

The Bronze Age Cemetery at Ardleigh, Essex: A Further Consideration

by CHRISTINE R. COUCHMAN

Introduction

Since Erith and Longworth published the Deverel-Rimbury urnfield at Ardleigh (Erith and Longworth, 1960), the number of Bronze Age sites known in the parish, and beyond its borders, has increased considerably; and some of these sites have a direct connection with the urnfield. Mr. F. Erith, the owner of the land on which the urnfield was found, undertook careful observation of his own and his neighbours' fields, and collaborated with others in taking a series of aerial photographs. One result of all this fieldwork has been the location of a number of levelled round barrows close to the urnfield, some of which have since been excavated (Erith, 1960 A, B, C; 1962 B). There are five further barrows on a neighbouring farm, Newhouse Farm, Great Bromley (Erith, 1962 C). Other sites, of different ages, include two probable henge monuments (one of these — at Lawford — has been excavated but not published), several possible long barrows, and an Iron Age farmstead (Erith, 1970). There are also a Belgic cemetery (pottery published in Birchall, 1965, 307—8, 338) and settlement in near-by fields; and Roman remains have been found not far away (Essex iii, 38). Figure 1 shows the sites immediately adjacent to the urnfield.

These discoveries provide evidence for lengthy and possibly continuous occupation in and around Ardleigh from the Neolithic to the Roman period, and so represent a considerable advance in our knowledge of the prehistory of the area. Moreover, further material has been added to the 'Ardleigh Group' itself, and this is sufficient excuse for another discussion of the topic.

The discoveries which concern us here are the levelled round barrows in the vicinity of the urnfield: of five barrows excavated, three produced reconstructable Deverel-Rimbury pottery, one produced only tiny fragments (the rest having been destroyed by ploughing), while one apparently had never been used. The vessels from the barrows have many similar features to those from the urnfield, and we may confidently assign them to the same, 'Ardleigh', group. On the other hand, there are differences whose significance must be examined. Most of the distinctive decorative features on both the barrow and the flat cemetery urns point to the region of origin, from which 'Deverel-Rimbury' settlers came to Essex and Suffolk. Dating evidence is meagre.

Unfortunately, the more recent finds have done very little to widen the scope of any discussion of the Ardleigh Group from being merely a study of pottery to a more three-dimensional view. Only two non-ceramic artefacts were found, both with the same burial: a pierced canine tooth of a young pig, and a fragment of a plain bronze

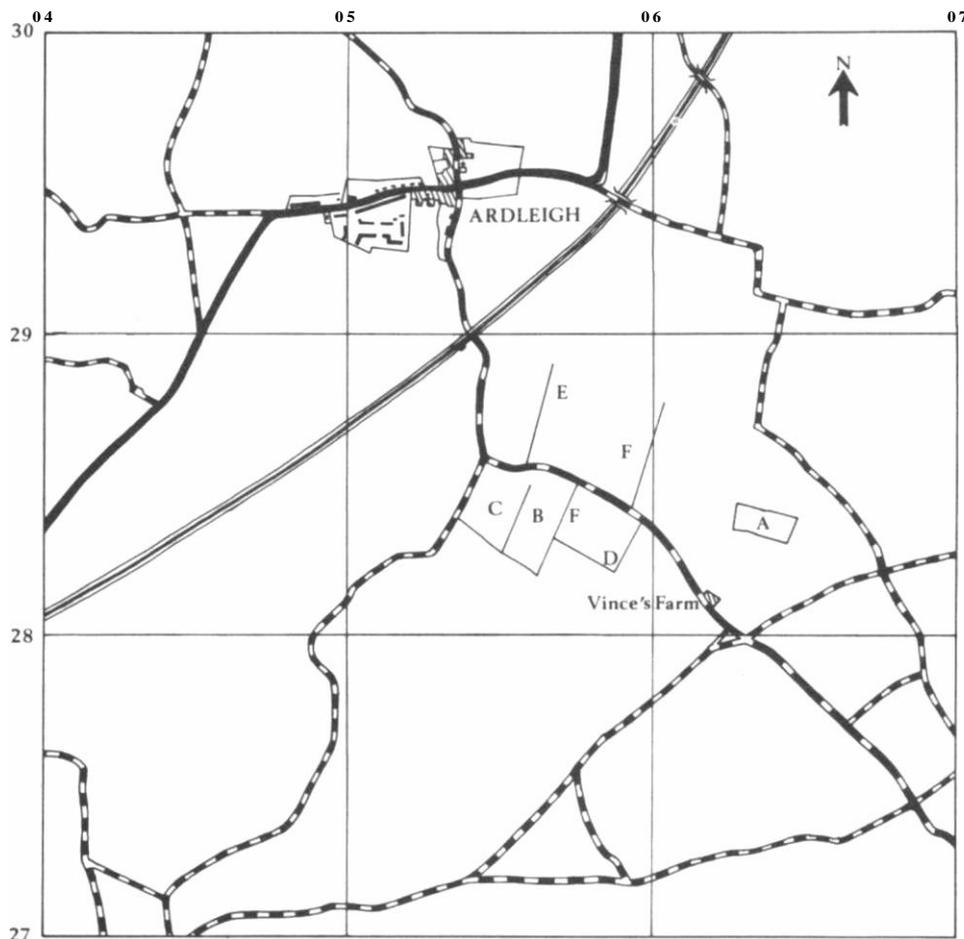


Fig. 1 South Ardleigh: A, Iron 'A' farmstead site; B, Bronze Age urnfield; C, Bronze Age barrows; D, Iron 'A' pottery with pestle; E, Belgic settlement; F, Belgic cemeteries. From Ordnance Survey sheet TM 02. Scale: 1:25000.

bracelet of sub-rectangular section (Fig. 6). So the approach must still be one-sided, and open to the criticisms attendant on an argument from pottery types and ornament alone.

Regrettably, too, no settlement has yet been discovered to complement the funerary remains. Therefore, it is almost impossible to suggest the size of the community to which this cemetery belonged.

