

# An Iron Age Tumulus on Warborough Hill, Stiffkey, Norfolk.

COMMUNICATED BY

RAINBIRD CLARKE AND H. APLING,

with contributions by

L. CHALK, D.Phil., GRAHAME CLARK, Ph.D., F.S.A., C. FORSTER COOPER, M.A.,  
CHRISTOPHER HAWKES, F.S.A., J. WILFRID JACKSON, D.Sc., F.G.S.,  
O. K. SCHRAM, Ph.D., and Miss M. L. TILDESLEY.

## I. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS.

The main coast road between Wells and Stiffkey surmounts by easy gradients the ridge of glacial gravel running northward from the Stiffkey river to end seaward in the flat-topped eminence now known as Warborough Hill. Bounded on the south by this road, the hill is 1000 feet from the western boundary of Stiffkey with Warham All Saints, and is separated by two fields, now arable, from the salt marshes, whose present boundary with the sea is slightly less than one mile to the north. Warborough Hill is oval in plan, about 500 feet in length by 250 in width, the longer axis running north-west and south-east, and the original area was about  $3\frac{1}{3}$  acres.<sup>1</sup> The whole hilltop is about 100 feet O.D., and the vertical height of its sides, which are precipitous

<sup>1</sup> 25 inches to 1 mile, O.S. Norfolk, Sheet VIII., 4, No. 59 (1928 edit.), and 6 inches to 1 mile, Sheet VIII., north-east (1929 edit.).

on all save the north-east, varies from 25 to 30 feet. The barren nature of this small elevated plateau is illustrated by the stunted vegetation of heath plants, gorse, and small trees on its top and western verge. This is accounted for by its exposed position and by the poverty of the soil—normally only 6 to 9 inches of humus overlying coarse gravel. This hill, astride the peninsula formed by the River Stiffkey and the sea, is remarkable for the wide expanse of coast visible from its summit.<sup>1</sup>

At the north-west extremity of the hill is an emaciated mound with ditch on the south side but obliterated by modern quarrying operations on the north. This spolia-tion renders difficult an accurate estimate of its original dimensions. The mound is now 48 feet in diameter from north-east to south-west with a ditch 14 feet wide on this side. A cross section in the same horizontal plane measures 42 feet and 8 feet respectively, though if due allowance is made for the rise in the present floor of the ditch on the south side, the results are 40 feet and 12 feet.<sup>2</sup> On top of the tumulus is an oval concavity about 30 feet in diameter and 13 inches in depth at the centre. The brim of this saucer-shaped depression forms the summit of the existing mound and varies from 4 to 17 inches below 100 feet O.D., that is, below the general level of the hilltop. From the top of the barrow to the present bottom of the ditch on the south-west side is 5 feet vertically, while the corresponding measurement on the south-east side is 4 feet.

Like the remainder of the hilltop the tumulus is much overgrown by vegetation, while its loose material has proved unfortunately attractive to rabbits.

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Clarke, *Norfolk and Suffolk*, 1921, p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> The slightly larger figures given in a preliminary note in *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia*, vol. vii., 1934, p. 410, are from measurements made from the centre of the ditch.

## II. ARCHÆOLOGICAL RECORD.

No ancient spellings are known of the name "Warborough Hill." On Donald and Milne's survey of 1797 it is called "Walbury Hill." In 1826 it appears as "Warburrow Hill" on Bryant's map; in 1831 Woodward terms it "Warbury Hill"; while in 1838 the Ordnance Survey gave currency to the present standard form. Dr. O. K. Schram interprets the name thus: "Until evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, I explain the name as 'ward-berg' with the later addition of 'hill,' that is, Old English compound 'weard-beorg'—'guard or look-out hill,' in which 'beorg' might mean either hill or barrow, but it seems likelier to me—and more intelligible—that the reference was to a 'hill' on which watch was kept, than to a 'barrow.'"

Considering the meagre archæological record of the site the mis-conceptions relating to it are surprising. On the slender strength of the name, Faden's map by Donald and Milne inserted a Roman camp at this site. In 1809 Britton casually referred to the existence of tumuli at or near Stiffkey, but gave no details.<sup>1</sup> It was not till 1830 that Samuel Woodward recognised the true nature of the site in a paper read to the Society of Antiquaries. He later published his conclusions, marking the site on the accompanying map.<sup>2</sup> "The next place on the coast (eastward from Holkham) is 'Warbury Hill,' which in Faden's Map of the County is named as a Roman Camp: it has a commanding appearance, and is seen for a long distance. On examination no trace of a camp is observable: on the north side are the remains of a tumulus twenty paces across;

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Brayley and J. Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales*, vol. xi., 1809, p. 15, and *The Antiquary*, vol. xlix., 1913, p. 417.

<sup>2</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xxiii., 1831, p. 361 (Roman Norfolk).

it is concave in the middle, and the ditch surrounding it is about 6 feet in depth." Despite this definite denial the legend of "ancient entrenchments" died hard, for it is found among well-informed writers in 1902 and 1905,<sup>1</sup> and still survives in less reputable publications. To return to the tumulus. Beloe merely refers to the site in terms of measured vagueness,<sup>2</sup> while W. G. Clarke in 1904,<sup>3</sup> misreading Woodward, removed the tumulus to Holkham, and in 1913 relegated it to Warham.<sup>4</sup> Yet the existence of this tumulus has been completely overlooked by the Ordnance Survey, despite the independent recognition of its character by numerous archæologists.<sup>5</sup>

Where material finds are concerned the record of Stiffkey is insignificant, comprising a few flint implements, not closely dateable at present, and a small hoard of Roman coins. The fields on the north-east of Warborough Hill have yielded a coarsely flaked axe, probably an agricultural implement rather than a real axe, to Mr. J. E. Sainty,<sup>6</sup> and to him and to the late Mr. F. H. Barclay a number of coarse scrapers, all showing much cortex. The whole series may be Neolithic or Bronze Age in date. In 1931 Mr. Barclay found a flat axe with much cortex, above Stiffkey Hall, and other implements north-east of the village.<sup>7</sup> In the summer of the same year Mr. C. E. Blunt purchased from a dealer at Wells 18 Roman coins, apparently

<sup>1</sup> W. A. Dutt, *Norfolk*, 1902, p. 203, corrected in *Norfolk and Suffolk Coast*, 1909, p. 239; and J. Hooper, *Nelson's Homeland*, 1905, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> *Cambridge Antiquarian Society's Communications*, vol. ix., 1899, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> *Norwich Mercury*, July 2nd, 1904 (Norfolk Barrows).

