

Bos Swallet, Mendip, Somerset

1. A DISTURBED BEAKER AGE DEPOSIT

By

H. TAYLOR, M.B., Ch.B.

(O.S. 6 in. to 1 mile, Som. ST 45 NE., N.G.R. ST 471584)

The site is about 100 yd. east of Read's Cavern. At it there was a low limestone cliff a few feet high at the north end of the depression into which ran a shallow, very small stream-incised valley. It could never have functioned as a swallet for more than a very short time and the volume of water would have been very small. The exact location is shown as No. 5 on Tratman's map (1963, *Fig.* 5).

The excavation of this site was first started by the Sidcot School Speleo Society in 1946 as a dig for a new explorable cave (Stanton, 1949). In that year a shaft was sunk to a depth of 20 ft. through loosely packed boulders and mud down to a small jagged passage. The shaft collapsed and another one was dug in 1947. The total length of cave found was 200 ft. of steeply descending difficult passage to a small chamber. One shaft, or both, for it is not clear which, passed through "a hearth of Beaker or Bronze Age [date] with flints and a few fragments of pottery . . . at 4 ft. below the surface". Some ox bones were also found, hence the name of the swallet.

For some time the site was abandoned, but during 1954-55 the same society restarted work there, this time, under Mr. W. M. Smith, treating it as an archæological site. Good records were kept and the actual excavation was well conducted. Work was concentrated on the east side of the depression and was abandoned when Mr. Smith left the school. It had yielded quite a few flint implements, mainly scrapers, and an appreciable amount of Beaker potsherds. In 1960 the archæological material found by the Sidcot School boys was sent on loan to this society so that all the material is now together. All archæologists will be grateful for this generous action by the school authorities.

In 1958 this Society took over the site as an archæological one with the agreement of the school authorities. At this time one hearth level, 6 in. thick, was exposed in part of the eastern face of the pit dug for access to the cave at a depth of 8 ft. below the original surface, not 4 ft. as stated in the 1949 account. A thinner and less well-marked hearth was present 1 ft. below the first.

Much preliminary clearing had to be done before the hearths could be tackled. As work went on it became unpleasantly clear that the hearths were spurious and that what was being dug was a miners' spoil heap as there was mining debris above and below the hearths, and mining activity had extended downwards for at least 30 ft. before the spoil containing the Beaker material was tipped in from the west. This direction of the tipping accounts for the discrepancy between the depths at which the hearths were found in 1946 and 1958. In all, about 10 sq. ft. of the pseudo-hearths were excavated and the yield of pottery and flints has been considerable. The original site must have been an extremely rich one as the pottery recovered comprises parts of at least 20 beakers, including 2 of the relatively rare handled forms.

A very thorough search has been made of the immediate neighbourhood in an attempt to locate the original site but without success, even when all the undergrowth had been burnt off. It may have been a single hut and was probably totally destroyed. The most likely place, in view of the direction of the tipping, is a long hollow, which has been mined, a few yards to the west of *Bos Swallet*.

It is worth noting that this site has yielded nothing but "A" beakers, whereas tumulus T5, 400 yd. to the east, contained a primary interment in a cist of "B" beaker date. It is therefore all the more unfortunate that *Bos Swallet* did not provide an opportunity for establishing a time relationship between the two sites.

In conclusion I would like to express my thanks to my wife, Betty, and to Mr. and Mrs. Masterman who were my constant assistants on the site, and to various members who assisted me from time to time. Mr. A. M. ApSimon has reported on the flints and pottery. He has drawn both, and I am very grateful to him for this.

2. STONE IMPLEMENTS

(Figs. 14 and 15)

By

A. M. APSIMON, B.A.

The stone artefacts from *Bos Swallet* are of flint, with the exception only of a flake of chert and another of silicified sandstone. Forty-one implements, some core fragments and a few waste flakes are attributable to the Beaker occupation. Two of the pieces figured are certainly strays, the first being the leaf-shaped arrowhead (*Fig. 14, No. 1*) which is probably Neolithic. The amber-coloured flint of which it is made is not otherwise found on the site, whereas scrapers and arrowheads made from similar flint were found among Neolithic material from the Chew Valley Lake excavations (M.o.W. excavations 1953-54, still unpublished), notably at Chew Park (N.G.R. ST 569595), and similar coloured flint was quite widely chosen for making Neolithic

arrowheads in southern England. The second stray is the patinated blade (*Fig. 15*, No. 28) which is technically quite distinct from the Beaker flake industry and is comparable to local Upper Palæolithic material, though it might equally well be Mesolithic. (It is just possible that the two patinated scrapers, *Fig. 15*, Nos. 26, 27, may be similar strays, but No. 26 is reworked and No. 27 burnt, and I doubt whether the patination of either can be trusted as a guide to their age.)