The origins of the Ardleigh Group

Distinctive though the Ardleigh Group is, it shares many characteristics with the main 'Deverel-Rimbury' tradition. Erith and Longworth (1960, 188) laid emphasis on the local traits and postulated a 'strong local conservatism'. While this may be part of the truth, it can be over-emphasised; and the fact remains that all the diagnostic features of this group

are represented elsewhere. The list of parallels in the appendices is by no means exhaustive. However, it serves to show not only that both types of vessels and styles of decoration are at home in the main 'Deverel-Rimbury' stream, but it also gives a clue to the region from which the Essex/Suffolk settlements may have occurred. A glance at a distribution map will show that, supposing the Dorset/Hampshire/south Wiltshire area to be the 'Deverel-Rimbury' home, expansion took place along two main avenues of communication: north and east up the Icknield Way, and east and north round the coast. It is probable that such finds as the small cemetery at Acton, London (see Appendix I) represent movement along the Thames, either downstream from its higher reaches, or perhaps more likely, upstream from the coastal route. It seems more probable that, as Erith and Longworth suggest (1960, 189), the 'Ardleigh Group' settlements were seaborne. They point out the difficulties of expansion eastwards off the chalk; and to this I believe we may add a more positive point while querying the rather dreary picture of eastern Suffolk and Essex as a 'cultural backwater'. After all, the sea route eastwards and north-eastwards through the Straits of Dover was not unknown. It must have been used for trade, and was presumably the way taken by another group of migrants: the 'Hilversum' people. Anyone negotiating this sea route would have been very much dependent on the tidal and weather conditions in the Straits of Dover and the southern North Sea. At certain times of each day the tidal stream sweeps both into the Thames estuary, and into the Scheldt and up the coast of Holland; the resultant effect of the ebb and flow of current would be to set a craft to one coast or the other. Thus the 'Ardleigh' people, setting out in the same basic direction as the 'Hilversum' people, could as easily make land on the western side of the southern North Sea, in Essex or Suffolk, as on the eastern shore, in the Netherlands.

Furthermore, the occurrence in the vicinity of Southampton Water, both on the mainland and on the Isle of Wight, of 'Deverel-Rimbury' material similar in many details to that of Ardleigh, makes it a reasonable supposition that it was from this part of the south coast that the 'Ardleigh' people set out. Nor need we assume that the movement must necessarily have been one-way only. For instance, if all-over rustication as a form of bucket urn decoration was initiated in Essex and Suffolk, its occurrence in the south might be taken as evidence for a return movement.

Discussion of typically 'Ardleigh' ceramic features

There is not much to add to Erith and Longworth's summing-up of the features of the Ardleigh Group (1960, 187—9), but one or two points, referring to the distinctive 'Ardleigh' characteristics of some of the bucket urns, may be expanded. Of these characteristics the most prominent is the lavish use of finger-tip rustication. This may be primarily a locally developed feature, or it may be simply that it achieved local popularity. There is, on the one hand, a fragmentary large rusticated beaker from Martlesham, Suffolk, in the Ipswich Museum, which, with its four applied finger-tipped cordons below the rim, and its flint-gritted fabric, bears a distinct resemblance to a small bucket urn; it is, however, associated with undeniably beaker pottery. On the

other hand, D. Clarke makes it clear that rusticated beakers were a standard component of domestic beaker assemblages throughout Britain (1966, 185—7, 190—3, 197). Now that it is recognised that some bucket urns are datable to the Middle Bronze Age (Burgess, 1969, 28), and maybe even the early part of the Middle Bronze Age, it is not necessary to suppose that the transference of this feature from one ceramic form to the other depended on any unusually long survival of the rusticated beaker tradition in a 'cultural backwater'.

The other feature of decoration most frequently employed by the 'Ardleigh' potters (apart from the ubiquitous applied cordon), often in combination with all-over finger-tipping, is the horseshoe 'handle'. Horseshoe 'handles' are by no means uncommon elsewhere (see Appendix I), nor are they confined to this class of pottery. Barrel and biconical urns with such ornament are quoted in the table in Appendix I. If bucket urns developed from biconical urns, this continuity of a feature of decoration is what might be expected. It may be giving them an unjustifiable 'image' to refer to them as 'handles' at all. However, two biconical urns from Ringwoud and Capelle-Ferne, Kent (Ashbee and Dunning, 1960, 51, Fig. 3; 52, Fig. 4), and one from Amesbury, Wilts. (Butler and Smith, 1956, 34, Fig. 6), have much more functional-looking handles than most, and raise the question of whether other, manifestly useless, 'handles' developed from useful ones. Erith considers that the bucket urn as a class may be a skeuomorph of a wicker basket (1961 A, 3). However, if this were the case, one would expect the most basket-like vessels to stand at the head of a typological series, and the less basket-like ones to be later. This cannot be demonstrated in practice. Another possibility is that the 'horseshoes' are skeuomorphs of rope handles, springing from a rope girdle encircling a pot just below its point of maximum girth. It is possible that the useless 'handles' on all these types of vessel: biconical, barrel and bucket urns, occurring as they do on cinerary urns, might be put there to represent handles that on domestic pottery would be made of rope and therefore useable. In such a case, one would need to assume that, in some instances at least, pots were made specifically for funerary purposes.

The structure of the barrows; and the question of the flat urnfield

Before comparisons between the barrow and urnfield material are considered, it is worthwhile to look at the structure of the barrows; and also the question of whether or not there was a true flat cemetery, or whether this is a false impression gained from the destruction of the mounds of unditched barrows.

It is, of course, impossible now to say anything about the structure of the tumuli themselves, as they have long since disappeared. Only the below-ground features remain. The diameters of the ditches of the five excavated barrows on Vince's Farm range from twenty-four feet (Ring I) to thirty-eight feet (Ring III), three of the five being at the lower end of this range. The remaining structures of Rings I and II are in each case the ditch only, and the central holes with urned burials. The two vessels of Ring I were buried in the same hole; in Ring II they were in separate, adjacent holes. In both cases the silting in the bottoms of the holes, beneath the urns, suggested that the

holes had been dug, and by implication all the below-ground features prepared, some months before the burials took place (Erith, 1960 C, 52). The excavator postulated that this was because the ground becomes so hard in summer that it was easier to dig a ditch and holes in the months when the ground was less intractable, even though there was no immediate need for a burial place. It is, of course, also possible that a corpse was not buried immediately after death, perhaps for some ritual purpose, or because less fuel is necessary to cremate an 'old' body than a fresh one (Atkinson, Piggott and Sandars, 1951, 74, note 37). The same delay may have occurred in the case of Ring VI, where the two central holes had silted right up, at least to the bottom of the plough soil. Although no urns were found in them, there were 'Deverel-Rimbury' sherds high in the ditch; and it is suggested that these are the remains of burials which, because unusually high in their holes on account of the silt, have been destroyed by ploughing (Erith, 1962 B, 107). By contrast, Ring VII seems really to have never been used, at least for a primary burial, as nothing at all was found at the centre.

Ring III had an interesting feature, which it shared with the barrow on Newhouse Farm. Nine feet due east and west respectively of the primary central cremation there were two quite shallow holes, full of wood ash (Erith, 1961 B, 58). At Newhouse Farm the comparable holes were five feet due east and west of the central feature, and were filled with soil. What may also be a 'ritual pit' was found in Ring VI, due east of the centre, almost at the circumference of the circle enclosed by the ditch (Erith, 1962 B, 107); this, too, contained only soil. Such pits have been observed in other British Bronze Age barrows, some with charcoal, or with fires actually burnt in them (Ashbee, 1960, 51—2). This is a feature, too, of some barrows in Holland, of the 'Hilversum' series (Glasbergen, 1954, 150—1).