<sup>4</sup> *The Antiquary*, vol. xlix., 1913, p. 423, quoted by H. St. George Gray, *Antiquaries' Journal*, vol. xiii., 1933, p. 399.

<sup>5</sup> e.g., by H. Dixon Hewitt, F.G.S., who recorded it on August 27th, 1906 (W. G. Clarke MSS., Norwich Central Library).

<sup>6</sup> In possession of J. E. Sainty, to whom we owe this information. *Proceedings of Prehistoric Society of East Anglia*, vol. vi., 1931, p. 385.

<sup>7</sup> In possession of F. H. Barclay (1934), to whom we owe this information.

forming a hoard, found at an unknown site at Stiffkey.<sup>1</sup> The coins ranged from Volusian to Victorinus and were probably concealed about 270 A.D. Though no proof can be adduced, it is not improbable that the hoard came from Warborough Hill, as the extensive gravel pits there were the only large excavations in the area at that time.

### III. THE EXCAVATIONS OF 1934:

#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS OF TUMULUS.

In September, 1934, it was learnt that the quarrying for gravel, which had been proceeding for over thirty years, was now threatening the tumulus with imminent destruction. On the advice of the Ancient Monuments Department of H.M. Office of Works it was decided to excavate immediately, and the Norfolk and Norwich Archæological Society made a small grant for this purpose. Owing to limitations of time and finance it was impossible to remove all the remains of the mound, and consequently the investigations of September 27th to October 1st were confined to the limited aim of salvaging the maximum of information before the inevitable destruction of the mound and its contents.

At the beginning of the excavation the position of the gravel sub-soil was ascertained by a trial section at R (*see* Figure 1). A trench 65 feet long and 4 feet 3 inches wide was driven from north-east to south-west through the centre of the mound, the ditch, and surrounding bank, exposing the area to the sub-soil beneath. At the centre of the long axis of the mound a cross-trench of the same width and 16 feet in length

<sup>1</sup> *Numismatic Chronicle*, 5th series, vol. xi., 1931, pp. 316-7 (list of coins); vol. xii., 1932, *Proceedings*, p. 27. Except two or three coins at the British Museum, the hoard is in possession of Christopher E. Blunt, 15, Gerald Road, S.W.1, from whom this information.

