

The 14 flint arrowheads (actual size) from the 3,500-year-old burial mound on Breach Farm, Crossways, near Cowbridge, which were found this week-end. The 13 barbed-and-tanged arrowheads have finely-serrated edges. The 14th is a leaf-shaped specimen from the body of the mound.

Dramatic Bronze Age Finds In Vale of Glamorgan

Finest Examples of Flint Work
Known in Wales

Brought to Light by
Excavations
In Burial Mound

BY DOROTHY DUNGWORTH

The excavations which Mr. W. F. Grimes has been making on behalf of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society at a mound on Breach Farm, near Crossways, Cowbridge, resulted in finds of extraordinary interest being made during the week-end.

The finds, which date the mound to the Early Middle Bronze Age (about 1500 B.C.), included 13 barbed-and-tanged flint arrowheads, various bronzes, and a highly decorated pigmy cup. These accompanied a cremation burial consisting of burnt bones and charcoal in a pit at the centre of the barrow.

The richness of the find and the elaborate character of the burial suggest that the dead person was of great importance in his day.



safety-razor blades. When washed in a pool they were revealed to be of extraordinary beauty and delicacy. More and similar arrow-heads followed from this treasure-trove until there were, in all, 13 to be transferred to cotton wool in the toffee tin.

A find of another type and equally interesting was a pair of grooved sandstone stones, generally explained as straighteners or smoothers for arrow shafts, which performed, in the Middle Bronze Age, the same function as the sandpaper of to-day. There were also found the eight flint "points" in the form of thin triangles.

BRONZE DAGGER

The next find was a bronze dagger, still with its wooden handle showing the little ridge at the junction of the blade and the handle. This ridge was of --

Bronze Age (about 1500 B.C.) 13 barbed-and-tanged flint various bronzes, and a tanged pigmy cup. These cremation burial consistencies and charcoal in a pit of the barrow.

Character of the find and the character of the burial of the dead person was of importance in his day.

Grimes, commenting on the importance of the discovery at a fortnight's excavating, stated in two highly-illustrated photographs, told me:—

From the burial pit are the complete equipment person put into the pit with bones. The arrowheads of ordinary fine quality, both at view of their form and workmanship. Outstanding are their fine outlines and beveled edges and points.

With much fear of contradiction I said that these arrowheads are the best examples of flint-work recorded from Wales and with any that have been found in the British Isles.

When the arrowheads had been found, a little later, of a still earlier leaf-headed belonging to the pre-historic period, which showed that the area was occupied by man in the Bronze Age.

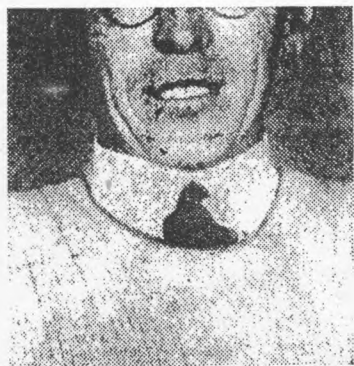
THE CUP

A particularly fine example which occurs fairly frequently in burials in the Middle and Bronze Ages. It is bi-conical in shape, the usual pair of puzzling wall at its greatest diameter. The cup is elaborate, consisting of angles incised with a fine line. In every way the cup is an outstanding example of the Bronze Age since it adds to its good well-arranged decoration a touch of finish, both in ware and

It is found with the arrowheads, the best indication of date, and according to the conditions of the soil they were found, they are liable and decomposed into two most readily recognizable simple chisel and a flat chisel confirm the belief, based on the above considerations, that the burial is about 3,500 years ago."

CLOSING WALL

During the past fortnight Mr. Grimes and his party have been excavating a burial which is on high ground (sea level), characteristic of the Breach Farm burials. It, with three others, is in a field belonging to the Glamorgan County Council, and now owned by Mr. J. Thomas, of Breach Farm. These mounds are part of a group which extends over a large part of the Vale of Glamorgan, Glamorgan Major district. The Glamorgan section of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society undertook the excavation to obtain more information



MR. W. F. GRIMES

as to the inhabitants of that district during the Bronze Age.

