construction of a formal monument over the grave. Although this is undoubtedly an unusual conclusion to reach it is by no means unique in southern Britain. A beaker burial cut through the old land surface at Windmill Hill contained a large number of small mammal bones, the assemblage of which has been interpreted by Brothwell as a pit-fall trap. It is therefore likely that the body remained open and possibly only covered by hurdling or planks for some while before the grave was infilled (Whittle pers. comm.). A similar interpretation was made of Beaker burials in a round barrow on West Overton Farm (Swanton pers. comm.) only four miles to the east of Windmill Hill. Although we are not postulating that the burial at Pyecombe was left uncovered, this does demonstrate that 'burial' was a complex action and may involve more than a single episode of activity. A more satisfactory parallel can be seen at the Buckskin barrow, Hampshire (Allen *et al.* forthcoming). Here although no primary burial accompanied the monument, it was evident that extensive activity (feasting and burning) occurred within an area demarcated by a stake palisade. Subsequently, and perhaps sometime later, a mound was thrown up over the area. Once again a temporal disparity is evident between the first activity, whether burial or other ritual, and the construction of the mound, Thus, the hypothesis for a significant temporal hiatus at Pyecombe is not unparalleled, nor is the delay in covering the body or constructing a formal monument necessarily unusual.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Pat Stevens and Mark Maltby for the identification of the bone and their comments on my subsequent interpretation. Thanks are also due to Martin Bell and Arthur ApSimon for their comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this report.

DISCUSSION

There was little evidence for any activity prior to the construction of the barrow except, perhaps, for pit 14 which predates the barrow mound.

It appears that at the time the barrow was built the local environment comprised a cleared area, probably partially cultivated, with some cover, scrub or woodland nearby. This suggests that the barrow may have been situated on or adjacent to a field boundary, perhaps marked by the line of postholes to the east of the barrow. This situation would allow for an environment such as that suggested for the barrow on the molluscan evidence.

Once the burial pit had been dug, the body was inserted into it, and laid out in a crouched position, orientated NW/SE and facing north (Fig. 1). Grave goods were also placed by the body at this stage, or perhaps later. These included the beaker, which could have been made specifically for inclusion with the burial, the wristguard and dagger, probably personal belongings of the deceased. It is possible that other grave goods, for which no evidence remains, were also added. There was no indication of a coffin or shroud having been used.

It is not clear whether the burial pit was then immediately backfilled, or left open for a period of time. However, the inhumation became slightly disarticulated at some stage indicating

Fig. 11 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: The Burial.

that some post burial disturbance had taken place.

An initial fill covered the body, resulting either from a weathering of material into the burial pit, or from careful backfilling with fine material. This was followed by the complete backfilling of the burial pit, probably using the material originally excavated from the pit.

It is almost certain that a period of time elapsed between the burial pit being backfilled and the barrow mound being thrown up (Allen, this report). The reason for this hiatus is uncertain; there could have been some ritual purpose, or simply that other tasks took precedence, for example gathering in the harvest, and work on the barrow construction was temporarily halted.

However, at some stage a penannular ditch was dug around the burial pit and the excavated material thrown up to construct the barrow mound. The ditch did not completely enclose the barrow; a small causeway was left on the north west side, presumably as a ceremonial entrance/exit. A surplus of material seems to have been produced for the mound, as part of the barrow ditch on the north west side was backfilled with unabraded chalk and flint. As there was no primary fill below this material, very little time must have elapsed between the digging of the ditch and its backfilling.

On the south west side a series of stakeholes was found in the bottom of the ditch (see Fig. 12). The purpose of these stakeholes is unclear; it seems that a structure of some sort was erected in the ditch, possibly with more than one phase of construction as some holes were cut by others. Revetment for the barrow mound is unlikely as the holes are situated on the uphill

Fig. 12 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: The stakeholes in the bottom of the ditch on the south-west side.

side of the barrow. Whatever their purpose, it appears to have been a short-lived structure as the fill of the empty stakeholes was the same as the primary fill of the ditch.