PLAN OF TUMULUS ON  
WARBOROUGH HILL,  
STIFFKEY, NORFOLK

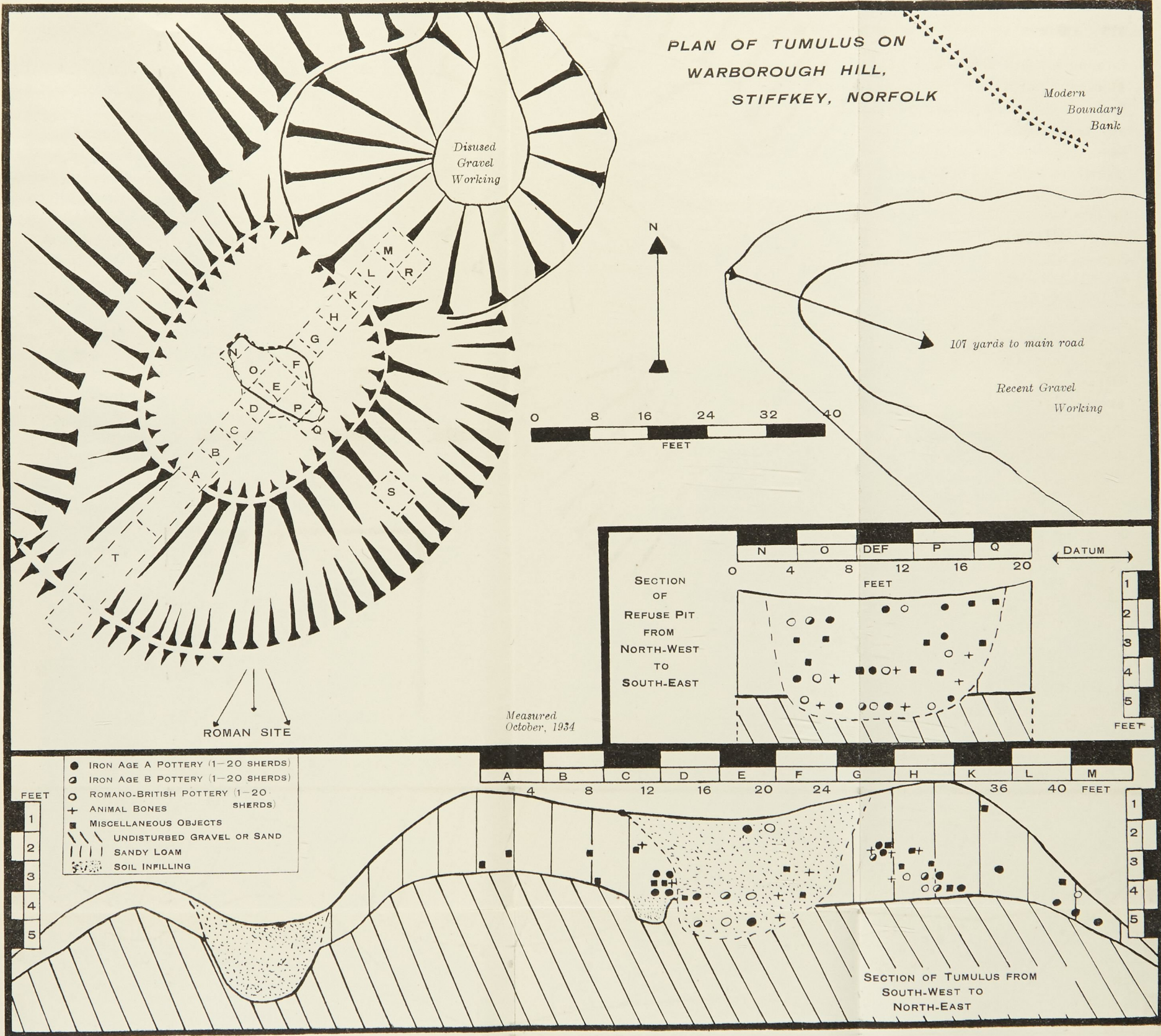


Figure 1. Plan and Sections of Tumulus on Warborough Hill, Stiffkey.

was excavated. Subsequently the corners at the intersection of these two trenches were bevelled. Finally a section was dug in the ditch at S.

It was soon evident that the mound and its contents had been subjected to a number of serious disturbances. The concave instead of the normal convex outline of the mound probably indicated extensive excavation in the centre prior to 1830. This view was confirmed when the turf was removed from the main cross-section, revealing a sharp soil contrast at the edges of this concavity. The scattered potsherds of Iron Age and Roman date outside the numerous rabbit burrows, particularly on the north side, presaged the destruction within. The disused gravel workings on the north-east not only destroyed that sector of the ditch but probably also damaged the mound. Finally, the ditch and mound were badly overgrown by gorse bushes, while within living memory the hilltop had been under the plough.

Owing to these various agents of confusion it proved difficult to establish the old ground surface with precision, but judging from the contour of the sub-soil of coarse gravel, the tumulus builders took advantage of a slight knoll of this material capped by surface soil a few inches in depth. Except on the south-east side where this knoll coalesced with the hilltop the sub-soil was not apparently excavated from the ditch to swell the mound. The surface soil quarried from the ditch was insufficient to build the tumulus to its probable original height of 4 feet above the old surface. The light sandy soil employed probably came from the fields immediately to the north-east of the foot of the hill. Later, in the centre of the mound, a hole was dug 14 feet in diameter at the surface, from south-west to north-east, and 16 feet from south-east to north-west. Though oval in plan at the top, this pit became roughly

rectangular in plan on reaching the surface of the sub-soil, into which it cut to a depth of 1 foot 6 inches in the centre. The soil content of this pit was black when first excavated, and included a considerable quantity of coarse gravel, probably infilled material from its bottom.

The contents of the tumulus will be described first according to their position. This is often not a matter of great significance on account of the extensive diffusion of objects due to the causes set out above, but is necessary to establish the unusual features of the site.

The migrations into Norfolk, begun in the Late Bronze Age, culminated in the 5th century B.C., in the intrusion of Lower Rhenish settlers, whose arrival inaugurates Iron Age A. In the 3rd century this original peasantry submitted to a small but dominant military caste, and, though their material culture was little disturbed by their new overlords, the resultant transformation to Iron Age B is manifest. The continuity of Icenian culture is unbroken till the Romanization of the late 1st and early 2nd centuries, and exhibits only slight influences absorbed from the hostile Belgic civilization of Iron Age C on its periphery from the end of the 1st century B.C. This summary is inserted to explain the terms employed below.

The following abbreviations are used:—I.A.A.—Iron Age A; I.A.B.—Iron Age B; R.B.—Romano-British; cent.—century. The position of each object or group of objects is indicated by a Roman capital and by an Arabic numeral referring to the plan and to the section (Figure 1). Measurements of depth refer to the vertical distance below datum, which is a line horizontal to the highest point on the barrow on section south-west to north-east, approximately 4 inches below 100 feet O.D.