A rarely recorded feature of a wall enclosing the mound, about 250ft. in circumference, was one of Mr. Grimes's first finds and was recorded and illustrated in the "Western Mail" of October 14.

But, it was not until this week-end that the real treasure house of the tomb was discovered.

The clue to its existence was provided by a peculiar clay formation, rather like an inverted pudding basin which was revealed in the centre of the barrow as the main mound was dug away from its sides. Careful examination showed that this was part of the mound which had sunk over a pit in the old ground surface.

A THRILLING HOUR

This clay tump was still in position when members of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society, visited the excavations on Saturday afternoon. The members watched Mr. Grimes carefully demolish the tump with pick and shovel, a work of about an hour. Its removal at once confirmed the existence of the pit, which was followed downwards to a depth of 28 inches.

Mr. Grimes hung head downwards over the hole, from the edge of which, 24 inches in diameter, the clay crumbled away to reveal that a definite circular excavation had been made there. First with a spade, then with a large trowel, then a smaller trowel, then with a pen-knife, and finally with his finger nails he scraped away the earth, passing it carefully through his fingers.

He first found two scattered pieces of charcoal, proving that other human agencies had been at work in that hole. But the real excitement came at a depth of about 2ft., when Mr. Grimes startled the peering company by exclaiming: "Look at this! Wood!"

This turned out to be the handle presumably of a much corroded bronze axe-like article which was found adjoining it, the first trace of bronze which showed glowing green against the grey clay.

From then on discoveries followed in swift and dramatic succession, each one received with great excitement, by a ring of spectators round the hole. A toffee tin was sent for to hold the finds.

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The next find was a bronze dagger, still with its wooden handle showing the little ridge at the junction of the blade and the handle. This ridge was of an unusual shape.

By this time it was quite dark, and Mr. Grimes, lying prone on the wet ground, had been working for some time by the light of an electric hand torch. Before he raised himself out of the hole into which he had hung for nearly three hours there was just time to find a few pieces of bone, mixed with charcoal, the remains of the funeral pyre, which showed that the remains of that great personage of the early part of the Middle Bronze Age were to be found in the bottom of the pit.

Work was then abandoned for the night. The bones were covered with that day's *Western Mail* and the hole filled in, and Mr. Thomas, the farmer of the land, mounted guard during the night.

THE PIGMY CUP

Mr. Grimes recommenced excavating at two o'clock Sunday afternoon, when the members of the Naturalists' Society were reinforced by many members of the general public, attracted by the lines of cars parked along the nearby lane.

Work proceeded without incident for some time as Mr. Grimes removed handful after handful of cremated bones and deposited them in a packing case for further examination by an anatomist, who will decide the age and sex of the dead person.

The thrill of the afternoon, almost when Mr. Grimes had given up expecting any more finds other than bones, came when he dug out the pottery incense, or pigmy cup, which was found on its side against the side of the pit.

Further work ended the exhumation of the bones at a depth of 28 inches from the Bronze Age ground surface, and the resulting material available for further examination amounted to about two bucketsful of bones, among which could be traced pieces of skull of "the round-headed man who made the round barrows."

OLD BURIAL CUSTOMS

Discussing the finds, Mr. Grimes gave me the following statement:—

"The character of a site like that at Breach Farm can only be properly understood with some sort of knowledge of the burial customs followed by man in the prehistoric period.

"The real beginnings of well-defined burial customs belong to the New Stone Age or Neolithic period, which dates from about 2500 to 2000 B.C. and was the time of the great chambered tombs which throughout Wales are commonly known as cromlechs.

"It was a belief in the past that these great stone monuments were connected with the Druids, but modern archaeologists have discarded this, and excavation of a number of them has shown quite clearly that they were communal burial places used like a modern burial-vault over a period of many years.

"The people who built these tombs—they were also the first to introduce a knowledge of agriculture and stock breeding into this country—settled in what is now Glamorgan. We have examples of their monuments at Tythegston, near Porthcawl, and especially at St. Nicholas, near Cardiff.

