

Proceedings of the
SUFFOLK INSTITUTE
OF ARCHÆOLOGY

For 1974



VOLUME XXXIII, PART 2

(published 1975)

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY BY
THE ANCIENT HOUSE PRESS, IPSWICH, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND

AN INTERIM REPORT ON PREHISTORIC EXCAVATIONS AT IVY TREE FARM, HADLEIGH

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Excavations were carried out at Ivy Tree Farm, Hadleigh, in September 1971, in advance of subsoiling. The site (TM/01324479), which seemed to be a ploughed-out round barrow, had appeared for a number of years as a clear crop-mark (Fig. 28, a). It was photographed when the field was under sugarbeet in 1970 and barley in 1971. Photographs showed a slightly ovular shape surrounded by a double ditch, with some disturbance to the ditches on the west and south sides and in the centre of the barrow. One of the aims of the excavation was to investigate the amount of damage which subsoiling and deep-ploughing had already done.¹ The excavation clearly showed that this was damaging the site and another season of excavation was planned for 1972. This was not carried out as the land changed hands and the second season's work has yet to be done. Excavation in 1971 was confined to trenches cut into the four sides of the barrow's ditches and in the centre (Fig. 28, b).

Excavation showed that the barrow was originally 57 ft in diameter at its greatest point, slightly ovular in shape and surrounded by a ditch. This inner ditch was in some places *c.* 7 ft wide and 1 ft 6 ins deep from the old ground surface (Fig. 29). It was not very steeply cut and had silted with a fine, rather sandy dark brown soil (Munsell colour 7.5 YR 4/4). In trench IV, within the top of the filling of the inner ditch were the remains of a cremation. It had suffered badly through ploughing, as it was only 10 ins from the surface of the field. Less than half a small collared urn (Fig. 30) was found lying on its side with some cremated bones, charcoal and burnt flints scattered all around it. No signs of the cremation had remained inside the urn which had probably been knocked over and partially destroyed by ploughing. The pot itself was made of buff-coloured clay. It was badly fired, though perhaps its irregular shape is due to distortion caused by earth pressure. When it was found, the fabric of the pot was like dried natural clay and had to be treated *in situ*. It is just over 5½ ins high and 4½ ins in diameter at the rim, tapering to 3 ins at the base. The collar is 5¼ ins in diameter and

¹ Several writers have already drawn attention to this: William Greenwell, *Archaeologia*, LII (1890), p. 43, with reference to the parish of Lythe; *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, XXIX (1963), p. 175; *Bull. Colchester Arch. Group*, 14 (1971), pp. 5-20; *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, XXXIII (1973), p. 19.

