Preliminary report on the grave groups from

Petersfield Heath Barrows 11 and 13

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The first excavations on Petersfield Heath (September 2014) led to the recovery of 14 artefacts in association with coffin traces in the centre of Barrow 11. The coffin was essentially above ground surface and abutted or cut through a small inner turf stack. No traces of human remains were encountered, but the coffin continued beyond the excavated area. A second burial deposit was found in Barrow 13 in September 2015; this time a grave cut into the subsoil contained 18 artefacts alongside cremated bones probably deposited in an organic bag with a wooden handle, which survived in mineral-replaced form. Both are impressive grave groups for the Early Bronze Age in their own right, but they also have certain intriguing similarities. The opportunity is taken here to begin to explore their potential significance and the questions they pose.

Barrow 11 grave group inventory (contexts 31 and 15)

Context 31

2 ***Sandstone abrasion block***; small rhomboid shaped block of ferruginous cemented sandstone, medium-fine grain; grey-brown, one face darker with purple tinge; one face has an axial natural ridge; not certainly worked, but one end and possibly also the sides are fairly smooth and may have been abraded; max. dimension 114mm, W 43.7mm, T 18.0mm

3 ***Sandstone abrasion(?) block***; small polygonal shaped block of tabular ferruginous cemented sandstone, fairly coarse grain; grey-brown, one face darker with purple tinge; the faces are undulating and the sides rounded; no clear signs of working or abrasion, but this is a particularly crumbly stone and localised working facets may have eroded away; max. dimension 99 mm, W 64 mm, T 16 mm

4 ***Flint flake***; light grey with remnant of thick cortex (chalky?), probably heat-altered; L 46.3mm, W 38.7mm, T 12.2mm

5 ***Flint flake, possible blank***; mottled grey; sub-triangular with some secondary working (retouch) on all three sides, but not a finished implement; L 67.5mm, W 56.1mm, T 13.7mm

6 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; light grey, mottled, probably heat-altered; edge retouch on all three sides and both faces; L 44.5mm, W 37.5mm, T 6.7mm

7 ***Flint flake***; mottled grey with cortex remnant (chalky?), probably heat-altered; sub-triangular, but no secondary working; L 64.3mm, W 52.8mm, T 14.3mm

8 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; light grey with cortex remnant (chalky?), probably heat-altered; edge retouch on all three sides and both faces; L 52.6mm, W 43.3mm, T 13.0mm

9 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; light grey with cortex remnant (chalky?), probably heat-altered; very little edge retouch; L 49.0mm, W 45.2mm, T 11.0mm

10 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; slightly brownish grey mottled to lightish grey, semi translucent in thinner parts; edge retouch on all three sides and both faces; L 43.3mm, W 42.9mm, T 7.4mm

11 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; light grey, probably heat-altered; invasive, probably all-over retouch on both faces; L 45.8mm, W 40.8mm, T 10.7mm

12 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; light grey, probably heat-altered; bifacial retouch on one edge only; L 41.9mm, W 34.1mm, T 8.3mm

13 ***Flint striker***, thick gently curved rod with nibble retouch along both sides; striking end retouched to form obtuse and blunt 'point', which is extremely rounded from wear, opposite end is slightly convex with very steep retouch, *c.* 90° in profile; mottled grey; L 58.1mm, W 17.8mm, T 12.8mm

Context 15

14 ***Perforated whetstone***; long sub-rectangular shape with hour-glass perforation close to one end; in plan it is cigar-shaped with fairly angular corners to a flat end at the top; a similar shape at the bottom end is more rounded, likely due to use wear, although one corner may have recent abrasion; parallel-faced profile except towards the ends, where it tapers gently; towards top and bottom the body angles are fairly crisp, but these are rounded for the middle *c.* 40mm, presumably due to use; indeed, a large spall has been detached from one of the angles in this stretch and it is clear that this is ancient damage; rotational striations are evident in the perforation, and on one face two have bitten in deeply to form small grooves; the stone (not yet identified to rock type) is grey-brown with a tinge of purple; L 87.0mm, W 18.4mm, T 9.1mm, T top 4.5mm, T bottom 6.5mm, internal diam perf 4.7mm, external diam perf 8.8mm & 7.2mm; spalled removal L 31mm, W 9mm

15 ***Bronze dagger*** represented by four fragments of the lower blade including the tip; none of the four fragments join although they must have been very close to one; blade of lozengic section becoming more rounded towards the tip; mid-blade flanked by a triple-groove, light furrow and narrow edge-bevel.

