I

A COLLARED URN CREMATION ON HOWICK HEUGH, NORTHUMBERLAND

G. Jobey and T. G. Newman

Introduction

The low ridge of the Northumberland Whin Sill known as Howick Heugh lies 1·5 km to the east of the hamlet of Little Houghton and is withdrawn some 2·5 km from the coast (NU 237171). From the west it overlooks Howick Hall, at one time the secluded family seat of the second Earl Grey, better known as Lord Grey of the Reform Bill.

The locality has already received archaeological notice in the pages of these Transactions as the site of a pagan Anglian cemetery, uncovered between 1928 and 1930 during the course of quarrying a rocky knoll which then formed part of the main ridge (fig. 1). The published account of these discoveries was not compiled from the manuscript notes left by R. C. Bosanquet until some years later, and only after further trenching had been carried out by G. S. Keeney in 1937 with negative results.[1] Although only fifteen burials were recorded this cemetery was, and apart from the Yeavering cemeteries still is, the most considerable find of this order in Northumberland.

It is as well to note at this juncture, however, that some of the objects recovered by Bosanquet on his visits to the quarry were not found in strict association with the burials. These included, amongst other things, part of a Roman fibula of second century type and a large base-sherd of native hand-built pottery, not in itself closely datable but at one time referred to generally as Votadinian Ware.[2] In the published account the fibula was merely taken to be an additional indication in favour of a post-Roman date for the cemetery, on the basis that it would have been regarded as a valuable object and accordingly preserved, perhaps after the manner of some Roman objects found on Anglo-Saxon sites elsewhere. Be that as it may, for some reason now difficult to ascertain, no account was rendered at the time of a substantial amount of skeletal material, other than human, which was also recovered from the same area.[3] The bones themselves no longer survive but a detailed report is preserved with

[1] Keeney, G. S., A Pagan Anglian Cemetery at Howick, *Arch. Ael.*,[4] 16 (1939), 120–28.

[2] Richmond, I. A., A potsherd from Ingram Hill and some kindred types of Votadinian pottery, *Arch. Ael.*,[4] 20 (1942), 121–132, no. 11.

[3] This report together with Bosanquet's original notebooks and correspondence are lodged in the record-room, Department of Archaeology, University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

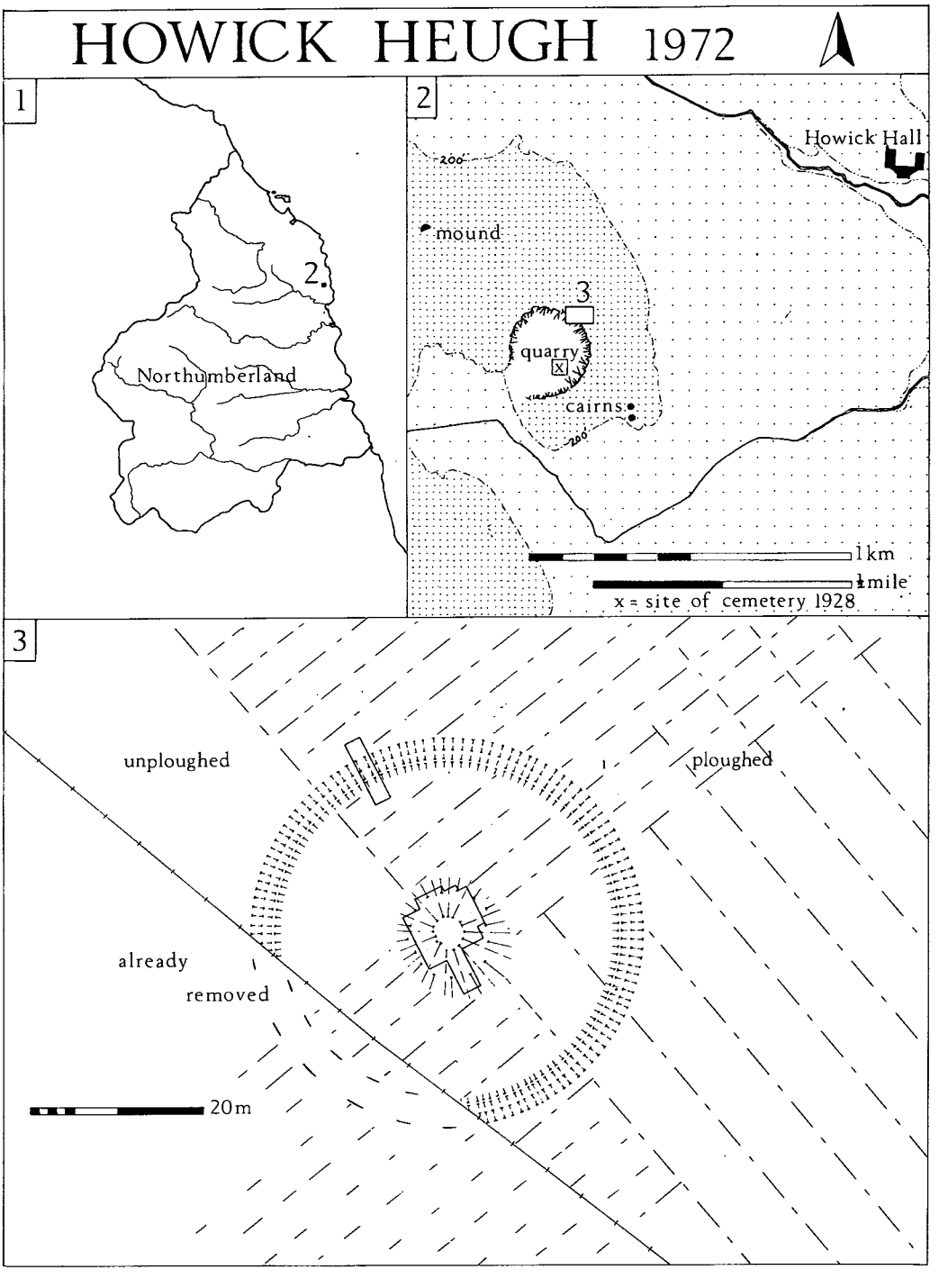
HOWICK HEUGH 1972
1
2
Howick Hall
200
mound
3
quarry
x
cairns
200
Northumberland
1km
½mile
x = site of cemetery 1928
3
unploughed
ploughed
already
removed
20m

Fig. 1

Bosanquet's original notes, and there would seem to be no reason to doubt the meticulous identifications then made by L. Morrison of the Department of Agriculture, Armstrong College, Newcastle upon Tyne. In brief, they included the remains of at least three horses, seventeen oxen, one wild ox, six sheep, five red deer, five pigs, one ? cat, and two birds (possibly geese). There were also quantities of mollusc shells "found in a number of heaps" and, seemingly, not all necessarily associated with the burials, although some limpet and periwinkle shells are recorded as having been found with burial VIII.