All the remaining pieces are quite characteristic of Beaker flintwork as found for example at Gorseley Bigbury, though the series is much more extensive there, or for that matter the small assemblages of "B" Beaker flintwork from the Chew Valley Lake excavations. The use of grey or black flint is normal in north Somerset, as is the small size of implements, cores and waste, and the concomitant frequency of flakes bearing patches of the outer skin (cortex) of the nodules. These must have been small, brought from the chalk regions and not derived from river or beach gravel. Small size does, however, seem to be a characteristic tendency in Beaker flintwork independent of the raw material available. The simple flake technique, the opportunist use of irregular flakes or fragments, however small, and the fine quality of the secondary working, mostly either parallel fluted facets or very fine scale flaking, are equally characteristic. A curious feature of the industry is the very small percentage of waste flakes as compared with contemporary local assemblages in which 80-90 per cent is normal. (Possibly the early excavators retained only the finished implements.) The percentage of burnt flint tools is normal for a settlement site.

The majority of the implements are scrapers with round or convex working edges, with an angle of about 45° between the flaked surface and the bulbar surface. Some of the scrapers are made on the ends of elongated flakes and are thus technically end scrapers (ES) and have been so described, but the sizes and flaking angles of the working edges are similar to those of the simple round scrapers (CS), so that there was presumably no functional difference. On two scrapers (*Fig. 15*, Nos. 21, 22) the angle between the flaked surface and the bulbar surface is close to 90° , and these are described as steep scrapers. The former has a distinctly nosed working edge and the latter appears to be a combination end and side scraper. Probably these had a function different from the simple convex scrapers. All seem to have been used with the flaked surface held upwards and drawn towards the user as the use-facets are all on the flaked surface and not on the bulbar surface.

The lengths of the scrapers vary between 16 and 41 mm. and the widths of the working edges between 16 and 34 mm. Five convex scrapers with dimensions around or below 20 mm. seem to form a group (*Fig. 14*, Nos. 2, 3, and three not illustrated). Such diminutive scrapers are specially characteristic of Beaker flint industries. Several scrapers are made on

flakes which might well have been left as waste on a flint-rich site (*Fig. 15*, Nos. 23-26).

There are two small flake knives with fine fluted flaking of the working edge (*Fig. 15*, Nos. 3, 4), a type characteristic of Beaker assemblages, as for example from Gorsey Bigbury (Jones, 1938), as well as a number of more roughly or simply flaked pieces usable as knives (*Fig. 15*, Nos. 5-7, and three

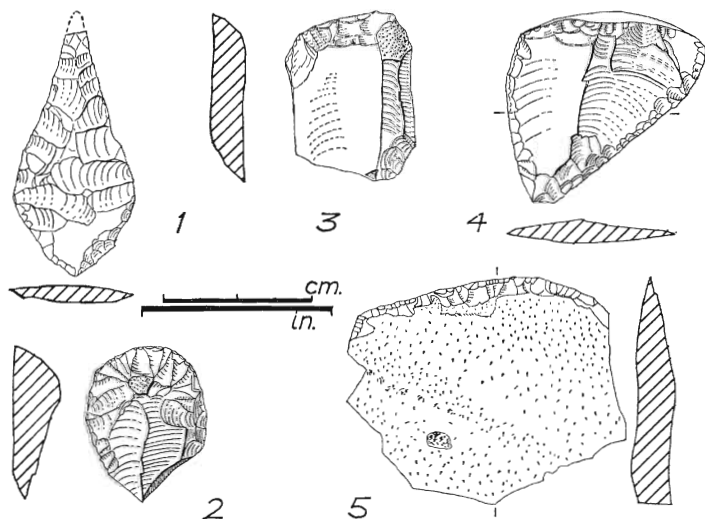


Fig. 14.—Flint implements from *Bos Swallet*. Scale 1/1.

not illustrated). Particularly interesting are the thin flakes with very delicately trimmed cutting edges (*Fig. 14*, Nos. 4, 5 and *Fig. 15*, Nos. 1-3). These seem too delicate for general use and probably had some special function.

DESCRIPTION

All implements are of grey or black flint, fresh and unpatinated unless otherwise stated.

Fig. 14 (Scale 1/1).

- No. 1. Leaf-shaped arrowhead, made of yellowish-amber coloured flint, finely pressure flaked on both faces, two patches of the original flake surface left on the face figured. The tip is broken.
2. Convex scraper (CS) made on small flake, the butt perhaps broken. Flaked along both edges but the working edge is restricted to the end.
3. Convex end scraper (ES), thinner than No. 2, but the scraping angle is about the same.

Not illustrated: Three CS's of about the same size as Nos. 2 and 3; one is burnt, the other two made on cortical flakes with only the working edge flaked.

Fig. 14 (cont.)

