

# The excavation of a Bronze Age round barrow at Round-the-Down near Lewes, East Sussex

by Chris Butler

*A barrow at Round-the-Down near Lewes, was excavated by Lewes Archaeological Group in the mid 1970s under the direction of the late Richard Lewis. The barrow had been plundered, probably in its more recent history, and its poor state of preservation at the time of excavation plus the inadequate records kept meant that the amount of useful information extracted was limited. However, use of those records that exist, and a full analysis of the finds from the excavation, have made it possible to date the construction of the barrow to the early Bronze Age, thus contributing further to our understanding of the past landscape and activity in this area.*

## INTRODUCTION

A Bronze Age round barrow at Round-the-Down, Lewes (TQ 43330914) (Fig. 1), was excavated by the Lewes Archaeological Group, under the direction of Richard Lewis between 1973 and 1976. Unfortunately no report on the excavations was ever prepared, and on the death of Richard Lewis the finds and archive were deposited at Barbican House, Lewes.

In 1973 the barrow was situated on the edge of a quarry (Fig. 2), but further quarrying has subsequently destroyed part of the site. It was described by Grinsell (1934, 54SW, no. 41) as a bowl barrow, 20 paces in diameter and two feet high; in 1930 it was under plough. By the time of the excavation there was little of the mound visible.

## THE EXCAVATION

The excavation was carried out using the quadrant method, with the four quadrants being excavated in turn between 1973 and 1975 (Fig. 2). A single trial trench was also excavated across a possible feature to the north-west of the barrow, but nothing was found. The excavation of the barrow was carried out by hand, with the top-soil also being carefully trowelled. Unfortunately, there are no surviving context records for the excavation, and the same context numbers were used to refer to different

contexts in each quadrant. The features and contexts described below were interpreted from the plans, section drawings, slides and the very brief notes contained in the site notebooks.

### THE DITCH

The barrow was surrounded by an uninterrupted ditch which varied in depth and width. When excavated, the ditch (Fig. 3) was recorded as containing a primary fill described as a 'chalky silt wash', and a secondary fill of 'a fine chalk rubble with a silty loam'. In quadrants where the barrow was less plough-damaged, a tertiary fill comprising a 'fine chalk rubble and chalky clay loam' survived. The ditch fills were described by Allen in 1995 (this report) as producing a typical tripartite infill sequence (*cf.* Evans 1972, 321-8; Limbrey 1975, 290-310).

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 0-33 cm  | Modern brown rendzina, humic silty loam with weak small blocky peds, many roots. Rare small and medium sub-rounded chalk pieces, 2% macropores and larger voids, much biotic activity. Tertiary fill. |
| 33-46 cm | Silty loam, common and medium fleshy to fine fibrous roots, frequent small and very small chalk pieces, rare large subangular chalk pieces. Stabilization horizon.                                    |