Despite now comprising corrosion products, possibly right through to the core, surface condition is excellent with a smooth, slightly shiny and silvery-brown patina, whilst intact parts of edges are thin and sharp; all transverse breaks are crisp rather than abraded and they bear traces of the sandy soil – this is unlikely to be due to attrition in the sieving process or in-situ corrosion, processes which tend to round angles, and may therefore imply that the blade was already fragmentary in the ground having been either deposited thus or fractured soon after burial.

a) L 28.1mm, W 24.8mm (max W edge bevel 3.8mm, W triple groove 2.5mm), T 6.2mm; on one face outer groove is missing, presumably erased by reworking of edge

b) L 14.2mm, W 21.2mm, T 5.8mm

c) L *c.*11.5mm, W 10.8mm, T 5.2mm

d) (tip) L 22.5mm, W 15.4mm, T 5.0mm

Barrow 13 grave group inventory (context 79)

325 ***Large whetstone***, sub-rectangular with flat faces and lightly furrowed long sides; mid-brown and fairly fine-grained (rock type to be determined); evidence for small areas of erosion which has removed a surface skin; L 225mm, W 57mm, T 35mm

326 ***Flint flake***; dull browny-grey – could be from same core as <328> and <333>; L 27.5mm, W 34mm, T 7.7mm

327 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; dark grey with patch of bluey-grey patination indicating re-use of earlier flake probably initially deposited in chalk environment; L 58.5mm, W 45.5mm, T 8.3mm

328 ***Flint blade***; dull browny-grey – could be from same core as <326> and <333>; L 50mm, W 19mm, T 4.8mm

329 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; mottled milky grey to dark grey with tiny remnant of chalky cortex indicating use of chalk flint; L 52.5mm, W 35mm, T 6.9mm

330 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; dark grey; L 56.5mm, W 47mm. T 7.7mm

331 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and possibly for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead (further reduction through thinning would make it rather small); L 38mm, W 27.5mm, T 9.5mm

332 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; small remnant of off-white chalky cortex indicating use of chalk flint; also a patch of milky bluey-grey patination indicating re-use of earlier flake probably initially deposited in chalk environment; L 38.5mm, W 31.5mm, T 7.5mm

333 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; dull browny-grey – could be from same core as <326> and <328>; L 57.5mm, W 46.5mm, T 9.2mm

334 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; dark grey with tiny remnants of off-white chalky cortex indicating use of chalk flint; L 65.5mm, W 46mm, T 8.5mm

335 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; dark grey with tiny remnants of off-white chalky cortex indicating use of chalk flint; L 48mm, W 38mm, T 7.5mm

336 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; dark grey; L 36.5mm, W 39mm, T 5.0mm

337 ***Flint arrowhead pre-form***, sub-triangular and probably for barbed-and-tanged arrowhead; dark grey; L 57.5mm, W 47.5mm, T 7.9mm

338 ***Burnt flint lump***; small lump of thoroughly burnt flint with much of surface heat-spalled; pale bluey-grey to off-white with probable chalky cortex on two faces suggesting a small

nodule or modest projection from a larger one; nevertheless, it retains two flake beds; maximum dimension 46.5mm, W 35.5mm, T 20mm

339 ***Flint knife***; thoroughly burnt, thermally split into two joining parts; smaller part pure white, larger one off-white with brown humic staining; much of dorsal face heat-spalled, but intact parts suggest invasive retouch, possibly all over except where a tiny patch of cortex survives; possibly a *plano-convex* type knife; L(total) 63mm, W 28.5mm, T 6.6mm

340 ***Retouched flint flake***; dark grey with patch of thin pinky-beige cortex; restricted retouch at one end; L 48.5mm, W 39mm, T 7.2mm

341 ***Flint core***; grey with remnants of off-white chalky cortex and a pale bluey-grey patinated flake bed, suggesting not only a chalk origin for the nodule, but that it had been worked as a core, deposited in a chalk environment, retrieved and then re-utilised as a core; maximum dimension 54mm, W 48.5mm, T 33mm

