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Two Late Bronze Age Hoards from the Yorkshire Wolds

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Introduction

On 23rd of March 2016 Mr. D. Haldenby found a large hoard of Bronze Age metalwork whilst searching an arable field on the Yorkshire Wolds north of Driffield with a metal detector. This hoard (Driffield Hoard I) consists of 12 complete socketed axes of the Yorkshire Type, one complete socketed axe of the Everthorpe type, one complete socketed axe of the Meldreth Type (Variant Westow) and 13 ingot fragments, most of which belonged to plano-convex or 'bun-shaped' ingots. Plano-convex ingots and the types of axes present in these hoards generally fall within the earlier phases of the Ewart Park phase of the Late Bronze Age (c. 950-850 BC) (Needham *et al.* 1997). Mr. Haldenby reported the discovery to the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) and the hoard was recorded and lifted under the auspices of PAS staff.

A few days later, on 28th of March, Mr. Haldenby found a much larger hoard about 3.5m away from the first. This second hoard (Driffield Hoard II) consists of 36 complete socketed axes of at least five types, 23 broken axes or axe fragments, two (nearly) complete bun-shaped plano-convex ingots and 89 ingot fragments, many of which were of the plano-convex type. Most of the axes and axe fragments in the hoard that could be identified are of the regional Yorkshire Type (25 in total), with smaller numbers of South-Eastern Type axes from the south of England (ten in total), and five bag-shaped axes with an Irish or Scottish origin. Two miniature axes could not be typified and four other axes did not fit comfortably into any of the above types either. Many of the axes in this hoard were in good condition, some retaining their original metallic surface. This hoard too was recorded and lifted under the auspices of PAS staff. With a weight of around 27kg, Driffield Hoard II is the largest Bronze Age hoard recorded from Yorkshire (T.G. Manby pers. comm.).

The Driffield Hoards stand out in terms of their size and content with axe types that suggest there may have been links with the south-east and possibly the north of the UK. The fact that these hoards were carefully recorded and lifted after their discovery is also rare. It provides an important insight into the structure of these deposits and may help us understand how and why people in the Late Bronze Age buried these collections of metal items. The following article will describe and discuss both hoards, which were declared Treasure under the stipulations of the Treasure Act (1996) (Designation Order 2002) in August 2017. A description of the discovery and excavation of the hoards will be given first. This will be followed by an overview of their contents and a description of the various axe types within them. In the discussion several important features of these prehistoric metalwork deposits will be highlighted and the wider context of these hoards will be considered. This article should be seen as a preliminary statement, as many features of these hoards require further research. Thus, this article ends with a few suggestions for future research.

Discovery and Excavation

As far as is known, the arable field containing the hoards had never been archaeologically examined or metal detected. The hoards were found five days and around 3.5m apart, each at a depth of around 30cm. Only when several of the ingot fragments forming a cap over the first hoard had been removed and some of the axes beneath exposed was the nature of the find recognised. Excavation was abated to allow for archaeological input. The second hoard was recognised as soon as axes at the top of the deposit were reached, and excavation ceased. The time of discovery and availability of archaeological personnel enabled the first hoard to be lifted on the day of discovery, but the second hoard was discovered later, so excavation was carried out the following day. Although a large surrounding area has now been metal detected, little by way of further Bronze Age finds has been made, apart from one ingot fragment found a few metres from the hoards.

After their discovery both hoards were carefully lifted and recorded in several layers. Each layer was photographed and drawn before finds were numbered and bagged. Few hoards have been recorded *in situ* so the Driffield Hoards provide us with a unique and detailed insight into the content and arrangement of items within the hoards. This is of great interest as it may inform us about how the hoards were deposited and whether they could be considered as a ‘structured deposit’, in which the selection of particular objects and the treatment they received before deposition is of importance. This possibility has been proposed and debated for various prehistoric hoards (Turner 2010).