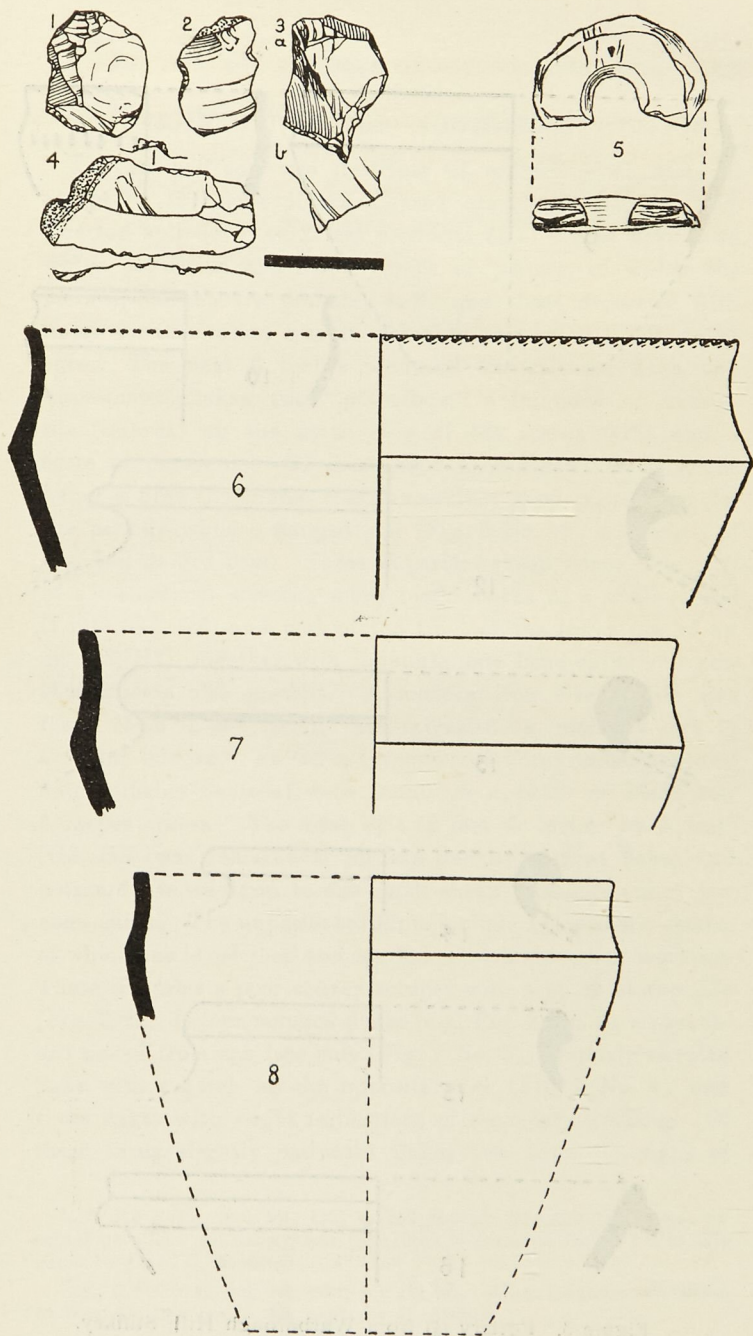


Figure 2. Flint Implements (3), Spindle-whorl (5), and Pottery (6), from Warborough Hill, Stiffkey.

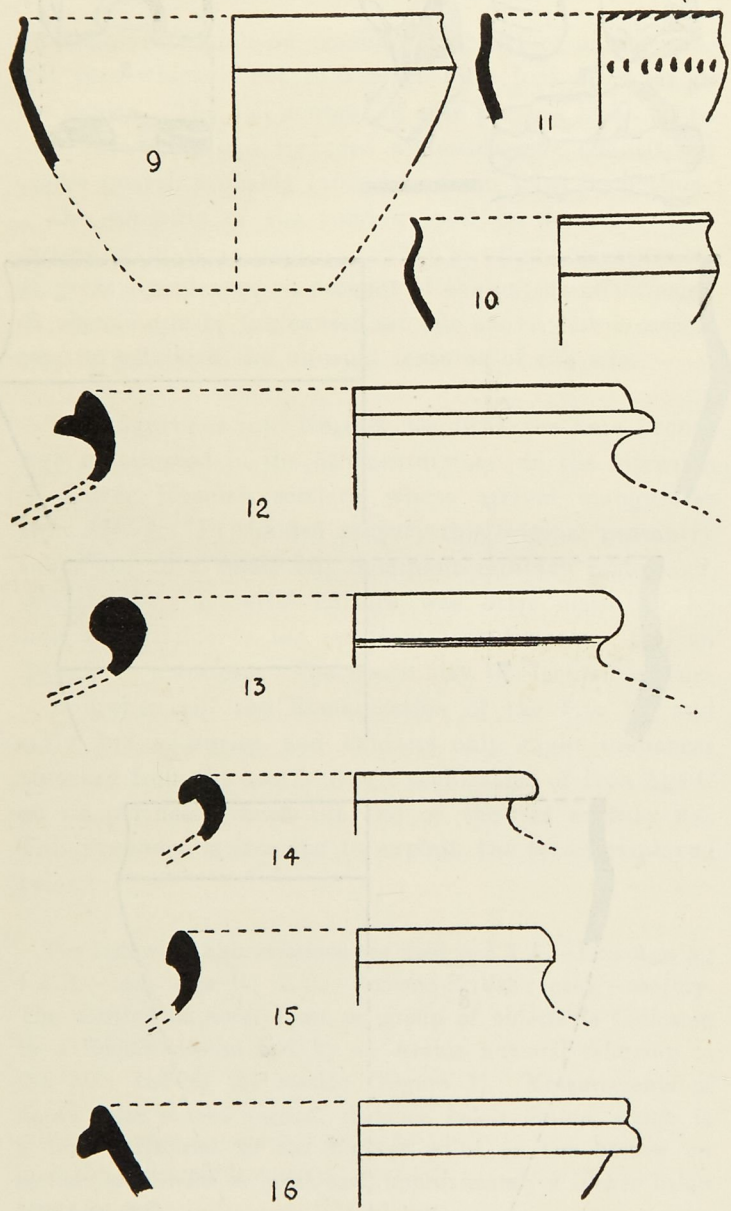


Figure 3. Pottery (♁) from Warborough Hill, Stiffkey.

## A. ORIGINAL TUMULUS—NORTH-EAST PORTION.

The surface soil was destitute of archæological material except on the slope of the disused gravel pit (L4, M4, M5). The top spit down to 2 feet produced (K1) a flint flake with white patination and a few scraps of pottery, of which the plain specimens are probably R.B., and those decorated with linear ornamentation owe it either to this or to I.A.B. influence.<sup>1</sup> The next 6 inches produced one calcined flake, two unpatinated flakes, two "potboilers," a fragment of roofing-tile (*imbrex*) on the north side of the trench (G2), and a score of potsherds. Of these, four were I.A.A. in date, one being a high-shouldered coarse vessel—a good initial type for the period,<sup>2</sup> while a flanged rim (Fig. 3 No. 12) is Roman, of late 2nd or 3rd cent. Three imperfect sheep bones (one part of a metacarpal showing many tooth marks of a small rodent (? rat) (G2, G3) and part of the front of the lower jaw of an ox (H2, H3), together with indeterminate bone chips and potsherds were also present. A modern iron clasp knife was found close to the latter. Its intrusion is probably due to a rabbit burrow. At G2 a fragment of horny substance and unidentifiable charcoal were found in a patch of black soil 6 inches across. The next spit (2 feet 6 inches by 3 feet) (G3, H3) was remarkable for the density of flint flakes and potsherds, in addition to one small sheep phalange and a few bone chips. The unpatinated flints include 111 primary flakes, of which one is calcined and ten flakes with secondary working. These comprise a poor convex scraper with a notch at the side (Fig. 2 No. 1) four notched flakes (*e.g.*, Fig. 2 No. 2), a pseudo-awl flaked from one face only (Fig. 2 No. 3), a crudely serrated flake with a notch on the opposite edge (Fig. 2 No. 4), and three flakes with slight indications of secondary working. Of these three slightly patinated flakes two show no signs of

<sup>1</sup> *cf.*, *P.P.S.E.A.*, vol. vii., 1933, p. 233, though Runcton Holme has no actual parallel. All subsequent references to Runcton Holme are to this paper by C. F. C. Hawkes.

