

# THE EXCAVATION OF TWO ROUND BARROWS AND ASSOCIATED FIELDWORK ON ASHEY DOWN, ISLE OF WIGHT, 1969

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With reports on *Human Skeletal Remains* by P. Sandiford, *Animal Skeletal Material* by M. Harman, and *Foreign Stones* by R. E. Butler.

## SUMMARY

1. Neolithic: Excavation revealed evidence of Neolithic occupation in the form of pot-sherds and worked flints.

2. Bronze Age: One bowl barrow and one bell barrow out of a group of 17 were totally excavated. The bell barrow was badly plough damaged and the primary burial, with no associated artifacts, was scattered in the plough soil. The ditchless bowl barrow had been robbed. No primary burial was found but two secondary cremations, with no associated artifacts, were found inserted into the side of the mound.

3. Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British: The remains of a 'Celtic' field system in the north-west corner of the Down were surveyed. Barrow 8 appears to have been partly ploughed over in the Pre-Roman Iron Age and the Romano-British periods. Numerous pot-sherds of these periods were found on barrows 8 and 9. Evidence of foreign stones from the excavated plough soils indicates manure brought on to the Down from the south, possibly from the Brading Villa. Surface evidence was found for a small Romano-British settlement to the south of the main barrow group. Secondary burials of these periods were inserted into at least three of the Bronze Age barrows.

4. Medieval: Five blocks of ridge and furrow fields, a large stock enclosure, five pillow mounds and a possible small Medieval settlement were surveyed. These features were probably associated with the Abbey of Wherwell's manor of Aissheye.

## INTRODUCTION

Due to a threat of renewed agricultural operations on Ashley Down, Isle of Wight (NGR SZ 577878), the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, Ministry of Public Building and Works, decided to excavate two of the lowest barrows to the south of the main group (figs. 16 and 18 and pl. IIa). It was hoped that the main group could then be easily ploughed around. A sudden change of ownership soon after the excavations, however, has resulted in the future of Ashley Down becoming uncertain. In all probability the threatened area will at present, remain as pasture. The excavation of barrows 8 and 9 was undertaken between 14 July and 22 August, 1969. Associated with this work the writer also undertook a field survey of the whole Down.

## GEOLOGY AND GEOMORPHOLOGY

Geologically Ashley Down is part of the main ridge of hard Upper Chalk which spans the Island from west to east. The highest point of the Down is 427 feet above sea level. The Down falls away steeply to the north and a little less so to the south. The

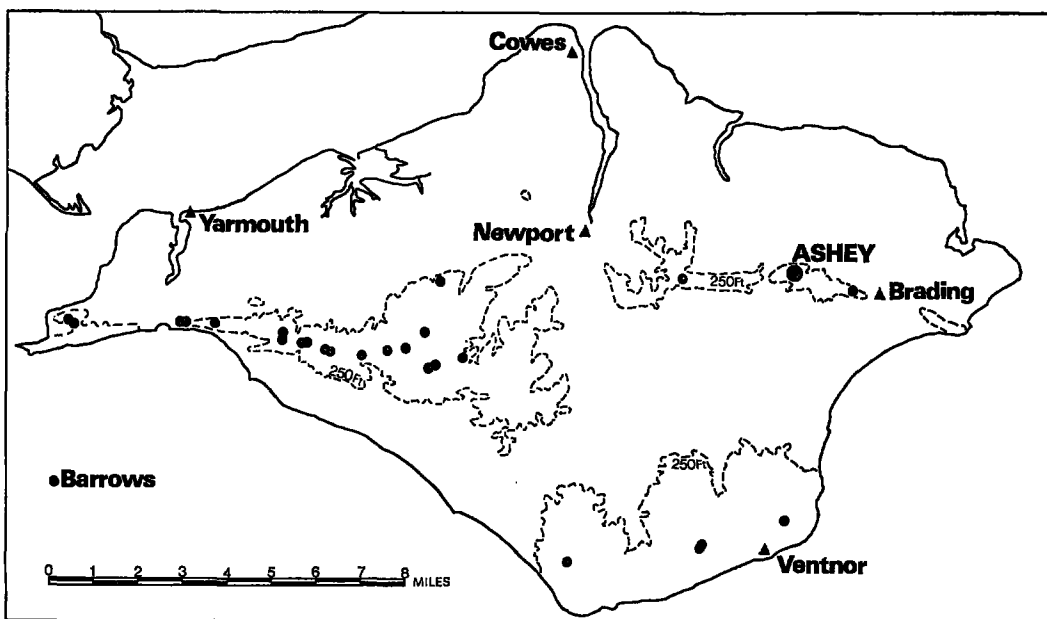


Fig. 16. The position of the Ashey Down Barrow group in relation to the other main barrow groups on the Isle of Wight.

land falls away gently to the west but rises again on to Arreton Down. The east side of Ashey Down is bordered by a dry valley, the steep sides of which clearly show the resistant nature of this hard Upper Chalk. On the east side of this valley the land rises up again on to Brading Down.

#### THE BARROW CEMETERY

##### *Previous History of Investigation*

In 1853 Benjamin Barrow, Esq., excavated trenches into 11 of the barrows on Ashey Down. He also trenched one of the pillow mounds (fig. 18, pillow mound B) mistaking it for a barrow.<sup>1</sup> A clear plan published with Barrow's report leaves no doubt as to what material was found in which barrows. These excavations may be summarised as follows (numbered as on fig. 18).

Barrow 1: A trench was dug 12 feet deep. Ten feet of this was through 'adventitious earth, i.e. earth which had been brought from another spot' and the last two feet through solid chalk. No primary burial was found but 'at various depths, from that of two feet below the summit of this mound, were found human bones, a few belonging to animals, and also some teeth, portions of pottery with rude indentations, a few small pieces of iron pyrite and an echinite'.

Barrow 2: Natural chalk was found four feet from the top of the mound. Only charcoal was found.

<sup>1</sup> *J. Brit. Archaeol. Ass.* 10 (1854), 162-165.

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Barrow 3: Excavated to a depth of from five to six feet through a large mass of flints until chalk was reached. At five feet a bronze dagger was found lying on a cremation. This dagger is now in the Carisbrooke Castle Museum (fig. 17).

Barrow 4: Excavated through earth and stones until the chalk was reached. Nothing except 'considerable heaps' of charcoal was found.

Barrow 5: Excavated to a depth of two feet entirely through flints. At this depth a collared urn was found inverted over a cremation. The urn appears to have had its mouth buried six inches in the chalk and was covered with flint nodules. No trace can now be found of this urn or the cremation. From Barrow's sketch it would appear that the urn was plain with the exception of a dotted pattern of crossed lines on the collar.<sup>2</sup>

Barrow 7: A trench was dug  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep through flints and earth, similar to that used to make up barrow 1, until the chalk was reached. At about 1 foot 4 inches in the chalk a heap of cremated human bones was found apparently unassociated with any artifacts. Only charcoal and a few animal teeth were found in the barrow material.

Barrows 11-14: All were excavated to various depths until the chalk was reached but nothing was found.

Barrow 15: A two-foot wide trench was dug two feet into the mound. At this depth a Romano-British pot containing a cremation was found. This pot (fig. 19, no. 34) is now in the Carisbrooke Castle Museum. An animal tusk was the only other find in this barrow.

### THE 1969 EXCAVATIONS

#### *Structure of Barrow 8*

Barrow 8 (fig. 20 and pl. IIb) had been almost completely levelled by Iron Age to Medieval ploughing which, at least in the medieval period, went right over the barrow. The barrow as it was in 1969, consisted of a very slight mound less than 0.5 m. in height

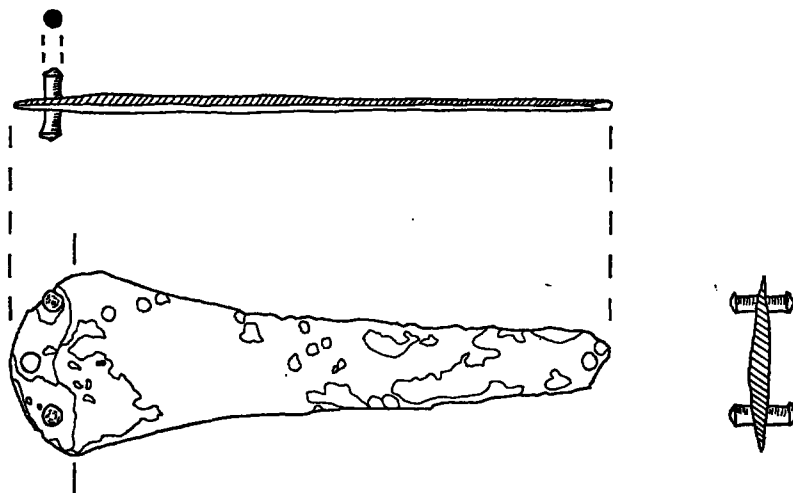


Fig. 17. Bronze Dagger from Barrow 3 found in 1853. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

<sup>2</sup> *J. Brit. Archaeol. Ass.* 10 (1854), pl. 19, fig. 1.