4. Hinge-fractured end of thin flake, trimmed along both left-hand and right-hand edges, to give a delicate cutting edge.
5. Thin cortical flake trimmed along the top edge in the same way as No. 4.

Fig. 15 (Scale $\frac{1}{2}$).

- No. 1. Knife made on thin ridged cortical flake, with delicate scale trimming down the left-hand edge and at the upper part of the right-hand edge, similar in character to *Fig. 15*, Nos. 4 and 5. The tip is broken.
2. Thin hinge-fractured flake, the bulbar end broken off. The right-hand edge and part of the left-hand edge are finely trimmed, apparently for use as a knife; burnt.
 3. Knife, made on a cortical flake, the striking platform trimmed away, finely worked on the left-hand edge with fluted facets, the right-hand edge also partly worked.
 4. Knife made on flake with patches of cortex, left-hand side worked to notched edge, right-hand edge steeply blunted.
 5. Small flake, finely scale flaked along the left-hand edge, probably a knife.
 6. Flake-blade, retouched along the left-hand edge, probably a knife.

Not illustrated: Three flake-blades, 2.4, 1.7 and 1.5 in. long, one with rough flaking along one edge, the others with traces of retouch; all appear to have been used as rough knives.

7. Flake, irregularly retouched along the right-hand edge, probably a knife rather than a scraper.
8. CS made on a keeled flake, the bulb of percussion and striking platform removed leaving a single concave facet. The working edge is very finely scale flaked, with fluted flaking of the right-hand side.
9. CS made on a keeled cortical flake.
10. CS made on a ridged flake, the bulbar edge has been snapped off. The working edge is very finely flaked; burnt.
11. CS made on keeled flake, fine fluted flaking of working edge.
12. CS made on the left-hand edge of a ridged flake; the upper edge also worked and the bulbar end of the flake removed in the same way as No. 8.
13. Convex end scraper (ES) made on a double-ridged flake, patches of cortex present.
14. CS made on double-ridged flake, the bulbar end snapped off. The implement is burnt and the bulbar surface has broken away.
15. CS made on a double-ridged flake, the bulbar end snapped off, patches of cortex present, the working carried down the left-hand edge.
16. ES made on a double-ridged flake, cortex present on both edges.
17. CS, bulbar surface partly cut away by a single facet, cortex present. The working edge is very finely flaked.
18. CS made on flake, the lower edge is a hinge fracture and a little trimming of this has been done. The flaking of the working edge is finely controlled.
19. CS made on flake with patches of cortex, the striking platform removed by flaking of the bulbar surface. Irregularity of the working edge may be due to the presence of an opacity in the flint.
20. ES made on a thick cortical flake with ridged bulbar surface (an incipient fracture facet), the striking platform rather battered. The flaking of the working edge is carried rather roughly along both edges and there is some inverse flaking of the lower half of the right-hand edge.
21. Nosed steep scraper made on a ridged flake, the striking platform partly removed by a facet directed from the upper face. The steep flaking of the nose is carried along the edges at a reduced angle with some fine scale flaking.
22. End-side scraper, made on flake, patches of cortex, striking platform removed in the same way as Nos. 8 and 12. Fine scale flaking is carried all the way down the left-hand edge, with rather coarser flaking of the right-hand edge, truncated by the removal of the striking platform.
23. ES made on cortical flake, the bulbar end snapped off, scale flaking of the working edge is damaged by burning.
24. CS made on flat flake, the left-hand edge snapped off subsequently.
25. Flake, patch of cortex, parts of edge flaked to CS.