<sup>2</sup> *cf.*, *P.P.S.E.A.*, vol. vii., 1932, pp. 111-122. All subsequent references to West Harling are to this paper by H. Apling.

ancient secondary flaking, and the third, which shows only the first stages of patination is trimmed on both edges, one edge showing a succession of shallow notches. More than half the hundred fragments of pottery are of indeterminate date, but might be Iron Age. The few fragments of I.A.A. wares include two pieces with finger-tip ornament and a large portion of the rim of a high-shouldered vessel (K3) (Fig. 2 No. 7). The smooth fabric and restrained incised ornament (including triangular incisions) (*e.g.*, Fig. 3 No. 1), together with several fine thin rims with little shoulders, favour a date late in the Iron Age, though exhibiting no sign of Belgic influence. A score of featureless bits are probably early R.B. Beneath this layer down to 3 feet 6 inches (H4, K4) were further flint flakes and potsherds, together with a dozen oyster shells. The last are probably to be regarded as a portion of the Roman refuse tipped into the tumulus, though there is not *a priori* objection to their association with Iron Age pottery and flakes.<sup>1</sup> In addition to 32 unpatinated flakes there were two slightly patinated and three patinated white, none exhibiting secondary working. Besides many indeterminate fragments this group of pottery presents a *theoretical* continuity in form from the coarse finger-nail decoration and flat-topped rims of I.A.A., through the finer fabric of I.A.B. (*e.g.*, Fig. 3 No. 10) to the middle Roman period represented especially by a 2nd—3rd cent. flask neck in grey ware and by a colour-coated fragment. At the extreme north-east end of this section (L4, M4, M5), where the surface of the mound tapers to the sub-soil, was found a large quantity of pottery, nearly all I.A.A., with a “corky” sherd representing its early phase; the middle and later phases with their thinner rims are also present, but no sign of Belgic influence. The remainder including a dish rim<sup>2</sup> is 2nd—3rd cent. R.B., for what seems a “bead rim” suggests early R.B. rather than Belgic influence. A flat

<sup>1</sup> For oyster shells on pre-Roman sites see St. Catharine's Hill, *Proceedings of Hampshire Field Club*, vol. xi., 1930, p. 136; and at Park Brow (*Antiquaries' Journal*, vol. iv., 1924, p. 350), and see p. 424, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> *cf.*, Runcton Holme, Figure 11, p. 238.

fragment of jet (? a bead)  $\frac{1}{10}$ -inch thick with bevelled edges 1 inch and  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch long, meeting at an angle of  $120^\circ$ , comes from I.A.

## B. ORIGINAL TUMULUS—SOUTH-WEST PORTION.

The south-west section produced fewer objects than that just described. It was marked by greater concentration and less disturbance, with consequent reduction of diffusion. The upper layers were similarly unprolific. A few scraps including a plain flat-topped rim (probably I.A.A.) came from A2, and others from B2. Between 2 feet and 3 feet were a few fragments of I.A. ware and an early R.B. rim of grey ware (A3), with two limb bones of (?) sheep, one gnawed by a rodent. From the bottom of this layer (B3) a fragment of daub and a few indeterminate potsherds were retrieved.

Between 1 foot and 3 feet (C2, C3), on the north side of the trench, was part of a sheep's skeleton *in situ*. The remains consisted of a pair of lower jaws with the third milk molar in place, together with ribs and vertebræ, all stained with earth from the adjacent refuse pit. Three sherds of coarse unornamented Iron-Age ware were contiguous, but the state of preservation of the bones and their position probably indicate a post-Roman interment.

On the south side of the trench (C3, D3), 3 inches above the undisturbed gravel and close to the old surface, was a deposit of considerable interest. Its top was 2 feet below datum, its height 9 inches, its diameter at the base 1 foot 9 inches, and the plan was roughly circular. Resting on a disturbed surface of fired sandy loam and clay, some heavily fired and some bearing the impress of bark, was a pile of potsherds, about 80 in number, with animal bones, burnt and unburnt, charcoal, and an unpatinated flake, while around and partly under the pottery on the north-east side were over 20 fragments of daub, some as much as  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick. Beneath (C4, D4, C5, D5) was a small pit, about 9 inches deep and 2 feet 10 inches in diameter, filled with ashes and burnt earth. Many pieces of daub had wattle grooves and

smooth surfaces, doubtless part of a wall facing. One fragment bore the impress of a finger, while another had blackened soil adhering to it as though it had been subjected to fire. The pottery includes at least three high-shouldered vessels, all of initial I.A.A. character<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 2 Nos. 6 & 8; Fig. 3 No. 9). Late Bronze Age (Deverel-Rimbury) character is quite absent. The ware is coarse with reddish surface and black interior. Fig. 2 No. 6 alone shows decoration of "cable" type on the outer edge of the rim. One sherd has burnt earth adhering to the inner surface. Associated with the pottery were the burnt ulna of a pig, showing green staining, two heavily stained indeterminate bone chips, and part of the limb bone of a fairly large animal, possibly an ox, but not necessarily derived even from an ungulate. The last three bones are black in colour, and in this respect very similar to river-bed skulls stained black by peat. Whatever chemical or mineral agency has blackened these fragments has not done so completely, and on the inner surface the colour is deposited in roundish patches. They are not burnt and exhibit no heat cracking nor distortion whatever. The charcoal represents (*a*) oak (*quercus* sp.); (*b*) probably rowan (*pyrus aucuparia*), but possibly hawthorn; (*c*) gorse (*ulex europæus*); and (*d*) unidentified bark. From its proximity to the centre of the tumulus and to the old ground surface, from the presence of fired materials around and beneath it, and above all, from the pottery it contained, this deposit is, in the absence of any earlier ceramic, to be regarded as one, if not the, primary I.A.A. multiple cremation burial group. Against this identification may be offset the absence of human remains and the presence beneath part of the deposit of fragments of daub. The latter are most plausibly to be explained as intrusions of Roman date from the refuse pit, while the absence of human bones may be explained by the inherent nature of the method of their disposal and by the disintegrating tendencies of the adjacent refuse shown by