Hoard I was lifted in three layers, the uppermost consisting of ingot fragments, several of which had already been removed during the hoards’ discovery, prior to recognition of its significance. The lower layers were composed of axes. Above the ingots was a layer of chalk pebbles. The hoard was contained in a roughly oval pit (measuring 44cm x 33cm) with a depth of 41cm below the surface. The pit appears to have been a hollow in the chalk filled with silt but few chalk pebbles. The objects in the hoard appeared to be constrained, as if originally placed in one or more containers. Notably, some axes held no soil in their sockets. Perhaps this was the result of the axes being tightly packed into the pit or because they were covered with organic material. It is unlikely that they were hafted given the relatively small dimensions of the pit. In total fourteen complete socketed axes in good condition and 13 ingot fragments were found, amounting to around 9kg of metal.

The second hoard was lifted and recorded in seven layers, preserving its arrangement. Like Hoard I, the hoard appears to have been covered by a layer of chalk rubble and the soil in which the hoard was deposited contained a considerable amount of chalk fragments. Like Hoard I, it was placed in an oval pit (measuring 40cm x 52cm). Yet in Hoard II the ingot fragments were concentrated at one end of the deposit, rather than on top of the axes (Fig 1). In addition, several ingot fragments were found around the hoard, just above its upper level. Like Hoard I, Hoard II appeared to be constrained, possibly because it was originally placed in one or more organic bags or containers that have now disintegrated. This may explain the excellent condition of several axes in this hoard, some of which still have their original golden bronze colour, e.g. axe no. 33 (Fig 2).

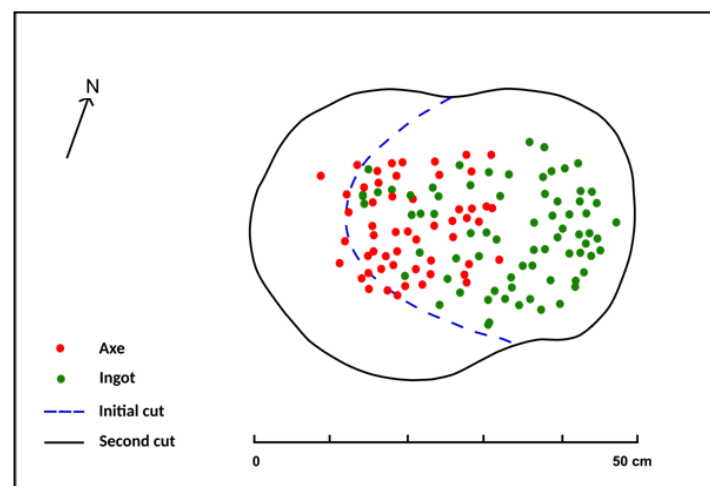


Fig 1: Plan of the pit of Hoard II (image by the authors)



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Fig 2: Axe no. 33 (1:1)

General Overview of the Hoards' Content

As the hoards (especially no. II) are so large, it would be impractical to provide a description of each item within them. Below follows a more general overview in which the various axe and ingot types are briefly described and individual objects are only mentioned when they are of interest. For a full description of all items, please see the Treasure Report on the Portable Antiquity Scheme website (<https://finds.org.uk/>).

Hoard I

Axes

The smaller Hoard I consists of 14 complete socketed axes of three types. The majority (12 in total) are of the regional Yorkshire Type. This type of axe is very distinctive and its main characteristic is the three widely spaced parallel and straight or slightly diverging lines (or 'ribs') descending about halfway down the face from a horizontal line (the moulding) below a prominent, heavy collar (Fig 3).

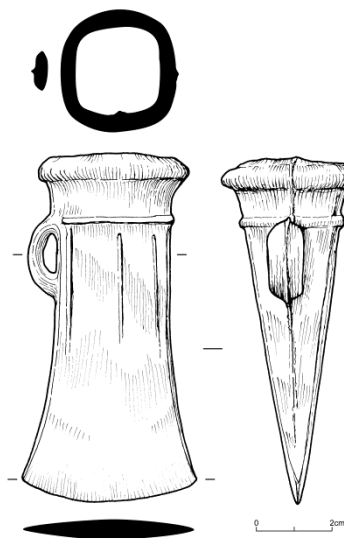


Fig 3: Yorkshire Type axe (no. 19) from Hoard II

(N.B. Axe images by Craig Williams ©: Trustees of the British Museum and reproduced half-scale)