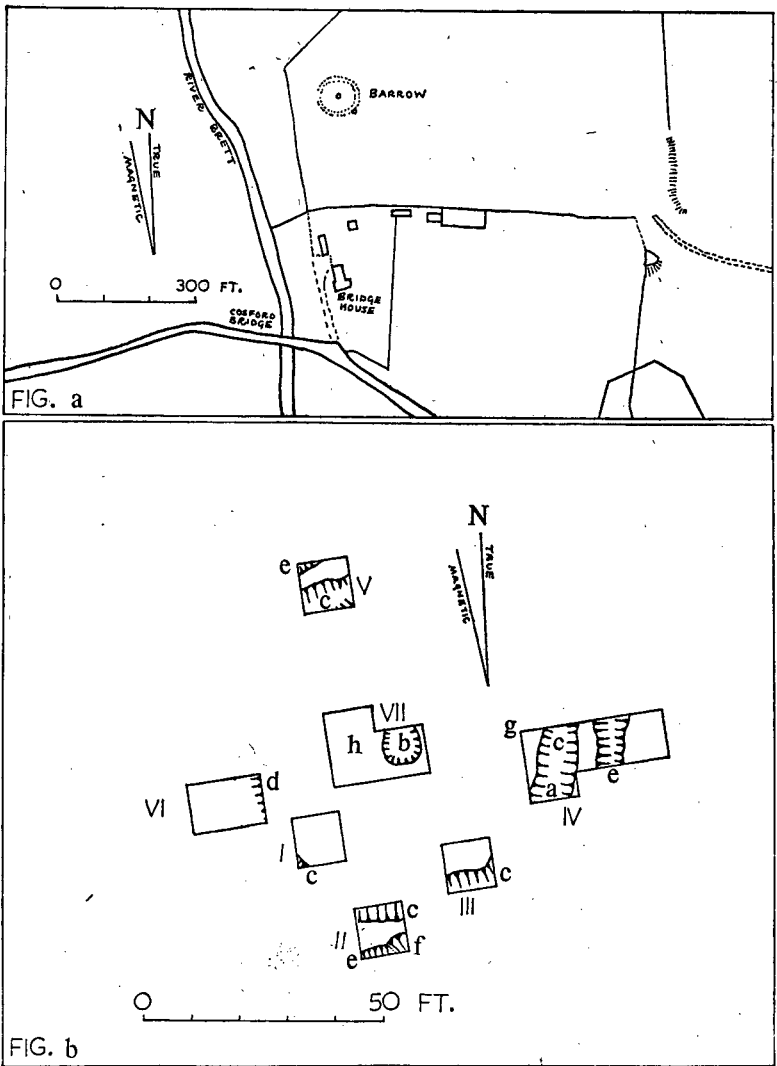


FIG. 28.—a, Map showing location of the ploughed-out barrow at Ivy Tree Farm, Hadleigh. Barrow marked from aerial photographs and excavation. —b, Plan of barrow showing trenches excavated. Key: a, secondary burial; b, robber trench; c, inner ditch; d, partially filled inner ditch; e, outer ditch; f, possible 'Grubenhau'; g, section drawn (see Fig. 29).

HADLEIGH, 1971 DITCH SECTION

TRENCH IV

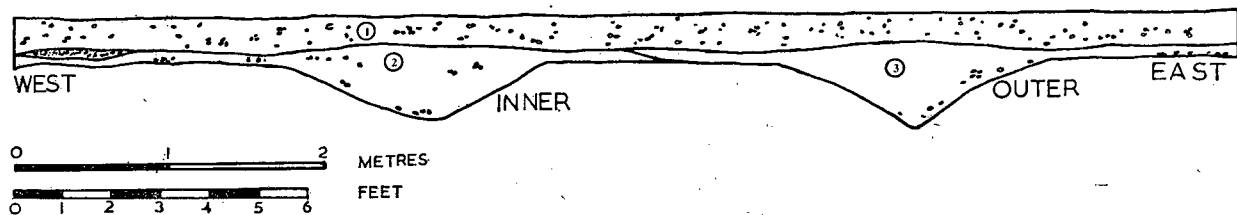


FIG. 29.—Part of north section (marked *g* in Fig. 28) of trench IV. Layers: 1, topsoil; 2, fill of inner ditch; 3, fill of outer ditch.

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ins deep. The concave rim bevel is undecorated but the collar has diagonal whipcord decoration. The shoulder, which is not very pronounced, is decorated with finger-tipping.

The cremated bones found in association with the urn weighed 93.5g. Dr. Calvin Wells' report on the bones is as follows: 'This consists of about 65 very small scraps of cremated bone, plus a few which have been left embedded in their matrix. Identifiable are: a few tiny fragments of cranial vault and base; some broken pieces from the shafts of limb bones. Several of the cranial scraps show short lengths of unfused suture and this, together with the small diameter of the shafts of the long bones, suggests that this was a young, lightly built person – perhaps in the 11–15 year old range. Apart from this there is little to be said about these remains. Firing has been carried out with complete efficiency. Collection of remains has been poor: not more than 2 or 3% of the skeleton survives here.'

About 5 ft away from the lip of the inner ditch another ditch was cut. This outer ditch was *c.* 5 ft 6 ins wide, V-shaped in construction and 1 ft 9 ins deep from the old ground surface. Its fill was also fine and sandy in texture but was dark yellowish brown in colour (Munsell colour 10 YR 4/4). Two features appeared within this ditch which make a second season's work important. First, in trench II on the south of the barrow, was part of a larger intrusion into the outer ditch. Only the section within the trench was excavated. It was *c.* 6 ins deep and contained bone and pottery. The intrusion was large enough to have been part of a Saxon 'Grubenhau' but only further excavation will confirm this.² The bone was from a cow and there were also two pieces of an ox horn. The pottery was as follows:

1. A small piece of Samian ware (*c.* $\frac{3}{4}$ by $\frac{5}{8}$ in).
2. Several small pieces of Saxon pottery, with sizes ranging from $\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins:
 - (a) 8 pieces of thick (*c.* $\frac{1}{2}$ in), slightly gritty ware, light brown in colour, with a rough texture but well-fired.
 - (b) 1 piece of thin (*c.* $\frac{1}{4}$ in.) ware, again slightly gritty but with brick-red colouring on the outside.
 - (c) 1 larger (*c.* 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins) piece of base (thickness *c.* $\frac{3}{8}$ in), slightly gritty and black in colour but with a buff exterior.
 - (d) 1 small (*c.* 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins) piece of rim of very gritty ware, badly fired with its surface cracked. Yellowish-brown in colour.

Second, in trench VI on the west of the barrow, this outer ditch did not appear as expected. Only the inner ditch was located. It was found to have only partially silted and then been levelled off with a layer of very stony soil. Perhaps at this point in the barrow

² Saxon occupation on a barrow was investigated fully at Grimstone End, Pakenham. See *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, xxvi (1955), pp. 188–207. See also *Ibid.*, xxiv (1948), p. 234, n. 4 (Martlesham and Brightwell Heaths).