One other, slightly unusual, feature of Ring III, is the disposition of the secondary burials. Unlike many 'Deverel-Rimbury' barrows, the secondaries of Ring III (which is the only barrow excavated on Vince's Farm to have undisturbed secondary burials) were mostly in the northern half of the circle.

It may be noted that there was no evidence for the existence of hurdle or post rings under the barrows. It is, however, not impossible that such evidence has been ploughed away.

Whether or not the flat cemetery was really another group of barrows, without ditches, is not immediately obvious. That the mounds of any such barrows would have been long since destroyed without trace is evident from the fact that this is precisely what happened to the mounds of the ditched barrows. Erith and Longworth do suggest, tentatively, that there might originally have been 'low mounds or other surface indication' (1960, 178—9). The evidence from which this is adduced is two-fold: firstly, the urns were buried in groups; secondly, urn B. 1 was buried to a depth of twenty-two inches, although its estimated height was twenty-four inches. This seems slight evidence for the former presence of mounds. The site's long history of cultivation, beginning in the Roman period if not before, would easily explain a slight change in the contours of the ground, sufficient to account for the loss of the few inches of soil necessary to cover urn B. 1. Some slight dissolution of the soluble components of the soil may also have taken place, though the ground is a mainly flint gravel. One vessel out of 101 is not enough on which to base a theory. The grouping of

the pots could equally well be an indication of separate flat burial plots, delimited by something which would leave no trace in the archaeological record, such as light hurdle fences. It is considered here, therefore, that the likelihood of the urnfield having been a group of barrows is very slight.

Comparisons between the pottery from the barrows and the flat cemetery

When we turn to an examination of the pottery itself, one contrast is immediately apparent: none of the urns from the barrows on Vince's Farm carries the horseshoe 'handle' motif. Horseshoe 'handles' are present on the urn from the Newhouse Farm barrow, but there they are small, plain, and have more in common with some of the examples cited in Appendix I, from the south of England, than they have with the Vince's Farm series, less than a mile away. It is difficult to account for this disparity. It cannot be chronological, as it would seem that the barrows were used for secondary burials as long as the flat cemetery, and even possibly longer.

All-over finger-tipping is likewise a feature primarily of the flat cemetery urns, though not, as horseshoe 'handles', exclusively so. The following table shows the relative numbers and percentages (these percentages are in terms of the numbers of bucket urns in the flat cemetery and the barrows respectively, not of the combined numbers from both; i.e., they are out of 88 for the flat cemetery, and 32 for the barrows):

	'Handles' only	Rusticated body only	Both
Flat cemetery:	4 (4.54%)	17 (19.32%)	13 (14.77%)
Barrows:	0 (0%)	3 (9.38%) ²	0 (0%)

Furthermore, sixteen barrow urns, all from Ring III, have a line of pierced holes below the rim (out of eighteen urns from the barrow on which the rim survives); this is not found on any urns from the flat cemetery.

The differences of occurrence of these three features of ornament on bucket urns from the urnfield on the one hand, and from the barrows on the other, is sufficiently great to be presumably significant, but the significance is not apparent from the material remains. However, a very tentative suggestion may be offered. The size of the settlement which this burial ground served cannot be established unless the site of the settlement itself is found, as the number of occupants of the cemetery cannot now be known. This much is clear, though. There are at Ardleigh, in adjacent fields, two groups of burials which from their proximity and many common features we may assume served one community, yet also with significant differences as outlined above. May this reflect two groups, living together yet adhering to different forms of burial rite? Is it even justifiable to suppose that the barrow builders were more conservative in their outlook as expressed their form of burial than the users of the urnfield? The

1. This includes those on which the attempt at all-over rustication is 'half-hearted', e.g. C. 3; also Ring III no. 21, where the all-over finger-tipping is regularised in the form of vertical stripes.
2. That is, assuming that Ring II B's finger-tip ornament was continued over the whole of the lower part of the vessel, and not just on the surviving portion below the cordon.

possibility that the distinction was one of status is unlikely. Just over a quarter of all urns found were from the barrows, a rather high percentage to support such a theory.

Globular urns comprise only 12.5% of all the urns in flat cemetery and barrows. The relative numbers and percentages are as follows:

	Bucket urns	Globular urns
Flat cemetery:	88 (87.13%)	13 (12.87%)
Barrows:	32 (94.12%)	2 (5.88%)

(Percentages are of all the pots in the flat cemetery — 101 — for the first line of the table, and of all the pots in the barrows — 34 — for the second).

Since the total number of globular urns from Vince's Farm is only a small percentage of the total number of vessels, the differences in percentages between flat cemetery and barrows are perhaps not significant; though if they are, they will serve to point the contrast between the two parts of the cemetery referred to above. Since there are so few globular urns in the barrows, it would not be useful to draw comparisons between the ornament on these urns in the urnfield and the barrows.

It may be worth while at this point to consider the marked numerical inferiority of the globular urns. It can be seen from the analysis of the bones from the urns found in Ring III (Erith, 1961 C, 60) that the use of one or the other type of urn was not dictated by the age or sex of the occupant, as men, women and children (and sometimes all three together) were buried in both types. It may be significant, however, that none of the globular urns is 'degenerate'; all are well made, and the decorated examples have well-executed designs, though the pattern on D. 3 is not as regular as on the others. This may suggest that the globular urns, being perhaps the pottery type of a minority in the settlement, were only made during the earlier years of occupation. (It may, however, suggest nothing of the sort; do earlier pots of a type *have* to be the good ones and later ones 'degenerate'? May it not at least sometimes be an indication of the skill, or lack of it, of an individual potter, or the degree of care she exercised?)

Relative dates of vessels within the group

There are very few urns which can be shown stratigraphically to be earlier than any others. There were five primary urns from the three barrows: Rings I, II and III. One of the secondary urns from Ring III overlaid two others; and in the flat urnfield there were two instances of one urn being stratified above another.

Ring I contained two primary urns, both buckets. Both were comparatively plain. Urn A had a finger-tipped applied cordon, with rare finger-tip impressions on the rest of the body; Urn B was unornamented, except for finger-tip impressions on top of the rim. Both these vessels have only features which are well represented on other pots in the cemetery, both in ornament, and in fabric, which is without grits, and similar to Fabric 2 of the urnfield series. The few fragments surviving of secondary urns are of a bucket urn and a (plain?) globular urn.