The loop is set below the collar and its upper end runs into the moulding. Yorkshire Type axes range in shape and size, from long, straight-sided, wedge-shaped ones with unexpanded blades, to small, stumpy examples with strongly expanded blades (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 223). Schmidt and Burgess (1981, 223) state that the Yorkshire Type axes “are capable of meaningful subdivision, but given their great number and the subtlety of the variations involved this...is beyond the scope of the present work”. Within the group of Yorkshire Type axes from both Driffield Hoards at least two and possibly five potential sub-varieties (sub-types A-E) can be recognised. Within Hoard I, Yorkshire axes of sub-types A (one axe) and C (seven axes) were found and three more could be tentatively classified as belonging to sub-type D (one axe) and E (two axes). However, in order to establish whether this sub-division is meaningful it would be necessary to compare the axes in the Driffield Hoards to Yorkshire axes from other (hoard) contexts and to systematically measure and plot axe size and dimensions. Until this can be achieved, any subdivision should remain tentative.

The other two axes in Hoard I are of different types. One is of the Everthorpe Type, which resemble Yorkshire Type axes in their typical wedge-shaped form with slightly diverging sides, a slightly expanded blade, a distinct, slightly flaring collar and a horizontal moulding which runs into the top of the loop, but lack the decorative ribs of the Yorkshire Type (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 218) (Fig 4).

The final axe in Hoard I is of the Meldreth Type. It has a slender faceted body (this axe has six facets) and concave sides which run into a trumpet-shaped collar at the mouth and a splayed, almost crescentic blade. The collar is round in plan and the loop is on a level with the lower edge of the collar. There are two mouldings below the collar of this axe which suggest it is of the Westow Variant, which is characterised by mouths with multiple mouldings (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 208) (Fig 5).

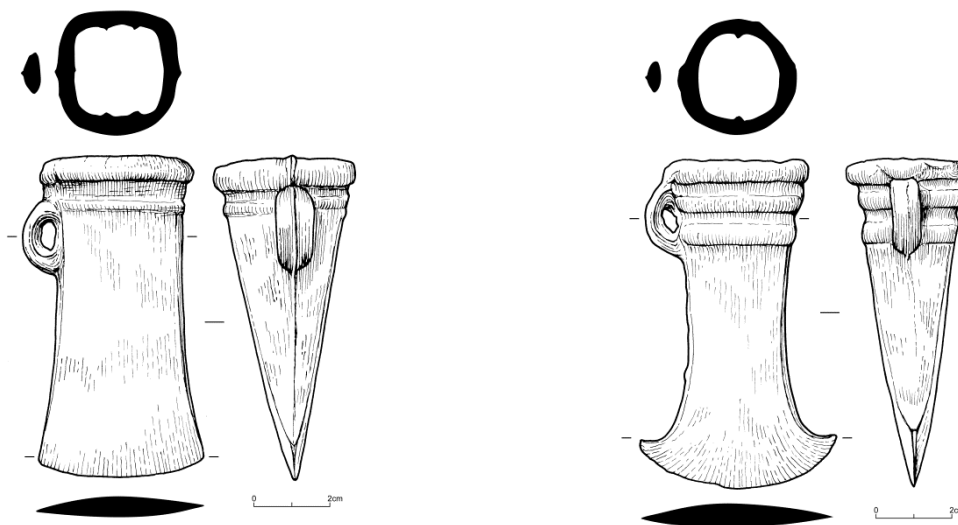


Fig 4: Everthorpe Type axe (no. 13) from Hoard I Fig 5: Meldreth Type axe (no. 14) from Hoard I

The axes in Hoard I were all complete and in fairly good condition, though most do show signs of corrosion. All axes were finished with sharpened cutting edges. However, there were some axes with asymmetrical cutting edges, or chunks missing from their blades, which suggest that they had been used, worn and re-sharpened. This is of importance as some hoards contain unfinished axes that had never entered use (K. Leahy pers. comm.).

Ingots

The 13 ingot fragments in Hoard I can be divided into two groups: fragments of plano-convex ingots and other fragments. Most fragments (11 in total) are clearly of the plano-convex type, as they were in Hoard II, which is typical of the Late Bronze Age (Fig 6). Plano-convex ingots were cast in a dish-shaped mould, and are often referred to as ‘bun’ ingots due to their shape (Fig 7). Based on their thickness and/or the curvature of their edges, most of the fragments in Hoard I seem to belong to relatively large ingots, but a few may come from smaller sized ingots.