The primary fill in the ditch accumulated fairly rapidly. Its clay matrix suggests that it was formed from a wind blown fine silt, perhaps from cultivated fields around the barrow. It was interesting to note that areas of ditch left open for some two months during the excavation began to silt up with a similar material blown in from the surrounding ploughed field. Few finds were present in this fill, although an incomplete crushed East Anglian beaker was found on the west side (Fig. 2), indicating that some activity was taking place around the barrow at this time.

The secondary fill accumulated more slowly up until the time the barrow was ploughed out. However, most of the accumulation appears to have taken place during the later Beaker period when activity continued around the barrow. Material associated with this activity consists of quantities of pottery, flintwork and fire-fractured flint, together with possible evidence for hearths or fires and ceremonial deposition (Holgate, this report) of artefacts in the ditch.

The continued activity during the later Beaker period suggests that there was a domestic settlement relatively close by. The inhabitants were cultivating the fields around the barrow, and occasionally visiting the barrow either for some ceremonial purpose or perhaps simply to deposit waste material in the barrow ditch.

To the east of the barrow a number of postholes were located. These may have been part of the field boundary mentioned above, alternatively they may have formed part of a different structure, as some seem too large to have simply held fencing posts. A number of the holes had a large flint placed in the bottom of the hole, and in some there was evidence of flints being used to pack the holes. However, the presence of cattle teeth in some holes could indicate a ceremonial purpose for some of them.

The barrow (Fig. 13) appears to be a solitary monument, with no other barrows nearby. The nearest round barrows are on the west spur of Newtimber Hill, or across the valley on Wolstonbury Hill (see Fig. 1). Its position on the false crest of the Downs means that it could have been seen clearly from Wolstonbury, the opposite side of the valley, and from the valley below where Allen (this report) suggests a contemporary domestic site could have existed. Fieldwalking around the barrow (Butler 1988 and forthcoming) has indicated that there was widespread activity here in the later Neolithic/early Bronze Age. To date, although numerous activity areas have been located, there is no firm evidence for a domestic site in the immediate vicinity of the barrow.

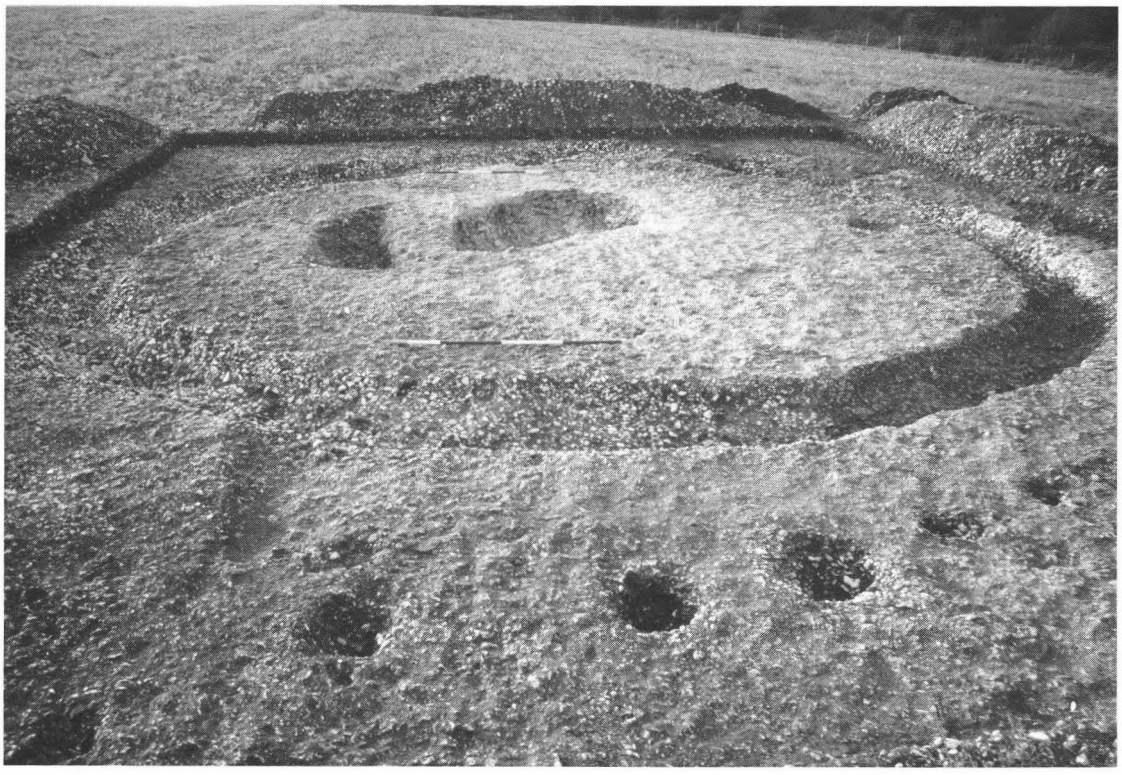

Fig. 13 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: The excavated Barrow, facing west.