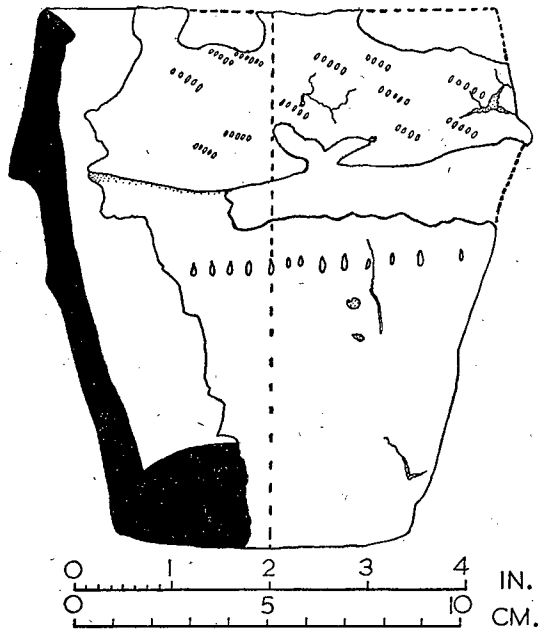


FIG. 30.—Secondary cremation urn. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

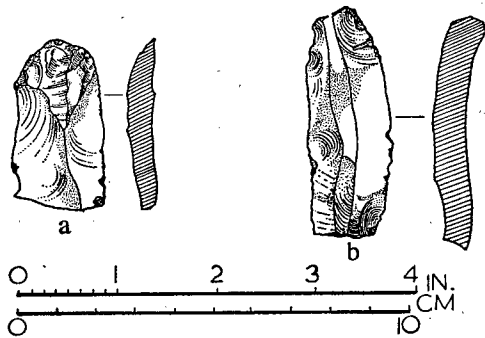


FIG. 31.—Flint implements. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

the outer ditch ends in a horseshoe shape and the half-silted inner ditch was deliberately levelled to make a causeway. Again, this can only be confirmed by further excavation.

The centre of the barrow proved to have been robbed. The robber trench was oval in shape and *c.* 7 ft by 9 ft. It had cut through a layer of stones and soil which covered the centre of the barrow. On the surface of the robber trench three small pieces of buff-coloured pottery, along with charcoal and burnt flints were found. They must have been the remains of the cremation urn taken away or destroyed by whoever dug this trench. It was obviously dug while the mound was still standing, since the trench for *c.* 2 ft was filled with the same type of soil as the ditch-fill. Below this, for another 6 ins, was a heavily burnt layer consisting of soil, charcoal and burnt flints. There was also a small piece of human (but unidentifiable) bone. The layer was so intensely burnt that it could have been a cremation pit. However, only the fill of the robber trench was investigated, so it is not possible to speculate further about the size of the original burial pit. Although it is not possible to date the robbing absolutely, it may have been made by the members of the Hadleigh Literary and Scientific Institute, which flourished briefly in the mid-19th century.

Finds

There were two other finds, not already mentioned:

(a) *Flints*. Two worked flint implements were found in the filling of the inner ditch. Both were made from good-quality flint and are pale grey in colour. One (Fig. 31, a) is an end scraper, $1\frac{3}{4}$ ins long from trench V; the other (Fig. 31, b) is a blade, $2\frac{3}{8}$ ins long from trench II. Both the implements were broken.

(b) *Pottery*. 34 pieces of early Iron Age pottery were found in the fill of the outer ditch in trench IV. They were not found within any feature and nothing else was found with them. All the pieces were small (sizes ranging from $\frac{3}{8}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins). The ware was very gritty and dark brown in colour with a buff-coloured exterior. Of these pieces two were parts of a base, five were rim sections and two showed a pronounced shoulder. All the pottery was thin (*c.* $\frac{1}{4}$ in).³

SUMMARY

Presumably the barrow's original construction was simple: a ditch cut to enclose an oval area and providing the material for constructing a mound over at least one burial, which may have been a cremation pit. Some time later the mound was reconditioned by the digging of a new outer ditch. At this time the secondary burial was

³ Early Iron Age pottery in ditch silting has also been noted at Gazeley—see above, p. 42.

placed on the top of the silted-up inner ditch and the extended mound placed over it.⁴ Any other theories about the mound and its later occupation will need to be tested by further excavation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are due to those who worked on the site; Mr. D. Hoyle for encouragement during the excavation; Mr. D. Sowden for permission to excavate on his land; Miss Elizabeth Owles and Mr. S. E. West for encouragement and advice; the Conservation Department at Ipswich Museum for restoring the burial urn, and Dr. Calvin Wells for his report on the cremated bones. All material from the excavation is in Ipswich Museum (I.M. 1971.163).

⁴ There are many examples of this procedure. See P. Ashbee, *The Bronze Age Round Barrow in Britain* (London 1960), but Greenwell states it clearly for barrows CCLXIX and CCLXXI in *Archaeologia*, *loc. cit.*