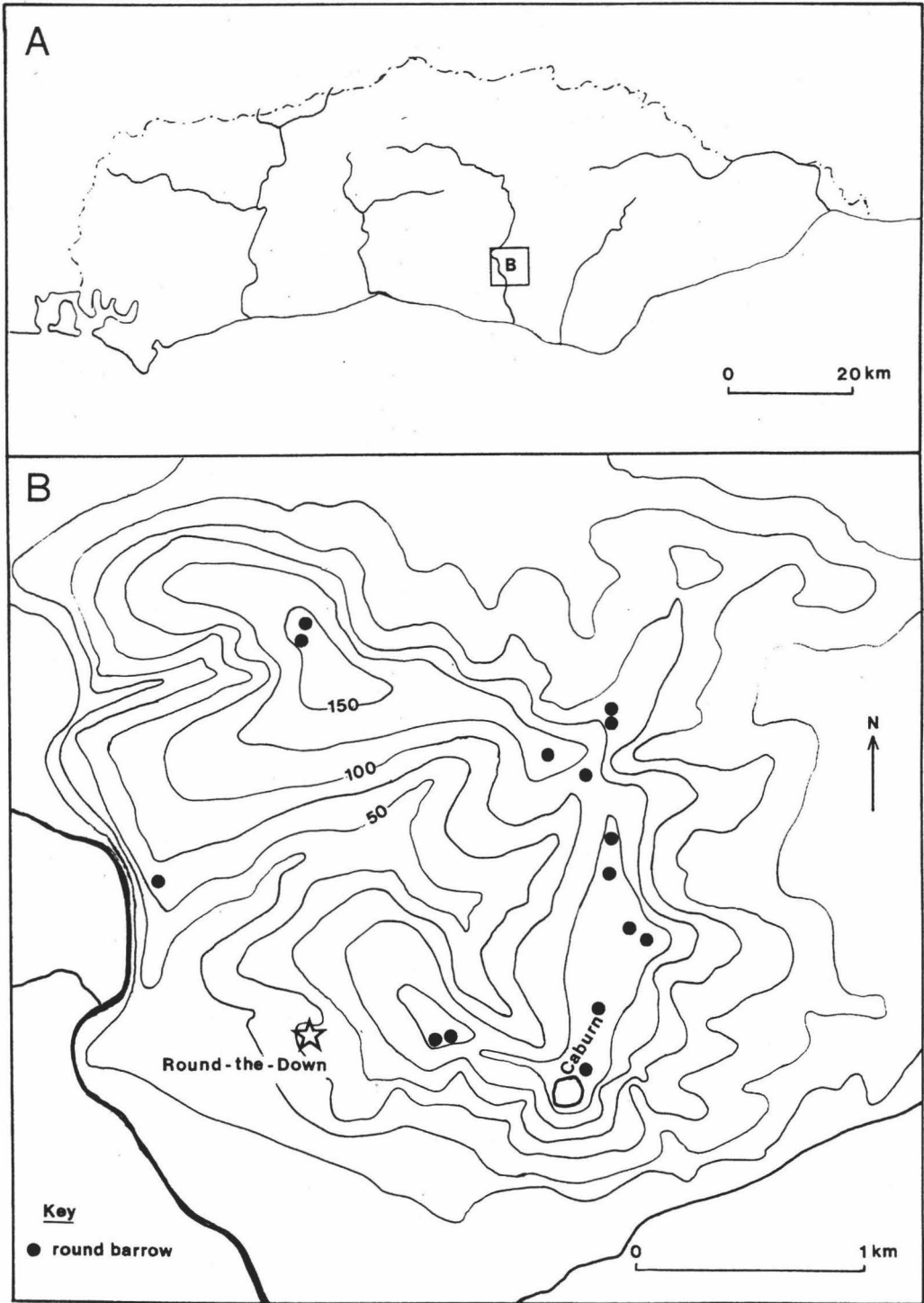


Fig. 1. Site location plan.

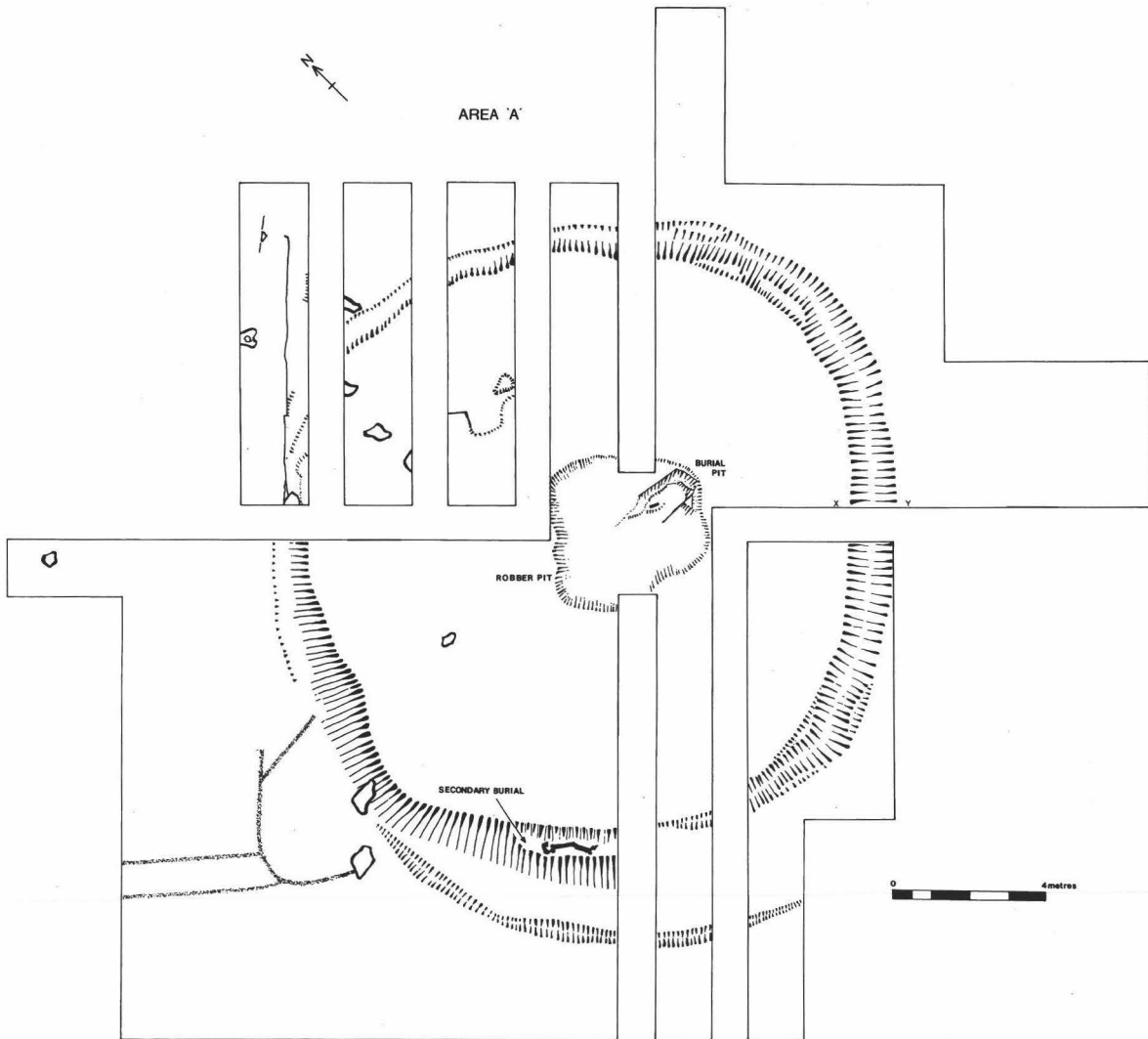


Fig. 2. The excavated barrow at Round-the-Down.

- 46–65 cm Calcareous silty clay loam with medium subangular chalk pieces, common fine fibrous roots. Secondary fill.
- 65–92 cm Calcareous primary fill with common to abundant small and medium angular chalk pieces and some large angular chalk blocks in a calcareous silt matrix.
- 92–99 cm Stone-free calcareous chalk mud. Primary wash.