342 ***Sandstone abrasion block***; thin pear-shaped object of coarse-grained stone; in three joining parts (excavation damage); brown, speckled due to variation in colour of sand grains; L 107mm, W 37mm, T 7.5mm

343 ***Mineral-replaced wooden handle***; object, almost certainly originally wood; steadily tapering from squared end towards a narrow hand-grip which is offset from the long axis and terminates in a curled knob; approximate dimensions: L 385mm, W broad end 89mm, W just before hand grip taper 47mm, W of hand grip close to terminal 15mm, W terminal 24mm

Discussion

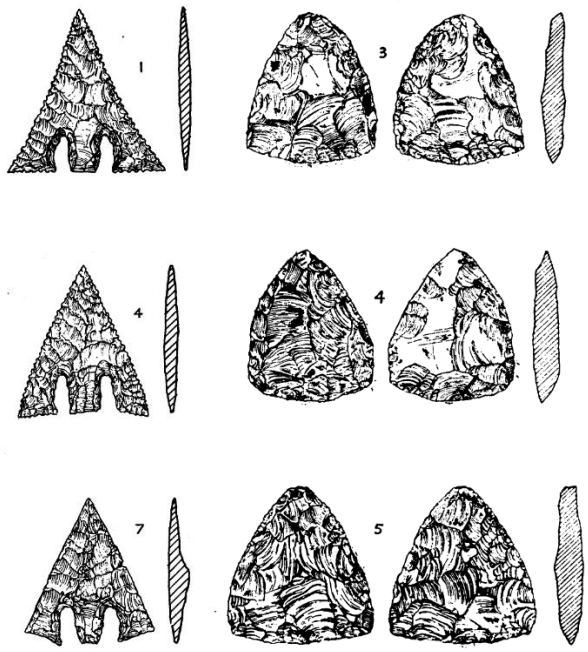
The diagnostic and distinctive types

Flint sub-triangular pre-forms (or blanks), probably for barbed and tanged arrowheads

Symmetrical triangular arrowheads are not a recurrent feature of British prehistory, nor is there any other small flint type of triangular shape. The identification of these partially flaked flints in both grave groups as pre-forms for barbed-and-tanged arrowheads is therefore secure and is supported by grave groups that have both sub-triangular pre-forms and finished arrowheads – such as the Amesbury Archer's (Boscombe Down), Wiltshire, and that from Breach Farm, Llanbleddian, Vale of Glamorgan (Harding 2011; Grimes 1938; Clarke *et al*. 1985 161 fig 4.98). Finishing the implements would have required, in most cases, further thinning by surface flaking and the careful double notching of the base to create a medial tang flanked by a 'barb' to either side. Barbed-and-tanged arrowheads vary considerably in size, detailed shape and quality of workmanship. It is possible, nevertheless, that two or three of the pre-forms from Petersfield Heath would have been too small to produce an arrowhead after further flaking.

Figure 1 Sub-triangular arrowhead blanks from Barrow 13 (left) and Barrow 11 (right); images Stuart Needham

Figure 2 Selected arrowheads and blanks from the Breach Farm grave group (Grimes 1938)



Flint striker (or fabricator)

The one example, from Barrow 11, is a classic striker: a thick, often slightly curved 'rod' is struck off a core, trimmed along the sides and retouched to give a blunt working end. Two main functions have been advanced for strikers, use as a flintworking tool to detach small flakes and use in conjunction with an iron-based mineral such as haematite to make sparks for fire lighting. A number of strikers in Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age graves have been found associated with iron ore nodules, hence forming fire-lighting kits, and this would be essential equipment for many members of the community, especially those spending much time away from the home base. The butt end of the Barrow 11 striker has been retouched very steeply, but whether for some specialised use or just to facilitate handling remains to be ascertained.