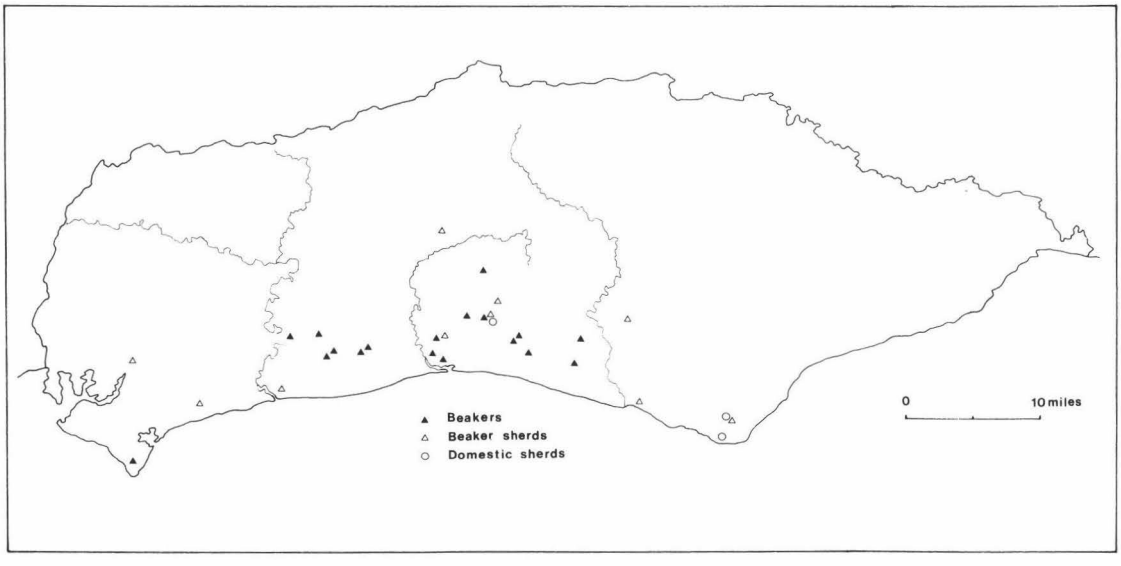

Fig. 14 Pyecombe Beaker Barrow: Distribution of Beakers and Beaker Pottery in Sussex.

Whoever the person buried in this barrow was, his status in society must be considered as important. His grave group is one of the 'richest' so far discovered in Sussex, and amongst the 'richest' Beaker burials so far recorded in South East England. The social standing of this individual, whether within a family unit or whole community, must have been significant enough to bestow upon him the privilege of burial in this fashion, when compared to the majority of the population at that time for whom there is no evidence of burial. He seems to have died a natural death, but his physical condition indicates that life was harsh during these times. The two broken, but healed, bones suggest that he was a party to one or more violent incidents during his life.

Beaker activity in Sussex appears more dense on the South Downs than elsewhere in Sussex (Fig. 14), with only a small number of finds known from the Weald. This may, however, reflect the intensity of research in these two areas. Most of the evidence from the Downs has come from barrows or other burials, with little in the way of Beaker settlements, with the notable exception of Belle Tout (Bradley 1970). However, recent excavations and surveys (e.g. Holgate 1988) are turning up evidence for Beaker activity, suggesting that occupation was perhaps more widespread than previously thought.

Carbon 14 Date

A Carbon 14 date was carried out, with the aid of funding from the Lloyds Bank Dating Fund, on a sample of bone from the inhumation; unfortunately problems were encountered due to the lack of collagen, and a date of 7520 ± 140 BP (5570 BC) uncalibrated was produced. Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre; GU-2574.

Microfiche

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