There was a suggestion at the time, although not apparently the view of the excavator, that the ditch in the south-west quadrant was more reminiscent of a negative lynchet created by the later ploughing (Allen, pers. comm.); this does, however, now appear to be the case.

A secondary burial had been inserted into the barrow ditch on the south-west side, on what appears to have been a specially cut platform. Only

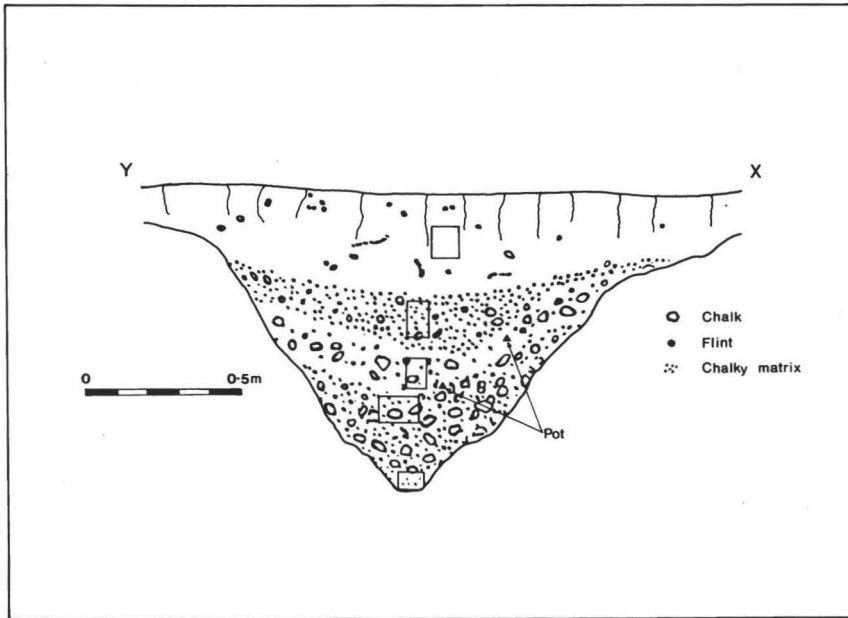


Fig. 3. Ditch section in the north-east quadrant, showing the location of the soil samples taken for molluscan analysis.

a few fragmentary remains were present, again probably due to the damage caused by later ploughing, and there were no associated grave goods. Some human remains were apparently also found in the ditch in the north-east quadrant.

The site notebooks mention possible pick marks on the 'north wall' of the ditch in the north-west quadrant. This observation is confirmed by those who assisted in the excavation and who can remember 'distinct pick marks on the ditch, especially on the well-preserved sides towards the base of the ditch in the north-east and north-west quadrants' (Allen, pers. comm.).

#### THE BURIAL PIT

In the centre of the barrow there was a primary grave pit, but this had been badly damaged by a large robber pit. The burial pit appears to have had a single

fill of chalk rubble. This was cut by the robber pit which had a primary fill of fine chalk, suggesting that it had been left open for a period of time, and a secondary fill of chalk rubble. There was no remaining evidence for a burial or grave goods.

#### OTHER FEATURES

There were a number of features, possibly post-holes, in the north-west quadrant, but no record of any finds associated with them. A shallow gully was found outside the ditch in the south-east and south-west quadrants. In the south-west quadrant a pit apparently produced a flint blade and some fire-fractured flint, but there was no trace of these artefacts amongst the surviving finds. If correct though, this could indicate Neolithic or earlier activity. Another possible pit in the same quadrant was sterile.

### THE FINDS

#### THE POTTERY

By Tessa Gingell  
In total, 903 sherds of pottery were recovered from the excavations (Table 1). The pottery ranges in date from early Bronze Age through to the present day. 553 sherds were retrieved from the barrow ditch fills and the remainder was recovered from the top-soil.

#### The fabrics

The prehistoric fabrics have been categorized by Prehistoric

Ceramic Research Group conventions (P.C.R.G. 1992). Later fabrics have been analyzed under the conventions of Peacock (1977). Fabric descriptions for the Roman and later pottery can be found in the site archive.

#### 1. Bronze Age fabrics

##### a) Early Bronze Age

G1 Soft fabric with grey core and buff/beige surfaces. This coarse fabric usually has sherds with a cross section of c. 10 mm and would seem to be from a tripartite, second series, urn of a comparable form and fabric to vessel 49

from barrow 3 at Black Patch (Ellison 1982). A single sherd from the lower part of a collar is decorated with impressed twisted cord. The form of the decoration and the shape of the lower collar might suggest that the vessel represented is a food vessel rather than a collared urn, but the small size of the sherd makes firm conclusions difficult. The presence of a protruding-foot base sherd would support the food vessel interpretation, although this may just be due to the irregularity of the base, as flat base sherds in a similar fabric are also present.

#### b) Middle Bronze Age

F1 Reasonably hard fabric with a black core and red/brown margins and exterior. Contains very coarse flint and is generally thick-walled. This fabric relates to large urn vessels, although the small size of the sherds makes precise form recognition difficult.

F2 Hard fabric with black/grey core and reddish margins and exterior. Contains coarse flint though in lesser amounts than F1. This fabric is slightly thinner than F1, but would also seem to represent urn forms.

#### c) Late Bronze Age

F3 Hard fabric, may be the same as F2 but is generally harder and thinner.

F4 Hard fabric with grey core and red/brown surfaces. Common medium to coarse flint. This fabric is often smoothed on the exterior surface.