Figure 3 Flint striker, or fabricator, from Barrow 11; image Stuart Needham

Figure 4 Burnt flint knife, badly heat-spalled and split in two; image Stuart Needham

Flint knife

The burnt knife from Barrow 13 is unfortunately badly spalled across its dorsal face due to heat stress. This prevents certainty over how finely finished it would have been and whether it may be classified to the *plano-convex type*. Plano-convex knives are not only characterised, as the name implies, by a thin plano-convex section, but also by fine all-over invasive retouch of the dorsal face, often so finely executed as to give a rippled

appearance. Such finely made knives are found in a number of Early Bronze Age graves, most usually those containing Food Vessels or Collared Urns. Their floruit in funerary contexts was probably between about 2100 and 1700 BC. Much more common are knives without the all-over retouch, but these are still frequently finely made implements with acute and neatly retouched cutting edges.

Perforated whetstone

The narrow rectangular form of whetstone present in Barrow 11 conforms well to a type found in a modest number of graves in southern England usually referred to as the 'Wessex 2' grave series. In a recent study, this type of perforated whetstone is described as having 'square' sections, contrasting with those with 'flat' sections (Woodward & Hunter 2015, 76). Until recently 'Wessex 2' graves were dated to between about 1750 and 1500 BC, but there is growing evidence that this date bracket may need to be shifted a bit earlier (Jones & Quinnell 2013; Needham 2015). Woodward & Hunter's detailed study, including examination of wear traces, suggests these finely crafted items were indeed utilised as whetstones (Woodward & Hunter 2015, 79-80); the Petersfield Heath example adds to this evidence for it looks fairly well worn, particularly along the middle stretches of its angles. Although relatively homogeneous in form, the square-sectioned whetstones are not all made from the same rock type, nor even from rock sources from the same region. The rocks chosen are 'fine-grained sediments or meta-sediments, ranging in grain size from mudstone and silty mudstone …. up to fine-grained sandstone' (Ixer 2015, 18).

Figure 5 Perforated whetstone from Barrrow 11; image Stuart Needham

Large whetstone

The large whetstone from Barrow 13 is also rectanguloid, but is considerably larger than the perforated example just described. Stone blocks are not infrequently found in Early Bronze Age grave groups and others come from the mound make-up of round barrows. They vary considerably in size and shape, and doubtless in function too; no standardised type of similar scale and proportions to the Barrow 13 one has yet been recognised. Indeed, there seem to be few close parallels. Perhaps the best parallel is an even longer example (30cm) from an unrecorded context, but bearing the inscription 'King Barrow, Coneybury Hill', a site a little south-east of Stonehenge (Amesbury G23 – Grinsell 1957, 150; object in Salisbury Museum). The King Barrow example, however, lacks the light furrowing of the sides seen on this one. The rock type of the Petersfield Heath example remains to be ascertained, but it is moderately fine-grained and would certainly serve for whetting or fine sanding. The side furrows could have given it a broader options for use; alternatively they may have allowed this heavy object to be held by a thong for everyday carriage – an alternative mode of suspension to the perforation (we are grateful to David Wilkinson for this suggestion).

Figure 6 Large whetstone with furrowed sides, Barrow 13; image Stuart Needham

Abrasion blocks

The smaller stone object from the Barrow 13 group is equally unusual – a thin pear-shaped piece, presumably carefully shaped; however, the coarse-grained and crumbly nature of the stone, which seems to have been vulnerable to the acid soil, precludes finding evidence of working since the original surface has deteriorated. The coarseness of the grain suggests that any functional use would have been for heavy duty or preliminary grinding or sanding. It could be held flat in the fingers to make use of its flat faces, or held knife-style to make use of the thin edges for reaming out grooves in wood, bone or even soft stone. Of the two sandstone blocks from Barrow 11, only the finer-grained example gives some indication of having been utilised.

Figure 7 Pear-shaped abrasion block from Barrow 13 (left) and pair of blocks from Barrow 11 (right); image Stuart Needham

Bronze dagger

The lack of the hilt end of the dagger blade means we cannot know its full form. Nevertheless, it can be classified to a fairly refined level on the characteristics of the lower blade. The mid-blade is thickened in section and hemmed in by groove bands and additional furrows, features characteristic of the *Camerton-Snowshill series* (Gerloff 1975, 99-128), now placed within a broader family termed *Series 5* (Needham 2015, 9-11). One slightly unusual feature for the type is that the groove-bands extend almost to the tip of the blade, rather than converging higher. It remains to be examined what if any significance this has.