There were two primary urns also in Ring II (Fig. 5). Urn A is a plain, well-made globular urn, with a narrow cordon round the girth; if there was any incised decoration above this cordon, no sherd showing it has survived. The fabric is hard and fine, but

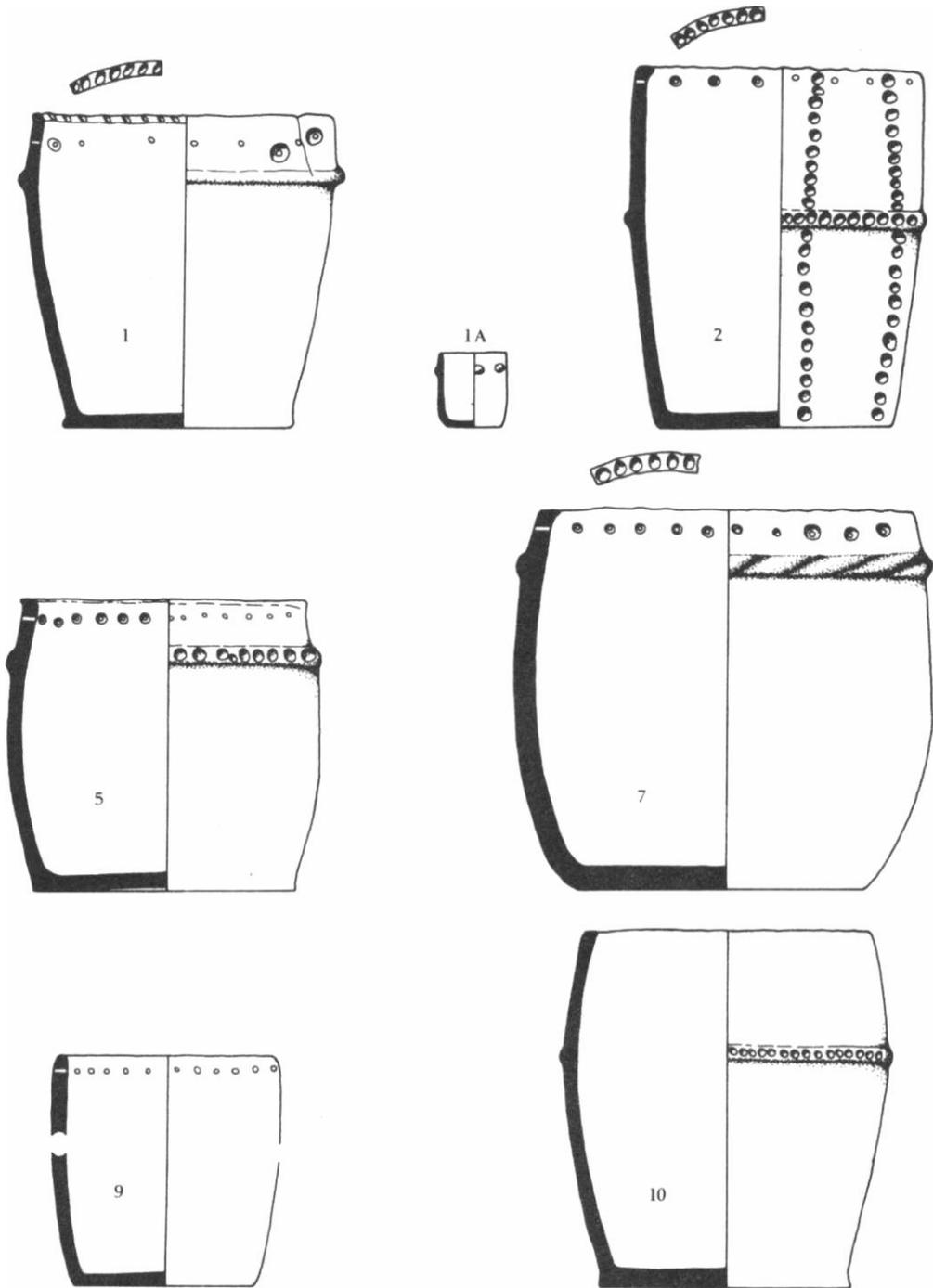


Fig. 2 Ring III. Scale: 1:6.

differs from the flat urnfield examples, and is similar to the fragments of globular urn from Ring I in that it contains some flint filler. The other primary urn, B, is a bucket urn with rather coarse fabric but only occasional tiny flint grits. Its slightly mounded rim is not necessarily an early feature, as will be seen from an examination of the Ring III vessels, but the arrangement of the finger-tipping in vertical lines may be. The three secondaries are all normal bucket urns; urn 3 has finger-tipping on the top of the rim and occasionally on the body; urn 4 has a cordon of finger-tipping; and urn 5 has a finger-tipped rim and cordon.

Ring III provides more useful pointers as to what may be considered early decorative features in the series (Figs. 2—4). First, the negative side: it seems that it is not possible to work out any typological scheme of rim forms. The primary urn, no. 21, has a simple slightly inturned squared rim, very similar to those of many of the secondary pots. Rims which might in a typological series be 'earlier': the T-shaped rim of no. 14 and the flat-topped, everted rim of no. 13, are secondaries, and there is no stratigraphical reason why they should be earlier or later than any of the other secondaries.

None the less, urn 21 is indisputably the earliest vessel from Ring III, and may be one of the earliest from the site, supposing that the flat cemetery was not in use before any of the barrows were constructed. In this case early features could be:

- i. the applied finger-tipped cross inside the base.
- ii. the ordering of the all-over rustication in vertical lines.
- iii. a second cordon well down the body of the vessel.
- iv. finger-tipping on top of the rim.
- v. a line of pierced holes below the rim.

Of these, iv. and v. are common among the secondary urns, and probably were employed throughout the timespan covered by the site; both are present on urn 7 from Ring III, which, as we shall see, may be one of the latest in the group, i. is unique in this group (though B. 1 in the flat cemetery has a rusticated base). It is found in Dorset and Hampshire, however, where it is one of the features of South Lodge-type barrel urns (Calkin, 1964, 20). It may be an early feature here. ii. occurs on urn B from Ring II also. Like the cross, it may be a borrowing from South Lodge barrel urns, with their vertical plain or finger-tipped applied stripes. Occurring as it does on two primary urns, it has claims to be an early feature. Vertical finger-tipped lines, though wider spaced, are also on urn 2 from Ring III, which was stratified beneath urn 3; and on urn 13 from the same barrow, vertical applied strips ornamented with finger impressions run from the rim to the (comparatively highly placed) cordon. Other vessels with this vertical line pattern, impressed directly on to the body of the pot, but generally less regularly than the above examples, come from the flat cemetery: A. 1, B. 2 and 6, D. 8 and H. 4 (Fig. 5). iii. is not found on any other vessel from Ardleigh, though there may be reflections of it in the single cordon well down the body, on urns 2 and 17 from Ring III.