F5 Hard fabric with black core and margins. Common medium to fine flint. This fabric is often thin-walled.

FQ1 Hard fabric with black core and exterior. Common medium to coarse flint with moderate amounts of medium sand.

FQ2 Hard fabric with black/grey core and reddish margins. This fabric has common fine flint and sand. It is generally thin-walled and is most often associated with 'S' profile bowls/jars.

FI1 Greyish core with red/brown exterior. Hard fabric with common medium to fine iron oxide inclusions. This fabric is thin-walled and sherds are often burnished. This fabric may well be of an Iron Age date, but is probably from the transitional late Bronze Age/early Iron Age period.

#### Discussion

Collared urns and food vessels are generally found associated with burial sites rather than settlements, and it is therefore not surprising that evidence for these vessels was found at Round-the-Down. Similar vessels, all dug from barrows, have been found on this same block of downland (e.g. Musson 1954, nos. 280, 290 & 250). The occurrence in the ditch fills of collared urn/food vessel sherds in such numbers does suggest that the barrow was constructed in the early Bronze Age.

The presence of middle and later Bronze Age fabrics in the later ditch fills indicates that activity continued in the immediate vicinity of the barrow throughout later prehistory,

Table 1. The pottery (summary of main fabric types).

Fabric	Context				
	Primary	Ditch fills Secondary	Tertiary	Top-soil	Total
<i>Bronze Age</i>					
G1	-	64	79	-	143
F1	-	2	-	-	2
F2	-	1	-	1	2
F3	4	27	22	6	59
F4	-	-	1	3	4
FQ1	-	-	1	-	1
FQ2	-	-	2	3	5
F5	-	1	-	3	4
FI1	-	-	2	2	4
<i>Roman</i>					
East Sussex Ware	-	99	27	42	168
Samian	-	2	-	1	3
Grey Sandy Ware	1	1	1	2	5
<i>Medieval</i>					
Medium Sand & Grog	-	30	19	68	117
Medium Sand & Flint	-	79	60	136	275
Hard Fired Earthenware	-	-	2	5	7
<i>Post-medieval</i>					
Sandy Ware	-	17	5	72	94
Staffordshire	-	2	-	2	4
China	-	2	-	4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>903</b>

and these sherds have probably been incorporated into the barrow ditch through later ploughing and the natural ditch fill process. However, the F3 fabric sherds in the primary ditch fill would suggest that the barrow ditch was still open at this time.

The Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval sherds confined to the top-soil and later ditch fills are almost certainly present via farming activities, such as manuring, and would not appear to relate to any features found on the site.

### THE FLINT

Over 1400 pieces of struck flint were recovered during the excavation (Table 2), of which 62% came from the ditch fills. The raw material is mainly a white patinated flint which originated from the chalk downs, with a smaller proportion of grey or blue-black pieces. A small number of pieces are of pebble flint, possibly originating from the pleistocene river gravels on the edge of the Ouse valley, or from soliflucted deposits in footslope locations, as revealed in the local quarries.

#### Debitage

The debitage has a high proportion of hard hammer-struck short stubby flakes with numerous hinge fractures, a large number of them having some cortex present. A large number of the flakes are very small (less than 20 mm in both length and breadth) and there is a very high proportion of shattered pieces (20% of the total debitage). Blades make up only 2% of the debitage, and 6% of the flakes and blades were produced with a soft hammer. The cores have either one or two platforms and are generally rather roughly worked, with no preparation of the striking platform and little care taken with the removal of flakes.

Table 2. The flint.

Type	Primary	Ditch fills Secondary	Tertiary	Other features	Top-soil	Surface
<i>Debitage</i>						
Flakes	25	435	247	8	338	53
Blades/bladelets	2	6	10	–	9	2
Shattered pieces	3	95	80	1	112	5
Axe thinning flakes	–	–	–	–	1	–
<i>Cores</i>						
Single-platform flake cores	–	5	2	–	1	–
Two-platform flake cores	–	3	2	–	7	1
<i>Implements</i>						
Scrapers	1	3	8	–	11	4
Piercers/awls	–	2	–	–	1	–
Combination tool	–	–	–	–	1	–
Notched pieces	–	–	–	–	1	–
Misc. retouched pieces	–	2	–	–	3	–
Chopping tool	–	–	–	–	1	–
Barbed-and-tanged arrowhead	–	1	–	–	–	–
Chisel arrowhead	–	–	1	–	–	–
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>552</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>486</i>	<i>65</i>
Fire-fractured flint	6	278	360	10	383	96
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>161</b>

#### Implements

The implements and retouched flakes comprise only 3.4% of the assemblage. Scrapers predominate; some of them were invasively retouched on the end of small hard hammer-struck flakes, whilst others were crudely produced on larger, rounded flakes with abrupt or semi-abrupt retouch, or in some cases simply abraded around the scraping edge.

#### Discussion

There was little flintwork (2% of the assemblage) found in the primary ditch fill, which suggests that there was only limited activity around the barrow in the years immediately after its construction. Most of the assemblage occurred in the secondary and tertiary ditch fills (60%) with the remainder in the top-soil. The proportions of flintwork found in each of the ditch fills are comparable with those found in Bronze Age barrows elsewhere, for example at Pyecombe (Butler 1991) and Cornish Farm (Drewett 1992), and are probably a function of the natural ditch fill processes rather than an indication of human activity. Most of the assemblage is made up of debitage, with implements and retouched flakes comprising only 3.4% of the worked flint. The range of implement types is limited, with scrapers and piercers predominating (Table 2).

