

**SUMMARY REPORT ON
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND
RECORDING**

**GOULD'S HILL BARROW
UPWEY
DORSET**

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Revision of version R0b, after comment by Vervan Heal (English Heritage) and Steve Wallis (DCC), insertion of Plate 8 and revision of section on Archiving.

SUMMARY REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

AT GOULD'S HILL BARROW, UPWEY, DORSET

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SUMMARY

Hand excavation around the base of an existing telecommunications tower sited on top of the barrow, and around the four guy anchor blocks, was observed by the writer on 15th August 2011. This was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Arrowhead Archaeology and agreed by English Heritage, to comply with a requirement of English Heritage for archaeological supervision as a condition of the grant of Scheduled Monument Consent for the mast strengthening works.

No satellite burials of other features were present in the reduced areas, and there was an absence of any exposure to inform on the construction of the barrow. A small assemblage of unstratified struck flint was recovered, which is considered insignificant.

INTRODUCTION

Gould's Hill Barrow is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM DO232, NMR monument no. 452028, HER no. 4 002 403; it is a bowl barrow, and is a component of a group of four barrows which forms part of the dense concentration on the South Dorset Ridgeway. The barrow is centred on NGR 365738 86622. In the NMR record, it is part of a group of round barrows on 'Ridgeway Hill', on the HER record it is part of the 'Ridgehill Group', the applicants refer to it as a barrow at 'Gould's Hill'. The viewshed from the top of the barrow is extraordinary, with the view south of Weymouth Harbour and Portland, and the view north of the (later) Maiden Castle with Dorchester beyond.

The NMR describes it as a "bowl barrow, not ploughed, diameter 42 m, height 4 m; flat top used as a site for a mast; no visible ditch; slight mutilation on west side, otherwise in good condition". The barrow has been subject to some excavation, apparently extensive (Drew 1936, and NMR); according to the NMR record, in 1885 it was "114 ft in diameter and 13 ft high. It contained a primary inhumation in a Portland Stone cist in a pit covered by a cairn 13 ft in diameter and 7 ft high. In and around the cairn were a bone dagger pommel, a bone needle, animal bones and many flint implements including a flint macehead, a polished flint axe and part of another, a flint saw and scrapers. An inhumation with a three-riveted bronze dagger, and a nearby cremation, were in an upper part of the cairn under two layers of stone slabs. In the top of the mound was a secondary cremation with three grooved and riveted daggers (one copper, and two bronze), gold mountings for a dagger pommel, traces of wooden sheaths and a small flanged copper axe with a small piece of fine cloth adhering to it. This is Wessex interment no. 20, one of the richest grave groups in Dorset. Surviving finds are in Dorchester County Museum."

The same record states that the other three barrows in the group were also excavated; all of these contained burnt material, but no burials (some burnt bone was present in one) or other finds apart from a small quantity of lithics were present.

It is the mast surmounting the barrow, and its four guy anchor blocks, which occasion the works observed and reported here.

DESCRIPTION

Groundwork to prepare for the pouring of new concrete to increase the kentledge of the four anchor points for the guys for the mast was undertaken on 15 August 2011 under the supervision of the writer.