Figure 8 Bronze dagger fragments from the lower blade; image Stuart Needham

Wooden handle, or 'cremation bearer'

The final object to be discussed here is the mineral-replaced object which can be deduced with reasonable confidence to have been originally of wood. Its function as a long handle can be

interpreted from the combination of its position within the grave and its intrinsic shape. The broad end was seen to abut directly the narrow north end of the cremation deposit which was itself so crisply defined all round that it must have been in an organic container that has since decayed. Given this spatial association, it is reasonable to see the long mineral-replaced object as an elaborate handle for the cremation-containing bag. The upper, tapered end of the handle is shaped exactly as one might expect to provide a narrow hand grip of palm's width with a neat curling knob at the top.

This is an entirely novel component of the funerary repertoire for the Early Bronze Age, perhaps more due to the frequency with which organic goods decayed than original rarity. Nevertheless, we should not assume it was the norm, or even necessarily a frequent way of bearing the cremation. A high proportion of Early Bronze Age cremations were buried in pottery vessels, and it may be that these are alternative ways of containing and carrying the deceased's remains. This unique handle does, however, hint at largely hidden aspects of the funerary process – not only the role of well-crafted organic objects, but also the formality that might be involved in the carriage of the precious remains to their final resting place. There is no evidence to suggest how far away from Barrow 13 the act of cremation may have taken place, but it is worth noting that large-scale excavation of Early Bronze Age barrows only occasionally yields evidence for a funeral pyre on the burial site itself.

Figure 9 The upper face of the mineral-replaced handle from Barrow 13; the colour has been manipulated to differentiate the object from the surrounding soil better; image Marta Diaz-Guardamino Uribe

The handle has been successfully conserved (see Bulletin no 8) and hopefully will survive in its current state (in two main parts) for future study and display.

Comparing the two grave groups

It is intriguing that certain elements of the grave groups from Barrows 11 and 13 are similar: flint arrowhead pre-forms (or blanks) on the one hand and stone crafting-and-maintenance equipment on the other. This point becomes the more striking when it is appreciated that the particular combination is rarely found elsewhere, throughout Britain (and probably beyond). Of especial note is the multiplication of arrowhead *pre-forms* in both grave groups and the absence of actual *finished* arrowheads – this seems to be quite exceptional. Most graves containing pre-forms (usually just one or two) also contain finished arrowheads; in these contexts the pre-forms can be seen as 'spares'

ready for working up into usable state as necessary. The occurrence of six and ten arrowhead pre-forms seems to be unique thus far.

The occurrence of broadly comparable stone equipment is more frequent than that of arrowhead pre-forms, but as already noted the particular forms found at Petersfield Heath are uncommon, rare or extremely rare.

The differences between the two Petersfield Heath graves may of course be as revealing as the similarities, although understanding the particular meanings of the differentiating goods is always more problematic. In terms of the flintwork present, both graves have flints in addition to the arrowhead pre-forms and for the most part this comprises debitage (debris from working) of one kind or another. The only definitive tool types are the striker in Barrow 11 and the knife in Barrow 13; these bear upon different but equally fundamental aspects of everyday life in the Bronze Age. At a more subtle level, even the arrowhead pre-forms in the two graves are different in two respects. The pre-forms in Barrow 11 are at different stages of preparation ranging from minimal secondary retouch to all-over bifacial retouch and it is probable that two unworked flakes of sub-triangular shape (5 & 7) were also destined for the same purpose. In contrast, all those in Barrow 13 have either all-over or extensive bifacial retouch. The second difference is that all but one of the Barrow 11 examples have been heat-treated, possibly to improve the working properties of the flint, whereas none from Barrow 13 show the characteristic colour change.

The only other significant point of difference is the presence of a bronze dagger, or at least part of one, in the Barrow 11 grave. These points of individuality reflect the pattern seen in Early Bronze Age grave goods more generally; there are frequently individual or idiosyncratic elements added to more standardised packages. It is also worth noting that the burial 'container' differed between Barrows 11 and 13 (above).