Two pots, urns 1 and 2, were found side by side beneath urn 3 in Ring III. Urn 2 has already been discussed. The distinctive feature of urn 1 is that its cordon is a plain applied strip, unornamented with finger-tip impressions. This is comparatively

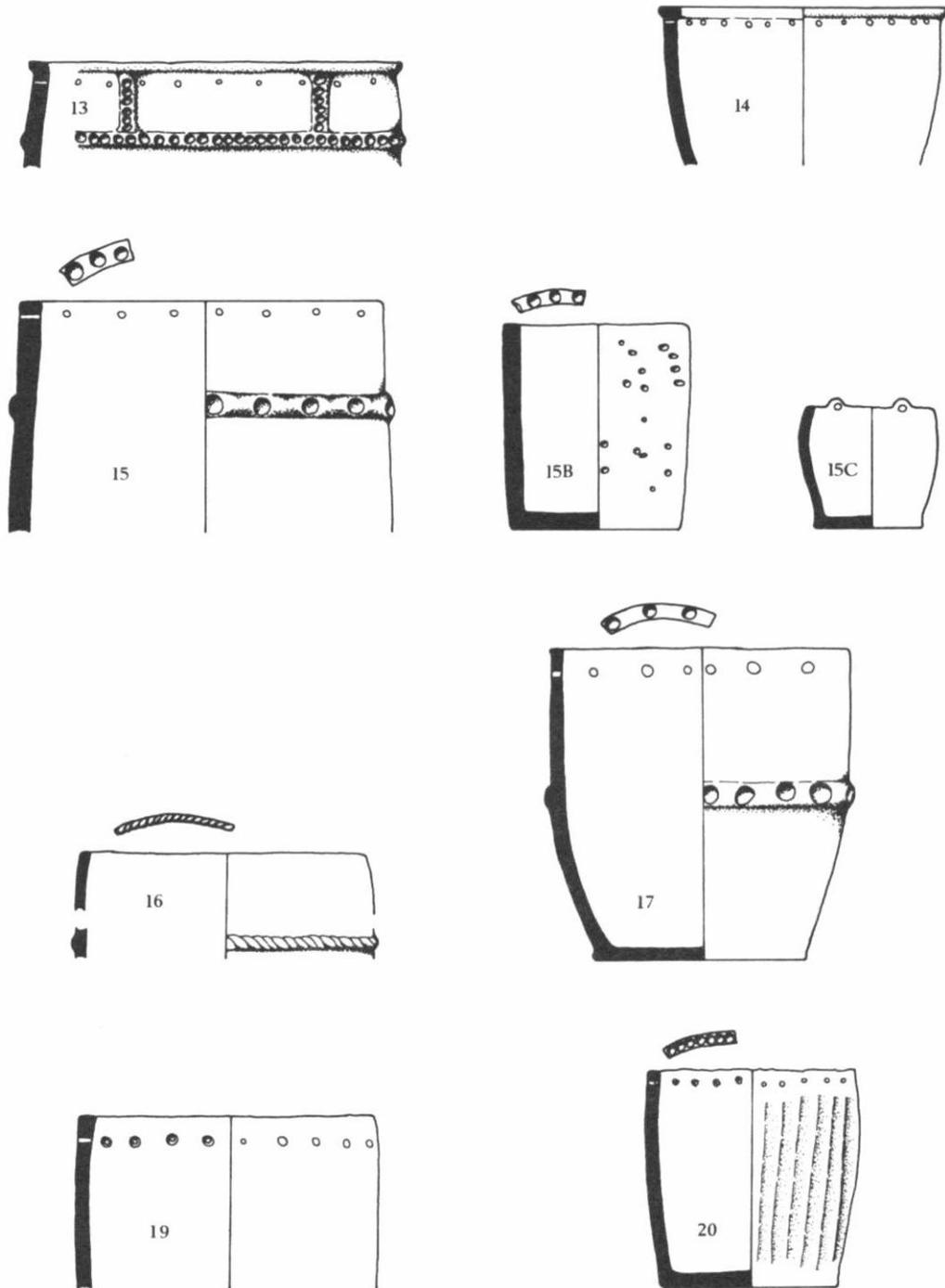


Fig. 3 Ring III. Scale: 1:6.

uncommon on the bucket urns from Ardleigh, though finer versions occur on seven of the globular urns, and the hybrid urn G. 1. Bucket urns with plain cordons are: Ring III no. 28, B. 4 and C. 1 from the flat cemetery, and Newhouse Farm barrow, urn 2 (Fig. 6). Ring III no. 28 is represented by three sherds from the ditch, which may mean that it was a comparatively late burial, placed high up in the barrow, and so more readily removed by ploughing into the ditch. Ring III urn 1 contained a small accessory vessel, urn 1a, whose only decorative feature was a row of bosses on the shoulder. This was also paralleled by a sherd from the ditch of Ring III: no. 26. The same arguments may therefore be applied to bosses as to plain cordons, and it is considered that these forms of decoration are not distinctively early or late.

In the flat cemetery, D. 17 is later than D. 16, H. 15 is later than H. 16. In the former instance, this means that a bucket urn with two applied and finger-tipped 'handles' springing from an applied finger-tipped cordon, and with an otherwise plain body, is later than one which probably had no handles, but which has all-over rustication below a line of finger impressions. However, both these urns have features unique to themselves. D. 16's rustication is of a peculiar 'raised' variety, executed by 'pinching up' the surface of the clay — as it were the 'positive' of which the finger-tip impression is the 'negative'. D. 17's horseshoe 'handles' have a vertical applied strip bisecting them. If this derives from anything more than the whim of the potter, it is possible that it is an adaptation to the applied technique of an incised motif employed elsewhere on globular urns: the chevron-within-chevron. The vertical strip would then represent the aligned angles of this motif (as on Calkin, 1962, 25, Fig. 10 (1), (2) and (3)). H. 4, it may be noted in passing, also has ornamental features within the 'handles', in this case, crosses in finger-tipping, which are repeated between the 'handles'. As both all-over rustication and horseshoe 'handles' occur in many cases in combination on a single vessel, including H. 4, the stratigraphical relationship between D. 16 and D. 17 is valid only for these two urns. The same is true for H. 15 and H. 16. H. 15 is a bucket urn of which the rim only survives; H. 16 is a plain globular urn with four vertically pierced lugs. There are no grounds for maintaining that globular urns as a class are earlier than bucket urns as a class.