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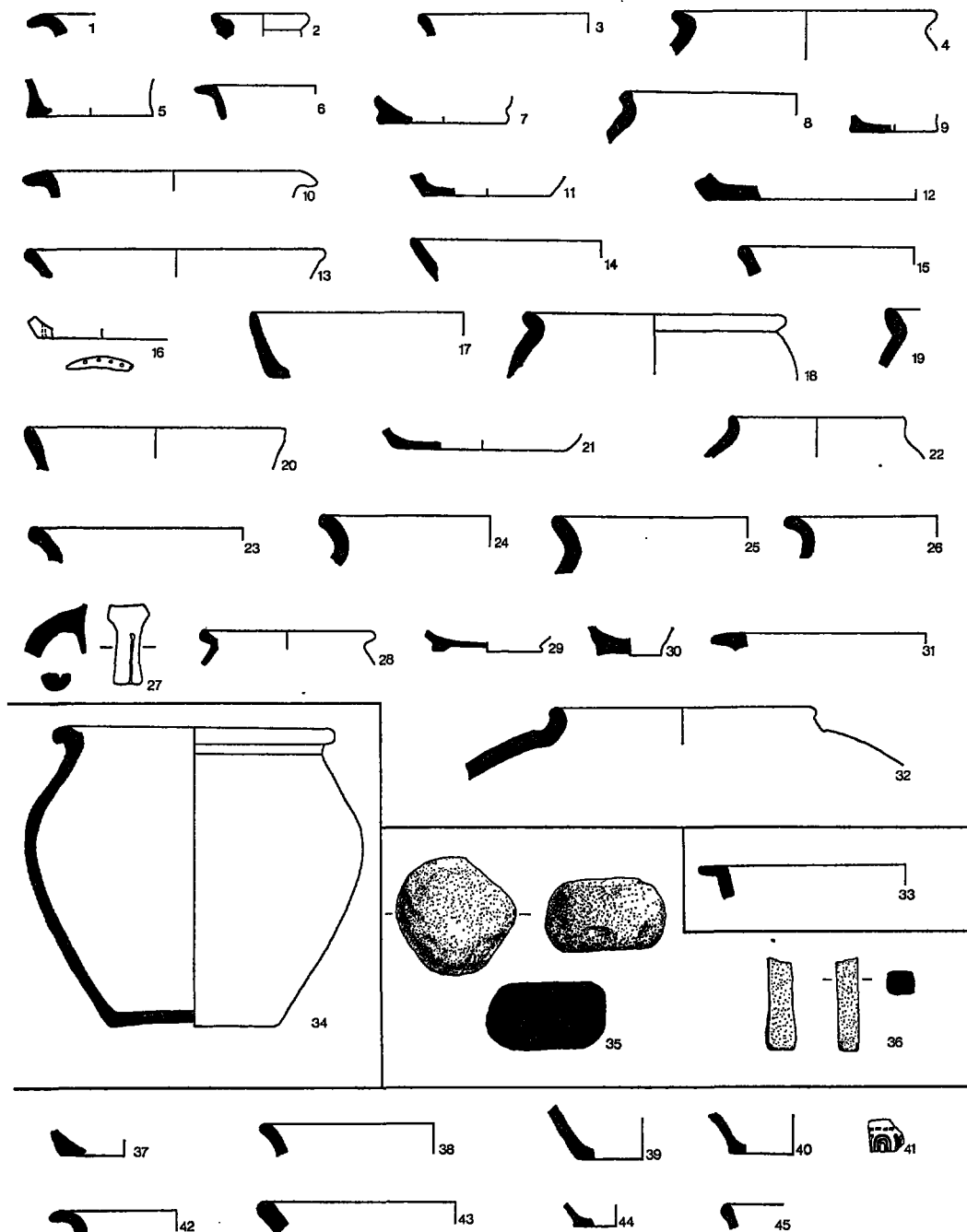


Fig. 19. Ashley Down 1969. Post-Barrow pottery and stone objects. 1-32 Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British; 33 Medieval; 34 Romano-British pot from Barrow 15; 35 Quernstone rubber; 36 Whetstone; 37-41 Pottery from Romano-British settlement site. (½)

with no trace of an outer ditch (fig. 20). Excavation revealed that very little of the actual barrow material was left: the mound being mainly a preserved rise in the chalk overlain by a buried old ground surface (layer 3). Above this there was only about 10 cm. of actual barrow material and this had been considerably disturbed by ploughing. The majority of the barrow material appears to have accumulated in the ditch through soil creep accelerated by ploughing and had completely silted it up (pl. IIIa). A large number of flint nodules, particularly from the western part of the ditch, would suggest that probably the mound was originally capped with flint nodules (as in barrow 9) over a core of turf and top-soil.

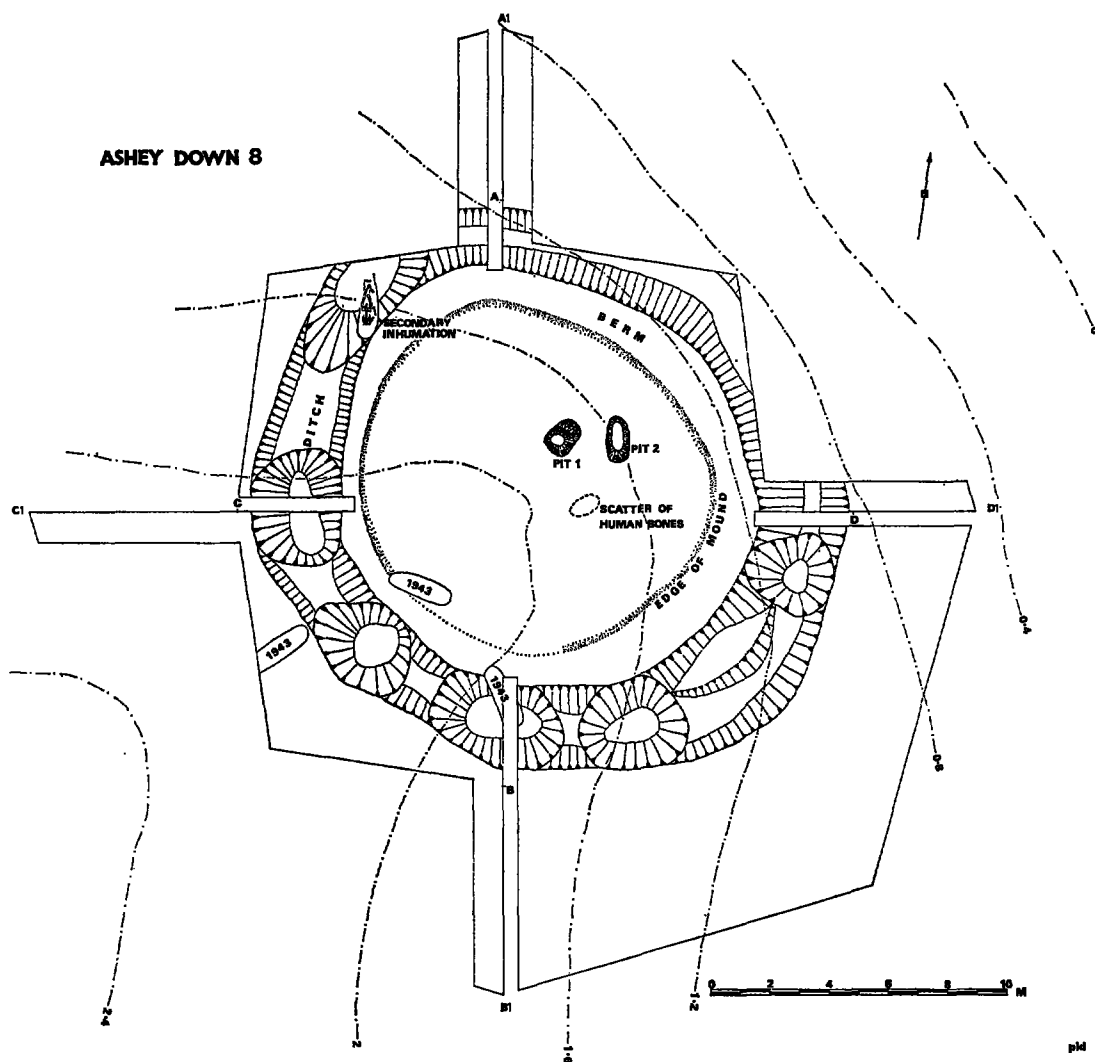


Fig. 20. Ashey Down 1969. Plan of Barrow 8. Contours at 0.4 m. intervals.