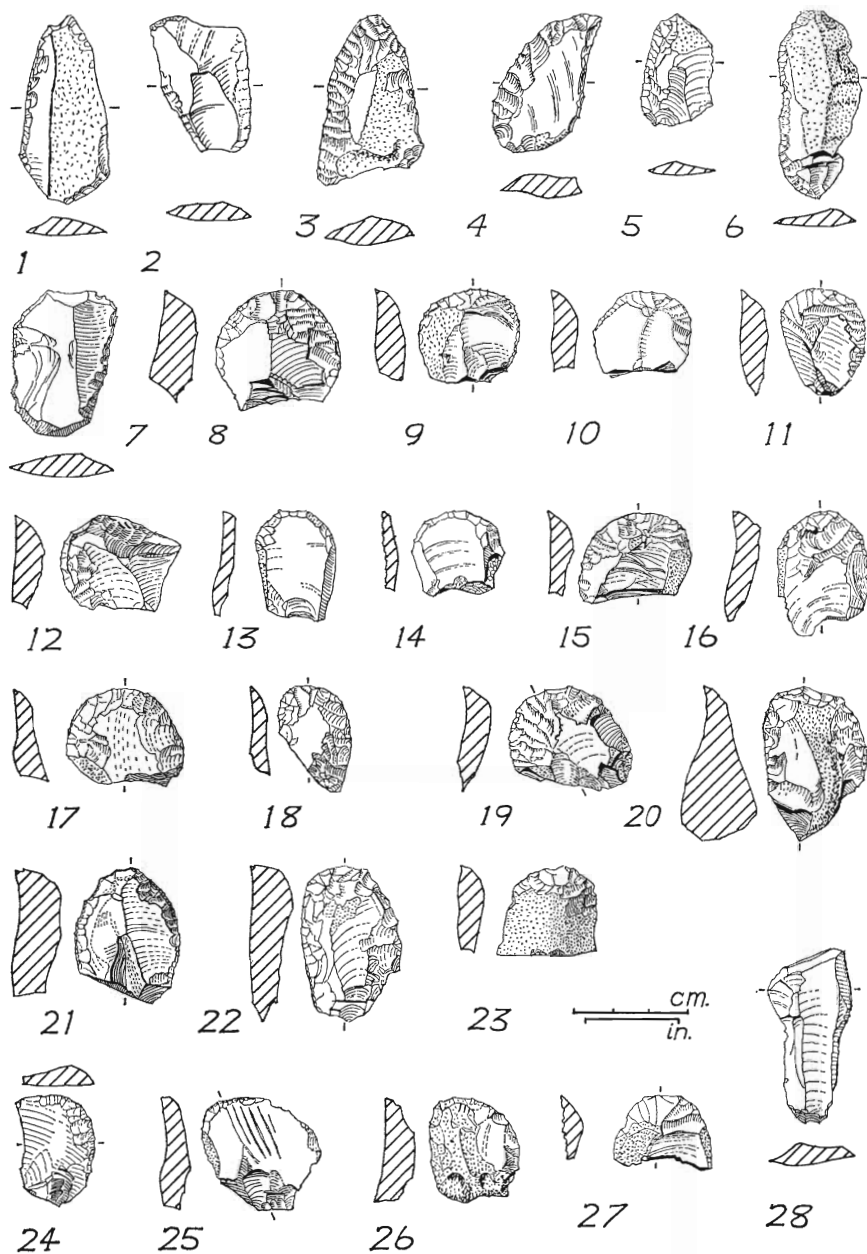


Fig. 15.—Flint implements from *Bos Swallet*. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

Fig. 15 (cont.)

26. CS made on part of a ridged cortical flake, the left-hand edge being flaked from the cortex. This piece has a blotchy blue-grey "milky" patina, but some of the flaking of the right-hand edge is unpatinated.
27. CS made on a cortical flake, burnt, breaking off the lower edge and most of the bulbar surface. The apparent simplicity of the flaking of the working edge is partly due to this. The piece has patina identical with No. 26, but burnt flint seems unreliable as to patination.
28. Double-ridged blade, patinated greyish white, no retouch or signs of use.

Not illustrated: (a) Part of bladelet, 1.0 × 0.5 in., small notch in one edge, probably accidental.

(b) Flake with part of edge flaked to CS form; burnt CS similar to No. 10 but thinner; and burnt fragments of two CS's.

(c) Two struck flake cores, 1.5 × 0.8 × 1.2 in., and 1.0 × 0.7 in., both struck to the point at which they are of no further use; another flat core fragment 1.5 in., burnt; and a fourth, also burnt, which looks to have been used as a pot-boiler.

(d) Fifteen small waste flakes and fragments, 2 burnt, plus a number of small chips.

Other than flint (not illustrated).

(a) Half of ridged flake of dark brown chert (1.4 in. wide), no retouch, no signs of use, also a chip of the same and a piece of burnt chert, perhaps a flake.

(b) Ridged flake of silicified sandstone, 2.8 × 1.5 in., no retouch, no sign of use. This is the largest stone artifact from the site.

3. BEAKER POTTERY

(*Figs. 16, 17*)

By

A. M. APSIMON, B.A.

There are about 80 sherds and an equal number of small fragments of Beaker pottery, the probable minimum number of pots represented being 20. None of the pots can be completely reconstructed in profile and some are only represented by single sherds. The condition of the material varies from fresh to very worn, though the greater part is in good condition and only one of the larger sherds is perhaps burnt. The paste is generally fine, without visible added grit (though thin sections might well show the presence of small fragments of pottery in the paste as this is known to occur in Beaker pottery) and mostly fired to a reddish colour, although the core is black in some cases. The sherds are brick red to yellow outside, sometimes brown inside, and much of the pottery is evenly fired right through. Number 17 and a sherd not figured show fractures indicating that the pots were ring built. Some sherds have very smooth outer surfaces. The only exceptions to this general description are the coarse wares decorated with finger-tip and circular impressions.