<sup>1</sup> *cf.*, West Harling and Park Brow (*Antiquaries' Journal*, vol. iv., 1924, p. 355), (Figure 13), and Kendrick and Hawkes, *Archæology in England and Wales*, 1914-31, 1932, p. 158 (Fig 62 No. 1).

the state of preservation of the animal bones. The deposit is essentially *in situ*, for the nature of the associated finds overlying the pit in which the cremation fire was probably lit, forbids any other interpretation.

### C. THE REFUSE PIT.

The top layer of this pit produced little, as was to be expected. In the area E1, P1, Q1, E2, P2, Q2, a fragment of mortar, a piece of coarse brick, charcoal, fired stones, and a few fragments of I.A.A. pottery, including an example of finger-tip decoration, together with black-coated ware of Roman date, were alone discovered. In the north-west sector, between 1 foot and 3 feet (N2, O2, N3, O3), were two fragments of brick, and one of daub, one calcareous nodule, and a small amount of pottery, including coarse gritty ware with finger-printed shoulders, in the same I.A.A. tradition as at West Harling, but not necessarily so early in date. A few I.A.B. scraps of smoother fabric, together with a ribbed jug handle of 2nd—3rd cent., a fragmentary base of Samian ware (mid-late 2nd cent., and a jar with fine vertical combings of about the same period,<sup>1</sup> complete the inventory. A small fragment of burnt bone also occurred here. At the bottom of this layer were found scattered fragments of a rusted iron blade, now 6 inches long. Its use and age are alike unknown. At the same level in the south-east sector (P2, Q2, P3, Q3) occurred an unpatinated flake, a few bone splinters (ox), charcoal (gorse), and a few potsherds. These included some coarse fabric of I.A.A. type and jar rims which, though not strictly parallel to the Runcton Holme or Caistor kiln forms, are regular members of the same family and therefore probably dated to 2nd cent. A.D. (e.g., Fig. 3 Nos. 14 & 15). A ground-stone and half a whorl of shale (Fig. 2 No. 5) of late I.A. or early R.B. date were also found. Still at the same level (F3), were found a fragment of brick, an iron file, obviously modern from its state of preservation, and about 30 bones of an ox,

<sup>1</sup> cf., Runcton Holme, Figure 35.

including part of the skull, horn cores, one upper molar, and the much decayed proximal end of an ulna.

In the south-east sector, from 2 feet 6 inches below datum to the bottom of the pit at 5 feet (in the centre), sloping upwards at the south-east end (P3, Q3, P4, Q4, P5), were four lumps of faced daub with wattle grooves, the horn core of an ox, the tooth of a sheep, charcoal (gorse), and pottery, mostly I.A.A. but including some R.B. A flat-topped rim, together with finger-printed and coarse gritty ware belong to the early phases of the former, while grey combed and plain wares go on to the middle of the latter, including a dish rim analogous to that from M4. A brown-coated flanged bowl is probably 4th cent.<sup>1</sup> Another fragment of this vessel occurred on the edge of E5.

In the centre of the pit, between 3 feet and 4 feet (D4, E4, F4), was a considerable quantity of pottery, mostly I.A.A. but with a fair admixture of later I.A. and R.B. forms. Charcoal (gorse), oyster shells, and rabbit bones were at 4 feet, but from their preservation the latter are relatively modern. Building materials included five fragments of very coarse brick (one  $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch thick); two of these were roofing-tiles (*tegulae*), while one fragment of daub was also present. Thirty-one unpatinated primary flakes, two patinated flakes, and one calcined specimen, none exhibiting secondary work, together with a "potboiler," were of flint. Finger-nail decoration, flat-topped rims, and coarse gritty fabric were all in the I.A.A. tradition. Smooth ware with linear ornamentation, notably oblong punch markings, show I.A.B. influence and must belong late in the age<sup>2</sup> or be survivals into the R.B. period. A cordoned grey rim indicates Belgic influence.<sup>3</sup> The first two centuries A.D. are represented by an overhanging roll-rim (Fig. 3 No. 13), and by comb ware (*cf.*, N2-O2). The whole group presents a continuous evolution of

<sup>1</sup> *cf.*, Runcton Holme, p. 258, Note 4.

<sup>2</sup> *cf.*, Warham, *Antiquaries' Journal*, vol. xiii., 1933, p. 411, and Runcton Holme, p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> Runcton Holme, p. 253.



ceramic form from I.A.A. to mid-R.B. times. The same level (N4, O4) in the north-west sector produced a fragment of burnt antler tine, a fragment of brick, and a few potsherds, mostly indeterminate, but including an I.A.A. notched rim and a flanged rim of 3rd—4th cent. A.D.<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 3 No. 16).

The bottom layer of the pit down to 5 feet (N5, O5, D5, E5, F5) produced the same evidence for disturbance as the higher levels. Gorse charcoal came from within a few inches of the bottom. Animal remains comprised three teeth (sheep), burnt bone, a few indeterminate bones, and part of three tooth-sockets of an ungulate jaw, perhaps an ox, with black stain like that on the limb bone from the primary deposit. These fragments are quite consistent with being derived from an ox, and may come from the same animal, but are too small to enable one to say definitely to what member of the ungulate family the bit of jaw belonged. Besides three pieces of brick (one of coarse composition), fired clay, and two fragments of daub, about 50 potsherds were found here. These, attributable to I.A.A., include gritty "nail" decoration, probably early in the period. From their soapy texture a few fragments are probably late in I.A., as is also a sherd with finely pounded silicious material. Much of the pottery is vague, but is probably late I.A. or early R.B. More definite are a grey barbotine fragment (2nd—3rd cent.),<sup>2</sup> a black dish rim (early 2nd cent.),<sup>3</sup> while another black dish,<sup>4</sup> and a buff mortarium with black grit are 3rd—4th cent.