All told, the import of this must surely be that from the time of the first discoveries there has been evidence to suggest the possibility of some domestic occupation on the Heugh, perhaps more permanent than could be attributed to Anglian funerary wakes, and, because of the Roman trumpet brooch, if less certainly the native pottery, not necessarily of the same context as the burials themselves. Whereas it has been assumed that all of the inhumations were of the same period, in fact some of these were not accompanied by datable grave-goods and there was also a rather obscure reference to a possible cremation.

Since the publication of the report the extent of the quarry has continued to increase, although no additional finds have been reported. In 1967, however, the existence of an assumed sepulchral monument of Bronze Age context was noted for the first time, lying on the same low ridge but further to the north-east of the assumed site of the Anglian burials. This was recorded tentatively as an enclosed cremation cemetery, although it by no means corresponded in all surface aspects with other monuments of this order then listed in the county or being explored at that time in southern Scotland and northern England.[4] At least in plan it bore a superficial resemblance to some Wessex culture disc barrows, of a type noted particularly in Dorset, where the bank lies within the peripheral ditch.[5]

In 1972, as a proposal to extend the quarry even further to the east threatened the existence of this monument, an investigation was made at short notice in September of that year, under the auspices of the Department of the Environment and with the welcome and necessary co-operation of a small number of internal and extra-mural students of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.[6] Permission to excavate was readily granted by Trocoll Quaries Ltd., the present lessees, and the late Lord Howick, then the landowner.

THE SITE (fig. 1; plate I)

The monument lay on the rather flat crest of the ridge where the turf and soil-cover over brash and bed-rock was clearly fairly shallow. To the east the land slopes away gently but consistently, allowing a prospect over the narrow coastal plain and extending intermittently as far as the coast-line. Even so, the monument would never have been conspicuous from the surrounding countryside, which perhaps accounts for it having escaped earlier records.

[4] Jobey, G., Excavation of cairns at Chatton Sandyford, Northumberland, *Arch. Ael.*,[4] 46 (1968), 42–44. The site was noted from the air by Dr. N. McCord, University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

[5] *v.* now Grinsell, L. V., Disc Barrows, *P.P.S.*, 40 (1974), 83.

[6] In particular we are indebted to Mr. & Mrs. R. Charlton, Miss E. Clark, Miss M. Creighton, Mrs. S. Rolland, Miss M. Mitchison, Mr. J. Day and Mr. M. Higgins. Gratitude must also be expressed to Mr. Oswin Craster, Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, for his help in other directions.

HOWICK HEUGH, Northumberland: as it appeared from the air in 1967

The remains consisted of a low mound, some 8 m across and just over 1 m high, almost but not quite centrally placed within a very low circular bank and shallow external groove, measuring some forty-six metres in overall diameter. It seemed that some earlier investigation could have been made into the central tump in that it lacked symmetry and was somewhat flattened on the top: in addition there were a number of larger whin boulders scattered beyond the mound to the south, as if they had been displaced.

It was already evident, from the original survey made in 1967, that the lower eastern slopes of the ridge had been ploughed at some time in the past, giving rise to a series of small terraces running north to south along the slope. This ploughing had also extended into a slight declivity to the south of the monument, where the soil-cover was deeper. Subsequently, additional air-photographs came to hand which showed faint traces of two further areas of cultivation, extending both from the east and the west up to and possibly into the area enclosed by the outer bank of the monument (fig. 1; plate I).[7] This ploughing was clearly not associated with that which had produced the low rigs on the eastern slope and was not altogether visible from surface observation. Its precise relationship to the monument, therefore, was still uncertain before excavation, although it did seem as if the central mound might have served as a boundary point for the two field-systems.

There are no other remains now visible on what is left of this part of the ridge, but two small and insignificant cairns lie some two hundred and fifty metres to the south-south-east and a partly destroyed mound some five hundred and fifty metres to the north-west.

THE EXCAVATIONS

By the time of the excavations the working face of the quarry lay no great distance to the west and surface-stripping for the extension had already encroached upon the western circumference of the monument. Because of the urgency of the situation, exploration was mainly confined to the central mound, in the belief that a watching brief would be possible when the remainder of the top soil was removed by mechanical means. As it has happened, a change in plan by the quarry operators has delayed this event for two and a half years, until January 1975.

THE CENTRAL MOUND (figs. 2 and 3)

1. LATER DISTURBANCE

The first quadrant to be excavated quickly revealed that the central mound, consisting of a stone ring infilled with earth and brash, had already suffered from widespread investigation. In the final analysis it appeared that entry had probably been made by a cutting from the south, followed by extensive exploration of the interior down to bed-rock. As a result of this

[7] Air photographs A.1101 and A.1102 taken by Dr. N. McCord, record-room, Dept. of Archaeology, University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