The predominant decorative technique is toothed-comb impressions, characteristically more deeply impressed than is often the case on "B" Beaker pottery. The patterns include arrangements with two good main zones, as well as narrow zone patterns (Nos. 7 and 8). Bar chevrons occur on Nos. 1 and 2, multiple chevrons on Nos. 3 and 4 and chevron derivatives on

Nos. 5 and 6. Complex but incomplete patterns are indicated by Nos. 9-12. Elaborate comb decoration also occurs on the two handles. Numbers 15 and 16 have paired finger-tip impressions of rusticated type, while No. 17 is decorated with circular impressions and curious raised pellets. Decoration on top of the rim occurs in four cases (Nos. 1, 2, 8, 10). Incised decoration is absent.

The shapes of the pots in so far as they can be reconstructed are all of normal beaker type, including two handled beakers. There is some variation in the quality of the pottery, but the best (e.g., Nos. 3 and 14) is about as good as any other Beaker pottery that I have seen.

DESCRIPTION

Figs. 16, 17 (one-third natural size).

- No. 1. Seventeen sherds, many joining making up the upper two-thirds of the profile, fine brown to black ware, outside red-brown, smooth, fine deeply impressed comb decoration. Pot has well-marked waist and slightly recurved, bevelled in rim. There is simple line decoration on the rim and the upper part has a main zone of reserved or "bar"-chevron pattern, flanked above by a cross-hatched "XXXX" marginal zone and below by five horizontal lines with an outer limit line. The irregularity of the bases of the lower row of triangles in this pattern is due to its having been conceived as a reserved chevron standing out against a hatched background. The main zone on the body is likely to have been also bar chevron but cannot be restored with certainty. It, too, is flanked above by a single limit line.
2. Two joined rim and neck sherds of red to buff ware decorated with coarse, deeply impressed toothed-comb pattern, probably intended to have been a reserved bar chevron with double outline, but it has perhaps been bungled, note the very small upper triangles and the lack of hatching in the left-hand lower triangle.
- 2a. Four joined sherds from the lower part of neck, waist and body of beaker, perhaps the same pot as No. 2. Buff-brown ware, rather weathered, decoration coarse and not very neat. The broad zone on the body is bar-chevron pattern, the upper zone probably the same except for the double outline.
3. One rim and two body sherds of fine red beaker ware with black core, outside smooth and very good, deeply impressed, well-executed comb pattern, on upper zone consisting of multiple running chevrons attached to the upper and lower (double) limit lines, the chevrons having sloping hatching. The body zone similar but narrower.
4. Body sherd of brown beaker ware, surfaces and fractures worn, hard gritty fabric, perhaps burnt. From the curvature likely to be from the lower half of the pot and could be the other way up. Decorated with broad zone of hatched multiple running chevrons in impressed-comb technique, now very worn and indistinct. This seems too thin to be from the same pot as the handle, No. 14.
5. Thirteen sherds, several joining, from base and lower half of beaker, core black, inside dark brown-black, outside brick red. The outer red part of the base has fractured as a separate piece about $\frac{1}{8}$ in. thick. Lower zone of decoration only, large and deep comb impressions arranged as a double reserved chevron pattern, the upper triangles and the intermediate diamonds hatched vertically, the basal triangles hatched horizontally. Double limit lines above, triple below.
6. a-g. Rim, five body sherds and one lower wall sherd; two dark brown, worn and leached looking, two reddish and three yellow. Despite differences in fabric all might be from the same pot except one body sherd which seems too thin. Decorated with comb impressions of which some are very deeply

