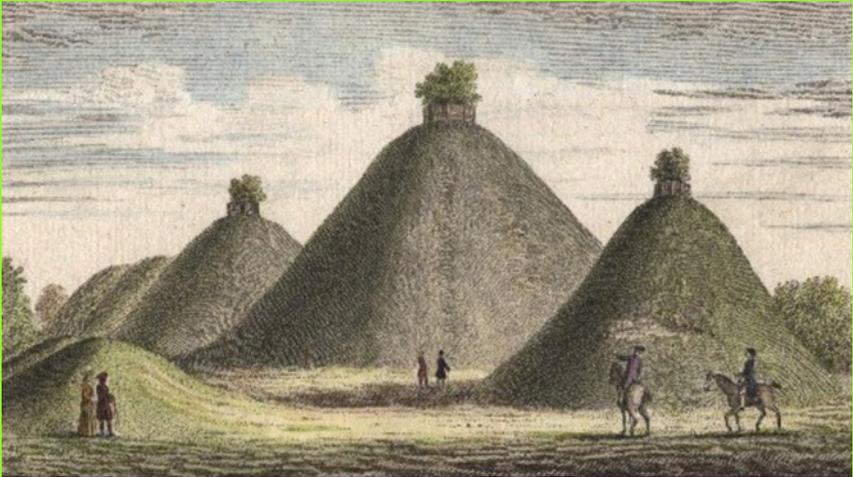


Bartlow Hills Barrow Cemetery



**Information From
Various Sources**

Bartlow Hills Barrow Cemetery



**Above: Barton Hills Barrow Cemetery Early 1900's -
Cover Early 1800's**

BARTLOW HILLS WAS ORIGINALLY THE LARGEST GROUP OF ROMAN BARROWS IN NORTHERN EUROPE and includes the highest burial mound in Britain. The seven mounds covered extraordinarily rich burials containing a wonderful collection of artistic objects, the best found in Britain. Mound IV, the largest, is 45 feet high and 144 feet in diameter. Mound II is still visible as a low rise, I is just discernible and III is totally destroyed. Their steep conical shape, originally surrounded by a ditch, is typical of Roman burial mounds.

Large wooden chests with iron fittings were found in five mounds and there was a brick cist in another.

Cremated burials, with food and drink in exotic vessels of decorated bronze, glass, and potter and other sacrificial offerings had been deposited in the chests, which were buried with lamps still burning in them. Items found included an iron folding chair and remains of flowers, box leaves,

Bartlow Hills Barrow Cemetery

a sponge, incense, and liquids including blood, milk and wine mixed with honey.

Burial mounds of this type were built in the late first and early second centuries AD in Eastern England and Belgium. Most artefacts in them show the high status of the owner; they were usually imported from the Rhineland and Northern Gaul, and are concerned with feasting and sacrificial offerings, rather than personal belongings which would be useful in the Afterlife.



Objects found in the Hills at Bartlow.

Left - glass
cremation urn.
Right and above -
vessels found in
barrows.



In 1815 Busick Harwood "excavated" VI to provide work for the unemployed—"They began at the apex and digging down at great labour to the cist despoiled it of its contents, which were distributed and no account of them taken". However, some of the humbler items went to Saffron Walden museum where they survive. John Cage carried out better recorded excavations between 1832 and 1840.

Set in a wood, approached along a dark and winding path, suddenly the space opens up. shading trees give way to bright sunshine. Their greeting is unexpected, closely hemmed in by trees, suddenly you are confronted by three miniature mountains. Steps up the side of the tallest barrow - 45 feet high. Built of chalk, similar to Silbury, these barrows house rich pagan burials of the late 1st to early 2nd century.

Large wooden chests, cremated burials, food and drink in exotic vessels of bronze, glass and pottery, these were foreign imported goods reflecting

Bartlow Hills Barrow Cemetery

the high status of the deceased; concerned more with feasting and sacrificial offerings rather than take all this worldly wealth to the other world. Lamps left to burn, what did that signify? a light for the spirit to see as he departed this world.



