

## The Lambourn Chambered Long Barrow.

By L. V. GRINSELL.

### DISCOVERY OF THE SITE.

WHILE searching in September 1935 for unrecorded barrows, the writer observed a slight rise in the ground at the southern end of the plantation on Westcot Down north of the Lambourn Seven Barrows. A closer inspection of the site showed that it was a long barrow, and the presence of sarsens protruding at the eastern end suggested that it may be of the chambered variety.

This diagnosis was confirmed by a much more thorough inspection and survey undertaken the following week-end, and shortly afterwards Major G. W. G. Allen, F.S.A., flew over the site at the writer's request and took the valuable air-photographs which accompany this paper. These air-photographs confirm and amplify the results of the ground survey.

Since then the barrow has been visited by Messrs. O. G. S. Crawford, H. J. E. Peake, Stuart Piggott, and several members of this Society, all of whom accept the writer's identification of the site.

### DESCRIPTION.

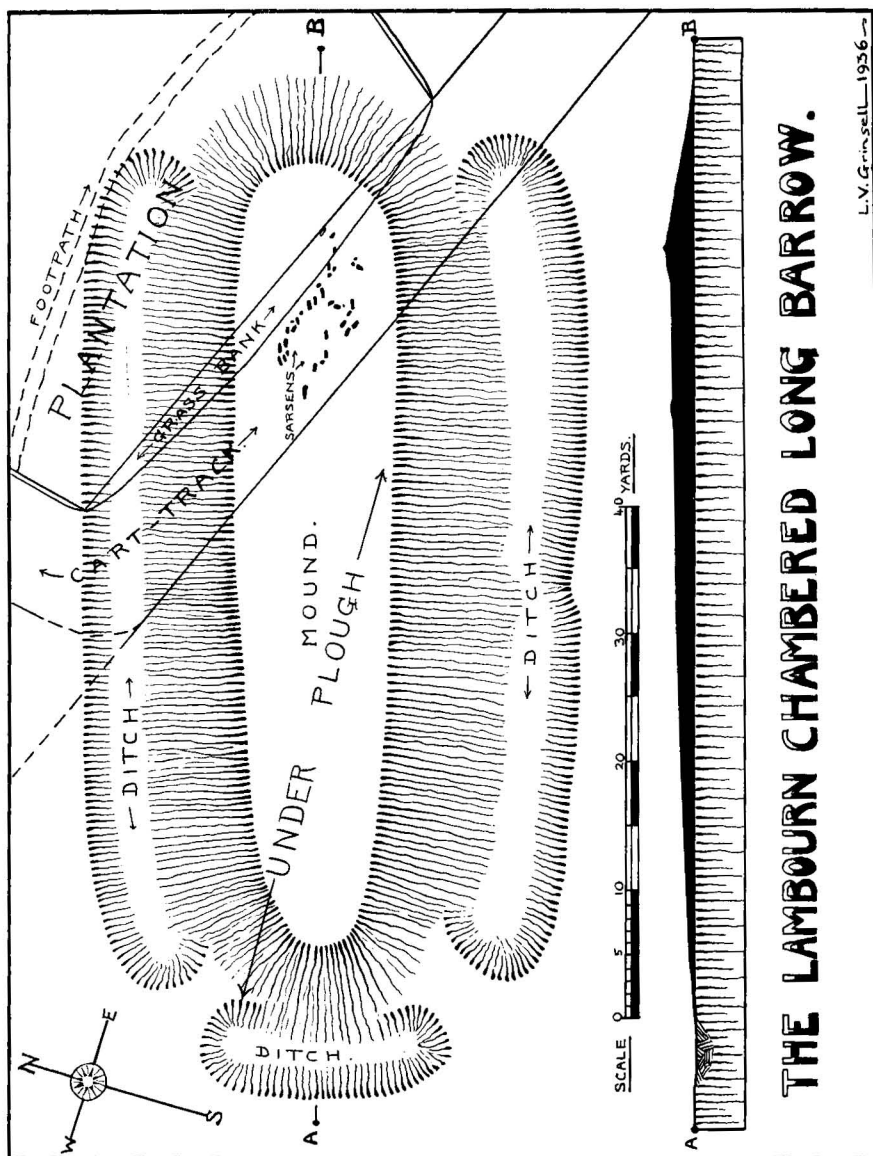
The barrow is situated at the southern end of the wood on Westcot Down and immediately north of Seven Barrows Farm (now Mr. Cottrill's racing stables). The north-eastern tip of the mound is in the wood; the greater part of the eastern end, containing the burial-chambers, is traversed by a cart-track, and the south-western part of the barrow is under cultivation. The mound is placed E.N.E. by W.S.W., the broader and higher end being towards the east as is the tendency in long barrows.

The following details are best given in the form hereunder:

*Latitude*:  $51^{\circ} 32' 52-3''$ . *Longitude*:  $1^{\circ} 32' 0''-1^{\circ} 32' 4''$  W.  
*Parishes*: On the boundary of Lambourn, Sparsholt and Kingston Lisle parishes. *Subsoil*: Chalk. *Local Name and Folk-lore*: apparently none.

*Map References*: 25" O.S. Map, Berks, XIX, 7; 6" O.S. Map, Berks, XIX N.E.; 1" O.S. Popular Edition, Sheet 104, J 12. The barrow is not actually marked on any maps.