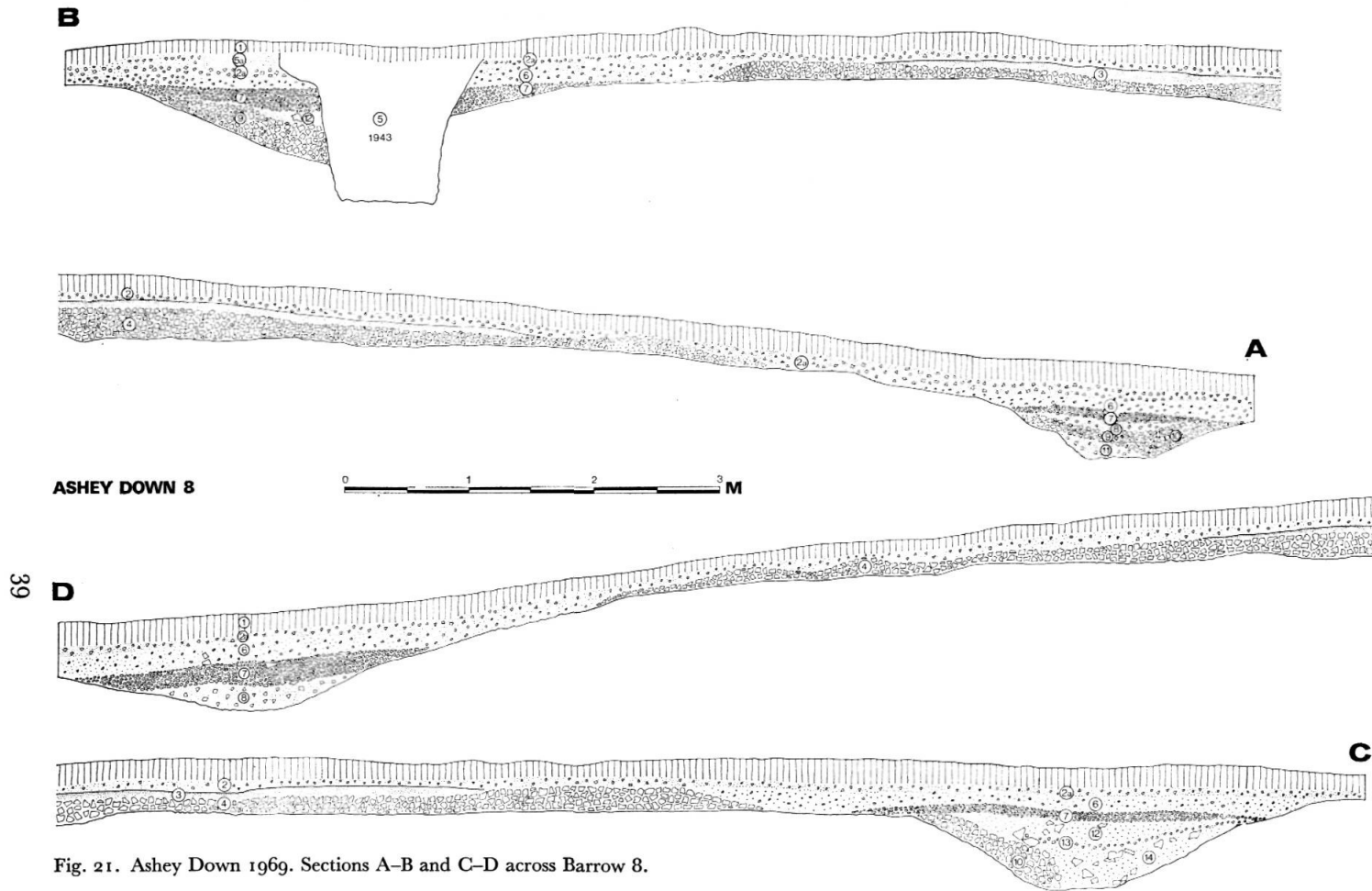


Fig. 21. Ashley Down 1969. Sections A-B and C-D across Barrow 8.

**KEY:**

1. Turf and top soil.
2. Dark brown friable soil with some chalk lumps and some flint chips. (Ploughed remains of barrow material.)
- 2a. Dark brown friable soil with chalk lumps and some flint chips. (Plough soil with chalk material dragged off barrow by Medieval(?) ploughing.)
3. Fine dark brown friable soil with few flint lumps. (Original surface preserved beneath barrow material.)
4. Compact large chalk lumps with some brown soil. (Original sub-soil preserved beneath barrow.)
5. Alternate layers of dark brown soil and rotten chalk. (1943 slit trench.)
- 5a. Dark brown soil. (Turves from 5?)

**KEY:**

6. Brown friable soil with very small chalk lumps and tiny flint chips. (PRIA - R.B. plough soil.)
7. Very small rounded chalk lumps with brown friable soil. (Final silting derived from washed in PRIA - R.B. plough soil.)
8. Reddish-brown clayey soil with occasional flint lumps.
9. Large and medium chalk lumps with some brown clayey soil.
10. Large chalk lumps with some clayey soil. (Rapid silt.)
11. Light brown clayey soil with some chalk lumps.
12. Reddish brown soil with flint nodules.
13. Red-brown clayey soil with medium-sized chalk lumps.
14. Reddish-brown soil with many large flints.

There appears to have been a berm between the original mound and the ditch although due to ploughing its extent was not clear. The ditch was cut as a series of pits and only roughly joined with bridging gullies. As the ditch was dug to a maximum depth of 0.6 m. into the chalk it is very probable that the barrow was originally chalk capped.

No primary burial pit existed under this barrow. The burial appears to have been on the old land surface and is presumably marked by the plough scattered human remains found to the east of centre of the barrow (see report by P. Sandiford). No artifacts could be certainly associated with this bone scatter. To the north of this presumed burial were two chalk cut pits (fig. 22). Both appear to have been dug out and immediately refilled with the same material together with a few flakes of flint and indeterminate animal bone fragments. These pits, which are similar to those found under barrow 9, may be considered to have fulfilled some ritual function related to the primary burial ceremony.

No evidence was found for any contemporaneous secondary burials in this barrow but a later secondary inhumation had been roughly inserted into the top of the ditch on the north-west side of the barrow. No artifacts were found with this badly plough damaged individual (see report by P. Sandiford). The burial was only 0.5 m. from the present ground surface and could not have been much more when originally buried. The lack of any real care in this burial may perhaps indicate a pre-Roman Iron Age date for its interment. Without any artifacts, however, the date of this burial remains problematical.

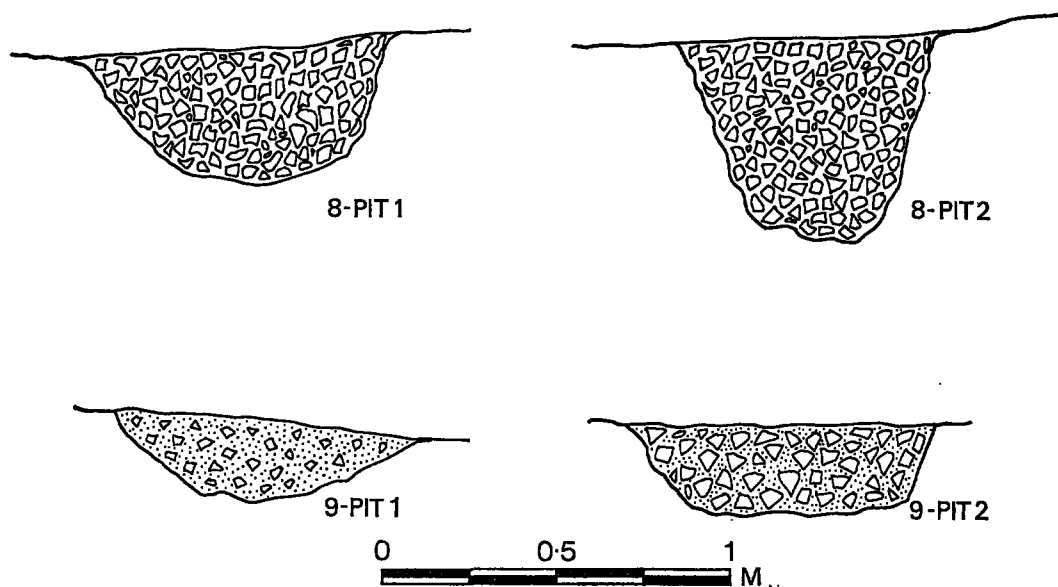


Fig. 22. Asheby Down 1969. Pit sections. Barrow 8 Pits 1 and 2 filled with chalk lumps. Barrow 9 Pits 1 and 2 filled with chalk lumps and some dark brown friable soil.