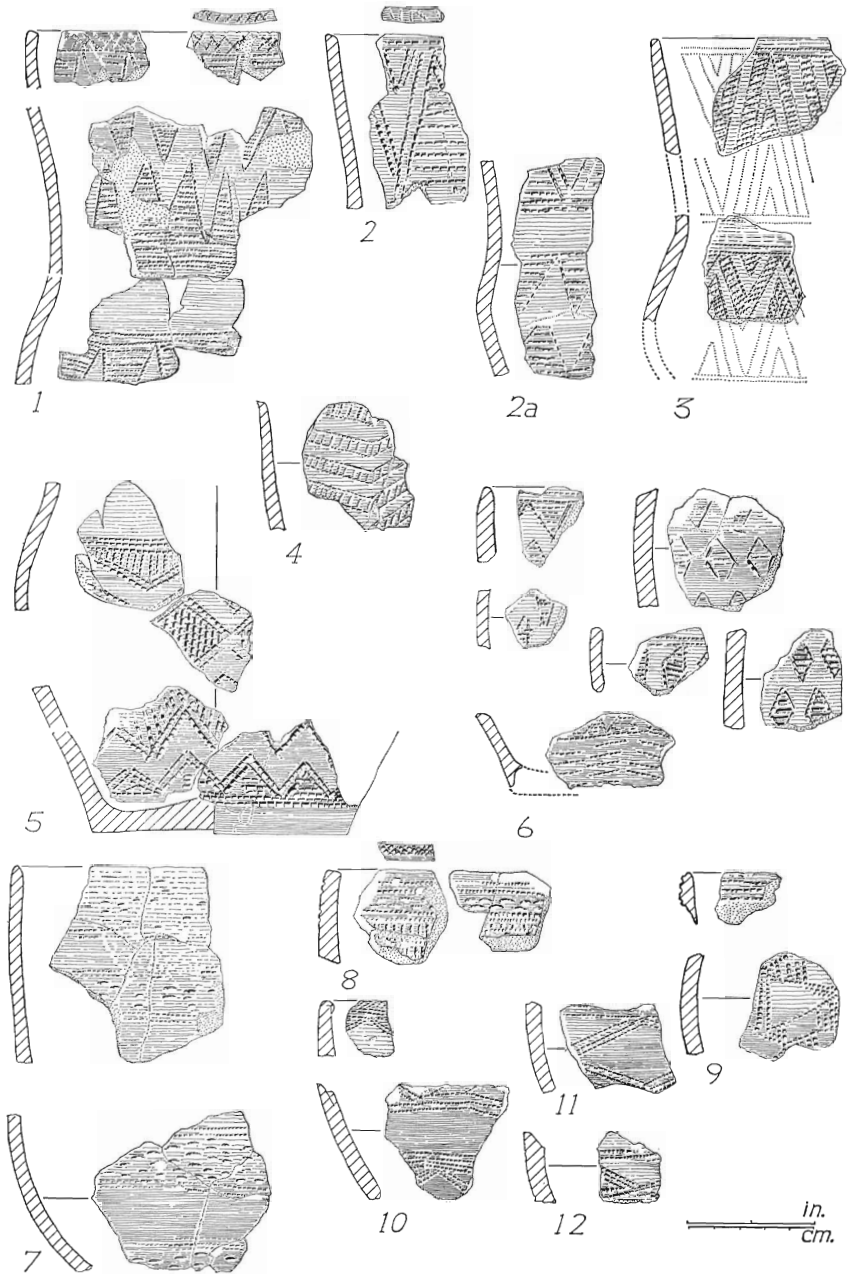


Fig. 16.—Beaker pottery from *Bos Swallet*. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

impressed and worn. The rim (a) shows the beginning of what might be a reserved chevron with horizontal hatching, though (b) suggests that the lower part of this may really be small diamonds; (f) shows the upper part of a lower body zone and (g) the lower edge, with simple triangles bounded below by clutches of short horizontal lines.

7. Rim and joined sherds from upper and lower halves of beaker, grey-black core, inside buff-brown, outside brick-red, upper sherds weathered and pattern indistinct, one body sherd fired right through. Decoration: narrow zone pattern consisting of horizontal impressions of an oval stamp, leaving a three-toothed mark, arranged in nearly vertical rows. The zones are limited by pairs of horizontal comb-impressed lines. Two zones are preserved on each part of the pot.
8. Two rim sherds of brick-red ware, worn, decorated with comb impressions and oval toothed-stamp marks. A narrow zone of toothed-stamp impressions is succeeded by one and perhaps two ladder pattern zones; paired horizontal comb-impressed limit lines; decoration on the rim.

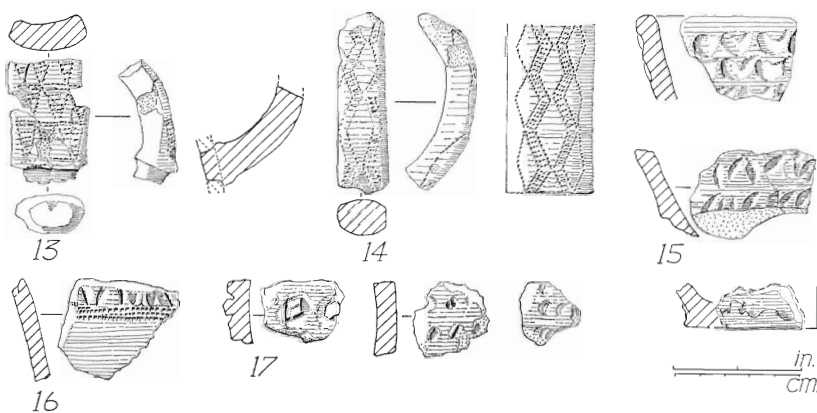


Fig. 17.—Beaker pottery from *Bos Swallet*. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

