

# Antiquity

## A Quarterly Review of Archæology

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### Editorial Notes

**A**NOTHER Woodhenge has been found, just outside the City of Norwich. Like the first it was discovered from the air by Wing Commander Insall, v.c., who was flying over it, pin-pointing, on 18 June last. The discovery was accidental, in the sense that it was totally unexpected, and it is of the first order of importance.



The site (which is illustrated on plate 1 opposite) lies in a grass field called Bridge Meadow, in the northern corner of the parish of Arminghall (Norfolk, 6-inch sheet 75 NE) opposite Old Lakenham. It consists of two concentric rings surrounding a circle of 9 dark spots representing without doubt wooden post-holes. The rings are revealed by the dark green grass which grows upon them and which contrasts strongly with the parched brown grass of the rest of the field. It is a gift of the drought. The rings represent ditches of which no other sign is visible. The soil is a sandy gravel. The outer ring is 10 feet wide; it is partially obscured on the south by a modern hedge and by an old field-bank running from a tree to the hedge at an acute angle. The inner ring is 25 feet wide and broken on the south-west by a gap or causeway about 14 feet wide. The holes have a diameter of 6 to 7 feet.



We visited the site with the finder on 26 June and it was possible to see both circles and holes marked out in the grass with the utmost clearness; the line of division between brown and green was sharp and distinct, enabling the dimensions to be taken with considerable accuracy.

PLATE I



PREHISTORIC CIRCLES AND WOODEN POST-HOLES NEAR NORWICH, DISCOVERED FROM  
THE AIR, 18 JUNE 1929

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*facing p. 257*

## ANTIQUITY

The rings surround a knoll, and the interior of the circles is a saucer-shaped depression which has the appearance of having been hollowed out. There is no indication of anything at the centre. (The large dark splotch east of the gap is a patch of stinging-nettles growing over the outflow of a modern drain, and there are other smaller patches visible near by). The river Yare is less than a quarter of a mile distant on the north-west. Not far off is a small circle whose ditch (of varying dimensions) is 8 feet wide on the north side. There is a hint of another circle (perhaps double) in the barley field on the opposite side of the road, due south of the new Woodhenge.



Before discussing the general bearings of the discovery we must describe another and almost equally important one made during the same flight. It consists of two concentric rings, but here the outermost ring is the wider of the two ; they are both perfect and unbroken by any gaps (plate II). The position is just over half a mile south-west of the new Woodhenge, on a tongue of land forming a promontory between the Yare and the Tas, just before they unite. The field is sown with barley, and the circles are revealed by the darker green growth above the silted-up ditches. Not only is the barley darker in colour, but it is also as much as six inches higher. There is a distinct suggestion of something inside the inner circle. There can be no doubt that these circles represent a disc-barrow, and that the narrow inner ring surrounded the small central burial-mound. The site is a gravelly hillock ; but it is not, like the other, saucer-shaped on the summit. Outside on the south-west is a mysterious D-shaped enclosure. The field is in the parish of Markshall and is called Monks on the tithe-map of 1840. The site is a mile north of the Roman town of Caistor (*Venta Icenorum*) of which an air-photograph was published in our last number. The Ordnance Map marks several other antiquities in the neighbourhood.



There is a strong probability that the Norfolk Woodhenge is contemporary with the neighbouring disc-barrow. A similar and even closer association occurs at the original Woodhenge in Wiltshire, which, as many of our readers will remember, was also first announced in *ANTIQUITY* (Vol. I, plate opposite page 92). There, in the foreground, is a disc-barrow in which was found later a beaker and skeleton. The interment was furthermore proved to be contemporary with

## EDITORIAL NOTES

Woodhenge. What does all this indicate? That Woodhenges and disc-barrows (to say nothing of Stonehenge) were the work of the Beaker-folk who invaded England at the end of the neolithic period of this island, and who probably brought with them the knowledge of metal. Now the evidence of the beakers themselves shows, as Lord Abercromby pointed out long ago, that the invaders came from somewhere near the mouth of the Rhine; and this is precisely where timber circles are most abundant at the same period (see *ANTIQUITY*, I, 100).



Norfolk is for geographical reasons precisely where one would expect to find scattered traces of the Beaker-folk, though hitherto they have been rare. A few beakers have been found in the district west of Cromer and a few more in the west of the county. An account of some newly discovered beakers in East Anglia is published by Mr J. Reid Moir in *The Antiquaries Journal*, July 1929, pp. 250-3. One would however not expect the barren gravelly heaths ever to have been capable of supporting a large population; and large concentrations like those of Wiltshire or the Yorkshire Wolds must not be looked for. We may confidently hope, however, for fresh discoveries to be made from the air, especially during dry years like the present. The beaker-regions, whose existence already has been established, round Colchester and Ipswich and on the Fenland shores south of Brandon, would well repay search from the air.



Caistor itself is, this year, a complete blank; not even the streets are visible from the air—only the area excavated. On the opposite side of the river however, an air-photograph reveals many interesting marks, the most interesting unfortunately being only partially included.



A movement is on foot to establish a School of Archaeology in Iraq, with its headquarters at Baghdad. The idea originated with Gertrude Bell, who bequeathed a sum of money on trust for this purpose; and the new foundation will be a suitable memorial of the great work she carried out there. By means of scholarships or appointments, the School will, it is hoped, provide British students with greatly needed facilities for study in the country. But the number of such students is not at any time likely to be large; and the main object of the School will be to encourage, support and undertake archaeological

## ANTIQUITY

research in the widest sense of the word, including excavation. Sir Edgar Bonham Carter has undertaken to act as Honorary Secretary, and he will be glad to hear from any persons interested in the proposal. (His address is 17 Radnor Place, London, W.2). An effort is being made to raise a capital fund with which to carry on the School for at least five years.

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The proposal has our cordial sympathy and support. A School of Archaeology in Baghdad might perform many useful functions. If it were no more than an Intelligence Bureau, it would serve a useful purpose; for, strange as it may seem, there is no British Society exclusively devoted to the archaeology of Iraq, and information about it is by no means easily obtained.

But the School might do much more than this. There are few countries where field-archaeology pure and simple, without excavation, can achieve so much. The whole land is covered with ancient sites which can be recorded by photography, measured plans and written record. Furthermore, though we almost fear to weary our readers by over-insistence, no country in the world is more suitable for air-photography, and nowhere is such a rich harvest waiting to be gathered in. The climate is sunny; the authorities are sympathetic; and many of the officers of the Royal Air Force are keen though at present without much guidance from archaeologists. The existence of a School of Archaeology might remedy this.

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As an example of the sort of work to be done we might mention Miss Gertrude Bell's book *Amurath to Amurath*. It records little excavation; but it is full of plans and descriptions of important sites, many of them up to then almost unknown. Dr Herzfeld's four volumes (*Archäologische Reise im Euphrat- und Tigris-Gebiet*, 1911-20) are another instance of the value of a topographical survey of antiquities. Had air-photography been available for these writers the value of their work would have been immensely increased and their labours proportionately lightened. They would also have made many other new discoveries.

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An important discovery was communicated too late for comment in these Notes. Details will be found on page 350.

PLATE II



DISC-BARROW AND D-SHAPED ENCLOSURE IN MONKS FIELD, MARKSHALL, NEAR NORWICH,  
DISCOVERED FROM THE AIR, 18 JUNE 1929

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*facing p. 260*