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In 1943 three slit trenches 1.54 m. deep were dug into the south-west corner of the barrow (marked 1943 on fig. 20).

*Structure of Barrow 9*

Barrow 9 (fig. 23) consisted of a simple mound of material scooped up from the south-eastern side of the barrow. No trace of a ditch was found. The mound was considerably eroded and was a maximum of 0.7 m. high. Originally there can have been little more than 1 m. of deposited material although its position on the hill slope

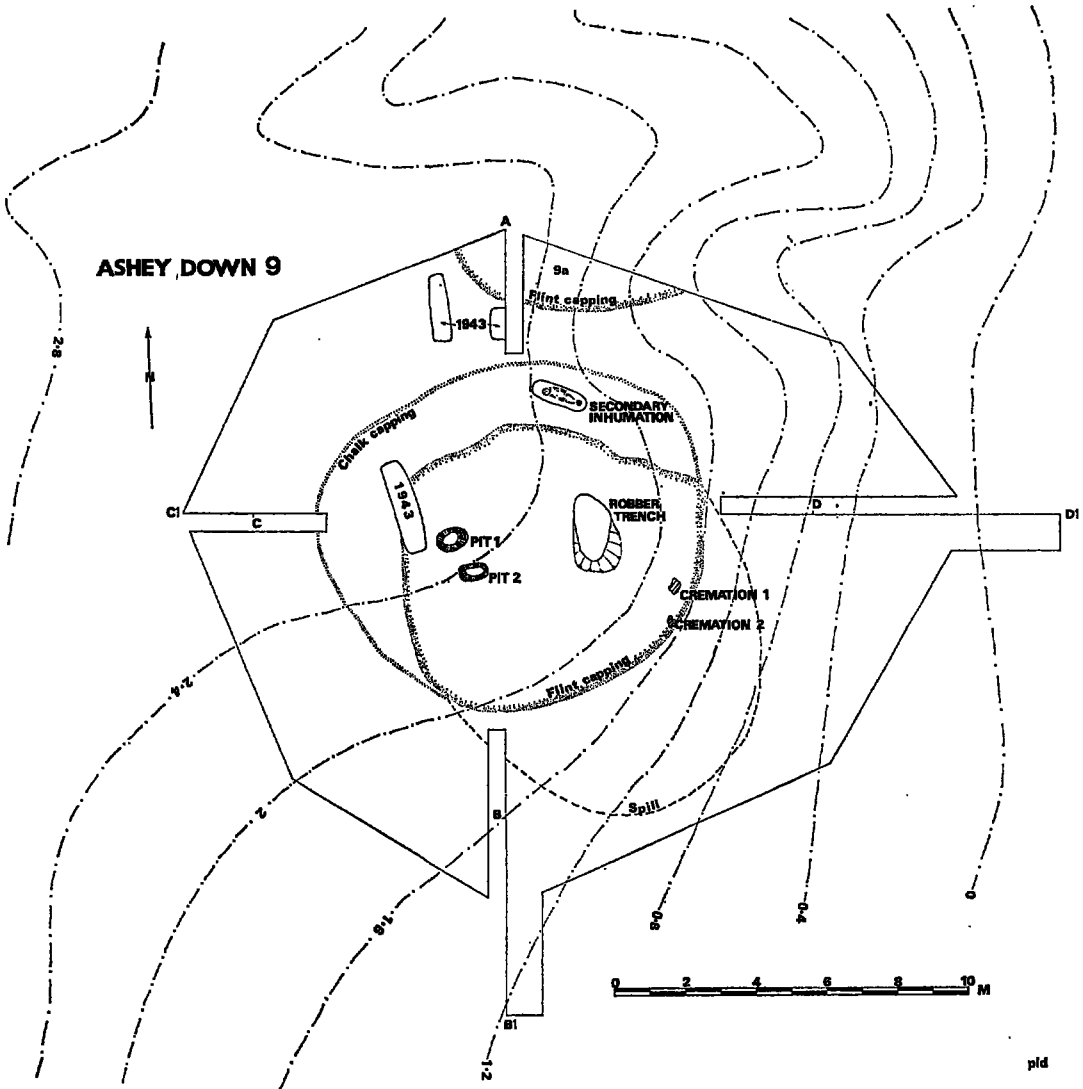


Fig. 23. Ashley Down 1969. Plan of Barrow 9. Contours at 0.4 m. intervals.

would have made the mound appear considerably higher from the downhill side. The mound consisted of a turf and top-soil core (layer 3) capped by a layer of flint nodules (layer 2, pl. IIIb) and overlain by a thin cap of chalk (layer 6). The flint and chalk cappings were badly eroded on the downhill side (pl. IVc). No trace of a primary burial was found. Certainly no burial pit existed so the primary burial was probably on the old land surface and was robbed out when the robber trench (layer 10) was dug. Three body sherds of coarse thick pottery from the robber trench may be the remains of a cinerary urn (see report on Bronze Age pottery). Two pits to the west of the presumed burial site were both found to have been dug out and immediately refilled with the same material. Both, however, incorporated a few flint flakes and indeterminate animal bone fragments which were probably derived from the old land surface (fig. 22).

Two secondary cremations (1 and 2 on fig. 23) and a secondary inhumation were found. No artifacts were found with any of the burials so their dating remains problematical. Possibly the cremations were inserted soon after the construction of the barrow and so are presumably Bronze Age as similar cremations with associated objects are known to date from the later Bronze Age. In all probability the inhumation, an extended burial of an adolescent (see report by P. Sandiford and pl. IVa), is of pre-Roman Iron Age or Romano-British date and as with the secondary inhumation from barrow 8 may have been an inhabitant of the farmstead to the south.

A slit trench was dug into the west side of the barrow in 1943. Two other slit trenches were dug at the same time between barrows 9 and 9a (fig. 23).

#### DISCUSSION OF THE BRONZE AGE BARROWS

Neither the evidence from the 1853 nor the 1969 excavations of barrows on Ashey Down offer a conclusive date for their construction. The evidence available, however, points to an Early Bronze Age date. Benjamin Barrow's excavations of 1853 revealed primary (?) cremation burials under barrows 3, 5 and 7.<sup>3</sup> The cremation under barrow 3 was associated with a flat riveted bronze dagger (fig. 17). Under barrow 5 the primary cremation was found beneath an inverted Early Bronze Age urn.<sup>4</sup> No primary burials were found under any other barrows excavated by Barrow. Unfortunately neither barrow 8 nor 9 excavated in 1969 revealed primary burials. It is possible, however, that the scatter of human bones found to the east of the centre of barrow 8 was the remains of a primary inhumation originally on the old land surface. It was not associated with any dateable material. Likewise no certain remains of a primary burial were found under barrow 9. The original burial, which must have been on the old land surface, may either have been robbed out (three sherds of a possible Early Bronze Age cinerary urn were found in the robber trench, but no trace of any human bones) or it may have been cremation 1. Although this cremation when found was well over to the south-east side of the barrow it must be remembered that there may have been considerable erosion on this downhill side.

The three sherds of Beaker pottery found in the barrow material of barrow 9 indicate that this barrow is at least post Beaker period in date. The one sherd of cord

<sup>3</sup> *J. Brit. Archaeol. Ass.* 10 (1854), 163-164.

<sup>4</sup> *J. Brit. Archaeol. Ass.* 10 (1854), pl. 19, fig. 1.