Dating

As yet we only have limited independent dating evidence – a single radiocarbon date for charcoal associated with the Barrow 11 coffin (Bulletin no 4). Other information on chronology therefore comes from the complex network of inter-comparisons between objects and associated groups from many sites, some of which themselves are radiocarbon dated. Most types present at Petersfield Heath are not especially sensitive chronologically on the basis of current knowledge. Those that would traditionally be seen as 'type fossils' representing a restricted phase (for example, two centuries) are the dagger and perforated whetstone from Barrow 11. These two types occur together in nine other graves in southern England and are datable to the mature Early Bronze Age (Periods 3 & 4), after about 1950 BC. Indeed, most of these dagger-whetstone pairings, those most closely paralleled at Petersfield Heath, have been placed in the final phase of the Early Bronze Age (Period 4), after about 1750 BC. A potential problem arises, however, when we take into account the other goods from Barrow 11.

Barbed-and-tanged arrowheads are a familiar inclusion in grave groups from the very beginning of the funerary tradition introduced with the Beaker culture around 2450 BC. They are quite frequent in graves during Periods 1 and 2, but after about 1950 BC decline in frequency and perhaps symbolic importance; by the last phase, Period 4, they appear to be rare. One of the latest well dated grave groups containing barbed-and-tanged arrowheads, but also sub-triangular pre-forms, is the aforementioned burial from Breach Farm. Not only does this contain a diminutive bronze axe datable to Period 3, but radiocarbon assay of a sample of the cremated bones has yielded a

compatible date of 2020 - 1690 cal BC (95% confidence). The radiocarbon date obtained for the Petersfield Heath Barrow 11 burial is similar, 1885 – 1690 cal BC (95% confidence), and even allowing that the sample concerned may not date the burial event so closely this would seem to tie in with a final phase of significant funerary use of flint arrowheads and pre-forms for them.

The key question then that arises for Barrow 11 is how the dagger/whetstone combination, notionally of Period 4 date, fits with this evidence favouring a Period 3 burial. On current evidence we cannot be sure, but it is worth outlining the three main possibilities. The first is that in reality there is more overlap between some supposedly classic types of Periods 3 and 4 – this is certainly plausible and might be supported by the unexpectedly early radiocarbon dates obtained for two burials with Camerton-Snowshill daggers from south-west England (Jones & Quinnell 2013, 177; Jones *et al.* 2013, 171; Needham 2015, 14-5). These would seem to suggest the emergence of that dagger type a little earlier than hitherto accepted. The second is that the grave group fell at a transition between different ideas about what were the most appropriate funerary accompaniments. A date within the second half of the calibrated radiocarbon range would not be inconsistent with a 'transitional' chronology. The third is that the dagger and whetstone in Barrow 11 accompanied a later burial than the other grave goods. The dagger and whetstone were unfortunately not recorded in situ, although the location they came from is known to within about 0.3m, in the extreme south-west corner of the original trench, and this was certainly very close to the northern edge of the subsequently recognised coffin. Meanwhile, the rest of the goods were recorded in situ and *within* the collapsed coffin. It cannot be known on present evidence therefore whether the dagger and whetstone were just inside or just outside the coffin, and this could have a profound impact on understanding not just this burial or burials, but also on wider chronological/cultural understandings.

If we are to contemplate the *possibility* of a secondary burial alongside the first, coffined burial, then this needs to be assessed against the structural evidence. Intrusions from the top of Barrow 11 seen in the excavation trench seem to be relatively modern and none penetrated close to the buried land surface. More critically, the highly discernible structure of the main mound, with alternating turves and sand lenses, continued unbroken over the central area including the coffin. A secondary burial would therefore either have to have been placed quickly after the first, before the main mound was laid on top, or there was a longer interval of time during which the coffin stood partially exposed and nestling against the inner, primary mound of almost pure turf to the south. There is evidence that the length of this interval cannot have been especially long; the coffin appears still to have been intact when the main mound was added, for when it finally decayed and collapsed, overlying turves slumped into it. This is strong evidence that even if two burial deposits are represented, they were deposited within a short period of time.

If dagger and whetstone belonged to the same grave as the arrowhead pre-forms and sandstone blocks, then this would be another quite exceptional grave assemblage on the national scale. Dagger graves of the later Early Bronze Age (Periods 3 and 4) seem to exclude arrowheads almost everywhere in Britain, even though both were used as funerary accompaniments for at least Period 3; this suggests a fundamental cultural or symbolic divide rather than a purely temporal succession. The occurrence of the two types of grave package together, if it could be demonstrated, might imply a variant belief structure in this region around Petersfield, one that did not observe the same funerary rules as elsewhere; the unusualness of having multiple arrowhead pre-forms already speaks for this to some extent.