The large proportion of small flakes and shattered pieces in the upper ditch fills could suggest that some flint knapping/preparation was taking place either in the partially open ditch, or adjacent to the ditch. However, the small number of cores (1.4%), and the lack of any discrete clusters of debitage or pieces that could be refitted make this unlikely. The large number of shattered pieces in the top-soil is probably the result of the extensive ploughing that has taken place at Round-the-Down. There is no suggestion that any of the flintwork had been

placed in the ditch as a ritual deposit, as at Pyecombe (Butler 1991).

The flint assemblage from Round-the-Down, with its roughly produced hard hammer-struck debitage and predominantly scraper- and piercer-based implement range, appears to be typical of assemblages that have been dated to the later Bronze Age (Ford *et al.* 1984). This assemblage, which has accumulated almost entirely in the top-soil and upper ditch fills, does suggest activity throughout the later Bronze Age in the vicinity of the barrow.

#### FOREIGN STONE

Three fragments of foreign stone from the secondary ditch fill were identified by Tim Gosden.

1. Possible fragment of quernstone. Light grey-green medium-grained calcareous sandstone with brown iron staining. Well sorted and structureless. Probably from the Lower Greensand.
2. Probable sharpening stone. Buff to light grey medium-grained calcareous sandstone. Well sorted with occasional light brown grains. Possibly from Bargate beds of the Lower Greensand.
3. Miscellaneous fragment. Medium-grained granite with quartz feldspar crystals and biotite mica. Source possibly Devon or Cornwall. Palaeozoic strata.

#### METAL

A number of iron and copper-alloy objects and a lead token (dated 1784) were found in the top-soil. A small strip of copper-alloy 27 mm × 4 mm was recovered from the primary ditch fill in the north-west quadrant, but this may be intrusive.

#### HUMAN BONE

By Wendy K. Wood  
A total of five bones (Table 3, see microfiche m3) were identified as human. Owing to their long burial in chalk these specimens are very badly eroded; it therefore was not possible to localize areas of pathological change. Similarly, measurements could not be taken from the bones because of their fragmentary nature.

All the bones were from an adult. Fortunately, a large fragment of the pelvis had escaped damage. From the narrowness of the sciatic it is probable that this burial is of an adult male.

#### ANIMAL BONE

By Patricia Stevens  
A small quantity of animal bone (Table 4, see microfiche m3) was found during the excavation, mainly from the upper ditch fills and the top-soil. Unfortunately, the bone was too fragmented for any useful measurements or age analysis to be made; the majority could only be attributed to size rather than species. Cattle bones account for the largest number of identifiable fragments, followed by sheep/goat bones. However,

## ROUND-THE-DOWN

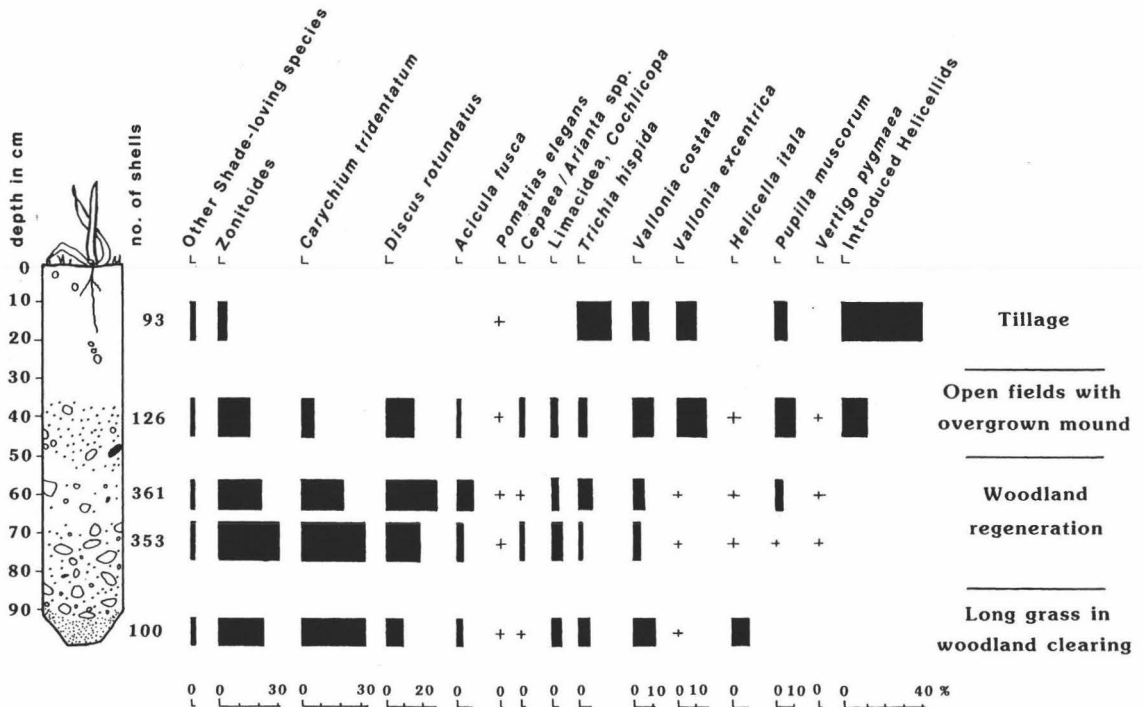


Fig. 4. The molluscan analysis: a histogram of relative abundance.

Table 6. Land mollusca from the ditch fills.