PLATE I



It is just possible that this mound may be the Stanhlaew of an Anglo-Saxon Land Charter of Kingston Lisle (Birch, *C.S.* 1121; Kemble, *C.D.* 1247). This charter has been edited in the Journal of this Society by Dr. G. B. Grundy (*Berks. Arch. Jour.*, Vol. 31, pp. 32-8). I am however by no means convinced that this barrow is the site referred to in the charter.

*The Mound* is about 220 feet long and 70 feet wide at the eastern end, the width being about 55 feet at the western end. It is about 4 or 4½ feet high at the eastern and higher end. The high percentage of chalk rubble composing the mound gives it a bleached appearance, in contrast to the much darker soil of the ditches. On 29th Sept., 1935, the writer picked up a fairly well chipped bleached flint scraper as a surface-find on the mound.

*The Ditches* are along both the flank-sides of the mound, and also (judging by the appearance of the air-photographs) at the western end, but there seem to be slight intervals or causeways between both flank-ditches and this end-ditch. The latter is not visible on the ground. The flank-ditches both contain darker soil than that on the mound, and this dark soil is also softer to the tread. The flank-ditches are about 5 or 6 yards wide. There seems to be a slight twist half-way along the southern ditch. The presence of a ditch at the western end is characteristic of several long barrows in the chalk areas, for example in N.E. Dorset.

*The Sarsens* are by far the most important and interesting part of the barrow. Unfortunately they are being gradually destroyed by the wear and tear of the cart-track over them, and it is feared that the best part of the roofing has already been thus destroyed. Several of the stones are evidently placed *vertically* in the ground and their tops are protruding. These may be the wall-stones of a passage and chambers.

It cannot at present be determined with certainty whether the barrow contains a true passage leading to burial-chambers as at Wayland's Smithy, or whether it is of the false passage-grave type, as at Belas Knap in the Cotswolds. I am inclined however to compare it with Wayland's Smithy.

Sarsens are abundant naturally near Ashdown, three miles south-west, and they also exist or existed until fairly recently,

THE LAMBOURN CHAMBERED LONG BARROW.

PLATE II



THE LAMBOURN LONG BARROW : AERIAL VIEW FROM S.W.



THE LAMBOURN LONG BARROW : AERIAL VIEW FROM W.

*Photographs by Major G. W. G. Allen, M.C., F.S.A.*

at Knighton Bushes and Hare Warren, a mile or more from the site in question.

#### RELATION TO SURROUNDINGS.

The Lambourn long barrow is the extreme eastern member of an important and extensive group of chambered long barrows on the downs of North Wiltshire and Berkshire. The only other example in Berkshire is the celebrated Wayland's Smithy, but there are a number of fine ones on the Marlborough Downs, among them being the East and West Kennet long barrows, the example on Manton Down, Adam's Grave above Alton Priors, and the Devil's Den near Clatford.

It should be added that the presence of a long barrow on the fringe of the Lambourn Seven Barrows justifies us in regarding that group as what Thurnam called a "perfect group," containing barrows of all the main types—long, bowl, bell, disc, and saucer. These "perfect groups" are very rare and the best one is the Winterbourne Cross Roads group near Stonehenge.

#### POSSIBLE EARLY REFERENCES.

In his "Letter to Dr. Mead" (1738), Mr. Francis Wise mentioned that "there is one Long" barrow among the Lambourn group, and continues, "I know that Long Barrows ought to be reckoned Danish, and probably were designed for Kings, but I cannot remove King Baskey from *Wayland Smith* to this place." Until the recent find of the Lambourn long barrow, those in authority were inclined to think Wise had mistaken one of the twin-barrows in the group for a long one; but it now seems possible that Wise may have known of the site described in this paper. Another possible early reference occurs in the British Museum Register of British and Medieval Antiquities, Vol. I, 1861-6, Folios 25-6, relating to the Martin Atkins bequest. Item 56 is a "Bronze coin, 3rd brass, from Long Barrow" (? at Lambourn.) It is not certain whether this was found in the true long barrow or in one of the twin-barrows. A third possibility is that it may have been found not at Lambourn at all but in the long mound (pillow mound) on White Horse Hill, which Atkins

opened and found Roman remains therein. I must confess that I think it very unlikely that either of these references relates to the long barrow in question.

#### THE PRESERVATION OF THE SITE.

This is a matter of considerable importance in view of the fact that the passage and burial-chambers are being gradually destroyed by the use of the road, and the western part of the barrow is being gradually levelled by the plough. An application has therefore been made to H.M. Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments with a view to getting the site scheduled under the Ancient Monuments Acts, and the site has been placed on the list to be considered at the next meeting of the Ancient Monuments Board. The barrow will probably be scheduled sometime this year. This does not mean however that the site is now safe from further damage. On the contrary the ploughed area will probably continue under cultivation for the time being. Efforts may be made to divert the cart-track from its passage over the burial-chambers to a track through the wood immediately north of the barrow.

THE LAMBOURN LONG CHAMBERED BARROW.

PLATE III



THE LAMBOURN LONG BARROW, FROM S.E., SHOWING THE PASSAGE  
OF THE TRACK OVER THE EASTERN END.

*Photo : L. V. Grinsell.*



ONE OF THE SARSENS AT THE EASTERN END OF THE LAMBOURN  
LONG BARROW.

(Note six-inch scale resting on the stone).

*Photo : S. Piggott.*