
4 Topographical survey by *Lindsey Collier, Bruce Hobbs, Tim Neighbour and Richard Strachan*

The first detailed survey work was carried out over four days in April 1999 as part of The Angus and South Aberdeenshire Field School. Four components were identified including a natural terrace, the long barrow, a low mound to the east of the long barrow and a trapezoidal enclosure system of banks and ditches enclosing the barrow and mound (*Illus 2*).

4.1 The long barrow

The barrow (*illus 3*) is situated on the southern edge of a natural terrace, on the boundary between alluvial soils of recent riverine and lacustrine alluvial deposits and the Corby/Boyndie/Dinnet series of fluvio-glacial and raised beach sands and gravels derived from acid rocks (according to the 1981 *Soil Survey of Scotland (Eastern Scotland)*. 1:250,000 map; Walker *et al* 1982, 45–47 & 76–77). The terrace edge is a steep slope of c2.7–4.0m in height. It runs on a roughly east to west alignment. Modern drainage ditches run along the base of the western edge of the terrace. With the exception of the terrace, forestry and quarrying modifications, the surrounding terrain is flat.

The barrow lies with its main axis at 77° east of north. It is trapezoidal, with its broader and higher end facing east. The southern and south-western sides of the mound continue the slope of the natural terrace, with no visible distinction between terrace and mound, with the exception that where both mound and terrace are present, the gradient of slope is greatly increased. When viewed from the south, this presents the illusion of considerable height to the mound.

The mound measures 87m in length by 31.5m wide at its eastern end, tapering to 16m at the west. The summit of the barrow is generally flat, between 4m and 7.5m wide, and slopes gently downwards from east to west. The eastern end of the barrow stands c2.5m above the ground level to the north and over 4.5m above the base of the terrace. The western end of the barrow stands c1.6m above the ground level to the north, and 3.8m to the south, above the base of the terrace. The base of the terrace to the west of the mound is 2.4m below its western summit.

The cover of the mound is predominantly grass, tree-stumps, moss and bracken, forest debris and rosebay willow-herb. Rabbit burrows and tree-bole holes are present all over the mound.

A linear depression c3.2m wide runs across the northern face and summit of the monument approximately one third along its length from the western end. This depression, which has caused some localised deflation to the summit of the monument, is clearly indicative of relatively recent traffic over the

mound. The depression corresponds to breaks in the enclosure bank to the north and south, and to the forestry track depicted on the current Ordnance Survey map and possibly on the Ordnance Survey Second Edition 6" to 1 mile map of 1904 (Kincardineshire, Sheet XXIXNE, revised from the First Edition in 1901).

An area of deflation, measuring c8m east-west by 5m transversely, lies upon the eastern summit of the mound. This deflation appears to be the result of subsidence of some internal structure within the mound; perhaps a mortuary structure similar to that identified at Dalladies (*Piggott 1974*, 30–36 & fig 4).

No external stones or structural components are visible within the mound material. There are no surface indications of external ditches running parallel to the sides of the barrow, as were discovered at Dalladies (*Piggott 1974*, 26–27 & fig 3).

4.2 Low mound by the long barrow

A low mound lies immediately to the east of the long barrow, situated on the edge of the same terrace. Like the barrow, it is covered in grass, tree-stumps and numerous uprooted trees. The mound measures c45m east-west by 15m transversely and stands c1.5m above the ground level to the north. The western edge of the mound appears to run into the base of the eastern end of the long barrow. To the north, the edge of the mound is irregular and poorly defined. The relationship between the mound and the long barrow cannot be established on the basis of surface evidence and the function of the mound is not readily apparent. Possibilities include:

1. that the mound may be a natural part of the terrace;
2. that the mound may be an earlier monument partially robbed to construct the long barrow;
3. that the mound may be a secondary funerary monument;
4. that the mound may be spoil, either from previous investigations into the barrow, or associated with early 20th-century quarry workings, located to the south-east.

4.3 Enclosure bank and ditches

The long barrow and low mound are surrounded by a series of rectilinear banks and ditches which form a trapezoidal enclosure, with banks projecting from the north-eastern, south-eastern and south-western corners of the mound. Banks and ditches, similar to

