

# A COLLARED URN OF THE EARLY MIDDLE BRONZE AGE FROM CHILLESFORD

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The round barrow known locally as 'Money Hill' (TM/40045312) lies on Forestry Commission Land in the Tunstall Forest. It is some distance from the path and is heavily planted with fir trees. The mound is some 25 yards in diameter and the height has been reduced by ploughing to approximately 4 feet; the surrounding ditch is no longer visible.

In addition to being inconspicuous and secluded, it is a scheduled Ancient Monument, and anyone disturbing it is liable to severe penalties. In spite of this, when Mr. William Martin was exercising his dog in the forest in August 1967, he saw that a large pit had been dug through the centre of the mound, and that at the bottom were lying fragments of pottery. He collected a few pieces and Mrs. Martin brought them into the Ipswich Museum. As they were evidently part of a collared urn the writers went out to inspect the site, retrieve the rest of the pot and fill in the shaft.

One of us (N.S.), in his capacity of Chief County Correspondent had first reported the circumstances to the Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments and obtained his agreement.

The shaft was 3 feet by 4 feet, and 8 feet deep, and was of a workmanlike appearance. It was however dug by someone with no archaeological experience, as it had penetrated more than 3 feet into the undisturbed sand below the barrow. The excavator doubtless expected to find buried treasure, probably influenced by the misleading name, 'Money Hill'. He had not taken the trouble to back-fill, and the sides had subsequently collapsed, carrying with them the urn which had been narrowly missed by the grave-robber. The shaft had been open for some time as layers of pine needles were mixed with the sand, though it was dug after the last inspection by a Ministry official.

The urn seems to have dropped in piecemeal as fragments of pottery and cremated bone were scattered through several feet of fall. No sherds remained *in situ* so it was not possible to determine the original position of the urn, or whether it had been buried upright or inverted over the bones. It may, however, have come from a cavity showing signs of burning just above the natural sand,

PLATE XII



Bronze Age Urn from Chillesford.

which at this point was 4 feet 9 inches below the surface of the mound.

The urn was reconstructed by Mr. J. Tidder, the Conservation Officer of the South East Area Museum Service (Plate XII). It is  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height, and the maximum diameter is also  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The diameter of the rim is 12 inches and that of the base  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The outside is a light pinkish buff in colour, and the inside a dark grey. This may indicate that the urn was fired in an inverted position, which would exclude oxygen from the interior producing chemical reduction.

The decoration, formed by impressing whipped cord into the unfired clay, consists of a single row of chevrons on the rim bevel, and four rows of chevrons on the collar.

Dr. Ian Longworth has seen a photograph of the urn and places it in his Secondary Series, South Eastern Style. He would date it between 1400 and 1000 B.C., probably in the earlier half of the period. The urn is now in the Ipswich Museum (Registration No. 967.90).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks are due to Dr. Calvin Wells for his report on the cremated bones; to Mrs. Martin and her son for reporting the find to the Ipswich Museum, and for material assistance on the site, to the Forestry Commission and Mr. P. A. Banks for allowing access to the barrow, and to Dr. Ian Longworth for his comments on the urn.

#### NOTES ON THE CREMATED BONES

By CALVIN WELLS, F.R.A.I., PH.D., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

These remains consist of a few hundred fragments of cremated bones. They are mostly small but many pieces can be identified with some precision.

All major divisions of the body are represented including:—cranial vault and base, face and jaws, vertebrae, ribs, pelvis, arms and hands, legs and feet. This shows that, although the bulk of the material is not great, some effort was made to collect the fragments fairly thoroughly after the cremation.

It is impossible to be quite certain but this skeleton is much more likely to be that of a man than a woman.

The limb bones are sturdy and have well-developed markings for muscle attachments.

The age of this person at death is uncertain. He was fully adult because his M3 teeth had erupted. Fragments of cranial vault suggest areas of recent fusion of sutures, so he may have been in the 30–40 year range.