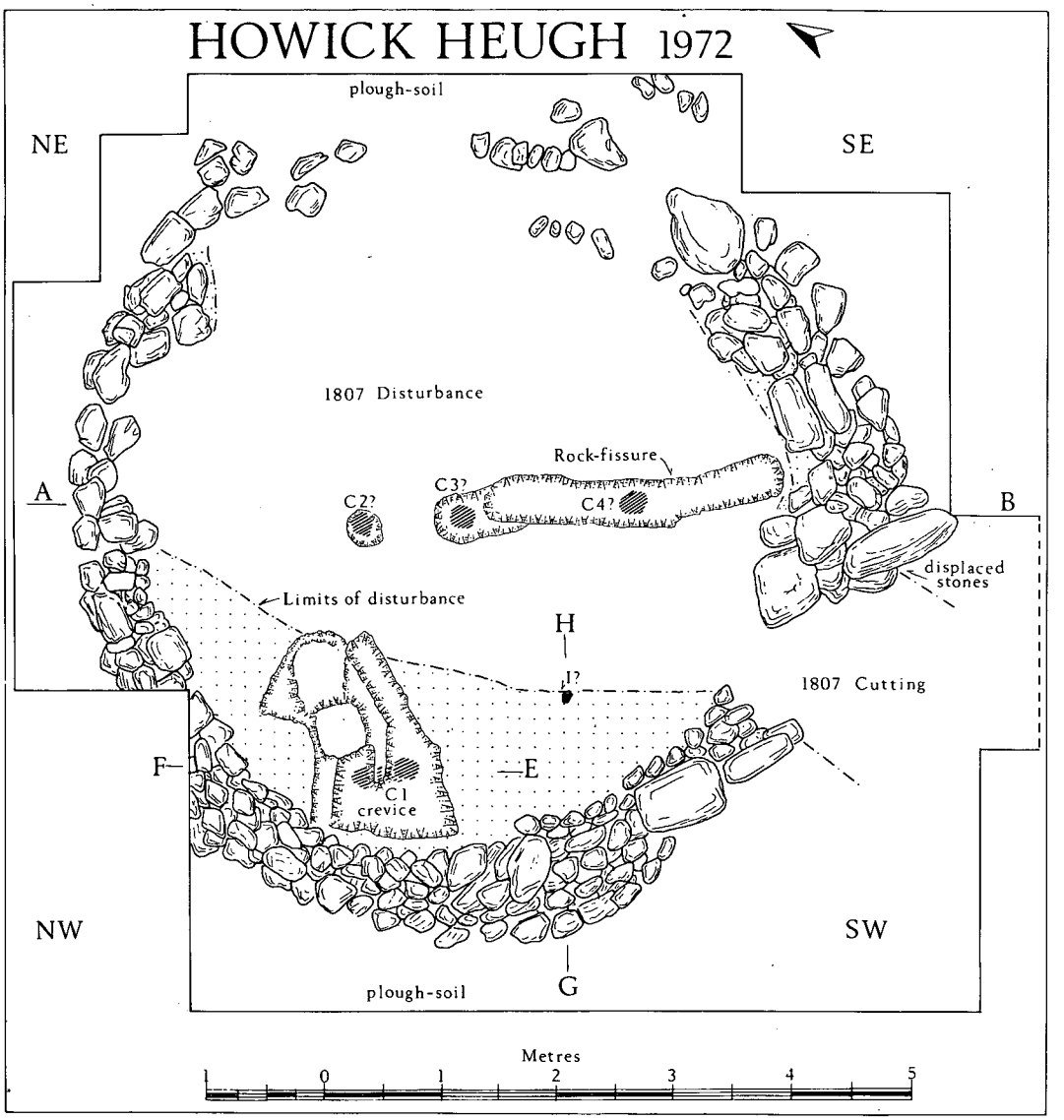
HOWICK HEUGH 1972
plough-soil
NE
SE
1807 Disturbance
Rock-fissure
C3?
C4?
C2?
A
B
displaced stones
Limits of disturbance
H
I?
1807 Cutting
F
E
C1
crevice
NW
SW
plough-soil
G
Metres
0
1
2
3
4
5

Fig. 2

intrusion only a small western portion of the original feature was undisturbed (fig. 2). That the extent of this earlier investigation had not been more noticeable from surface indications must be attributed to the fact that this excavation had been deliberately backfilled, a procedure not generally followed by early antiquaries hereabouts and indicative of unusual respect, unless, perhaps, some other function had been projected for the partly restored mound. Even more unexpected was the attempt which had been made by some northern Colt Hoare or Cunnington to leave on record the context of this activity, perhaps for just such an occasion as this.[8] Amongst the backfilled material of earth and some stones was a compact deposit consisting of an unworn penny of George III, dated 1807, a broken glass bottle of comparable date, and three roughly aligned horse-shoes from a working horse. Whether by intention or not, one of the horse-shoes retained a terminal nail bent inwards, thus rendering a possible pattern of CCG or CCC. Stratigraphically this was most certainly not a foundation deposit for the original mound, but any further enquiry as to its significance, other than as an indication of the date of intrusion, must be left for later discussion.

The suspicion already aroused by the air-photograph, that ploughing at some stage might have extended from the east into the area between the outer bank and the central mound, was confirmed by the presence of scratch marks in the brash and on the underlying rock surface beyond the mound in this sector. Initially, this ploughing could well have ridden up on to the mound itself and on the west had almost certainly done so. Here, at about 250 mm or less below the present turf level, was a thin band of small stones probably marking the bottom of the plough-soil, resting upon the remains of the undisturbed material of the mound (fig. 3). In addition, a number of score-marks showed on the uppermost stones of the stone ring in this arc. As the plough-line was not visible over that part of the mound which had been disturbed by the early nineteenth-century investigators, it may be assumed that this cultivation had taken place some time before 1807 but after the erection of the original mound. Three very small sherds of medieval glazed pottery, recovered from the top soil beyond the mound, could have been introduced with night-soil but are only doubtful indicators of context. There are other much later but more likely occasions when such a thin soil could have been brought under cultivation for what was undoubtedly only a short period.

No further interference with the mound seemed to have occurred after the early nineteenth century, not even when the area was used for some field-exercises in the Second World War. A number of spent ·303 cartridge cases, dated 1941 and 2, were recovered from the top of the mound immediately below the present turf and above the area of the earlier disturbance.

2. THE STONE RING AND ITS INFILL

The stone ring was best preserved on the western circumference of the mound and in places on the south, but had been reduced to a loose rickle of stones in the east and north (fig. 2). Where best preserved it consisted of piled stones, mainly of whin but including some local limestone, resting upon the underlying rock or brash. It was generally no wider than 1 m

[8] For the personal identification marks of Colt Hoare and William Cunnington *v. e.g.* Ashbee, P., *The Bronze Age Round Barrow in Britain* (1960), plate IIa.