Comparisons regional and beyond

There are not a large number of recorded Early Bronze Age grave groups from the immediate area of Petersfield and this preliminary consideration will selectively range across neighbouring regions. One significant aspect of the Petersfield Heath grave groups – the importance of stone crafting-and-maintenance equipment (which might also extend to Barrow 18, where a large ferruginous sandstone block, possibly worked, was placed at the centre of the mound but not in a burial context) – seems to be picked up at other sites. Closest, just 3km east, is a grooved whetstone from a disturbed context (antiquarian trench?) in West Heath Barrow V, Harting (Drewett 1985, 37, 58 fig 24 S1). A little further away and to the north-west, parts of at least two grooved whetstones came from a burial at Crabtree Farm, Froxfield, along with a bronze knife and bronze chisel (Gerloff 1975, 167 no 302, pl 53F). Although grooved, the large whetstone from Barrow 13 is of a different form and perhaps purpose to these parallels. The fragments from Crabtree Farm are curious in that the main grooves are 'ribbed' by means of a continuous series of transverse mini-grooves which are rather roughly executed.

Figure 11 The curious grooved stones from Crabtree Farm, Froxfield (Winchester Museum WINCM:ARCH 117.3-4); image Stuart Needham

Figure 10 Perforated whetstone from The Devil's Humps, Bow Hill; image Stuart Needham

The perforated whetstone can be paralleled more precisely in near regions: a well-known example from the famous Hove burial featuring a bronze dagger (Camerton-Snowshill type), stone battle-axe and amber cup (Clarke *et al*. 1985, 117 fig 4.45, 277 no 97); and a rather neglected find made during mid-nineteenth century excavations into the Devil's Humps on Bow Hill (Franks 1853). A fragmentary whetstone found towards the periphery of a bell barrow in Deerleap Wood, Wotton, Surrey, is broader and the perforation was never finished (Corcoran 1963, 11-13, fig 5.1), but it may originally have had similar elongate proportions.

These various examples of worked or utilised stone objects in graves do not imply a singular life function or funerary expression, but they might suggest a disproportionate disposition towards using such materials in the funerary sphere. This needs careful evaluation because other regions also include stone artefacts from time to time; there are a good number from Wessex, but that might simply reflect the large number of recorded graves there. Noteworthy groups of stone working blocks at the national level come from the 'shaman's grave', an inhumation at Upton Lovell G2a, Wiltshire (Cunnington 1806; Annable & Simpson 1964, 49-50 nos 242-262), and a Collared Urn cremation deposit from Sandmill, Dumfries & Galloway (Clarke et al 1985, 295-6 fig 7.31). In both contexts a stone battle-axe was also present. The stone blocks at Upton Lovell are very varied and the largest, although not neatly shaped, is about 210mm long and described by Cunnington as 'of granite or moor-stone'; it may be one of the two pieces in this group that has been petrologically identified as having a Cornish source (Annable & Simpson 1964; Clough & Cummins 1988, 157 nos 84 & 85).

Camerton-Snowshill daggers have traditionally been regarded as a 'Wessex' type, but they are increasingly being found in funerary contexts outside Wessex (in the case of Petersfield Heath, not far outside) and in reality they were probably in widespread use through much of southern Britain as far as the Midlands and Welsh Marches. The Petersfield Heath example certainly helps to fill a distributional gap for the type between central Hampshire and the Sussex examples from Chanctonbury Ring and Hove.

Significance for Petersfield Heath cemetery

This preliminary discussion does not attempt to offer fully considered conclusions. It is though already striking that the two burials that happen to have come to light during the People of the Heath campaign have both yielded sizable grave groups that have two principal elements in common one of which may be unique to this site. This certainly raises the possibility of the funerary offerings having reflected some local group identity or belief structure, even though this clearly worked within more broadly held attitudes towards funerary deposition during the mature Early Bronze Age. Of equal importance, though bearing on a different aspect of funerary practice, is the evidence for a wooden handle – or cremation bearer – to enable the fitting carriage of the cremation sack to its final resting place.

Acknowledgements

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