\ Sample Context Depth (mm) Wt (g)	4	5	6	7	8
	4	3	2	2a	1
	920-990 1500	670-770 1500	560-640 1000	350-450 1000	100-200 1000
<b>MOLLUSCA</b>					
<i>Pomatias elegans</i> (Müller)	+	2	+	1	1
<i>Acicula fusca</i> (Montagu)	3	9	27	2	-
<i>Carychium tridentatum</i> (Risso)	19	91	66	9	-
<i>Carychium</i> spp.	14	24	4	-	-
<i>Oxyloma/Succinea</i> spp.	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Cochlicopa lubricella</i> (Porro)	1	1	-	-	-
<i>Cochlicopa</i> spp.	2	7	8	1	-
<i>Vertigo pygmaea</i> (Draparnaud)	-	1	3	1	-
<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> (Dupuy)	-	-	-	1	-
<i>Pupilla muscorum</i> (Linnaeus)	-	1	15	12	6
<i>Vallonia costata</i> (Müller)	11	10	22	13	7
<i>Vallonia excentrica</i> (Sterki)	1	2	3	19	9
<i>Acanthinula aculeata</i> (Müller)	-	5	3	-	-
<i>Ena obscura</i> (Müller)	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Punctum pygmaeum</i> (Draparnaud)	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Discus rotundatus</i> (Müller)	8	60	91	17	-
<i>Vitrina pellucida</i> (Müller)	1	-	-	1	2
<i>Virea crystallina</i> (Müller)	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Vitrea contracta</i> (Westerlund)	20	67	52	17	-
<i>Nesovitrea hammonis</i> (Ström)	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Aegopinella pura</i> (Alder)	2	9	5	-	-
<i>Aegopinella nitidula</i> (Draparnaud)	-	17	15	3	-
<i>Oxychilus draparnaudi</i> (Beck)	-	-	-	-	4
<i>Oxychilus cellarius</i> (Müller)	1	16	5	-	-
Limacidae	1	10	4	3	-
<i>Euconulus fulvus</i> (Müller)	-	1	-	-	-
<i>Cecilioides acicula</i> (Müller)	3	6	58	234	108
<i>Cochlodina laminata</i> (Montagu)	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Clausilia bidentata</i> (Ström)	+	1	1	-	-
<i>Balaea perversa</i> (Linnaeus)	-	1	-	-	-
<i>Candidula intersecta</i> (Poiret)	-	-	-	7	22
<i>Candidula gigaxii</i> (L. Pfeiffer)	-	-	-	7	3
<i>Cernuella virgata</i> (da Costa)	-	-	-	2	6
<i>Helicella itala</i> (Linnaeus)	8	4	1	2	-
<i>Cochlicella acuta</i> (Müller)	-	-	-	-	17
<i>Trichia hispida</i> (Linnaeus)	6	8	26	6	16
<i>Arianta arbustorum</i> (Linnaeus)	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Helicigona lapicida</i> (Linnaeus)	-	+	+	+	-
<i>Cepaea/Arianta</i> spp.	1	6	5	2	-
<i>Helix aspersa</i> (Müller)	-	-	-	+	+
Taxa	16	21	23	20	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>93</b>
Species diversity	2.31	2.32	2.35	2.57	2.10

a large proportion of these fragments are teeth, and few of the remaining fragments are from bones which would provide meat. No evidence for butchery was found.

#### Marine molluscs

By Elizabeth Somerville  
The small sample (Table 5, see microfiche m3) was largely made up of fragments of oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) shell, and is described in more detail in the archive. As all of these specimens were found in the top-soil or upper ditch fills, it is likely that they

are the result of manuring during the medieval and post-medieval periods.

#### LAND-USE HISTORY OF ROUND-THE-DOWN; THE MOLLUSCAN EVIDENCE

By Michael J. Allen  
Over ten years after excavations had been conducted, the site was revisited (in 1985) to obtain samples from the Bronze Age ditch for mollusc analysis. Sampling was undertaken by the writer with the aid of Louise Mount and Paul Hill. A series of



Table 7. Hand picked mollusca (and shells washed from them).

\ Quadrant \ layer	NEQ	NEQ	NEQ	SEQ	SEQ	NEQ	NWQ	SEQ	SWQ	SWQ
	—4—		—3—		2a	—2—				1b
<b>MOLLUSCA</b>										
<i>Pomatias elegans</i> (Müller)	—	—	32	4	—	11	—	22	—	—
<i>Carychium tridentatum</i> (Risso)	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
<i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i> (Müller)	—	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Cochlicopa</i> spp.	—	—	2	—	—	4	—	1	—	—
<i>Pupilla muscorum</i> (Linnaeus)	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
<i>Vallonia costata</i> (Müller)	—	—	—	—	—	17	—	—	—	—
<i>Vallonia excentrica</i> (Sterki)	—	—	1	—	1	4	—	—	—	—
<i>Discus rotundatus</i> (Müller)	—	—	3	—	2	10	—	1	—	—
<i>Vitrea contracta</i> (Westerlund)	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—
<i>Nesovitrea hammonis</i> (Ström)	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Aegopinella pura</i> (Alder)	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Oxychilus cellarius</i> (Müller)	1	—	5	—	3	—	—	2	—	—
Limacidae	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	1	—
<i>Cecilioides acicula</i> (Müller)	9	—	—	—	4	40	—	1	—	—
<i>Cochlodina laminata</i> (Montagu)	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	+	—	—
<i>Candidula intersecta</i> (Poirot)	1	—	4	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
<i>Candidula gigaxii</i> (L. Pfeiffer)	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
<i>Cermeuella virgata</i> (da Costa)	—	—	—	—	—	4	1	—	—	2
<i>Helicella itala</i> (Linnaeus)	3	—	5	—	1	10	—	—	12	1
Helicellids	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
<i>Trichia hispida</i> (Linnaeus)	1	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Arianta arbustorum</i> (Linnaeus)	—	—	—	1	2	2	—	—	—	—
<i>Helicigona lapicida</i> (Linnaeus)	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Cepaea nemoralis</i> (Linnaeus)	+	2	18	4	15	36	2	11	5	—
<i>Cepaea hortensis</i> (Linnaeus)	—	1	8	—	1	2	—	2	—	—
<i>Cepaea/Arianta</i> spp.	—	—	8	—	—	—	—	4	—	—
<i>Helix aspersa</i> (Müller)	40	—	+	—	—	499	—	—	5	2
Taxa	5	2	16	4	9	14	2	10	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>