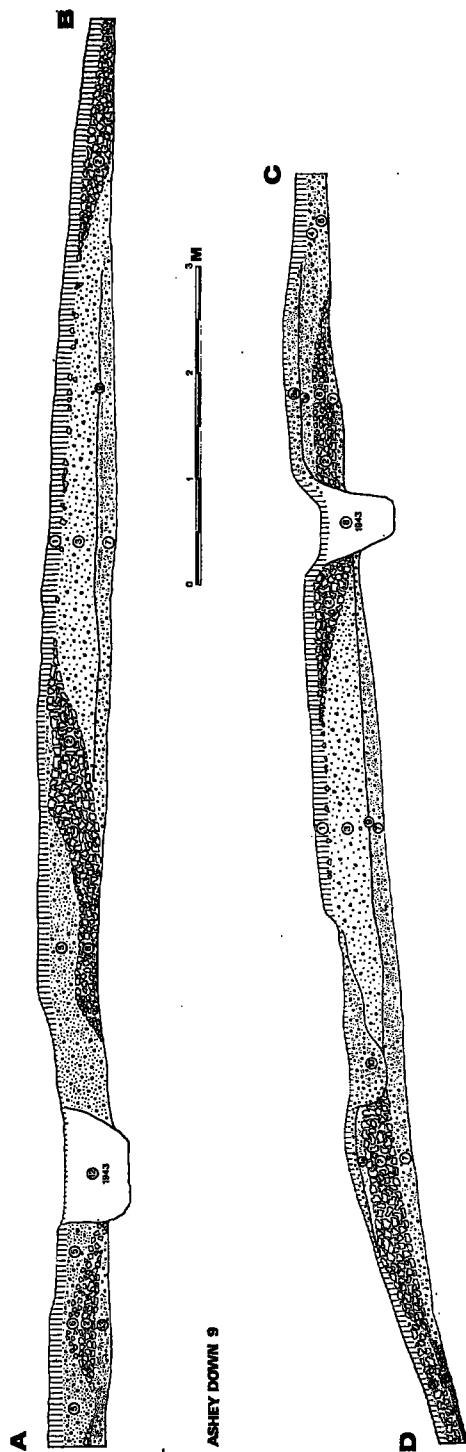


Fig. 24. Ashley Down 1969. Barrow 9. Sections A-B and C-D.

KEY:

1. Turf and top soil.
- 1a. Turf buried by material of robber trench.
2. Large flint nodules with some brown friable soil. (Barrow material.)
- 2a. Brown friable soil with large angular flints and some small chalk lumps. (Derived from 2 and 3.)
3. Brown friable soil with small chalk lumps and flint fragments. (Turf and soil core of barrow.)
4. Brown friable soil with small chalk lumps and angular flint fragments. (Hill wash; plough soil?)
5. Brown friable soil with small chalk lumps. (Romano-British plough soil built up against uphill side of barrow.)
6. Angular chalk lumps with little brown soil. (Remains of chalk capping.)
- 6a. Large angular chalk lumps with light brown friable soil. (Derived from 6.)
7. Brown friable soil with small chalk lumps. (Buried old land surface.)
8. Flints, chalk and mixed soil. (Fill of slit trench 1943.)
- 8a. Flints, chalk lumps and brown soil. (Spoil from slit trench.)
9. Dark friable soil. (Buried turf linc.)
10. Dark friable soil with angular flints and small chalk lumps. (Fill or robber trench.)

impressed ware of probable Early Bronze Age date found in the flint capping of barrow 9 suggests that this barrow is probably Early Bronze Age (or later).

The form of the barrows certainly suggests an Early Bronze Age date. Barrow 8 appears to be of the Bell type as it had a berm between the mound and the ditch. All examples of this type excavated on the Isle of Wight have been shown to be of Early Bronze Age date. Barrows 8 and possibly 9 show the remarkable feature, apparently restricted to the Isle of Wight, of incorporating beach pebbles (and/or sand) in the mound.<sup>5</sup> Although plough scattered the presence of at least 30 beach pebbles in barrow 8 and 13 in barrow 9 may have been connected with some local Early Bronze Age burial ceremony. None of the pebbles shows any polishing so an agricultural function is improbable.

The pair of pits found under both barrows 8 and 9 presumably fulfilled a function associated with the primary burial ceremony although the possibility remains that they may have been pre-existing domestic pits. There are several Bronze Age parallels to them from Southern England<sup>6</sup> but they have not yet been recognised under many Isle of Wight barrows. The two 'deeper hollows' shown to the north-west of the primary inhumation in the Arreton barrow<sup>7</sup> are in the same relative position as those under Ashley Down barrows 8 and 9 and so may be close parallels. An Early Bronze Age date is argued for the Arreton barrow.<sup>8</sup> The similar relative positions of the pits under these three barrows may support the suggestion that they did fulfil some ceremonial function rather than their being simply pre-existing domestic pits.

The absence of either a grave pit or a cairn of flints in the centre of the barrow, both taken to be early features<sup>9</sup> may suggest a later Early Bronze Age date for the Ashley Barrows. The flint cappings in barrows 8 and 9 (and possibly 3, 5 and 7) may possibly be a later development of the small internal flint cairn. In conclusion, therefore, the evidence would tend to indicate an Early Bronze Age date for the main barrow cemetery on Ashley Down. The barrows appear, however, to have been re-used for burial at least into the Romano-British period.

## THE FINDS

### *Pottery – Pre-Barrow Occupation*

#### Neolithic:

Two hundred and forty sherds of pottery found may be assigned to the Neolithic period. The majority was found in the buried old land surface under barrow 8 and in the ditch. The remainder had been plough scattered. The exact find-spot of each sherd is recorded in the finds register deposited with the finds at the Carisbrooke Castle Museum. On the basis of fabric three main groups can be established.

1. Fine ware with red outer oxidised surface and black inner reduced surface with some grog (fig. 25, nos. 1–9).
2. Smooth grey ware with orange inner and outer oxidised surfaces. Little calcined flint filler (fig. 25, no. 12).

<sup>5</sup> *Proc. Isle of Wight Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.* 3 (1938), 191.

<sup>6</sup> *The Bronze Age Round Barrow in Britain* (1960), 51.

<sup>7</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 26 (1960), 265, fig. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 26 (1960), 270.

<sup>9</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 26 (1960), 270–271.

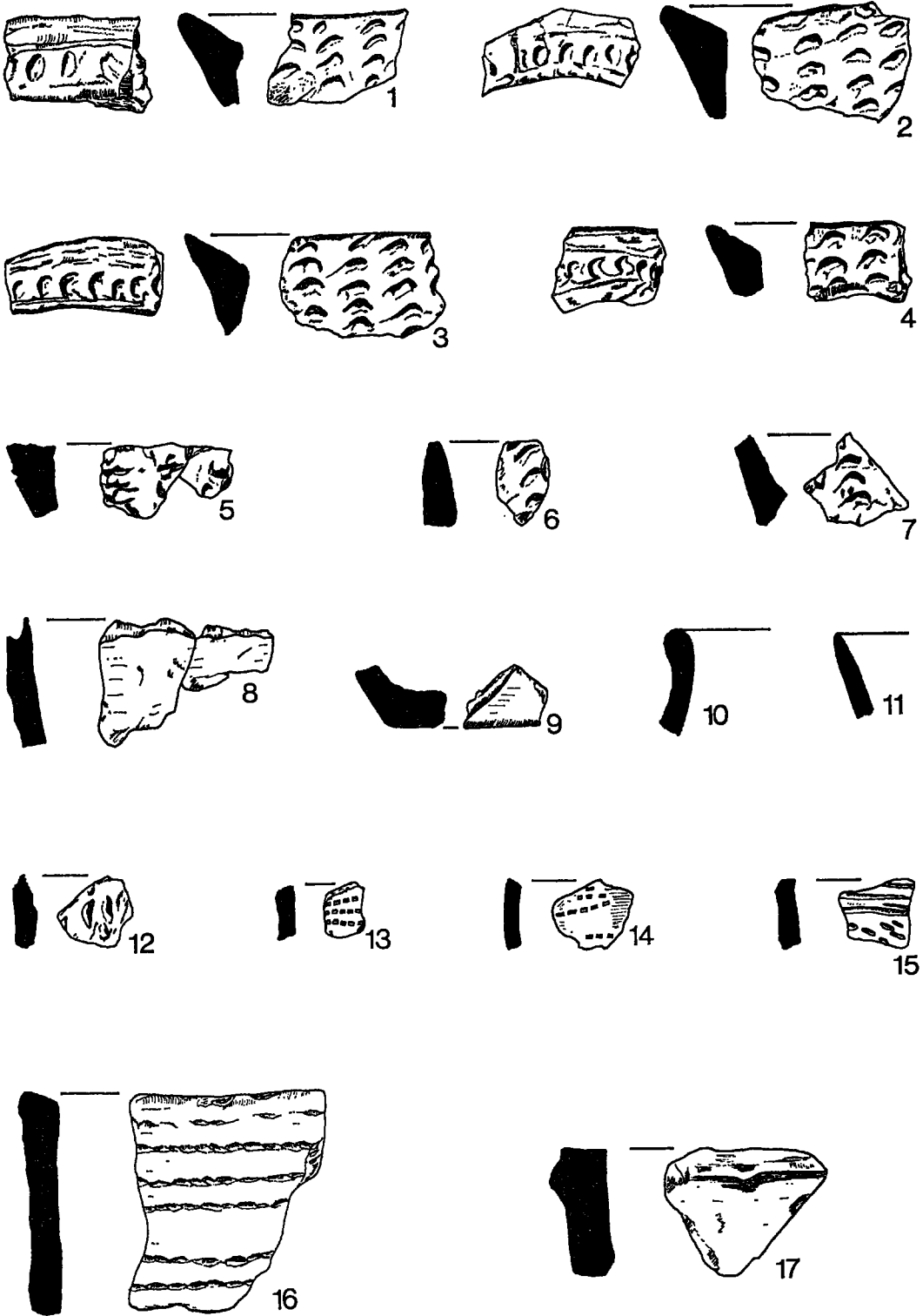


Fig. 25. Ashey Down 1969. Prehistoric Pottery from Barrows 8 and 9. 1-12 Neolithic; 13-15 Beaker; 16-17 Bronze Age. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