Bartlow Hills Barrow Cemetery 2000

Another Example of Our Disappearing (Deliberate?) History

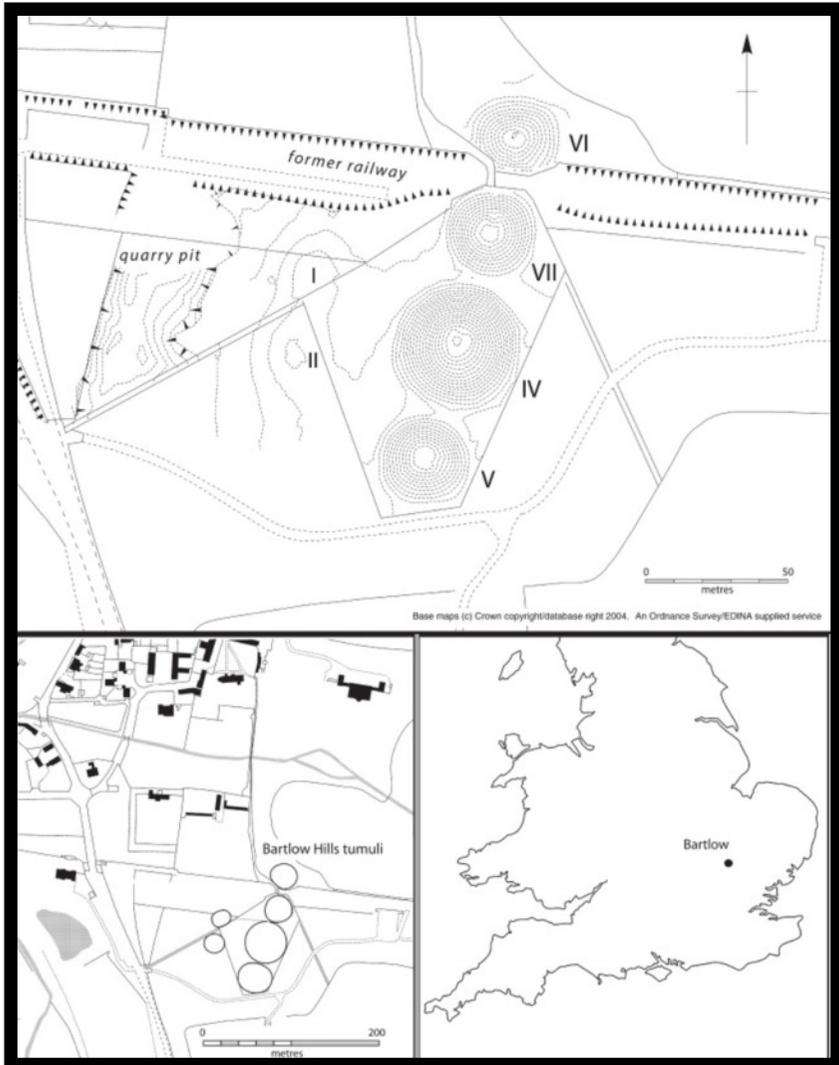
Eminent scientists, including Faraday, pioneer of electricity, analysed the contents of vessels and other organic remains. Cage's reports are the only evidence we now have, for all the objects were taken to Easton Lodge, Dunmow, where they were destroyed by fire in 1847.

The surviving mounds became overgrown before they were taken into guardianship by Essex County Council in 1978. the scrub was cleared and fences built for protection. the Hills passed to Cambridgeshire County Council in 1990 after a change in the County boundary.

Bartlow Hills Barrow Cemetery

Built of chalk and unusable for agriculture, the surviving mounds are a refuge for the distinctive plants and insects of chalk grassland; the Pasque flower grew here until early this century. Regular mowing in late summer will prevent the scrub from spreading.

Location Plan



Steven Books

**League Enterprises
Suite 3, 3rd. Floor
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