

Archaeological Conservation
Round Barrow at Errington Wood, Upleatham
Reburial of a cup-marked boulder



TA07/06

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May 2007

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Contents

1. Summary	1
2. Introduction	2-3
3. Archaeological Conservation	3
4. Methodology	4-5
5. Results	5
6. Bibliography	6
7. Archive	6
Appendix 1 Scheduled Monument Consent	pages following 7
Appendix 2 Digital Photograph Register	page following 8

Plates

Plate 1	The Burial Mound from the South	2
Plate 2	The cup marked boulder	3
Plate 3	The sledge with boulder	4
Plate 4	The reburied boulder	5

1. Summary

A Bronze Age burial mound stands at the northwest corner of the Upleatham Hills. A loose cup marked boulder was identified within a small-quarried area to the north of the mound in 1999. It is presumed that this has eroded from the mound or has been removed in an unrecorded 19th or early 20th century excavation.

In May 2007 the stone was reburied within a hollow at the summit of the mound by a team comprising members of Redcar & Cleveland Countryside Section and Tees Archaeology.

2. Introduction

A round barrow (Tees Archaeology Historic Environment Record No 0539) lies at the northwest apex of the Upleatham Hills, within Errington Woods (Grid Ref: NZ 6212 1999). It forms one of a pair of mounds that are a Scheduled Monument (Scheduled Monument No. 32005). The mound is a large example measuring approximately 14 metres in diameter and is 1.5 metres high (see Plate 1).



Plate 1: The Burial Mound from the South.

The mound has a large central depression, presumably the result of an episode of 19th century barrow digging. In 1817 the Reverend George Young reported the excavation of a tumulus at Upleatham in his 'History of Whitby' (Young, 1817). He later donated a small accessory to Whitby Museum (Rowe, 1993). It is not clear whether this excavation took place at the mound currently under study or at some other long vanished mound in the area.

The burial mound has an outer kerb that is particularly visible on its southeast side. One of these stones has several cup marks (HER 0571) and was first reported by Don Spratt in 1973 (CBA, 1973). A second cup-marked stone (HER 1834) was reported in 1999 by Graham Chappell. This is a large loose slab of local sandstone lying in a small quarry to the northeast of the mound. It measures 0.74m x 0.7m x 0.34m and has six cups with three interconnecting groove marks in one corner (see Plate 2). The most likely function of the stone is as a cist cover and it may have been removed from the mound in the 19th century.



Plate 2: The cup-marked boulder (note the six cups in the bottom left corner)

3. Archaeological Conservation

This area of the Upleatham Hills suffers periodically from anti-social behaviour. Stones from the adjacent field walls and other loose stones are regularly moved to create kerbing for fires. In order to avoid this happening to the cup marked boulder it was proposed that it should be reburied within the hollow at the top of the mound. Scheduled Monument Consent was applied for and granted in 2004 (see Appendix 1).

4. Methodology

Health and Safety

Tees Archaeology Research and Fieldwork Section are expected to comply with the 1974 Health and Safety Act and its subsequent amendments in all its operations. In this respect the SCAUM manual on archaeological health and safety is followed for site works, and as normal practice, First Aid boxes, an Accident Book and a telephone is provided for each project. Where required, Personal Protective Equipment is also provided. It is normal practice for a vehicle to be available on site for emergency purposes and site staff must be appropriately equipped in terms of bad weather gear. The site director is normally nominated as site safety officer and all supervisory staff have undertaken a first aid training course. Site specific risk assessments are undertaken in advance of the commencement of any archaeological works.

Logistics

The works took place on the 10th May 2007. The team comprised Keith Ferry, Steve Lightwing & Dennis Bennet of Redcar and Cleveland Countryside Section with Peter Rowe from Tees Archaeology. A temporary sledge was constructed from a stout wooden palette, enhanced with runners created from ribbed plastic pipe sections. The stone was pivoted into position and laid on the sledge that was dragged the short distance from the quarry to the summit of the mound (see Plate 3).



Plate 3: The sledge with boulder

A small area within the central hollow was cleared of bracken and leaf litter and the stone rested in place with the carving face down. It was then re-lifted and small amounts of material removed from high points beneath to allow the stone to bed down. This did not disturb the matrix of the mound and involved the removal of further organic leaf and pine-needle debris to a depth of approximately 0.1m. A 20 pence piece from 2006 was laid beneath the stone to mark a terminus post-quem for its re-deposition. This part of the hollow was then backfilled with the peaty material cleaned from the surface.

5. Results

The stone was securely bedded within the upper matrix of the mound without penetrating beneath a modern organic layer (see Plate 4) which included aluminium drinks cans and other litter. This will secure the safety of the cup-marked boulder for the foreseeable future, as it is now an integral part of the monument. The aims of the project have been achieved.



Plate 4: The re-buried boulder

6. Bibliography

Council for British Archaeology. 1973. *Group 4 Annual Newsletter*.

Rowe, P. 1993. *An Archaeological Survey of the Upleatham Hills, Cleveland*. B.A. Dissertation. University of Durham.

Young, G. 1817. *A History of Whitby*. Clark and Medd.

7. Archive

The project is archived with Tees Archaeology. The site code is UPB07 (Upleatham Patterson's Bank 2007). The archive contents comprise: -

- Printed report
- 14 x 4 megapixel digital images (see Appendix 2)
- 14 x A4 sheets – project design, SMC application/consent and correspondence with English Heritage and the Department of Culture Media and Sport

Appendix 1

Scheduled Monument Consent

Appendix 2

Digital Photograph register

Tees Archaeology

Digital Photo Register

Site Code: UPB07		Mega-pixels: 4.1 (Fuji Fine Pix)		
Shot #	Description	Facing	Inits	Date
1	General view of burial mound (HER 0571)	N	PR	10/05/2007
2	Top of mound prior to scrub removal	N	PR	10/05/2007
3	General view of burial mound (HER 0571)	S	PR	10/05/2007
4	Loose cup-marked boulder (HER1834) to north of	E	PR	10/05/2007
5	Loose cup marked boulder (detail)	E	PR	10/05/2007
6	Boulder on sledge	N	PR	10/05/2007
7	Boulder on sledge	N	PR	10/05/2007
8	Cup and groove markings (detail)	_	PR	10/05/2007
9	Top of mound following scrub removal	N	PR	10/05/2007
10	Top of mound following scrub removal (2006 20pence piece)	N	PR	10/05/2007
11	Placing the boulder	NW	PR	10/05/2007
12	Boulder in place	NW	PR	10/05/2007
13	Boulder bedded in	NW	PR	10/05/2007
14	Boulder covered with leaf and needle litter	NW	PR	10/05/2007