3. Very coarse pottery with dark grey core and reddish brown oxidised surfaces containing calcined flint filler (fig. 25, nos. 10-11).

Of these 240 sherds only eight (all of fabrics 1 and 2) bear any decoration. The decoration consists of short, wide whipped cord maggots and is very similar to that found under the round barrow on Arretton Down, Isle of Wight.<sup>10</sup> It is probable that these sherds belong to simple bag shaped bowls. Ozanne argues a late Neolithic date for this Peterborough style pottery.<sup>11</sup>

Three sherds of beaker ware were found in barrow 9. All three sherds are of a very fine orange/red ware. Two sherds (fig. 25, nos. 13-14) have lines of rectangular stabbed decoration and the other one (fig. 25, no. 15) has incised grooves and subrectangular indentations. Sherds similar to 13 and 14 are known from several Isle of Wight sites, e.g. Nodgham, Gore Down and St. John's at Ryde<sup>12</sup> and similar to sherd 15 from Bonchurch.<sup>13</sup>

### *Barrow Period*

#### Bronze Age:

Only five sherds of indisputably Bronze Age pottery were found. Three types were distinguishable, all from barrow 9.

1. Thick smooth black fabric with red oxidised outer surfaces and some grog. Probably part of an Early Bronze Age cinerary urn. Three body sherds were found in the robber trench (layer 10).
2. Black fabric with brown outer and inner surfaces and some grog. Rim sherd with parallel lines of twisted cord impressions. From layer no. 2 (fig. 25, no. 16).
3. Black ware with brown outer oxidised surfaces. Flaky with some grog. Applied cordon. From layer 2 (fig. 25, no. 17).

### *Post-Barrow Occupation*

#### Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British:

Four hundred and eight sherds of pre-Roman Iron Age pottery and 87 sherds of Romano-British pottery were found whilst excavating barrow 8. One hundred and ninety-four pre-Roman Iron Age sherds and 71 Romano-British sherds were found whilst excavating barrow 9. A representative selection of rim and base forms are illustrated in fig. 19. They are grouped by fabric rather than pot form as the majority of the sherds were very fragmentary. A description and the find-spot of every sherd is recorded in the finds book which is deposited with the finds at Carisbrooke Castle Museum.

- 1-18 Black sandy fabric with quartz grains.
- 19 Pale grey, rough sandy ware.
- 20-21 Fine brown ware. Red/black surfaces with calcined flint filler and voids indicating decayed chalk and organic filler.
- 23 Hard buff sandy ware.

<sup>10</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 26 (1960), 280, pl. 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 26 (1960), 281-284.

<sup>12</sup> *Proc. Isle of Wight Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.* 2 (1937), 292, pl. 1

<sup>13</sup> *Proc. Isle of Wight Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.* 2 (1937), 292, pl. 1.

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- 24-27, 32 Hard grey sandy ware.  
 28-30 White inner surface, pink outer surface, fine sandy ware.  
 31 Hard grey sandy ware with brown outer and inner oxidised surfaces. Not illustrated. Twenty-seven sherds of undecorated Samian ware.

Medieval:

Six Medieval sherds were found. Five sherds were of a hard grey sandy ware with red oxidised surfaces (fig. 19, no. 33). One body sherd of Tudor date was a red sandy fabric with internal green glaze.

*Worked Flints* (fig. 26)

The flint industry may be considered to be primarily of Neolithic date as it is associated with Peterborough style pottery. Some of the material may, however, be Bronze Age but the general lack of Bronze Age pottery suggests that there was little concentrated domestic occupation during this period in the immediate area around the barrow group. All the flints found are covered with a heavy white patination. The material was found scattered throughout all the layers. The find-spot of each flint is recorded in the finds register deposited with the material in the Carisbrooke Castle Museum. The flint assemblage will therefore be considered as one group. It may be classified as follows:

	Barrow 8:				Barrow 9:			
Scrapers .. .. .	8	..	..	..	..	..	..	6
Borers .. .. .	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Retouched flakes .. .. .	58	..	..	..	..	..	..	32
Hammerstones .. .. .	0	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Cores .. .. .	12	..	..	..	..	..	..	7
Waste flakes .. .. .	2,318	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,302
Fire cracked flints .. .. .	76	..	..	..	..	..	..	78

This gives a total flint assemblage of 4,751 worked flints with 154 fire cracked flints. Only 2.4 per cent of the worked flints have any secondary working. This is similar to the percentage with secondary working found on Arreton Down.<sup>14</sup> The Arreton assemblage was, however, considerably larger (13,610) and contained a far greater range of tool types. Of the 14 tool types isolated from the Arreton Down assemblage only three (the scrapers, borers and retouched flakes) occurred in the Ashley Down assemblage.

*Stone Artifacts* (Geological information from R. Butler)

1. Quernstone rubber (barrow 8, layer 2). Made of coarse grained sandstone containing muscovite. Probably Millstone Grit (fig. 19, no. 36).
2. Whetstone (barrow 9, layer 2a). Made of fine grained grey sandstone containing quartzite and muscovite (fig. 19, no. 36).

<sup>14</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 26 (1960), 284.