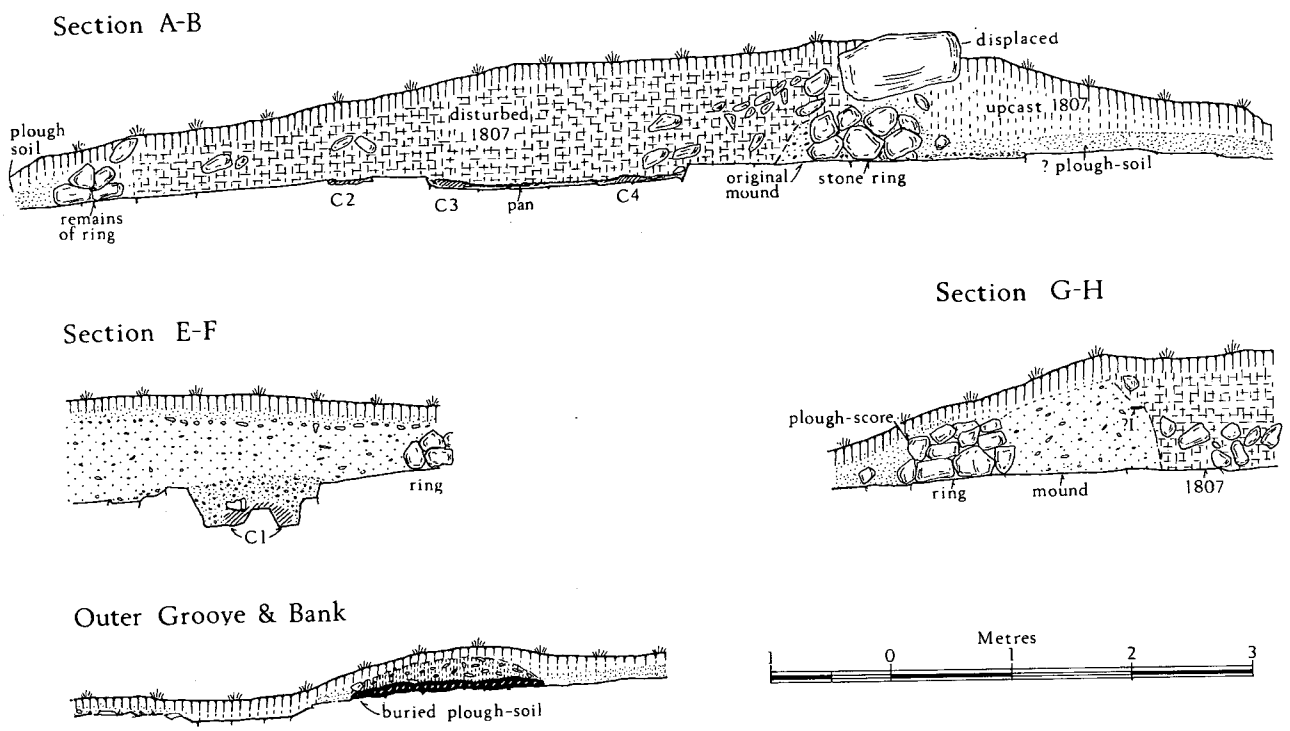

Fig. 3

at the base and at most 0·75 m high, enclosing an area *c.* 5 m in diameter. Some larger whin boulders occurred at intervals in the ring and others had undoubtedly been displaced or rolled out of position in the early nineteenth century. All told, however, these larger stones seemed not to have formed any significant pattern in the ring and, as the structure did not have the real semblance of a built kerb, the descriptive term stone ring is preferred.

Where the mound remained undisturbed, only in the small western portion, it was composed entirely of scraped up earth with an admixture of brash, once again resting directly upon the rocky bottom as if the area had been previously stripped. On the other hand, no turf was encountered amongst the infill in the area available for examination. The height of the mound, including the plough-soil below the present turf, was nowhere more than 0·75 m, and it did not appear to have extended beyond the stone ring in its original form.

3. THE BURIALS

One cremation deposit and the remains of three other possible cremations were found on the bed-rock within the area originally enclosed by the stone ring. No further cremations were encountered, either from beneath the stone ring itself or in the excavated areas beyond, and

recent mechanical stripping has failed to reveal anything of this nature between the central mound and the outer bank.

(a) CREMATION 1 (C 1, figs. 2, 3)

This was in all probability a double, simultaneous deposit, consisting of the remains of a woman over twenty-one years of age and an infant of 1 to 2 years (*v.* below). The cremated remains were mixed with a substantial amount of charcoal and had been placed in two contiguous crevices in the bed-rock, located beneath the undisturbed western portion of the mound and just over half a metre within the inner edge of the stone ring. Although the two crevices were up to 0·3 m deep, they were separated by only a very low intervening ridge and the deposit spread uninterrupted from one to the other. Lying on top of the cremated bone and charcoal in the southern crevice was a small Collared Urn, already broken in antiquity and incomplete when placed on its side with its mouth facing north. Despite the fact that this was in the general direction of the spread of the cremations, the vessel had almost certainly not been used as a receptacle for the remains and must be regarded, therefore, as an accompanying rather than a containing urn. This interpretation was enhanced by the recovery of a further nineteen small fragments of undecorated wall-sherds from the surface of and in the top of the cremated material. Whereas some of these could have been from the same urn, others were most assuredly not; some were abraded and a few so thoroughly vitrified as to suggest that they might have been retrieved from a funerary pyre. None of these fragments conjoined with the collared urn or with each other and no certain attribution as to the form of the additional vessel or vessels can be made. A broken whetstone was also associated with the deposit, but whether by intention or accident must remain unknown. A radiocarbon assay of the charcoal yielded an uncorrected date of 1440±90 b.c. (I—6974; 3390±90 B.P.).

After deposition the whole of these remains had been covered by an infill which contained a greater amount of fine brash than was present in the material of the mound itself. As no accumulation of buried soil or turf line could be distinguished between the two, it is probable that one followed upon the other with little interval in time.

(b) POSSIBLE CREMATIONS 2, 3 and 4 (C 2, 3 and 4, figs. 2 and 3)

These were all located in the area where the early nineteenth-century intrusion had penetrated down to bed-rock. That marked as C2 (?) on the plan was a small pocket of material containing minute flecks of bone and charcoal lying in a small hollow to the north of a long fissure of broken rock-surface. The material was encased in iron-pan and not suitable for radiocarbon assay, even had this been thought desirable. Two additional patches, marked C3 (?) and C4 (?), were similarly preserved in the shallow fissure. Although a small flake of calcined flint was found with C3 it bore no evidence of having been used as an implement. Whereas it is possible that these restricted patches of cremated material could have been the remains of a more extensive spread from a pyre, this would seem to be unlikely in view of the scarcity of charcoal elsewhere on the rock surface and amongst the backfilled earth.