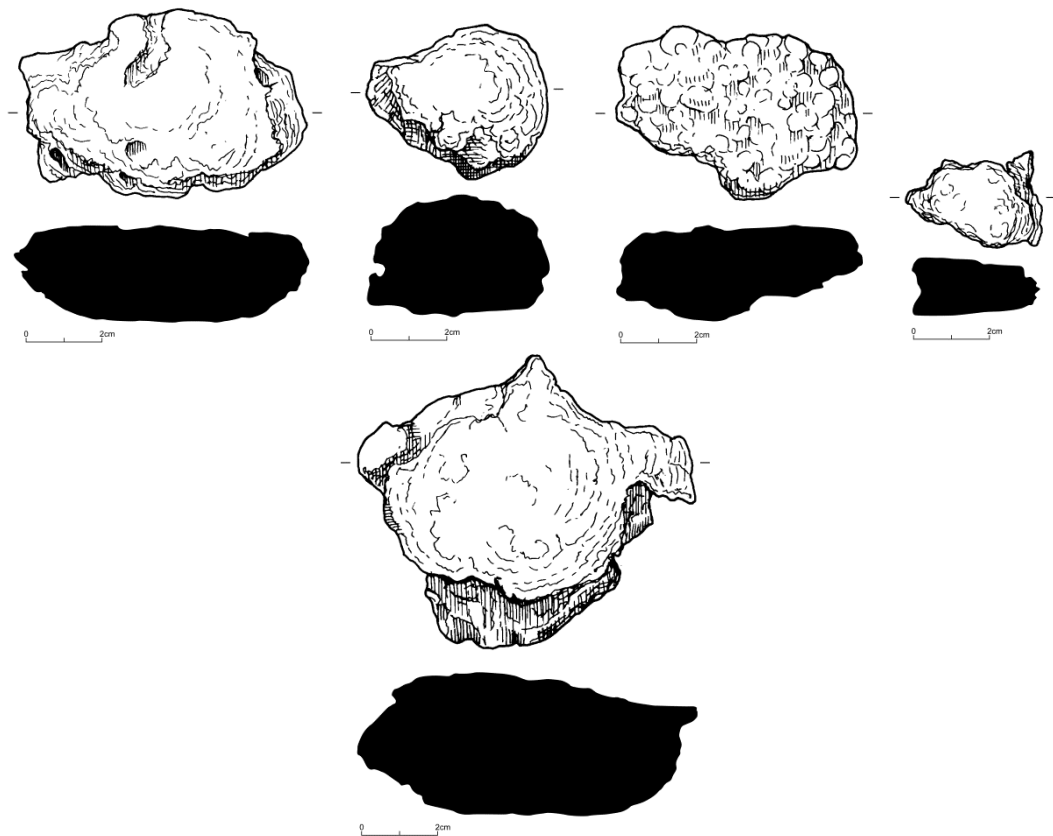


Fig 6: Selection of ingot fragments from Hoard II (half scale)



Fig 7: The two complete plano-complex ingots from Hoard II (half scale)

The corrosion state of the ingots, both in this hoard and Hoard II, differed from that of the axes: they were a different colour and seemed to have poorer surfaces. This might suggest that they were of a different composition to the axes, perhaps copper as opposed to bronze (K. Leahy pers. comm.).

Hoard II

Axes

The much larger Hoard II consists of 36 complete socketed axes of at least five types. Unlike Hoard I, Hoard II also contained 23 broken axes or axe fragments. Three different axe types can be identified

in the hoard with relative confidence and there seems to have been at least one more distinct type which cannot be typified. Four more axes cannot be grouped into any of the above four categories and have been considered separately. Below, a general description of each type is given.

As in Hoard I, Yorkshire Type axes are most common in this hoard, with 25 complete axes and butt-ends identified as such. Most Yorkshire Type axes in the hoard can be classified as belonging to one of the five proposed sub-varieties, but a small number cannot be comfortably fitted into one of the above five sub-type groups. Four fragmented axes, though clearly belonging to the Yorkshire Type given their characteristic moulding and parallel rib decoration, do not have blades which make it impossible to say to which sub-type of Yorkshire axe they might belong.