NEWCOMERS

"At the beginning of the Bronze Age, about 2000 B.C., these people were succeeded by newcomers who introduced an entirely different type of burial. They came from Holland and the Rhineland, and instead of burying their dead in megalithic tombs they buried them separately.

"Normally the body was buried on its side in a crouched-up position with arms folded and the knees almost touching the chin. It was protected by slabs forming a rough coffin or cist or some-

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times was merely enclosed roughly with stones. It was then covered with a round mound and the mound became the visible burial monument. Such mounds may still be seen throughout the Vale of Glamorgan. Once built they seem to have acquired a sacred character and were frequently used for other burials which were placed in the body of the mound.

"The Early Bronze Age invaders just mentioned practised the inhumation rite of burial, and when they were absorbed in the already existing native population that rite died out and was replaced by cremation.

"The burnt bones were then gathered together and buried in a pit or in a pottery urn. But throughout the whole of the Bronze Age the round mound persisted as the normal monument. So that we find both inhumation and cremation burials in a monument of this type.

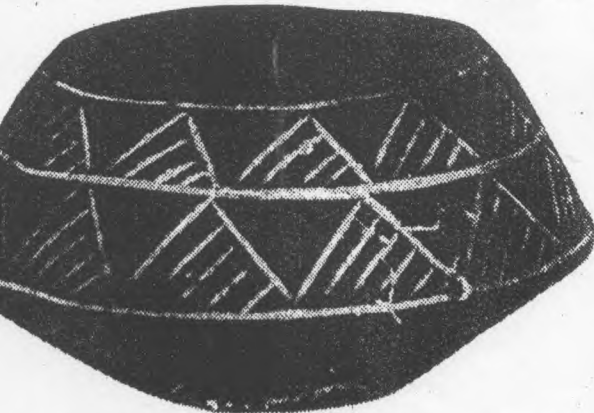
"Many of these mounds have been dug into in the past, but rarely until recent years has sufficient attention been given to the mound itself. Earlier excavators were too often content to look for the burial which experience taught them to expect at the centre and much valuable evidence has been lost, because of their indifference to anything else.

"The Breach mound is a good instance of the elaborate form which such mounds partake when raised over a person of great eminence in his day. At an early stage in the excavation, which was begun a fortnight ago, it was found that the monument was defined by a ringwork of stone, 8ft. in diameter, which had been laid to mark the limit of a mound of clay, the present height of which, above the old ground level, is about three-and-a-half feet.

"The ringwork is well defined on its outer face, having been built of large blocks of local limestone. Inside this, for a width of about 5ft., a skin of stone covered the surface of the clay mound, thus showing that the ringwork was built after the mound was in place. The clay mound itself had been built in two layers of brown and grey clay, respectively.

"As was expected, the primary burial for which the mound was erected was found almost exactly at the centre."

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Incense Cup, which was found in the Breach Farm burial mound, the finest ever discovered in Wales. A notable feature is the regular, of a potter of 1500 B.C. (Actual size.)

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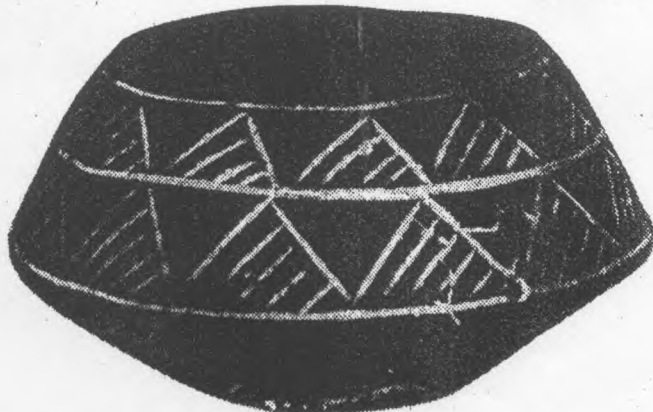
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