(c) POSSIBLE INHUMATION (I?, figs. 2, 3)

Part of a crushed male skull-cap was found 0·45 m below the present surface of the mound in the south west quadrant and on the very edge of the early nineteenth-century disturbance. Two additional fragments of skull-cap were also recovered from the backfill in the same area, but at a slightly higher level. The location was such that a secondary flexed or extended inhumation could have been removed by the earlier excavators, although no further bones were present in the backfill as corroborative evidence for this interpretation and, in the event, it proved impossible to delineate the edge of a secondary grave in the undisturbed part of the mound. The only other solution would be to assume that part of a skull had been scraped up from elsewhere in the process of gathering material for the original mound.

4. OTHER ACTIVITY IN THE AREA OF THE MOUND

A number of small finds were recovered from the backfill in the area of the earlier excavations or in the top soil beyond the mound. Six sherds, belonging to a hand-built vessel with an incurving rim, came from the backfill in the north east quadrant. It is a type which could have had a long tradition in pre-Roman and Roman contexts (*v.* small finds, fig. 4:2). In this instance its original association is unknown, but a sepulchral context with a secondary burial, later removed by the earlier investigators, seems most unlikely. Some fragments from a native hand-built pot with a pinched out rim were also recovered from the top soil well beyond the mound and stone ring in the south west quadrant. In the plough-soil beyond the disturbed circumference of the stone ring in the east were two sherds of Roman coarse pottery and a fragment from a shale pendant together with a core from a lathe-turning in the same material. All told, the native and Roman pottery and, more particularly, the shale core, would suggest the presence of some later domestic activity in the area, unconnected with the earlier mound or secondary burials.

THE OUTER GROOVE AND BANK (figs. 1, 3)

Time and resources allowed only one cutting to be made over this feature, the unsubstantial nature of which had already been revealed by the quarry operations on its western circumference. The bank was no more than 0·75 m wide at the base and 0·4 m high, and it had probably never been more upstanding. It consisted of a mixture of earth and brash scraped up from a shallow outer groove which did not penetrate the underlying bed-rock. Beneath the bank was a thick band of buried soil, such as had not been encountered beneath the central stone ring, from which was recovered a small wall-sherd of native hand-built pottery, most probably of Iron Age or Roman context (*v.* small finds, below).

More recent mechanical stripping of the whole area has demonstrated the slight nature of this feature elsewhere and confirmed the consistent presence of the buried soil beneath the bank. It will be evident, therefore, that such an inconsiderable feature would hardly have survived the later ploughing which, as we have seen, had undoubtedly taken place, and must

post-date it. In this event, the buried earth beneath the bank would be earlier plough-soil. Despite the apparent concentricity of the outer bank and groove to the central stone ring and mound, it then follows that the former must post-date the latter, perhaps by a considerable span of time. Such a solution would also meet the requirements of the single sherd of native pottery found beneath the bank. Whether or not historical rather than archaeological evidence can be invoked to give a context to the addition of this outer bank and groove is best left for consideration in the final discussion.

SMALL FINDS

POTTERY

1. *Fig. 4:1.* This small Collared Urn, only 135 mm high, was already broken and incomplete when deposited with the cremated remains of a female and child (cremation 1). The core is dark grey, the surfaces light brown to pink in colour, and the fabric contains numerous grits. Decoration consists entirely of twisted cord impressions; two roughly parallel lines on the bevel of the rim, four lines each with some overlap on the collar, and a haphazard arrangement of short vertical lines on the body. Hitherto it would probably have qualified for the tail-end of Longworth's Primary Series,[9] and the radiocarbon date of 1440±90 b.c. for the cremation would be in keeping with this, but the validity of this Series has been questioned more recently elsewhere.[10]

Similar, small, Collared Urns are not infrequent. A reasonably close northern parallel is the smaller urn found in the cremation cairn at Gourlaw,[11] Midlothian, although the twisted cord decoration is somewhat different and extends on to the inner wall-surface of the vessel. Attention has already been drawn elsewhere to the frequency of accompanying or accessory vessels which contain only a token quantity of bone or selected bones, sometimes no more than earth or charcoal, or, as in the case of the Howick urn, appear to have been completely empty when deposited.[12] Some of the small Collared Urns from Goodmanham,[13] E.R. Yorkshire, are comparable in this respect, although these were complete vessels. In form and decoration the small urn from Goodmanham LXXXIII is fairly close to the Howick urn. It is less easy to find similar vessels which were certainly already broken before deposition, but one might question if all the urns from the "ring-work" at Totley,[14] Derbyshire, were complete when placed in their respective cremation-pits. Cremation 3 with a Collared Urn, slightly larger but similar to the Howick vessel, and a Pygmy Cup, is a case in point. This particular cremation is not dated but others in the same cemetery have uncorrected radiocarbon dates of 1530±150, 1250±150 and 1050±150 b.c.

2. *Not illustrated.* Reference has already been made to the presence of a further nineteen undecorated

[9] Longworth, I., The origins and the development of the Primary Series in the Collared Urn tradition in England and Wales, *P.P.S.*, 27 (1961), 263–306.

[10] Lynch, F., Report on the re-excavation of two Bronze Age cairns in Anglesey: Bedd Branwen and Treiorwerth, *Arch. Camb.*, 120 (1971), 11–84.

[11] Coles, F. R., Notice of the exploration of the remains of a cairn of the Bronze Age at Gourlaw, Midlothian, *P.S.A.S.*, 39 (1904–5), 411–17.

[12] Lynch, F., *op. cit.* n. 10.

[13] Greenwell, W., *British Barrows* (1877), 287–8.

[14] Radley, J., A Bronze Age Ring-work on Totley Moor and other Bronze Age Ring-works in the Pennines, *Arch. J.*, 123 (1966), 1–26.