The second largest type group within Hoard II consists of South-Eastern Type axes. Three butt-end fragments and seven complete axes with relatively straight sides and a splayed, almost crescentic blade and a single horizontal moulding below the collar are most likely this type, described as “slender, rectangular sectioned, slightly concave-sided socketed axes” (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 212) (Fig 8). Various sub-types seem to be present, including the Isle of Harty, Shoebury and Worthing Variants (cf. Smith 1958, GB. 37, card 3 (3), GB.38, card 2 (2); Schmidt and Burgess 1981, Plates 84 and 85).

A third group of axes in Hoard II contains five bag-shaped axes for which parallels are hard to find in northern England. The closest parallels in Schmidt and Burgess’ overview of axes in northern England and Scotland (1981, 184) are Portree Type axes. These are ‘baggy’ axes, which are short and wedge-shaped with relatively broad bodies of sub-rectangular section and sub-rectangular mouths (Fig 9). They have fairly straight sides and an expanded blade, and the loop set below a prominent and fairly heavy collar. The sides are concave and curve gently towards an expanding blade. However, Portree axes occur mostly in Scotland with concentrations in the west Highlands and Hebrides and they normally do not occur outside Scotland (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 186, 190). This, in combination with the small size of the axes and the expanded, almost splayed blades in Hoard II makes the identification of Type 1 axes as Portree Type rather tentative. An alternative possibility is that these axes are of Irish origin. Eogan (2000, Plates 38-62) illustrates a large number of undecorated baggy axes that seem to form closer parallels to the axes in Hoard II than the Portree axes from Scotland. Several axes of Class 11A, which may have been developed in Ireland, are particularly similar to the ones found in Hoard II.

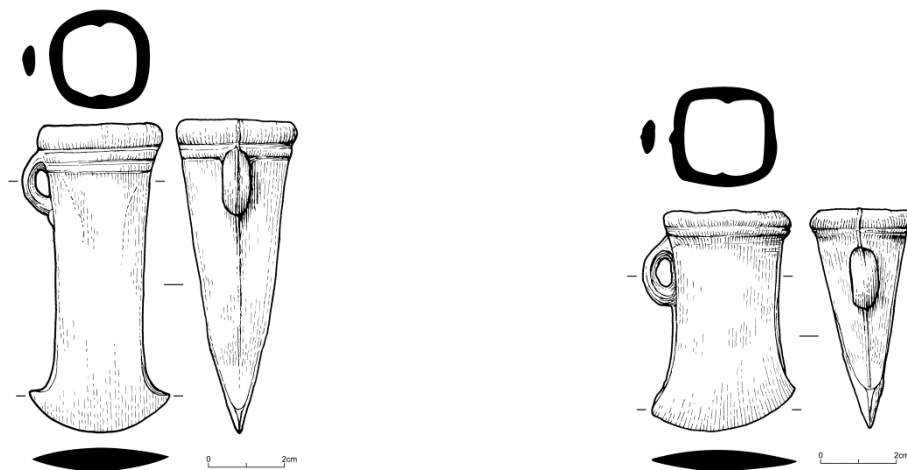


Fig 8: South-Eastern Type axe (no.8) from Hoard II Fig 9: A ‘baggy’ axe (no. 2) from Hoard II

Two axes with a relatively long body and slightly concave sides that splay out into an expanded blade are distinct from the types described above, due to their small size (they are only 50-55cm long) (Fig 10). In the north of England few good parallels can be found for these objects, but similar axes are sometimes found in southern hoards (cf. Turner 2010, 223, Illus. 5 nos. 02/26 and 02/27, 343, Illus. 125, no. 21/11). Here they are classified as axes “of plain south-eastern Type” (Turner 2010, 9, 10, 202). Given this, the two miniature axes in Hoard II could perhaps be grouped under the South-

Eastern Type axes. Alternatively, they should perhaps be considered as another type given their small size which seems to preclude their use as axes.