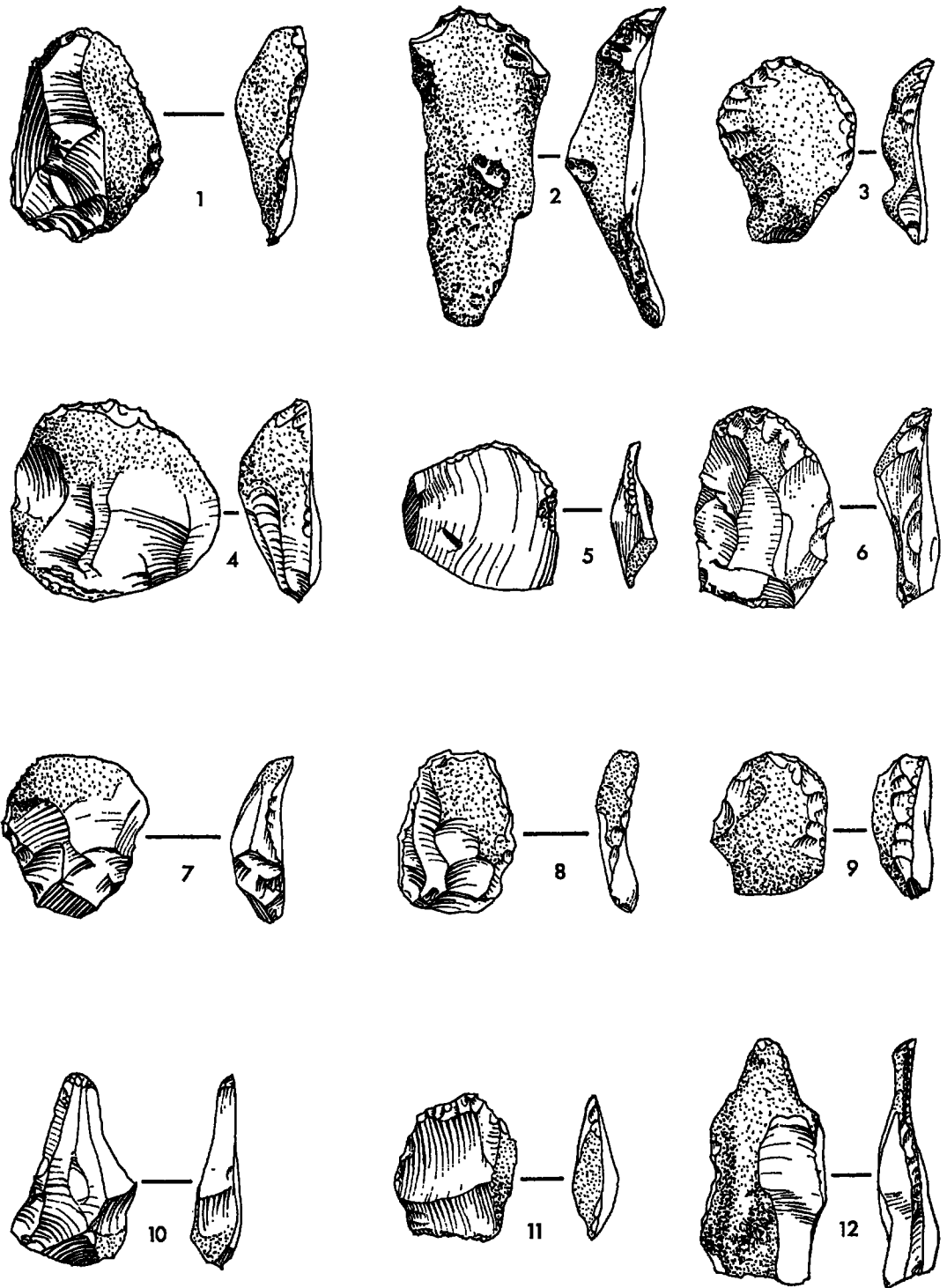


Fig. 26. Ashey Down 1969. Worked Flints. Scrapers 1-9, Borers 10-12.  
 (8 and 9 are surface finds from the barrow cemetery.) ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )



*Coins* (Identified by C. Masham)

1. Constantine I. A.D. 306-337.  
Mint: Alexandria.  
Condition: Worn.  
Barrow 9, layer 2.
2. Probably Antoninus Pius. A.D. 138-161.  
Condition: Very worn.  
Barrow 8, layer 6.
3. Antoninus Pius. A.D. 138-161.  
Condition: Worn.  
Barrow 9, layer 2a.

*Slag*

Iron slag. One fragment from barrow 8, layer 2.

Copper slag. Three fragments from barrow 9, two from layer 4 and one from layer 2a.

THE HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS FROM ASHEY DOWN, 1969

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*A Non-cremated Remains*

1. Extended Inhumation from barrow 8.

A fairly complete adult skeleton lacking a skull. The degree of positional displacement of the remains and their close proximity to the surface would seem to indicate that the burial had been disturbed, probably by ploughing. This could have been responsible for the removal of the skull together with the first three cervical vertebrae, the post mortem breakage of the left femur, and the lateral displacement of the two tibiae.

The remains vary in their degree of preservation and all the bones exhibit some surface pitting due to burial in chalk. With the exception of the two femora none of the other bones is complete, either being broken up as with radius, ulna and fibula, or lacking proximal and distal ends.

The osteometric data is presented in Table I.

The pelvis and sacrum are sufficiently well preserved to enable the sex of the individual to be determined. The sciatic notch is narrow and deep with an angle of 55 degrees as estimated by shadow tracing. The pre-auricular sulcus is absent. The sacrum displays a uniform curvature with maximum posterior depth at the level of the third segment. This, together with the overall robustness and large size of the long bones and well defined muscle insertion points e.g. prominence of the linea aspera, clearly point to the individual being male.

Use of regression formulae<sup>15</sup> on the two femora give a maximum stature estimate of 5 feet 9 inches. (The femur was the only long bone whose total length could be measured.)

Without the skull no accurate estimate of age can be made but three of the thoracic vertebrae exhibit considerable osteoarthritic lipping, indicating that the individual died between middle and late adulthood.

## 2. Extended Inhumation from barrow 9 (pl. IVa).

An incomplete skeleton with a well preserved skull. The feet are completely absent and all the long bones have either proximal or distal ends missing, usually both. Although most of the vertebrae are absent the bent over attitude in which the skull was found has preserved the atlas, axis, third, fourth and fifth cervical vertebrae. Many of the bones are in an extremely fragile condition and the majority exhibit slight surface pitting due to chalk burial.

The skull is small with a well rounded occipital region lacking a prominent external occipital protuberance. The mastoid processes are also small. Cranial suture closure is not yet complete and the basi-sphenoid has just begun to fuse with the basi-occipital, an event usually taking place at about the age of 17 years. The state of eruption of the dentition and the degree of wear would indicate that the individual was aged between 15 and 20 years, although dental anomalies have interrupted the normal pattern of wear (discussed later).

The long bones are small and lack prominent muscular markings. No epiphyseal fusions have taken place on either femur and the epiphysis is still present on the left femur. There is no sign of any epiphyseal lines on the two complete phalanges present. These observations would confirm an age estimate of about 17 years.

The pelvis is very poorly represented by a fragment of ilium containing part of the acetabulum. The greater sciatic notch is absent, making sexing of the remains difficult. However in view of the general small size and lack of robustness of the remains plus the reduced mastoid processes, it is probable that the individual was female.

Skull and dental data are presented in Table II and the osteometry in Table I.

### *Anomalies*

On the left side of the skull the squamosal suture divides into two about one centimetre from its junction with the coronal suture, forming an additional small cranial bone. Another sutural anomaly is the well defined retention of the metopic (medio-frontal) suture.

There is considerable alveolar prognathism and due to the extremely restricted area of the palate, the third molars, if they had erupted would have projected posteriorly into the skull instead of downwards (pl. Va).

<sup>15</sup> *American J. Phys. Anthropol.* ns. 16 (1958), 79-123.

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In the lower dentition there has been retention of the left, second deciduous molar and this has produced medial deflection of the second premolar beneath it (pl. Vb). In the upper dentition the corresponding deciduous second molar has also been retained, but in this case the second premolar beneath has forced the deciduous molar to project below the level of the upper tooth row causing considerable occlusal wear. An extra tooth cusp is present on the left upper second molar. The lower tooth row is also restricted in size and the third molars would have erupted, because of overcrowding, on the lower slope of the ascending ramus.

3. Scattered remains of inhumation from barrow 8.

These slight remains comprising 15 small fragments of adult human bone consist of: 5 fragments of femur shaft, one with an extremely well defined linea aspera.

3 fragments of radius, one piece from the left side with the distal end present and another with proximal end.

3 fragments of ulna.

2 fragments of tibia, one containing the nutrient foramen and one a portion of condyle.

2 phalangeal fragments.

Although there is nothing positive to show that these remains belonged to one individual the size of the different bones would not preclude this possibility.

TABLE I: POST CRANIAL MEASUREMENTS

	INHUMATION - BARROW 8		INHUMATION - BARROW 9	
	Right	Left	Right	Left
Fe L1	47.3 cm.	47.5 cm.	—	29.9 cm.
Fe D1	2.8	2.8	1.9	2.0
Fe D2	3.1	3.1	2.5	2.6
Ti L1	—	—	—	—
Ti D1	3.4	3.2	2.2	2.2
Ti D2	2.5	2.5	1.9	1.9
Hu L1	—	—	—	—
Hu D1	—	—	1.5	1.5
Femur shaft index	90		76	
Tibia shaft index	76		86	

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TABLE II: SKULL MEASUREMENTS AND BASIC DENTAL DATA  
(Inhumation Barrow 9)

CRANIAL MEASUREMENTS		FACIAL MEASUREMENTS		MANDIBULAR MEASUREMENTS	
L	17.6 cm.	LB	9.2 cm.	W1	11.0 cm.
B	13.4	G'H	5.9	GoGo	8.9
B'	9.2	GB	8.2	ZZ	4.1
H'	11.6	J	11.2	RB'	2.6
GL	9.5	NH'	4.3	H1	2.6
S1	11.5	NB	2.0	ML	8.7
S2	13.2	o1'	3.6	Cr H	4.4
S3	11.6	o2	3.1		
S'1	10.0	G'1	4.3		
S'2	11.1	G2	3.2		
S'3	9.6	DC	2.2		
FL	3.3	NH	4.2		
FB	3.2				
BiaStB	10.5				

BASIC DENTAL DATA

e	
+	
7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
	+

- / - Tooth missing, socket present.
- U - Tooth not yet erupted.
- e - Excessive occlusal wear.
- + - Second milk molar retained.