five spot samples of each layer were taken from the cleaned face of the ditch section in the north-east quadrant (Fig. 3). During excavation a number of caches of land snails were found and collected. These were identified (Table 7) and any soil and smaller shells carefully washed from them and also identified. This information is dealt with separately.

The methods of analysis are outlined by Evans (1972, 45–6) and detailed elsewhere (Allen 1989; 1990) and the results are presented in Table 6 and as a histogram of relative abundance in Figure 4. Mollusc nomenclature follows Waldén (1976).

The V-shaped ditch produced a typical tripartite infill sequence (cf. Evans 1972, 321–8; Limbrey 1975, 290–310) which is described earlier in this report. The basal chalk rubble primary fill probably accumulated over c. 20 years (cf. Bell 1990) and thus the associated mollusc assemblages probably represent the environment immediately prior to the barrow's construction and that contemporary with its construction and initial use. No buried soils were observed within the ditch sequence.

### The Mollusca

The assemblages from the chalk mud and primary fills are significant in that up to 85% belong to Evans' (1972, 194–6) shade-loving group. They are characterized by species commonly associated with decaying plant matter beneath leaf litter on a deciduous woodland floor. The relatively high proportion of Vallonias with *Vitrea contracta* may indicate long

mesic grassland, as argued by Allen for ditch assemblages at Barton, Bedfordshire (1991). Certainly many of these shade-loving species have been recorded in chalk grassland succession communities (Cameron & Morgan-Huws 1975). A shady woodland habitat is confirmed by the record of *Acicula fusca* which is a woodland species in the strict sense. It inhabits mature, undisturbed woodland ecosystems, is anthropophobic and, therefore, relatively rare in Neolithic and post-Neolithic contexts (Evans 1972, 135).

The upper primary and lower secondary fills broadly relate to the periods of the barrow's construction and initial ditch infill. Both these fills produced predominantly shade-loving species which is unusual as normally, barrows were left in open grassland and much of the downland in Sussex at this time was open grassland (Allen 1994). *Carychium* is still dominant but the increase in *Discus rotundatus*, *Acicula fusca* and the Zonitids, particularly *Aegopinella nitidula* and *Oxychilus cellarius*, and the presence of *Balaea perversa*, which lives on tree trunks, indicate that shrubs and perhaps even woodland conditions had been re-established. Such regeneration may represent either the encroachment of the former woodland, or the later stages of a hawthorn sere vegetation community. Whatever the precise nature of this more shady vegetation, it is clear that these conditions were prolonged. Surprisingly, despite the evident human activity, the anthropophobe *A. fusca* is still present. The only open-country species present in any significance

is *Pupilla muscorum* which probably exploited the bare earth habitats created by the weathering sides of the ditch itself.

It is only in the tertiary fills that open-country species become established in any way, but even here a surprisingly high shade-loving element is still in existence. The open-country group is typical of short grassland or even arable contexts, but the shade-loving species such as *Discus* and *Zonitids* shun these environments. It is possible, therefore, that the assemblages relate to two very localized environments: an arable environment around the barrow, and taller herbaceous vegetation and hawthorn shrubs on the mound and ditch. This assemblage included a number of Introduced Helicellids (Table 6) which indicates a medieval or later date (Kerney 1966; 1977). More typical open-country conditions finally prevailed very late in the monument's history. The base of the modern rendzina soil produced assemblages dominated by open-country species, typical of open dry downland and arable activity. One of the Introduced Helicellids, *Cochlicella acuta*, has a maritime distribution (Kerney 1976), but does occur inland (Ellis 1951) and is present in a number of locations in the Lewes area today (Allen personal observation).

#### Hand-picked shells

Usually only the larger specimens are recovered by manual recovery and these are not useful for palaeo-environmental interpretation. Careful cleaning and removal of the soil within the larger shells can sometimes provide an indication of the other smaller species with which it was associated (Table 7). During the excavation, a number of large caches of shells were recovered in the ditch. They were carefully excavated as it was thought that as they came from the lower fills, they may have constituted a part of the Bronze Age diet. However, identification revealed that the most common species (of which one cache included 499 specimens) was the large garden snail, *Helix aspersa*, not known to have existed in this country prior to the Roman period (Kerney 1966; 1977). A high proportion of snails were adult and detailed examination of every complete shell showed no evidence of apertural damage often caused when extracting the snail for consumption. The most likely explanation for the large collections of this species is that they were hibernating in the loose rock rubble. They are known to have gregarious habits and hibernate for six months of the year, often in groups in which individuals affix themselves to each other. That large numbers did not survive can be attributed to the 'species' susceptibility to winter frosts. Indeed, during sampling in March 1985 clusters of hibernating *Helix aspersa* were seen in the thin chalk rubble layers that had accumulated since the excavations were completed ten years earlier.