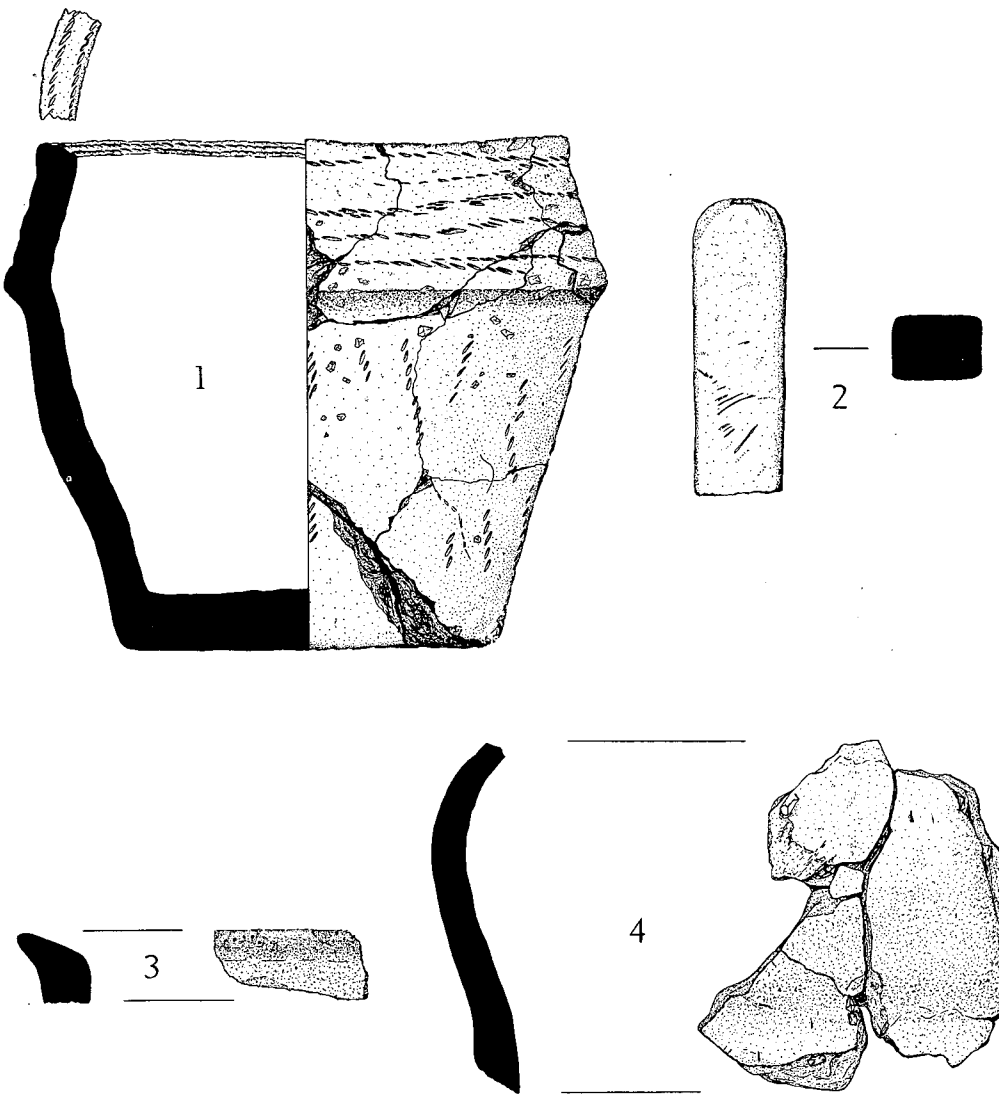

Fig. 4 ($\frac{1}{2}$)

wall-sherds with the same double cremation. Nine of these small sherds up to 12 mm thick have light brown to pink surfaces and grey cores containing numerous grits. Although these could belong to the small Collared Urn above, none of them conjoin with each other or with the urn as found, and some have been abraded before deposition. In any event, taken as a whole, they are not in sufficient quantity to have completed this vessel.

A further six small fragments, not conjoining, almost assuredly come from a different vessel or vessels of unknown form, but are not from a small accessory vessel such as a Pygmy Cup. Surfaces are brown to red in colour and the cores grey, whilst the fabric is more sandy and the grits less prominent than in the case of the Collared Urn. One of these sherds has a thin carbon encrustation on its surface as if it might have been from a vessel used in a domestic context.

Four vitrified sherds have been so thoroughly burnt that they defy any meaningful description, but serve to confirm the impression that this pottery had been gathered together in fragments and deposited with the cremations.

3. *Fig. 4:4.* Six sherds, some but not all conjoining and some abraded, are from a hand-built vessel with a bulging shoulder leading to a simple incurving rim. The outer surfaces are light brown to pink in colour, the core grey, and the fabric contains some large grits which tend to break the surfaces. All were recovered from the backfill of the early nineteenth-century investigations into the central mound in the north-east quadrant.

A very similar large jar was found, together with Roman pottery, in a hut which formed part of the Romano-British settlement at Hownam Rings,[15] Roxburghshire. Although a Roman context was understandably assigned to it, it may not be without significance that this site also has a long pre-Roman history. Almost certainly an identical vessel from the palisaded and embanked enclosure at Ingram Hill,[16] Northumberland, would seem to have a good pre-Roman context, possibly as early if not earlier than the third century b.c. on conventional dating. Moreover, similar hand-built vessels, but in different fabrics and with varying degrees of bulging on the shoulder, have been recorded, for example, from Tynemouth,[17] Northumberland; Traprain Law,[18] East Lothian; Dalnaglar,[19] Perthshire; and Kaimes Hill,[20] Midlothian. To some extent the basic form is also present in the so-called Dunagoil ware of the Scottish vitrified forts.[21] On some of these sites the pre-Roman nature of the form would seem to be assured although the context of its emergence is best left for discussion in a paper on native pottery currently in progress.

In this instance, the manner in which such a vessel found its way into the backfill is open to conjecture, but any association with the original mound, even in a secondary, funerary context, seems most unlikely. Rather, this vessel together with the sherd of similar fabric from beneath the outer bank and other native sherds from the top soil beyond the mound itself (*v.* 4 and 5 below) are best understood as representative of some later occupation in the general area of the ridge.

4. *Not illustrated.* Two undecorated wall-sherds of coarse hand-built pottery similar to no. 3 above. Found, together with a fragment of modern, white glazed pottery, in the top-soil beyond the periphery of the mound in the south-east quadrant.

5. *Fig. 4:3.* One pinched out rim-sherd and one wall-sherd, not conjoining but from the same hand-built vessel. The fabric is sandy to touch and contains small grits. Surfaces shade from grey to black in colour and there is a sooty deposit on both surfaces as if the pot has come from a domestic context.

[15] Piggott, C. M., The excavations at Hownam Rings, Roxburghshire, *P.S.A.S.*, 82 (1947–8), 213.

[16] Hogg, A. H. A., Further excavations at Ingram Hill, *Arch. Ael.*,[4] 34 (1956), 156. Jobey, G., Excavations at Brough Law and Ingram Hill, *Arch. Ael.*,[4] 49 (1971), 89.