There are two pots which may be late in the sequence: nos. 7 and 16 from Ring III. In place of the normal finger-tipping on the cordon, urn 7 has a 'cabled' pattern; urn 16 has such 'cabling' both on the cordon and on the top of the rim (Figs. 2 and 3). Parallels for this feature come from Plumpton Plain, Sussex, and, perhaps significantly, from Site B, the later of the two settlement sites there. This site, it was claimed, was very late Bronze Age, and 'covers the transition to the Early Iron Age in the period approximately centred on 500 B.C.' (Hawkes, 1935, 39). Site B produced part of a winged axe; but the dating of it so very late in the Late Bronze Age seems to rest on the assumption that Site A, being 'Deverel-Rimbury', was thought itself to be Late Bronze Age; and since it was the earlier of the two sites, this made Site B very late indeed. Though this need no longer be so, it remains possible that 'cabling', as an alternative to finger-tipping, was a comparatively late development in the 'Deverel-Rimbury culture'.

It has been claimed, on the basis of the cabled ornament, that urn 16 of Ring III is, in fact, Iron Age (Erith, 1970, 26). In the field marked 'D' on Fig. 1, there have been

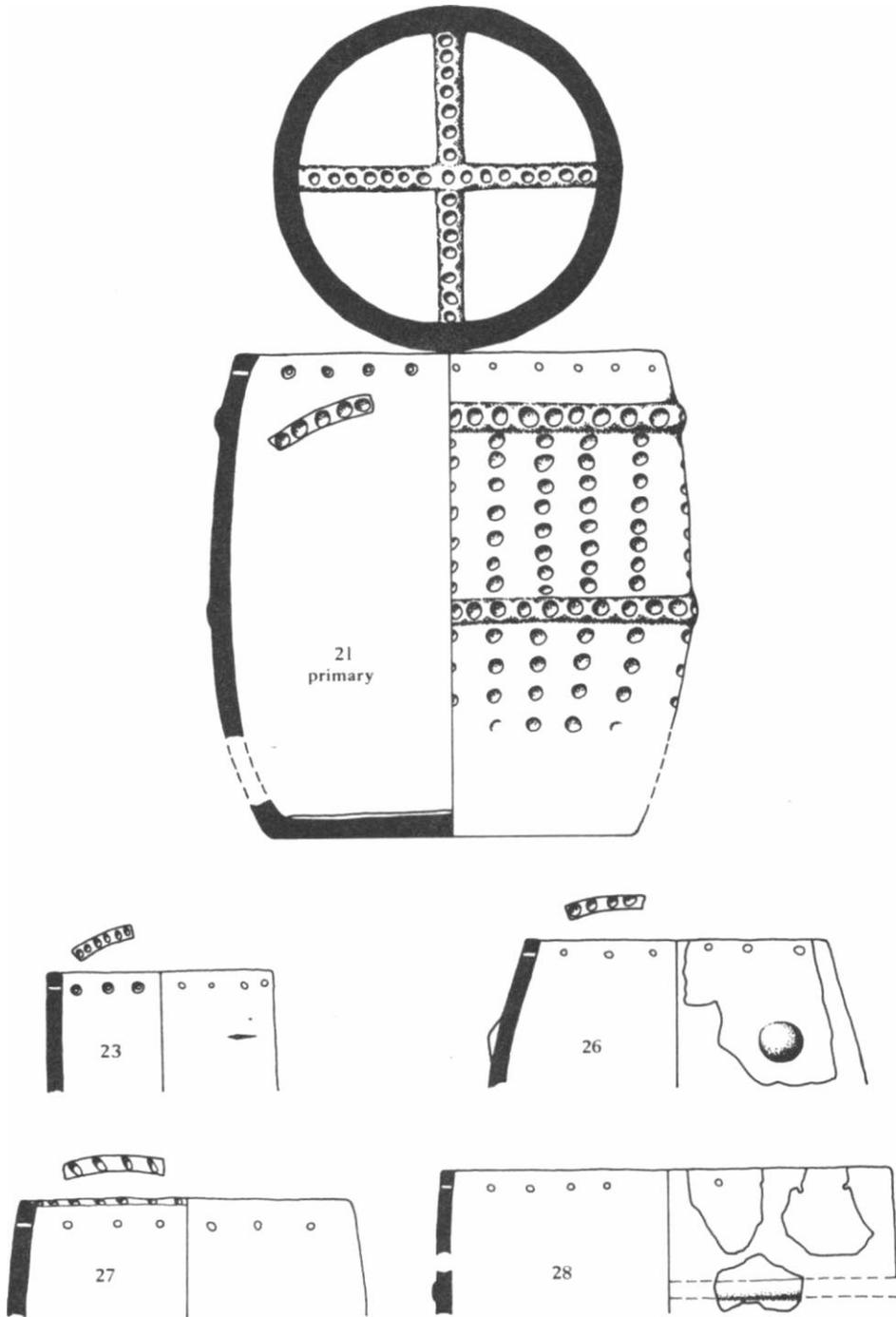
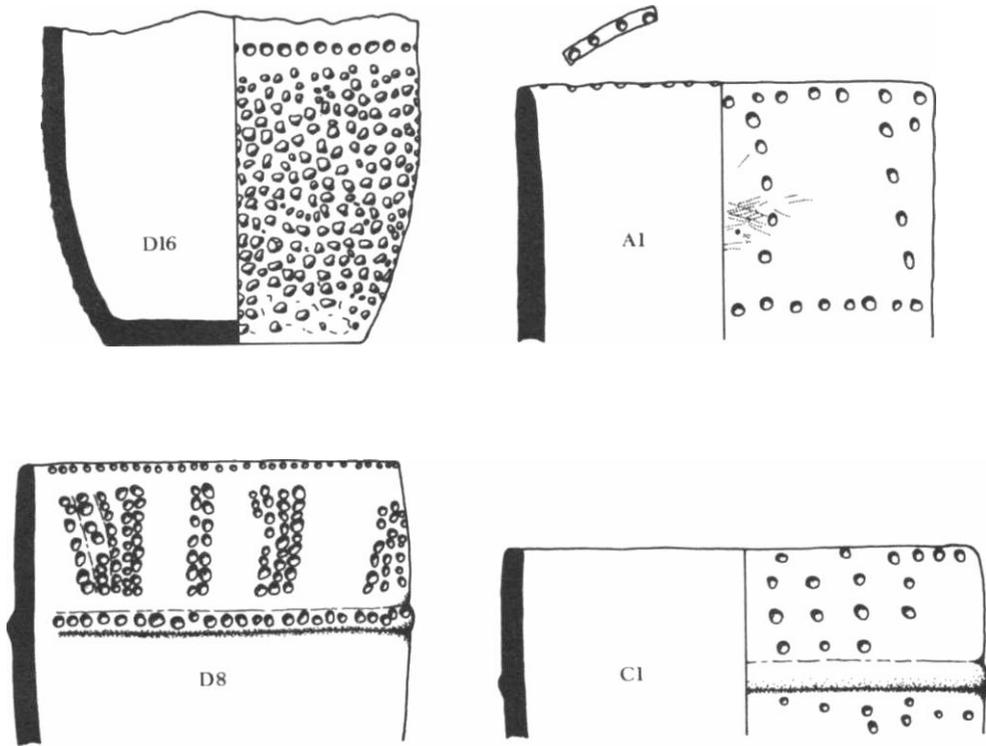
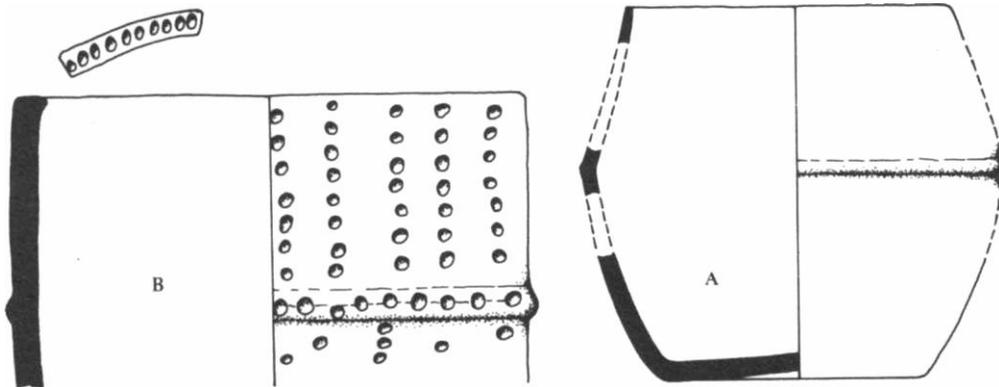