9. Rim fragment and four body sherds (three not drawn) of dark-grey beaker ware with red-buff outside, fractures worn. The rim is associated on fabric alone. Decoration: comb impressions, the pattern is to be understood as a diamond chequer, with half of each diamond vertically hatched. The body sherd might be the other way up.
10. Rim and body sherd from close to base, brown beaker ware with dark core, lumpy, surfaces reddish. Impressed comb decoration, the exact pattern uncertain but probably like No. 11.
11. Body sherd of dark beaker ware with smooth reddish outside, fine, neat comb impressions.
12. Body sherd, perhaps from near to base, brown ware, comb impressions, pattern as previous sherd.
13. Half of handle reconstructed from numerous fragments, red ware fired right through; the tenon by which it was attached to the wall of the beaker is blackish. Decorated on the back with fine comb impressions arranged as a chequer pattern of small triangles with the downward (?) pointing ones horizontally hatched. This handle seems to have belonged to a pot not otherwise represented in the sherds recovered from the site.
14. Broken handle, hard red beaker ware, core brown, the tenon on the unbroken end is black. This handle is thicker, narrower and of different cross-section from the first. It is decorated with very fine comb impressions consisting of two narrow "ladder pattern" chevrons which enclose a succession of diamond-shaped spaces down the back of the handle. A single row of comb impressions

on each side completes two rows of complementary diamond spaces outside the chevrons (see developed view of pattern). This pot also appears not to be otherwise represented on the site.

15. Rim and four body sherds, three not figured, black ware, the inside black or brown, the outside brick-red. The rim sherd is very worn, all other sherds could be from the same pot. This is rusticated ware, the outer surface roughened by pinching up between the finger and thumb of the right hand. The sherds are drawn with thumb-nail impressions to the left in each case.
16. Body sherd, black ware, the outside brown where decorated, decorated by rustication as described above, combined with horizontal lines of comb impressions.
17. Three body sherds and a base sherd. (a) is half brown, half red with calcite (?) grits (many weathered out), the surfaces a chocolate brown; decoration consists of raised pellets roughly of diamond shape, made by pinching up the surface between finger and thumb, twice for each pellet. (b) and (c) are of the same ware, the impressed decoration seems to have been made with the end of a stick or a bone held at about 45° to the side of the pot. (d) is of the same ware, outside is brick-red and the shape of normal beaker character.

A number of other sherds not duplicating those described above includes a sherd with a ring-join fracture and another with a narrow zone of cross-hatching flanked by horizontal lines.

COMPARISONS

The fabric and appearance of the ware, the character of the comb-impressed decoration, the patterns used and the shapes of the pots, in so far as these can be reconstructed, are all consistent with attribution to the "A" Beaker group of the British Bell Beaker cultures. The pottery of this group in southern Britain seems typologically stable, so that it is usually possible to cite close parallels from a large area, and the pottery from *Bos Swallet* is no exception in this. More specifically useful are parallels to local material, in particular those to the large series from *Gorse*y Bigbury, 2 miles away (Jones, 1938, cited here as *Gorse*y).

- No. 1, 2. Bar chevron with single outline (*Gorse*y, *Fig.* 13, Nos. 14, 20, 21); also several with double outline (Nos. 12, 16-18); cross-hatched marginal zone (*Fig.* 14, No. 23); single limit lines on many examples; decoration on top of rim common (*Fig.* 14, Nos. 22, 23, 26). The pattern is a familiar one elsewhere in England, South Wales and even in Ireland (Ó'Riordáin, 1951, *Fig.* 5).
3. *Gorse*y (*Fig.* 12, No. 6) has multiple chevron on the upper zone, wider than the present pot, the lower zone being duplicated, while the filling is of oval impressions. I have also seen a close parallel among the "A" Beaker pottery excavated by Dr. Liversage at Dalkey Island, Co. Dublin.
4. *Gorse*y (*Fig.* 12, No. 5). This is a common pattern elsewhere.
5. No exact parallel at *Gorse*y, only running lozenges there are degenerate or perhaps chevron derived (*Fig.* 14, No. 27). Similar treatment, though not the same pattern, occurs on an "A" Beaker from Swindon (Passmore, 1914, No. 2).
6. *Gorse*y, *Fig.* 12, No. 4, *Fig.* 13, Nos. 11 and 13 are very similar, horizontally hatched upright diamonds also occur on *Fig.* 12, Nos. 2 and 7.
- 7, 8. *Gorse*y, for simple zonal scheme, *Fig.* 14, No. 26. Zones filled with similar impressions are illustrated by ApSimon, 1951, *Fig.* 38, No. 54, and occur in marginal zones on the Beaker from Swindon cited above and on other examples in Wessex. Ladder pattern is common at *Gorse*y (cf. *Fig.* 12, Nos. 4 and 5, etc.).
9. *Gorse*y, *Fig.* 13, No. 19 is a very close parallel.