## CONCLUSION

There is limited evidence for any Neolithic or earlier activity at Round-the-Down; there was little clearance of the primary woodland and only a few pieces of flintwork dating to the Neolithic period were found.

The barrow appears to have been constructed in a small area of recently-cleared woodland, possibly cleared just for that purpose during the early Bronze Age. There was probably a primary burial in a central

## Discussion

The assemblages from the barrow are atypical in the prolonged predominance of shady, albeit local, habitats. It is evident that some of the local Down was cleared in the early Bronze Age, as indicated by the colluvial sequence at Grey Pit (Allen this volume), but there seems to have been little clearance of the woodland on the ridge of Round-the-Down itself at this time. This concurs with the broader picture of the area suggested by Thorley (1971; 1981) from pollen sequence in the Vale of the Brooks where woodland is indicated until the middle Bronze Age, but it is unclear how extensive woodland was, for the foot of the Down was probably already cleared at this time. The clearance at Round-the-Down may have been specifically for the construction of the barrow and its associated activities and, therefore, only localized. The rapid colonization of the ditch occurred probably within about 20 years and indicates that woodland clearance can only have been local. Certainly the topography is such that even a relatively small clearance on the ridge would result in the barrow having been a prominent feature and visible from various vantage points, including from both above (Caburn) and below (Ouse Valley).

It is also clear that after construction the monument was not tended, for the white chalk mound was very soon allowed to become an overgrown morass of vegetation, and probably remained as such through the rest of the prehistoric period. No episodes of temporary clearance associated with secondary activity, as have been demonstrated elsewhere (eg. Buckskin II, Hampshire; Allen *et al.* 1995), were recorded, but here this may have been a failing of the sampling strategy adopted.

Although Round-the-Down itself does not seem to have been ploughed, nor even extensively cleared for rough grazing throughout prehistory, this is not the case for the surrounding downland (Allen 1994; this volume). Certainly, both the Iron Age earthworks at Ranscombe and Caburn were constructed in open short-turfed downland probably with some bracken locally (Dimbleby 1985). Tillage of the slopes adjacent to and beneath Round-the-Down is evidenced in the hillwash recorded in the north face of the quarry section to the east and in the dry valley immediately to the west of the barrow (Fig. 1) and see Allen (1994, fig. 20; this volume, fig. 2). In both cases hillwash as a result of tillage is of early- to middle-Bronze Age date. It is certainly unusual that Round-the-Down, an area of apparently prime agricultural land, does not seem to have been exploited as such in prehistory despite the fact that most of the surrounding land was. Perhaps one can venture to say that the ridge was designated for other activities, one of which may have been the burial of the dead.

pit, although most of the evidence for this had been destroyed by the later robber pit. Following the interment a circular ditch was dug around the burial pit and the chalk excavated from the ditch thrown up to construct the barrow mound over the burial pit.

During the middle and later Bronze Age the barrow mound was not tended, and became overgrown. Although the surrounding downland appears to have been cultivated throughout this period, Round-the-Down itself does not seem to have been cleared for cultivation. This, however,

does not mean that the monument was being ignored; the ditch was still open, and may have provided a suitable place for depositing broken pottery and flint debitage. The flint implements, debitage and pottery dating to the later Bronze Age that were found in the upper ditch fills and top-soil show that there was activity in the immediate vicinity throughout this period.

It is also possible that the monument remained a place for burial as at least one further inhumation was inserted into a grave dug into the barrow ditch, although without firm dating evidence it is impossible to say when. The continued use of the barrow and the uncultivated state of its immediate surroundings do suggest that it was situated in a location that remained ritually important to later generations, and possibly marked a boundary, as has been suggested elsewhere (Butler 1991).

Only in later times were the immediate surroundings cleared for cultivation, and ploughed from the Roman period up to more recent times. This ploughing resulted in the ditch initially silting up, and then, together with most of the barrow mound, being severely truncated, creating a negative lynchet on its western side.

The digging of the robber pit in the centre of the barrow mound has completely destroyed the primary burial pit, and presumably resulted in the destruction or removal of its contents. There has been much antiquarian activity around Lewes since the early 19th century; Gideon Mantell's journal recorded the opening of eight tumuli near Mount Caburn in 1818 (Spokes 1932) and it is therefore likely that Round-the-Down was the victim of one of these antiquarian 'expeditions'.

There are a number of other barrows located on this block of chalk downland between Lewes and the Caburn. However, apart from one barrow which

was recorded before its destruction by quarrying at the golf course on Cliffe Hill (Spokes 1932), none have been subject to recent archaeological investigation. Many of them have been plundered in the past, as Musson records a number of early Bronze Age vessels found in barrows in this area (Musson 1954). Despite the number of barrows, there is no firm evidence for any early Bronze Age settlement here, although the colluvial sequence in the adjacent Grey Pit quarry did suggest that there was a Beaker settlement nearby (Allen this volume). A probable middle Bronze Age cremation burial was found during road construction some 250 m to the south-west of Round-the-Down in 1976 (Bedwin 1978). Any relationship this may have had with the area of the Round-the-Down barrow, however, was destroyed by the quarrying at the Grey Pit. There is substantial evidence for activity during the Iron Age and Roman periods nearby, at Ranscombe (Bedwin 1978) and Mount Caburn (Curwen & Curwen 1927), showing that the downland adjacent to Round-the-Down was being fully exploited in these later periods.

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