Fig. 4 Ring III. Scale: 1:6.

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Urnfield pots mentioned in this paper but not illustrated in P.P.S. XXVI.



Ring II.

Fig. 5 Scale: 1:6.

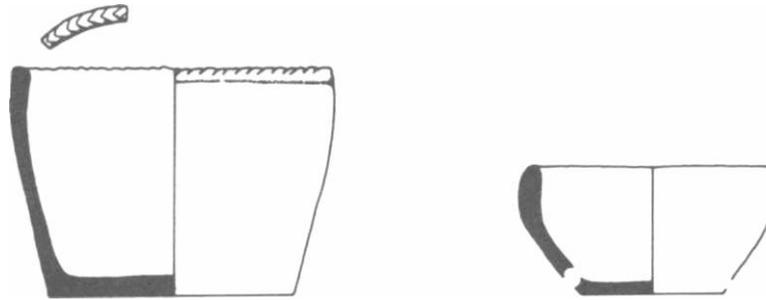
found sherds of pottery, one of which has a chevron, or 'double-cable' pattern on the rim top. This was stated, on the basis of its fabric, to be Iron 'A' (Erith, 1962 A, 76), and it is because of this identification that urn 16 has also been called Iron 'A'. However, there is no difference between the fabric of urn 16 and that of many other pots in the cemetery. On the other hand, the description of the fabric of the pottery from 'D' marks it as different from the certainly Iron 'A' pottery from the farmstead, site A, and its form is also different. It would seem to have more in common with the cemetery pottery, though it is not identical with it. It may be that the sherds from site D stand as a rather meagre stop-gap between the 'Deverel-Rimbury' material and that of the beginning of the Iron Age. It may be, too, that the tendencies begun in Ring III urns 7 and 16 were continued in the pottery from 'D'.

When all that has been said, however, it must be admitted that few changes can be seen in forms of ornament on the pottery which would enable one to suggest a chronological succession of styles; and, of course, nothing about the pottery itself ties it at all firmly to a 'real' chronology. It may be that the cemetery was in use over a comparatively short period of time by a large community; or it may be that the pottery styles employed by a smaller group of people changed little over a longer period. It cannot even be assumed, though it would be convenient to do so, that the initial use of the barrows antedates the beginning of the flat cemetery (Ashbee, 1960, 156), and in spite of the differences between these two forms of burial, it is more than likely that they continued in use side by side.

The date of the Ardleigh cemetery

There is only one piece of evidence to which anything resembling a 'real' date can be attached. This is a fragment of a plain bronze bracelet (Fig. 6), found in urn 20 of Ring III. It is, incidentally, the only fragment of metal found with a 'Deverel-Rimbury' urn in the Eastern Counties. Professor Hawkes in 1965 dated the occurrence of this type in Britain to *circa* 1200 to 1000 B.C. or later (Hawkes, 1965, 51), following M. Smith (1959, 155). This would presumably now be *circa* 1400 to 1200 B.C., following the correction of the radiocarbon dates upon which the above dates ultimately depend. He also analysed the metal content of the Ardleigh fragment: the silver content is near 1.0%, the lead about 0.7%. A possible source of error lies in the fact that the fragment is wholly corrosion products, and this may account for the high percentage of silver. The figure for lead is high for pre-Wilburton bronze, but low for the Late Bronze Age in the south-east. However, certain late Middle Bronze and early Late Bronze Age pieces of metalwork have lead contents of between 0.5% and 1.0%, and it seems likely that it is to this transitional period that the Ardleigh fragment belongs.

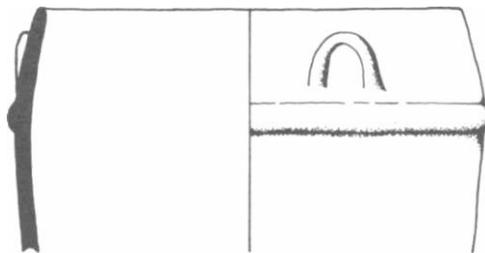
This gives a time-span of some two centuries, during some part of which, or all of it, the cemetery was in use. Whether the burial in urn 20 of Ring III occurred comparatively early, centrally or late in the history of the site is impossible to say. It is unfortunately one of the plainest (Fig. 3), and does not exhibit any of the features which may indicate comparative earliness or lateness in the sequence.



Pottery found with sandstone pestle at D on Fig. 1. Scale: 1:4.



Bronze bracelet from Ring III, urn 20. Scale: 1:1.



Secondary urn from the Newhouse Farm Barrow. Scale: 1:6.

Fig. 6

It may be that this welcome, if exiguous, piece of non-ceramic evidence indicates a time-lag between the floruit of the 'Deverel-Rimbury' culture in southern England and its extension north-eastwards. In the absence of a terminus ante quern for the culture, though, it may equally mean that the 'Ardleigh' people in Essex and Suffolk kept pace with their southern cousins, and that both groups continued on to the end of the Middle Bronze Age and even into the Late Bronze Age.

The settlement

It is very difficult to say anything about the settlement which must have gone with the cemetery at Ardleigh, as no settlement of comparable date has yet been found. The Iron 'A' farmstead was small, and presumably that of a single family. The pestle and

pottery from site D may well represent an earlier settlement than this, but one likely to be later than the cemetery; and in any case, the size of such a presumptive settlement is unknown.