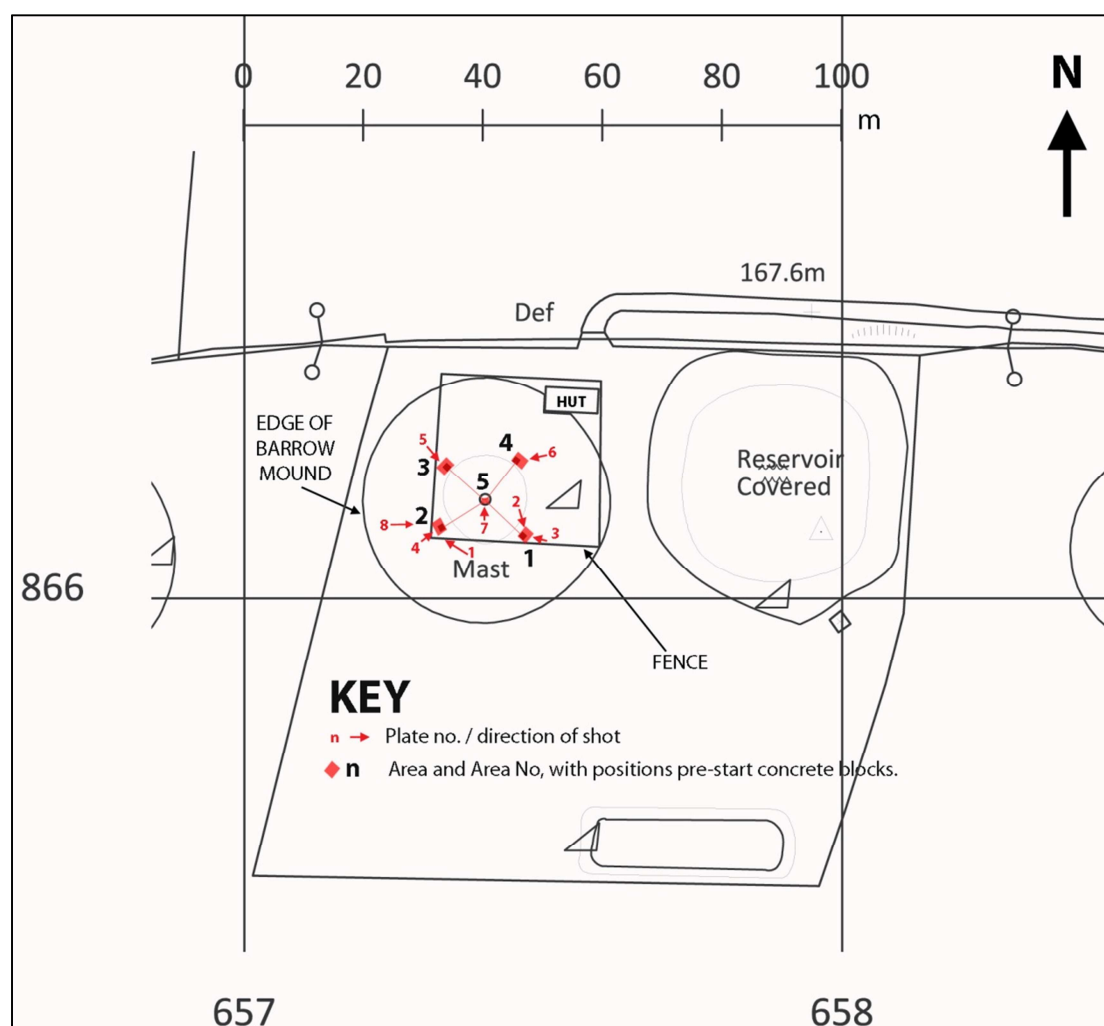


Fig 1: Barrow centred on SY 6573 8661. Anchor point positions (Areas 1-4) and mast base (Area 5) shown, with line of site for Plates 1-7.
Based on plan 2392 006 Rev C (Swann Consulting Group).

Ground reduction took the form of removal of turf and soil from around the existing concrete blocks to which the guys were secured (e.g. Plate 2). Soil was removed by spade and shovel, in rectangular areas measuring approximately 2.5 x 2 m (Table below); the process was to create level platforms slightly higher than the bottoms of the existing concrete blocks, onto which concrete would be poured to increase the kentledge (weight) of the anchor blocks, the new concrete keyed to the existing blocks by steel dowels. The flat-bottomed excavated areas (Plates 2-7) were slightly wider than long; their profile was wedge-shaped, the thick end of the wedges higher up the barrow mound. Dimensions of the four anchor point excavated areas (Areas 1-4) are given in the table below, with a note of the relevant Plate number. Area 5, on top of the barrow, was around the steel plate on which the mast base was positioned (Plate 7).

Area	Width (m)	Length (m)	Max ex depth (mm)	Min ex depth (mm)	Plate No.
1	2.3	1.8	240	0	2
2	2.3	1.7	400	100	1,3
3	2.7	2.0	300	10	4
4	2.5	2.0	250	0	5
5	2.0	1.2	130	130	6

Maximum depths in the table above include dense root matting on the surface and localised small variations in surface level.

All excavated areas had been disturbed beyond the confines of the concrete blocks by the digging of the pits into which these had been formed, and by the associated earth-boxes (Plates 2-5); the edges of the disturbed areas were not visible in the trowelled surface of the topsoil exposed during the ground reduction. Additional disturbance had occurred in Areas 3 and 4 (Plates 5-6), where earlier concrete anchor points had been replaced by those in use at the start of works; the more complete was in Area 4 (Plate 6). These original anchor points had clearly been replaced by those to which kentledge was added in the current exercise, the work just completed therefore being the third phase of anchor point for the mast.