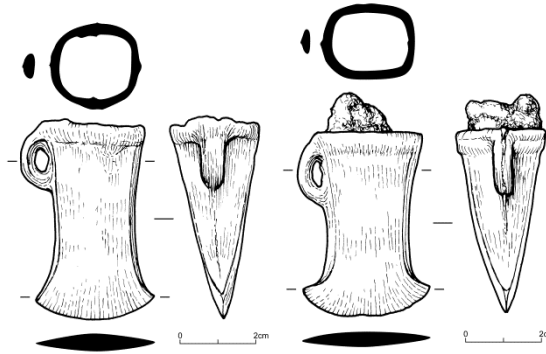


Fig 10: The two 'miniature axes' (Nos. 41 and 42) in Hoard II

Four complete axes in Hoard II do not fit well into any of the above type categories. One, axe no. 43, may be a Wilburton or Highfield Type axe (cf. Schmidt and Burgess 1981, Plate 71, no. 1009, Plate 72 no. 1026). Like the two small axes described above, axe no. 44 may be a small South-Eastern Type axe, possibly of the Isle of Harty Variant (cf. Smith 1958, GB. 18, card 3 (2), nos. 16, 18, 20, 21), but these small axes all have clear mouldings, unlike axe no. 44. Similarly, parallels for small axe no. 46 with its broad, plain collar are hard to find. Pearce (1983) has a similar axe (Plate 45, no. 281a), but it is longer and the collar more pronounced/stepped. Perhaps these small axes are other wood-working tools as well. Axe no. 45 has parallels amongst Schmidt and Burgess' Portree Type axes (e.g. Plates 73 (no. 1050), 75 (no. 1071) and 87 (nos. 1330, 1331), but it is also very similar to axes of the Everthorpe Type, discussed above (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, Plate 87). Given the distribution of this Type and axe no. 45's heavy collar it is likely to be an Everthorpe Type axe, yet its rather 'baggy' appearance, makes this a tentative classification.

In addition to the axes and axe fragments that could be identified and (tentatively) classified, thirteen smaller fragments, mostly blade tips, cannot readily be placed into one of the categories above as too few distinctive features survive.

Generally, the axes in this hoard were in an even better condition than those in Hoard I, with some retaining their original bronze lustre (cf. Fig 2). Like in Hoard I, all axes were finished with sharpened cutting edges though some had been worn, suggesting that they had been used and re-sharpened. However, unlike Hoard I, in which all axes were complete and undamaged, the second hoard contained several axes that were complete or nearly complete, but which had sustained damage. Some were lacking large chunks of their bodies, others had been flattened or were dented. Such deliberate damage to objects is not uncommon in hoards of this date and may reflect the ritual 'killing' of these objects before their deposition (Turner 2010).

Ingots

Hoard II contained a large number (89) of ingot fragments, most of which are of typical Late Bronze Age plano-convex type (cf. Fig 6). 15 fragments (60-74) seem to belong to relatively large plano-convex-ingots. Though ranging in length and width (anywhere between 134mm and 27mm) their thickness (of 30mm or more) and edge curvature suggests they belong to ingots with a large diameter. Another 15 fragments (75-89) belong to slightly smaller medium-sized plano-convex-ingots given their lower height (between 20 and 30mm) and curvature of their edges. 50 plano-convex ingot fragments are too small (generally between c. 35mm in length and 25mm in width, with heights of less than 25mm) to be confidently grouped into the first two categories. They probably mostly belong to medium sized plano-convex ingots. A small number of these fragments were found not in the hoard, but in close association with it at the top of the deposit. The possible implications of this will be discussed below. A final group of nine ingot fragments (119-127) cannot be classified as plano-convex due to their small size and often rather irregular shape. However, many of these small fragments may belong to plano-convex ingots.

Apart from 89 ingot fragments, two (nearly) complete bun-shaped ingots of plano-convex type are contained in Hoard II (cf. Fig 7). One medium to large plano-convex ingot (128) survives nearly complete, with only a few edge pieces missing. About two thirds of the other medium plano-convex ingot remains (129).

Discussion

This section will discuss several important features of the hoards and the objects contained within them, such as the arrangement of the objects, the relationship between the two hoards and links with other parts of the UK as reflected in the axe and ingot types. This demonstrates that there are both similarities and differences between the two hoards. As it is important to place the Driffield Hoards in a local context, the second section of the discussion will consider other Bronze Age finds from the vicinity of the hoards and the results of a geophysical survey undertaken by Dr. Hugh Willmott (University of Sheffield). Finally, the hoards will be compared to other similar hoards in the north of England.