It might be possible to suggest the size of the 'Deverel-Rimbury' settlement at Ardleigh, and even for how long it may have been occupied (though if the size were large, the duration would be short, and vice versa), if it were known how many people were buried in the cemetery. Unfortunately, it is not known how many people are represented by the 101 vessels in the flat urnfield; the evidence from the barrows shows that up to five people might be interred in the same urn. (Incidentally, the occurrence of multiple burials, some incomplete, in individual pots, may support the case, suggested earlier, for the keeping of bodies, or ashes, at least until two or more were available for burial together.)

The suggestion has already been put forward, tentatively, that the groups in the flat urnfield may have belonged to individual families. If so, the same might be said of the barrows. The small numbers of pots in some of the barrows possibly argue against this; but it is not known how many unurned cremations have been ploughed away; and it is dangerous to base any firm hypothesis on an unknowable figure. None the less, if it is accepted that flat cemetery groups and barrows maybe represented families of unknown size, the maximum number of families in the settlement would be fifteen; these, of course, need not all have been contemporary. To say more than this without further evidence would be to move out of the realm even of hypothesis, and into that of not very inspired guesswork.

Conclusion

Scattered all over the lighter soils of eastern Essex and south-eastern Suffolk, and inland up the river valleys, are the funerary remains of the people of the 'Ardleigh' group of the 'Deverel-Rimbury' culture. They came from the south of England at some stage during the currency of this culture there, and for their pottery drew on a fair proportion of the decorative motifs and styles available in the pool of ideas and traditions present in the south. They appear to have been orthodox in their expression of belief in so far as this is shown by their form of disposal of the dead, by urned or unurned cremations in both barrow cemeteries and flat cemeteries. It may be guessed that their settlements, wherever they are, would be of the normal type, quite small, nucleated, groups of house-enclosures, with associated field-systems, and undoubtedly prosperous on the fertile soils of Essex and Suffolk.

Much of this is inference, however; no settlement sites of this culture have yet been found, either in association with a cemetery, or alone, in the area covered by the 'Ardleigh' group. It is to be hoped that further fieldwork will produce sites which add not only bulk to the already abundant pottery but more associations with independently datable metalwork, and the sites of the homes of the people who were buried in the cemeteries. Ardleigh is one of the places where one, or both, of these hopes may perhaps be realised.

Appendix I: biconical, barrel and bucket urns

<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Urn type</i>	
Puddleton Heath, Dorset.	Abercromby 424a.	Bucket.	*
Rimbury cemetery, Dorset.	Abercromby 425g.	Bucket.	*
Plush, Dorset.	Calkin 1964, 33.	Bucket.	* <
Cranbury Common, Hants.	Godden 1966, 34-5 (1).	Bucket.	*
Iford Hill, Sussex.	Burstow & Holleyman 1957, 196-7.	Bucket Class A2.	*
Lord's Down, Dorset.	Abercromby 361b.	Biconical.	*
Dorchester, Dorset.	Abercromby 372.	Biconical.	*
Roke Down, Dorset.	Abercromby 375.	Biconical.	*
Butt's Ash, Hants.	Godden 1966, 36 (8).	Biconical.	*
Shalcombe Down, Isle of Wight.	Abercromby 373 bis.	Barrel.	*
Brook Down, Isle of Wight.	Dunning 1931, 114.	Barrel.	*
Bulford, Wilts.	Abercromby 373.	Bucket.	*
Old Sarum, Wilts.	Abercromby 356a.	Biconical.	*
Bulford, Wilts.	Abercromby 371.	Biconical.	*
Barnes, Isle of Wight.	Dunning 1931, III & Pl. III (8).	Barrel.	*
Mill Hill, Acton, London.	Abercromby 470c.	Bucket.	* <
Welcome Horsey, Dorset.	Abercromby 417.	Bucket.	*
Wick, Broadwater, Hants.	Calkin 1962, 31 & Fig. 12 (14).	Bucket.	*
Tuckton, Hants.	Calkin 1962, 63, App. V (R).	Bucket.	*
Eldon's Seat, Encombe, Dorset.	Cunliffe & Phillipson 1968, 211.	Bucket.	*
Colbury Barrow, Hants.	Preston & Hawkes 1933, 417-9, Figs. 2 & 4.	2 buckets.	*
Landford barrow, Hants/Wilts border.	Preston & Hawkes 1933, 423.	Bucket.	*
'South Lodge' type.	Calkin 1962, 20, Appendix III.	Barrels.	*
Furzy, near Latch Farm, Hants.	Calkin 1962, 31 & Fig. 12 (6).	Bucket.	*
Plumpton Plain, Sussex.	Hawkes 1935, 39, 40, Fig. 1.	Bucket.	*
Latch Farm, Christchurch, Hants.	Piggott 1938, 176, Fig. 5 no. 89.	Bucket.	*
Latch Farm, Christchurch, Hants.	Piggott 1938, 180, Fig. 7 no. 38.	Bucket.	*
Mill Hill, Acton, London.	Abercromby 470.	Bucket.	*
Steyning Round Hill, Sussex.	Burstow 1958, 163, Fig. 4:13.	Barrel.	*
Plumpton Plain, Sussex.	Hawkes 1935, 46.	Classes B1A & B1B.	*

- Rustication.
- Horseshoe 'handles'
- Cordons or horizontal bands of finger-tipping on lower and upper part of pot.
- Vertical smoothing
- Lugs.
- Applied cross inside base
- Row of holes below rim.
- Wide-spaced finger-tipping on cordon or rim.
- 'Cable' pattern on cordon and top of tim.

Appendix II: globular urns

The Ardleigh examples have more in common with Calkin's Type II than with his Type I (Calkin, 1964, 24—6): the fabric is well-fired and has no obvious filler; lugs, where they occur, are perforated horizontally; what incised decoration there is, is well scored and easily visible. Most of the Ardleigh globulars, however, are plain, and of the four which do carry incised decoration, three have chevron patterns approximating to Calkin's Type I.

- i. The bands of horizontal lines joining pairs of chevron-outlined triangles on urnfield no. D. 18 recall the ornament on a vessel from Barnes, Isle of Wight (Dunning, 1931, 109—10 and pi. II). In recording this urn, Dunning notes parallels from South Lodge Camp, Wilts., Handley, Dorset, Salisbury, Wilts., and the Deverel barrow, Dorset. Examples of multiple chevrons without the joining lines are not uncommon,
- ii. The nearest parallel to the band of horizontal lines linking the two lugs on urnfield no. E. 3 comes from Plumpton Plain (A 4A), Sussex (Hawkes, 1935, 40, and 42, Fig. 3).

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