In all cases turf to c. 1250 mm overlay friable mid brownish grey loam containing common small chalk and flint pebbles; the layer had common root disturbance. The topsoil layer (labelled context 2 in Area 1, and context 4 in Area 2) was homogenous except in Area 2, where disturbance was visible from an irregular line of darker grey topsoil; this appeared most likely to indicate animal disturbance (a fox earth with signs of very recent use is visible on the north side of the mound, and it must be the case that the mound has been frequently disturbed in the past by animal burrowing).

There was an absence of any evidence for any ancient cuts into the surface of the barrow mound, including an absence of satellite burials. Finds comprised only a small amount of struck flint from the topsoil, from Areas 1 and 2 only; the relatively high quantity from Area 2 may result from the visible disturbance (probably animal burrowing), and could possibly be material burrowed out of the interior of the barrow mound.

The area was inspected by the writer on 19 August 2011 after completion of site works, who was satisfied that no disturbance beyond that monitored on 15 August had occurred. Excavated topsoil was removed to outside the Scheduled Area as previously agreed with English Heritage. Area 2 after completion of increased kentledge works is shown in Plate 8.

Finds

Context 2 (topsoil in Area 1): single tertiary flake of local grey flint, blue patina in places, weight 1.07 g.

Context 4 (topsoil Area 2): 6 tertiary flakes, all local flint, total weight 26.62 g. One piece is an end scraper on a broken flake (bulbar end snapped off), probably broken during use (weight 5.42 g); the retouch is invasive, in the central and lower left part of the dorsal surface only, and shows slight use wear in restricted areas. It is similar to a scraper from an early Neolithic context at Rowden (Woodward. 1991, Fig. 43 No. 6), though the present example is undated.

General comment: all of the flint is fresh, it is local pale to mid grey with common mineral impurities, five of the seven pieces have small amounts of white cortex of varying thickness (1-7 mm), four of the pieces have traces of a blue patina. Platforms are generally absent, the pieces being struck from prepared areas. These are not possible to date, though the platform preparation and lack of bluntness may suggest a date in the earlier part of a Neolithic - Bronze Age date.

ARCHIVING

An archive for deposition in the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester could comprise a copy of the WSI, a copy of this report, a disk containing the digital images, site context sheets and the finds. However, observations were essentially negative, with groundwork not exposing satellite burials or other features, or any archaeological deposits providing information on the construction of the mound. There is a small group of struck flint which is stratified only to disturbed topsoil, and this is debitage except for the single broken scraper described above. Archiving of the

context sheets completed on site and other material itemised above would therefore be driven by the deposition of a single scraper which is only loosely stratified and incapable of direct association with any phase of the mound, is itself morphologically unremarkable, and is undatable. It is the opinion of the writer that in this case deposition would be of such limited value as to be pointless, and a waste of museum storage facility. It was agreed during consultation on a draft of this report (R0b) that finds would be discarded, and this will be done by the writer in a landfill site. There is therefore no museum archive, though copies of photographs etc. will be made available from Arrowhead Archaeology for an indefinite period.

CONCLUSION

The ground reduction required for the strengthening of the mast anchor points did not expose any features or deposits other than topsoil. The small group of struck flint recovered is insignificant.

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Plate 1: Anchor point Area 2 pre-works, from ESE. Photo CPC, 20 June 2010.



Plate 2: Area 1 from NNW, showing manual reduction of soil level around the anchor points. Horizontal scale 2 m, vertical 1 m. Photo CPC 15 August 2011, archive ref. AA127 fw_150811_10.jpg .



Plate 3: Area 1 from SE after removal of soil, earth-box exposed to right of concrete block. Horizontal scale 2 m, vertical 1 m. Photo CPC 15 August 2011, archive ref. AA127 fw_150811_10.jpg



Plate 4: Area 2 from SW. Horizontal scale 2 m, vertical 1 m. Photo CPC 15 August 2011, archive ref. AA127 fw_150811_10.jpg .



Plate 5: Area 3 from NW. Horizontal scale 2 m, vertical 1 m. Remains of an original anchor point block on left. Photo CPC 15 August 2011, archive ref. AA127 fw_150811_10.jpg .



Plate 6: Area 4 from ESE. Horizontal scale 2 m, vertical 1 m. Complete original anchor point block on left. Photo CPC 15 August 2011, archive ref. AA127 fw_150811_10.jpg .



Plate 7: Area 5 from S. Horizontal scale 2 m, vertical 1 m. Photo CPC 15 August 2011, archive ref. AA127 fw_150811_10.jpg .



Plate 8: Area 2 from W, after completion of works. Horizontal scale 2 m, vertical 1 m. Photo CPC, archive ref. AA127 SAM_0410.jpg.