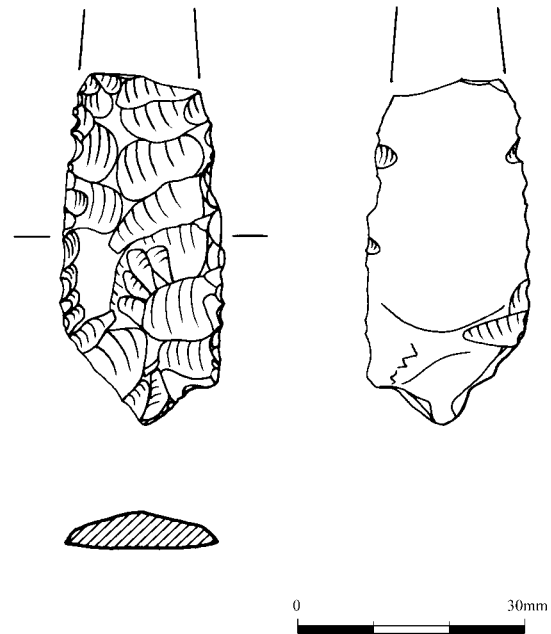
those around the barrow, have also been located elsewhere within Capo Plantation (Barclay and Shepherd 1989) and are considered most likely to have been constructed at the time the Plantation was established.

4.4 Two flints from the vicinity of the Capo Long Barrow by Graeme Warren

Two flints were recovered from eroded parts of the earthen banks of the enclosure around the barrow in 1999 (Illus 2, Findspots 1 and 2). A further two flint flakes had some years previously been picked up on the barrow itself (Barlow and Geldart 1978): these are not described here. Of the two recovered in 1999, one is a small secondary chunk of yellow pebble flint (14 × 8 × 5mm; no. 2 on Illus 2), probably a by-product of a knapping episode, and the other is a broken fragment of an unusual plano-convex flint knife (48 × 21 × 6mm; no. 1 on Illus 2; Illus 4).

The knife fragment has been manufactured on mottled yellow-grey flint. This flint is unlikely to be local, although in the absence of greater contextual understanding of flint sources in the area it is impossible to be certain. The distal edge of the knife survives and shows neat invasive pressure flaking from one edge, forming parallel removal scars across the dorsal surface. The other side of the knife has less distinct percussive evidence, partly because of a large area of coarse flint, but removals are still discernible. Both edges have also received short (2–3mm) edge-modification; in places this is somewhat uneven. The distal end of the knife has been retouched by short blunting and larger removals into a light ‘tang’; a very unusual feature. Some plano-convex knives have been found with distinctive wear traces (Piggott & Powell 1951, 121/128): the Capo example does not demonstrate this macroscopically.

Such knives are not chronologically diagnostic, being found with a range of, typically funerary, associations throughout the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (*contra* Clark 1932). They have been found with chambered tombs and leaf-shaped arrowheads (Bryce 1903) and in individual burials with Food Vessels and metal daggers (Clark 1932, using English and Welsh evidence). They are most often found in association with funerary monuments and it has been argued that in Yorkshire they were manufactured specifically for funerary purposes (Pierpoint 1980). In Scotland they are often found with tombs of the Clyde type and have also been found at earthen long barrows, such as Dalladies (Piggott 1974, 38 & fig 13.1). Here an example 133mm in length was found in association with the wooden mortuary structure underlying the mound. This complete artefact was manufactured on mottled grey flint, argued to derive from Yorkshire, and was retouched only on one surface. It is pressure retouched and narrow towards the distal. It was seemingly deliberately deposited in association with



Illus 4 Capo Barrow: the plano-convex flint knife (scale 1:1)

Phase 1 and Phase 2 activity on the site (it is not possible to attribute this artefact with one phase of activity). Dates for the burning and abandonment of Dalladies Phase 2 of 3700 to 3000 cal BC (SRR-289) and 3650 to 2900 cal BC (SRR-290) provide a *terminus ante quem* for its deposition (dates are quoted at 2-sigma confidence from Historic Scotland’s recalibration of Piggott’s dates [Piggott 1974, 26], available on-line at www.historic-scotland.gov.uk).

The Capo example is unusual. It is quite a small knife, which appears to narrow towards the proximal, and its distal tang is a distinctive feature. However, even these distinctive features do not help us to date the artefact more closely. Henshall noted the variety of forms of plano-convex knives in Scottish burial contexts, stating that ‘plano-convex knives cannot be classified closely nor fitted into a chronological category’ (Henshall 1972, 186) and it seems that the Capo knife offers us little more indication of date than Neolithic to Early Bronze Age. It is certainly tempting to associate it with the same period as the activity at Dalladies, but this must remain conjectural. Plano-convex knives are found most frequently in immediately funerary contexts and the presence of the knife in the later bank surrounding the barrow may be indicative of disturbance to the barrow, or, more tentatively, of the disturbance of inhumations or mortuary activity in the area surrounding the barrow. Broken plano-convex knives are also rare: one burnt example was recovered from Blackhammer (Henshall 1963, 110), but more often the knives are complete. The incomplete character and the presence of some edge damage on the break facet of the Capo example may be more evidence of considerable disturbance to the original context of this fine artefact.