#### IV. SUMMARY AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

The tumulus has been shewn to be a mound between 40 and 50 feet in diameter, probably originally 4 feet in height, constructed on a knoll of glacial gravel and surrounded by a ditch 12 to 14 feet wide and 4 feet

<sup>1</sup> *cf.*, Runceton Holme, Figure 14.

<sup>2</sup> *cf.*, Runceton Holme, Figure 37.

<sup>3</sup> *cf.*, Runceton Holme, Figure 11.

<sup>4</sup> *cf.*, Runceton Holme, Figure 14, pp. 239-40.

deep. The depression in its summit resulted in all probability from the excavation of a refuse pit nearly 4 feet deep through the sandy loam of the tumulus into the coarse gravel sub-soil. The radical upheavals of the interior and the consequent vertical and lateral diffusion of the archæological material have been emphasised. This is confirmed by a statistical analysis of the distribution of the pottery. If the potsherds of indeterminate date are subtracted from the total of nearly 700, it is found that the proportion of Roman to Iron Age A wares is almost identical in both the refuse pit and the remainder of the mound, though it must be borne in mind, that while the whole of the former was excavated, only a small portion of the surrounding mound was investigated. The archæological material may be regarded as fairly homogeneous in all save the south-west sector of the mound.

The initial Iron Age A pottery from the primary deposit and similar ware scattered in other deposits would on any showing be regarded as the earliest present: despite its mainly undecorated character, its forms and fabric invite comparison with the West Harling material. It *may* date from the 5th century B.C., and *might* well be earlier than anything at Runcton Holme. The potting *tradition* is certainly reasonably continuous from this date onwards, though the fabric has not the same amazing homogeneity as at Runcton Holme. The presence of 15 per cent. of Iron Age B wares and 25 per cent. of Romano-British wares suggests a plausible continuity of occupation on perhaps a smaller scale than in Iron Age A, which accounts for 60 per cent. of the total. The improved paste and smooth surface of some of the Iron Age pieces indicate a late date in that period: though influence of the "B" and "C" cultures on the "A" root are not often directly apparent, they

are certainly not absent in effect, and may be compared with the contemporary products at Warham, two miles to the south-west. We see no reason against the application of the full measure of Mr. Hawkes' remarks on the retarded Icenian Romanization at Runcton Holme. But if Romanization came tardily and inadequately, the resulting rather miserable Romano-British culture at least contrived to survive, as the latest pieces of colour-coated and other wares show, here, as at Runcton Holme, until about or after the middle of the 4th century A.D.

The flints fall into two main groups: the greater number (188) are fresh and unpatinated and belong to the Early Iron Age, being dated by their position in the tumulus and by associated pottery; a few, however, *may*, from their preservation, belong to an earlier period. The ten slightly patinated flakes are either more ancient than the tumulus or else have been exposed to some different physical conditions. The great majority, and possibly all of the flints from Warborough Hill, may safely be added to the evidence for flint-working in the Early Iron Age, and, it must be confessed, they do nothing to dispel the unfavourable impression of the standard of flint-working in this period which evidence from other sites had previously created.

Faunal remains include pig, ox, sheep, stag, and rabbit, the last being probably modern. The collection is very fragmentary, and little more can be said than that the bones seem typical of the Iron Age. On the analogy of the sheep remains associated with Roman pottery of the 3rd—4th centuries on the hilltop to the south, the sheep bones from the tumulus may in part be assigned to that period.

The date of the refuse pit is indicated by the latest of its contents: Roman pottery of the 4th century which it is impossible to date more precisely. The associated

building materials are probably to be connected with this pottery. This is confirmed by the discovery of Roman material on the hilltop, about 30 to 40 feet to the south. There, coarse fragments of similar red brick with fine mortar adhering, lumps of silicious mortar, oyster shells, and sheep bones, excellently preserved, were mingled with pottery, including red-coated wares, characteristic of the 3rd—4th centuries. The existing material is too scanty for closer dating. Assuming that this interpretation of the refuse pit is justified, the presence of pottery assigned to Iron Age B and the first two centuries of the Roman period, demands explanation. This pottery *may* be evidence for a continuity of burial corresponding to the morphological continuity of the ceramic, but it is possible that the early Romano-British wares are due not to secondary burials but to refuse scourings dumped on the site in the 4th century. It seems improbable that the tumulus was in continuous use till this period, for decency postulates a lapse in the burial custom before the over-riding needs of that critical century necessitated the sacrilegious rifling of the mound and wrecking of the cremated interments. The refuse pit was doubtless dug in the tumulus owing to the greater depth of soil at that point, in sharp contrast to the impenetrable gravel so close to the surface elsewhere on the hilltop.

Despite, and partly in consequence of, the utter lack of definite stratigraphy in the mound this site at Warborough Hill has definite claims to attention. It is first a noteworthy addition to the evidence for Iron Age A occupation in northern East Anglia—a region hitherto singularly destitute of cultural traces of that period. The only site within 30 miles producing evidence at all similar is at Runcton Holme,<sup>1</sup> for the pottery at Warham,

<sup>1</sup> A few fragments of pottery are recorded from Tottenhill (Norwich Museum, 1934) and Markshall (*Norfolk Archaeology*, vol. xxv., pp. 357-8).

though of "A" tradition, is undoubtedly under the influence of "B" culture and so of later date.<sup>1</sup> The situation of Warborough Hill on the coastline suggests a landing in the vicinity and is in contrast to the permeation of West Norfolk from the fen rivers. The earliest pottery from Stiffkey would appear to antedate Runcton Holme, while the absence of "bucket" and "barrel" urn characteristics indicates a date subsequent to the Grimes' Graves Black Hole settlement,<sup>2</sup> and to the urn with finger-tip ornament from Sheringham, which is probably to be attributed to the same Deverel-Rimbury complex.<sup>3</sup> The closest analogy published to date seems to be the material from the habitations and cattle corrals at West Harling excavated in 1932.