All symbols as in Brothwell 1963.<sup>16</sup>

*B Cremated Remains*

1. Cremation I from barrow 9.

A total of 2,462 fragments of cremated bone weighing 1,077 g. were recovered. There was a great deal of variation in the size of the fragments, the largest being over 4 cm. in length ranging down to extremely tiny unidentifiable pieces. The majority were between 1 and 2 cm. in length. There was also a large amount of variation in the physical appearance of the fragments. Some were well calcined and fissured and were almost pure white, while others were very blackened and had become impregnated, most likely during the cremation itself with a material giving the bone a glossy appearance.

<sup>16</sup> *Digging up Bones* (1963).

All the fragments which could be positively identified were of human origin and despite the large bulk of material in this cremation there was no evidence in the form of bone duplication for the presence of more than one individual. Most parts of the skull were represented including five permanent incisor roots and a piece of mandible from the region of the mental foramen. Most long bones were also represented although well broken up. There were three identifiable vertebral fragments and a small piece of scapula.

The individual was adult as judged from the epiphyseal state of the phalanges and long bones, the permanent dentition and the overall size of the remains. The thickness of the cranial fragments, the robustness of the long bones, the prominent muscle markings and the large mastoid process point to the individual having been male. No unequivocal age estimation can be made but many of the cranial fragments show no signs of sutural closure, an indication that the individual was a young adult.

## 2. Cremation II from barrow 9.

The remains as recovered consisted of 754 fragments of uniformly well calcined and fissured bone weighing 156 g. Almost all the fragments were completely white although a small number showed a slight degree of blackening. The fragments appear to have been well broken up and consist mainly of unidentifiable long bone fragments. The largest fragment was only 2.5 cm. long and the majority were less than 1 cm. in length making identification extremely difficult.

Only one individual is represented. The epiphyseal state of the phalanges, the state of sutural closure of the skull and the presence of a premolar tooth root all point to the individual having been adult. The very thin nature of the cranial fragments and the general lack of robustness of the remains possibly indicates that the individual was female although this must only be regarded as supposition since it was not possible, due to lack of material, to examine the more diagnostic skeletal features. Similarly although the cranial fragments present exhibit virtually complete sutural closure, the conclusion that the individual was either middle aged or old must be treated with caution.

## ANIMAL SKELETAL MATERIAL

*By M. HARMAN*

Considering the period of occupation of the area excavated surprisingly little animal skeletal material was found. The total number of bone fragments found numbered only 101 and of these the majority were indeterminate fragments under 5 cm. in length. The largest bone fragment was only 12 cm. long. The material is far too scanty for any detailed analysis to be meaningful. The following animals were, however, represented:

- Barrow 8 Old land surface (layer 9) – Deer.
- Barrow material (layer 3) – Deer, Cattle and Dog.
- Barrow 9 Old land surface (layer 3) – Deer and Cattle.
- Barrow material (layer 2) – Red Deer, Cattle and Pig.

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The presence of pigs and possibly deer suggest a former wooded area in the vicinity.

Oyster shells: 108 Oyster shells (*Ostrea edulis*) were found during the excavations. Seventy-four were found in the area of barrow 8 and 34 around barrow 9. The majority (76) were found in the Romano-British plough soil.

FOREIGN STONES

By R. E. BUTLER

All eight types of foreign stone found during the excavations occur naturally on the Isle of Wight (Table III). The Lower Greensand outcrops to the south of Ashe Down. It consists of Atherfield Clay overlain by ferruginous sandstones, the Sandrock Beds and Carstone. These beds outcrop from west to east across the Island. The Upper Greensand also outcrops to the south of Ashe Down at the base of the chalk. The Bembridge Limestone outcrops to the west of Ashe Down at Bembridge. The beach pebbles were probably from the sea-shore but may have been derived from the raised beaches to the north-west of Ashe Down. The whole group of rocks therefore outcrops within a radius of five miles from Ashe Down. The archaeological considerations of the material are discussed below.

TABLE III: FOREIGN STONES

Layer:	BARROW 8:							BARROW 9:				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	2a	3	6
Lower Greensand	1	1			2					2		
Sandrock Beds (LGS)		3		1								1
Carstone (LGS)	1	34	1	26	29			2	6	8	6	8
Upper Greensand		4		10	5			2	5	12	5	5
Glauconitic Marl					1							
Bembridge Limestone				7					1	4		
Nettleton Grit										2		
Beach Pebbles		1	1	21	5	1	1			4	1	8

## POST BRONZE AGE OCCUPATION OF ASHEY DOWN

*Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British Occupation*

In the north-west corner of Ashley Down there are the remains of a system of rectangular fields (fig. 18). In 1955, when Mr. W. Woodhouse of the Ordnance Survey examined this area, three or four positive/negative lynchets and a single negative lynchet were also visible in the area now ploughed to the south-west of the preserved fields. These were not visible when the area was examined in 1969. It is clear, however, that the small area of field lynchets now preserved were originally far more extensive. The general form of the remaining lynchets would suggest that they are of pre-Roman Iron Age or Romano-British date. The foreign stones found during the 1969 barrow excavations may possibly have been brought on to the Down with manure related to the use of these fields. The evidence of the foreign stones found, particularly in the plough soil over the ditch of barrow 8, would tend to indicate that manure was being brought on to the Down particularly from the south. It may be significant that the nearest Roman Villa to Ashley Down is that at Brading which is situated on the Lower Greensand series. Mr. Butler's chart (Table III) clearly shows that the majority of foreign stones found originated from the Greensand to the south of the Down. It is possible, therefore, that manure from the farmyards around Brading Villa, together, accidentally, with surface stones, was taken on to Ashley Down. Mr. C. Bowen has shown evidence for fields associated with Brading Villa on Brading Down.<sup>17</sup> It is not improbable that a villa the size of Brading controlled not only the grain growing on Brading Down but also on Ashley Down too.

Ashley Down is, however,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the Brading Villa so it is possible that the small Romano-British settlement on Ashley Down (fig. 16) was an outlying farmstead connected with the villa. This settlement is situated to the south of the main barrow group. A slight bank on the downhill side of the settlement would suggest, possibly, a small circular enclosure. Sixty-eight sherds of Romano-British pottery, together with two daub fragments and indeterminate animal bone fragments, were found in mole-hills on this probable settlement site. A representative selection are illustrated in fig. 19, nos. 37-45.

- [37-39, 42-44. Hard black and/or red sandy fabric.
- 40. Hard grey sandy ware.
- 41. Samian. Form 37.
- 45. Buff sandy ware with red outer oxidised surfaces.]

*Medieval Occupation*

The Manor of Ashley, spelt Aissheseye, Aschesaye and Asshaye in the 16th century, was granted to the Abbey of Wherwell, near Andover, before 1228 and by 1291 its annual value was estimated to be £41 6s. 2d. It extended to the sea-shore to the north of the present village of East Ashley and to the south over Ashley Down. It also controlled the passage from Ryde to Portsmouth which could explain its great wealth. Ashley remained with the Abbey of Wherwell until its dissolution and in 1544 Giles Worsley, who leased the manor from the last Abbess, was granted it from the Crown. In 1563 a third of the Manor became the Manor of Ryde.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *The Roman Villa in Britain* (1969), 43-44.

<sup>18</sup> *VCH Hampshire*, 5 (1912), 180.

At East Ashey there is archaeological evidence, in the form of rectangular house platforms at SZ 58758845, consistent with a depopulated manorial settlement. With a Manor as rich as Ashey controlling the Down during the Middle Ages it is hardly surprising that there is much archaeological evidence for Medieval farming activities on the Down. Fig. 18 shows five main blocks of ridge and furrow fields still visible on Ashey Down. As Mr. C. Bowen has pointed out<sup>19</sup> in many cases the actual preserved remains of ridge and furrow fields may be post-Medieval in date but they very probably reflect the Medieval field pattern.

It would appear that most of the Down was under plough during the Middle Ages with the exception of the south-east corner. Here, there is a large enclosure delimited by a bank and internal ditch (fig. 18 and pl. IIa). There is no evidence for ridge and furrow ploughing within this enclosure. The presence of five pillow mounds (fig. 18, A-E) within the enclosure supports the theory that it was left unploughed, perhaps as a stock enclosure. Near the centre of the enclosure is a small copse in which are the remains of a post-Medieval farm building. The bricks and tiles indicate a 17th-18th century structure but by 1769 this farmstead had been demolished as it does not appear on John Andrew's map of that date. The surface finds of body sherds of Medieval pottery from this site, however, indicate that this is probably also the site of a Medieval farmstead. It is probable, therefore, that there was a small farming settlement on Ashey Down controlling the farmlands worked on the Down on behalf of the Manor of Ashey.

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<sup>19</sup> *Ancient Fields* (1961), 48.