[17] Jobey, G., Excavations at Tynemouth Priory and Castle, *Arch. Ael.*,[4] 45 (1967), 68.

[18] Curle, A. O. and Cree, J. E., Excavations on Traprain Law in the parish of Prestonkirk, Haddington, in 1915, *P.S.A.S.*, 50 (1915–16).

[19] Stewart, M. E. C., The excavation of two circular enclosures at Dalnaglar, Perthshire, *P.S.A.S.*, 95 (1961–2), 155.

[20] Simpson, D. D. A., Excavations at Kaimes hillfort, Midlothian, 1964–68, *Glasgow Arch. J.*, I (1969), 7–28.

[21] McKie, E., The vitrified forts of Scotland, in *Hillforts* (ed. D. Harding 1974—forthcoming).

Similar basic rim-forms can be found, for example, as far afield as Covesea,[22] Morayshire, and at Traprain Law,[23] but these are not closely datable and the fabrics naturally vary.

6. *Not illustrated.* Two small sherds of Roman pottery, one a wall-sherd from a flagon in orange coloured fabric, the other a base-sherd probably from a small jar in light grey fabric with darker, abraded surfaces. Both sherds could be late first, second century in date. They were both found in the top soil beyond the periphery of the central mound in the north-east quadrant.

7. *Not illustrated.* Two small sherds of medieval pottery, originally glazed but now much abraded, found with no. 6 above.

STONE AND SHALE

1. *Fig. 4:2.* Part of a fine grained whetstone deposited with the Collared Urn on top of cremation 1.

2. *Fig. 5:2.* A small, much abraded fragment of black shale pendant or bracelet, probably originally some 13 mm thick and between 80 and 100 mm in diameter. Found in the top soil near to the Roman pottery, no. 6 above. There are local shales in the vicinity which are exposed on the coast.

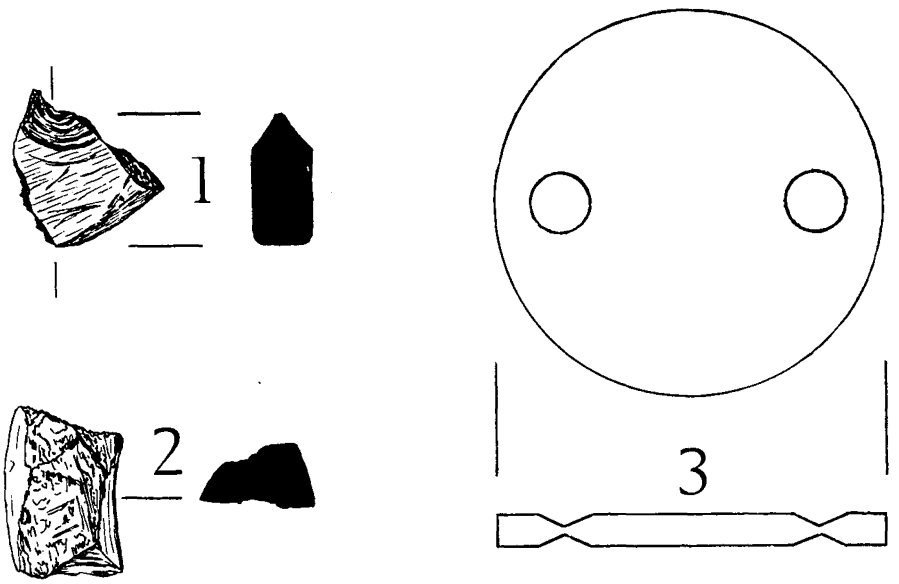

Fig. 5. 1: Shale lathe-core, 2: Shale pendant or bracelet, $(\frac{1}{1})$ 3: Diagram of complete lathe-core.

3. *Fig. 5:1.* A fragment of the same material, apparently originally circular in shape. There are the remains of two small, conical-shaped borings, one on either face, which do not penetrate the thickness of the disc. This is in all probability a core from a lathe-turning, in which event at least another boring on each face would have been present on the missing part. The provenance was as no. 2 above.

[22] Benton, S., The excavation of the Sculptor's Cave, Covesea, *P.S.A.S.*, 65 (1930–31), 177–216.

[23] Cruden, S. H., The ramparts of Traprain Law: Excavations in 1939, *P.S.A.S.*, 74 (1939–40), 48–59.

The best known examples of such cores are from the Kimmeridge Shale industry,[24] although in this instance the holes for the chuck are mainly rectangular or square in shape. Locally, perhaps the closest parallels would be from Traprain Law,[25] East Lothian. Possibly, although not certainly, both the pendant and the core are Roman in date.

4. *Not illustrated.* One small calcined flake of flint having no secondary working, found with possible cremation no. 3.

METAL

Apart from the nineteenth-century coin and horse-shoes, and the more recent cartridge cases, to which reference has been made, there was only one other find of this order. This was a very small bobble of copper alloy, previously fused, to which no certain function or context can be attributed. It was recovered from the area of the nineteenth-century disturbance.

SKELETAL REMAINS

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1. Urn Burial (C 1)

The skeletal remains consisted of a quantity of calcined and thoroughly fragmented bones. There were only about a dozen pieces as large as 50 mm long, the majority being 20 mm or less. All identifiable fragments were human. Among them was part of a mandible of an individual who was probably female. The roots of teeth present included those of a mature maxillary third molar which is fully developed at about 21 years of age.

Among the fragments there were also some pieces of a thin skull vault, small ribs, and the partly developed crowns of two molars. Because of the loss of enamel from the teeth during cremation it has not been possible to identify these two molars more exactly except that they may be either second deciduous or the first permanent molars. These factors taken together suggest a child of approximately 1–2 years of age.

It would appear that the cremated remains are probably those of a woman over 21 years of age, and an infant of 1–2 years. There was no evidence of more individuals.

2. Bone fragments from the mound

The material consisted of 24 fragments of bone of 20 mm or more in size and a few lesser pieces.

All were cranial and the majority were unremarkable pieces of skull-cap. Exceptions were the three largest, namely, a portion of a parietal bone including the posterior-superior angle, a bit of the squamous part of an occipital bone, and part of a frontal bone including the upper border of the left orbit. Another small fragment of a frontal bone showed part of the frontal crest.