Warborough Hill is secondly significant for the multiple cremation interments in the tumulus of Iron Age A date which crowns it. Despite the absence of human remains no other interpretation of the facts seems open to us. The lack of analogous material from either the ditch<sup>4</sup> or from the adjacent hilltop demanded by any other hypothesis, confirms our view. The presence of a cremation tumulus burial of this period in East Anglia is singular in view of the predominance of inhumation barrow interments by the Iron Age A immigrants.<sup>5</sup> In this respect the Deverel-Rimbury cremation rite persists, if not survives, at Stiffkey. The only other tumulus of this period known in Norfolk is that at Weeting excavated

<sup>1</sup> *P.P.S.E.A.*, vol. vii., 1933, p. 233, and *Antiquaries' Journal*, vol. xiii., 1933, p. 399. Warham finds at Norwich Museum.

<sup>2</sup> St. Catharine's Hill, 1930, pp. 104-5, for references to "Black Hole" literature.

<sup>3</sup> Now in Museum of Archaeology, Cambridge—given by G. J. Chester (*Cambridge University Reporter*, 1891, p. 496). A cremation found at Heacham in 1911 may also be of this period (*P.P.S.E.A.*, vol. i., 1912, p. 238), but the pottery seems to be lost.

<sup>4</sup> Sections R, S, T, produced no archaeological material, and no stratification.

<sup>5</sup> St. Catharine's Hill, 1930, p. 148; Kendrick and Hawkes, *Archæology in England and Wales, 1914-1931, 1932*, pp. 172-3; *Antiquaries' Journal*, vol. xii., 1932, p. 420 *seq.*

by Mr. A. L. Armstrong, F.S.A.<sup>1</sup> About 14 feet in diameter, 1 foot 6 inches in height, with no ditch, composed of sand, the mound showed no signs of disturbance except by rabbits. It yielded no bones, little pottery, but much charcoal and flint flakes, including two or three implements, with suggestions of cremation on the site. It probably dates from the transition to the Iron Age when the new culture was making itself felt but was not yet dominant. The Stiffkey barrow is considerably larger than this specimen and compares favourably in this respect with similar tumuli on King's Weston Hill near Bristol. Here two were 36 and 40 feet in diameter. This group also presents analogous features in the range of fauna, in the burnt animal bones, and in the intrusion of Roman objects.<sup>2</sup> Other cremation tumuli of this period have been published from Triplog Heath, Cambridgeshire<sup>3</sup> and Oliver's Battery near Winchester.<sup>4</sup> The dis-similarities of these sites go far to confirm the views of Mr. R. A. Smith<sup>5</sup> and Mr. C. F. C. Hawkes,<sup>6</sup> that these barrows are to be attributed to scattered settlers without military force arriving from different districts in Flanders and the Lower Rhineland within a short period of time.

#### SUGGESTED ROMAN SIGNAL STATION.

The third peculiar feature of this site is the existence in the centre of the mound of a refuse pit of the 4th century A.D., containing bricks and daub apparently from

<sup>1</sup> O.S. 6-inch sheet 93, S.W.; Fox, *Archæology of the Cambridge Region*, 1923, p. 79; Kendrick and Hawkes, *op. cit.*; and unpublished details from Mr. Armstrong.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the Speleological Society of the University of Bristol*, vol. ii., 1922-6, pp. 78-81, 238-43.

<sup>3</sup> Fox, *Archæology of the Cambridge Region*, 1923, pp. 79-80.

<sup>4</sup> *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club*, vol. xii., 1933, p. 9, with comment in *Archæological Journal*, vol. lxxxix., 1933, p. 293.

<sup>5</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. lxxvii., 1927, p. 200.

<sup>6</sup> St. Catharine's Hill, 1930, pp. 140-161.

the substructure and superstructure respectively of a building of that period in the immediate vicinity. The nature of the hilltop and the finding of similar materials outside the tumulus strongly suggest that the building was sited there. In January, 1935, this conclusion was reinforced when a trial section on the west edge of the hill, only 40 feet from the tumulus ditch, revealed a mass of disintegrated masonry of flint, brick, and stone bound by coarse mortar. In view of the extensive destruction wrought by quarrying and agriculture, and in the absence of excavation at this point, it would be premature to speculate on the nature of this erection. It is permissible, however, to emphasise the bleak and barren nature of this hilltop, rendering it eminently unsuitable for country residence or farmhouse, and the remarkable vistas obtainable from it. Before the extensive tree-planting at Holkham no land of similar elevation impeded a view to the Roman fort at Brancaster ( $11\frac{1}{4}$  miles to the west), while even now with moderate visibility (5—10 sea miles locally) Gramborough Hill, Salthouse ( $7\frac{3}{4}$  miles to the east) can be seen. There in 1852-5 Roman bricks and potsherds were discovered and traces of firing noticed, the whole being subsequently interpreted as a pottery kiln.<sup>1</sup> One of us (R. C.) found scraps of Roman pottery there in 1932 when the north-east end was being eroded by the sea. The evidence for a kiln is extremely scanty, and the similarity of this site and its remains to Warborough Hill incline us to hazard the guess—it is nothing more—that something in the nature of a system of signal stations connected with the forts of the Saxon shore *may* have existed at these sites in the 3rd—4th centuries A.D.

<sup>1</sup> *Norfolk Archaeology*, vol. iv., 1855, p. 355; *Archæological Journal*, vol. xlvi., 1889, p. 364; *Victoria County History of Norfolk*, vol. i., 1901, p. 322; O.S. 6-inch, Norfolk Sheet x., N.W.; O.S. Map of Roman-Britain, 1928; *Y Cymmrodor*, vol. xli., 1930, p. 61.

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