- No. 10. No parallel figured at *Gorse*y, the probable character of the pattern may be represented by Abercromby, 1912, Vol. 1, Pl. 8, No. 52 (from Derbyshire).
- 13-14. The handle from *Gorse*y (Fig. 16, No. 34) is as wide as No. 13 but shorter, and the decoration is different.
- 15-16. This compares closely with *Holdenhurst* rusticated ware from *Gorse*y (Fig. 17, No. 36, etc.). The combination of comb and rusticated decoration did not occur there. Such rusticated ware is a remarkably constant component of the "A" Beaker ceramic over a wide area.
17. *Gorse*y Bigbury has nothing like this sherd with raised pellet decoration. This particular sherd has been cited (ApSimon, 1959, p. 31) as an example of false relief technique, but this is incorrect as here the pellets are raised above the surface, whereas in false relief it is the background which is depressed giving an appearance only of relief. Rather similar circle-stamped pottery occurs at *Gorse*y Bigbury with similar fabric, not in any way distinguishable from some of the Grooved Ware pottery from Woodhenge.

As will be realized from the comparisons made above there is a very close resemblance between the series from *Bos Swallet* and that from *Gorse*y Bigbury and it seems reasonable to suggest that the two sites were occupied at the same time and by the same group or at least two closely related groups of people. On paper the *Bos Swallet* material looks better organized but the actual material is identical for all practical purposes.

COMMENTS

Other local "A" Beaker material (Distribution map in Savory, 1963, p. 37, Fig. 9) includes the contents of about half a dozen graves and a small quantity of sherds and flints from the Mendip caves and from the settlement site at Brean Down (ApSimon, Donovan and Taylor, 1961), where the layer in which they occurred was stratigraphically intermediate between a burial and occupation scatter belonging to the "B" Beaker group, and a subsequent occupation with pottery of Biconical Urn type. Compared with these the combined total of at least 120 pots and over 2,000 flint implements from *Gorse*y Bigbury and *Bos Swallet* emphasizes the potential value of such settlements as aids to our understanding of the Beaker cultures. A normal feature of such sites is the paucity of evidence for permanent structures or houses, though the find of rectangular timber structures at Swarkeston, Derbyshire, indicates that we may well be in for surprises in this field (Greenfield, 1961).

The flint industry is naturally less complete than the much more numerous series from *Gorse*y Bigbury, but we may note once again the characteristic absence of polished stone or flint axes (everywhere very rare in Bell Beaker contexts), and of large flint knives, which gives the impression that metal tools were coming to take the place of stone. After some years as "Late Neolithic" the "A" Beaker culture is now firmly placed in the first part of the Early Bronze Age, when tin bronze was first appearing (Britton, 1963), lasting on to overlap the early "Wessex I" phase of the mature Early Bronze Age, perhaps in the first half of the 16th century B.C. The flint

industry is here reduced to small knives and scrapers, the latter to be connected with the continued use of skin clothing, though even these seem largely to disappear in the post-Beaker stage, concurrently with the appearance of evidence for woven clothing in the latter part of the Early Bronze Age. [Occasional instances of later flint industries are known, as, for example, early Middle Bronze Age implements from the Tynings Farm Barrows (Taylor, 1951, p. 166, *Fig.* 32 and p. 170).]

So far as the pottery is concerned we may note the consistent association of the finer comb-decorated wares with coarse, rusticated wares, contrasting with the finger-nail decorated coarse ware of the "B" Beaker group. (There is some plain coarse ware from the Chew Valley.) The character of the two broken handles lends support to the idea that beakers with such handles should be considered an integral and normal part of the "A" Beaker group, even though they may be rarely found in graves in some areas. Such handled beakers are so excessively rare among other British Beaker groups that we may specify them as one of the indications of renewed contact with central Europe, where they are common, to which Piggott's excellent re-assessment of the British Beaker cultures has called attention. Possibly also of central European origin would be false relief and decoration underneath the pot bottom, features which appear to have been transmitted through the "A" Beaker group to the Irish Bowl Food Vessel group (ApSimon, 1959). Two contradictory views of "A" Beaker origins are currently available, but the one (Piggott, 1963) that they developed in Britain out of "C" Beakers as yet lacks any adequate discussion of the pottery evidence (and in any case needs the qualification indicated by the above and by Piggott himself, p. 76), while the other (Savory, 1963) that they may have originated in western France relies heavily on the eventual discovery of as yet hypothetical prototypes in that area. (Savory's study does, however, contain several valuable points about the British material as well as a useful warning against over-stressing eastern as against western elements.)

From a cultural point of view it is interesting to note that although the barrow—T.5, 400 yd. distant—excavated by the Society has yielded burials with "B" Beaker, Food Vessel and Collared Urn pottery, no trace of these groups appears at *Bos Swallet*.

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* This note is basically a catalogue of the pottery salvaged after the destruction of the Society's museum, but a few additional pieces of pottery are figured.

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