These four pieces of bone were human, and as all the remaining fragments were similar in texture and appearance, it was concluded that they represented the remains of one skull. This individual was a

[24] Calkin, J. B., "Kimmeridge Coal Money", *Proc. Dorset N.H. & A. Soc.*, 75 (1955), 45–71.

[25] Cree, J. E., Excavations at Traprain Law, *P.S.A.S.*, 57 (1922–23), Fig. 13, 33.

mature adult and the presence of some degree of supra-orbital prominence suggested that this was a male.

3. Charcoal from Cremation 1

Identification of woods not available at time of writing.

Discussion and Conclusions

The low central mound of this monument was initially a cremation-barrow of the Early Bronze Age, later disturbed by ploughing and, eventually, some widespread investigation carried out in the early nineteenth century. Originally it had consisted of a stone ring with an earth and brash infill which covered one double cremation, accompanied by a Collared Urn, and possibly three additional cremations. Whether or not the construction of the stone ring had preceded the deposition of the cremations cannot be known for certain, but it may well have served as a ritual demarcation of the area prior to acting as a kerb for the low mound. From the evidence obtained from the undisturbed portion of the mound it seems that no appreciable time had elapsed between the covering of the urn cremation and the subsequent overall filling of the enclosed area. A radiocarbon date of 1440±90 b.c. (calibrated *c.* 1840–1690 B.C.) was obtained for this cremation.

The Howick barrow provides yet another example of the re-emergence, if not the continuation, of the practice of cremation during the Early Bronze Age, and is probably in the tradition of the family-orientated Neolithic type of collective burial, as discussed recently by Miss Frances Lynch.[26] Although the users of cinerary urns buried their dead in a variety of monuments, there would seem to be a preference for barrow-burials roughly south of the Tees across to the Wirral.[27] But there are exceptions, of which Howick must be one. Even so, it takes its place amongst the general range of northern enclosed cremation cemeteries, many exhibiting elements of the earlier henge tradition, and some of which certainly have comparable radiocarbon dates.[28] The Howick date also provides further proof, if indeed this is still required, of the earliness of the cinerary urn tradition, and, therefore, one of the flaws in the former Bronze Age pottery sequence which delayed the appearance of the Collared Urn along with other forms of cinerary vessels.

Although attention has been drawn recently to a number of barrows in northern Britain which seem to bear a resemblance to certain Wessex barrows,[29] the superficial similarity of the Howick monument to a Dorset-type disc barrow was not borne out in excavation. Despite the near concentricity of the widely spaced outer bank and groove to the central mound, this peripheral feature cannot be associated with the original cremation-barrow. Ploughing of the

[26] Lynch, F., *op. cit.* note 10.

[27] *v.* now for summary of evidence and C14 dates, Burgess, C., The Bronze Age, in *British Prehistory* (ed. Renfrew, C., London 1974), esp. 227.

[28] For recent summary with dates *v.* Ritchie, G. and MacLaren, A., Ring Cairns and related monuments in Scotland, *Scottish Arch. Forum* (Glasgow 1972), 13–17. The only other radiocarbon date for a Collared Urn with cremation in Northumberland is that from Kirkhill, reading 1292±90 b.c. (*v. Arch. Ael.*,[5] 2 (1974), 187).

[29] Feachem, R. W., Berms, banks, ditches and platforms associated with barrows in Scotland, *Scottish Arch. Forum* (Glasgow, 1972), 105–108.

area, probably at some time later than nearby rig cultivation and almost certainly before the investigation of the central mound in 1807, denies such a relationship, in that the outer bank appeared to be later than this ploughing. In any event, the outer bank was of such an inconsiderable stature that it would not have survived even a minimal amount of ploughing.

In looking for an occasion when such an addition could have been made, there may be significance in the manner in which the central mound was partly restored by backfilling in 1807 and, indeed, the nature of the deposit then made to mark this activity. If the three horse-shoes aligned CCG or CCC were not merely a traditional offering to good fortune, still less a somewhat lame *in memoriam* to a faithful equine servant, then the possibility of a personal mark needs to be considered. The three Northumbrian families entitled to use horse-shoes as part of their personal insignia are almost certainly eliminated as possible candidates at this time. More likely contenders might be thought to lie in the Grey family, as long established landowners of the Heugh. Unfortunately, Charles Grey, shortly to become the second Earl, although out of parliamentary office from March 1807 and more free than ever to enjoy the seclusion of nearby Howick and, incidentally, riding on the Heugh,[30] is wanting a suitable additional initial and has no known reputation for antiquarian pursuits. Likewise, other members of this large family at that time also fail to qualify. Even so, it is difficult to escape the feeling that the activities of 1807 are to be related in some manner to the Grey family. The year was one of some importance in the family history, even if for no other reason than that General Sir Charles Grey, the first Earl for a short period, died at Fallodon in Northumberland in November 1807 and his eldest son Charles Grey, until then Lord Howick, became the second Earl. Just such an event might have promoted the resolution to leave the unusual record in the central tump of the monument and to circumscribe the whole by the small outer bank and groove. This may offer a seemingly unlikely explanation, but the eighteenth century burial of that remarkable steed, "Beware Chalk Pit", in the top of the Farley Mount barrow in Hampshire and, at the same time, its circumscription by a bank and outer ditch, may serve as an apt illustration of the occurrence of the improbable.[31] Farley Mount is a well-known landmark in Hampshire and was possibly not unknown to some members of the Grey family. But to invoke the fact that one of Charles Grey's brothers, George, was Commissioner of the Portsmouth Dockyard at this very time,[32] may be to carry the hypothesis too far. All that can be said with certainty is that a search through such Grey family papers as are readily available in the area has not produced any direct reference to this unusual monument on the Heugh.[33]

One further aspect of the recent excavations needs to be mentioned. The recovery of some Roman and native sherds, together with evidence for the possible contemporary manufacture of shale pendants, when considered in conjunction with the Roman brooch, native pot, and domestic skeletal rubbish from the area of the so-called pagan Anglian cemetery, must surely point to the former presence of some settlement site on the Heugh itself. Although no earthworks are now visible, the potential of the area in this respect should not be overlooked in the event of further encroachments by the quarry.

[30] Trevelyan, G. M., *Lord Grey of the Reform Bill* (London, 1920), esp. p. 110.

[31] Crawford, O. G. S. & Keiller, A., *Wessex from the Air* (Oxford, 1928), 102–3.

[32] Creighton, M., *Memoir of Sir George Grey* (London, 1901), 12.

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