Arrangement of the Hoard Deposit

As both hoards were carefully lifted and recorded in several layers, we gain a detailed insight into their structure and the depositional practice. This is rare as most hoards are lifted as soon as they are discovered, without their structure being recorded. Several features of the deposit suggest that the objects within the two hoards were carefully placed in the pits. In Hoard I, several axes do not have soil in their sockets and the deposit seems constrained, suggesting that they may have been held within a bag or container. This may explain why the axes in this hoard were generally aligned east-west. In Hoard II the rounded shape of the axe deposit suggests that they were also constrained, possibly within a bag. However, unlike Hoard I the ingot fragments are positioned to one end of the deposit, with some of them underlying the axes. Given this fact and the shape of the pit (cf. Fig 1) it appears likely that the ingots were also deposited in a bag, and then the pit slightly enlarged to accommodate the axes. Whether this was done as one operation or whether the deposit was reopened later, for addition of the axes, is unclear. The small number of ingot fragments that were found not in the hoard but around it equally suggests the hoard was revisited, possibly to retrieve material from or add to it. Though less likely, it is possible that items were placed individually in the hoard pits and not deposited in containers, in which case it would be interesting to look at where the various axe types were located within the hoards. This might tell us if the types we recognise today had significance in the past and whether there may have been associations between particular types.

Axes

It is perhaps unsurprising that the most numerous type within both hoards is the regional Yorkshire Type (a total of 33 axes, eight in Hoard I and 25 in Hoard II). Yorkshire Type axes are found in several parts of England, including Lincolnshire, East Anglia, North Lancashire and the Border region. However they are best known from hoards in Yorkshire (with a concentration in eastern Yorkshire) (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 238). Although the proposed sub-division of the Yorkshire Type axes should be treated as tentative, it is worth noting that sub-types A and B seem to be relatively distinct. The axes in these groups share several clear features, whereas Types C, D and E are less clear-cut.

The uniformity of sub-type A Yorkshire Type axes is remarkable. Six of the axes in Hoard II assigned to this sub-type are very similar in size and form. Based on socket dimensions and similarities in the ribs, loop and haft ribs, nos. 19 and 21 may have come from the same mould, though there is a difference in weight between these two axes (Fig 11). Axes nos. 20 and 22 are also very similar, and even if they are not from the same mould, it is possible that these axes and the other four Yorkshire Type A axes were made in the same workshop, which would explain their close similarity.

It is also interesting to note that one of the smaller Type A axes (no. 23) is very similar to the only sub-type A Yorkshire Type axe found in Hoard I (no. 9) (Fig 12). Though probably not from the same mould (there are a few slight differences between the two axes), they may have come from the same workshop, suggesting that Hoards I and II were somehow related.

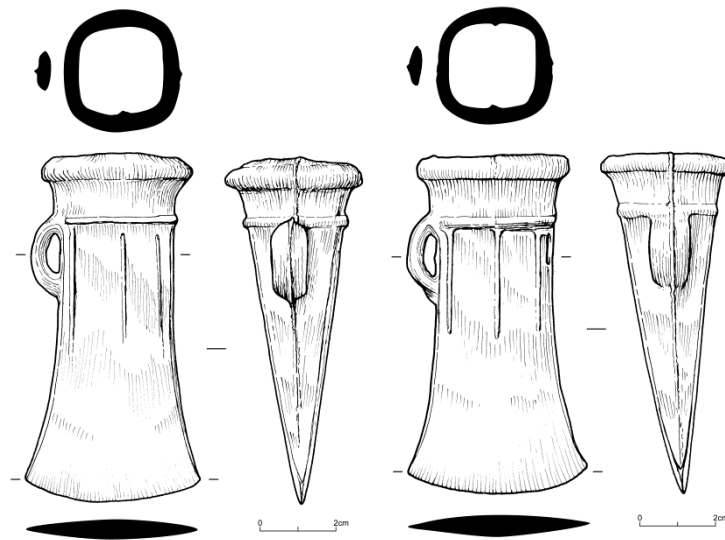


Fig 11: Axes nos. 19 and 21

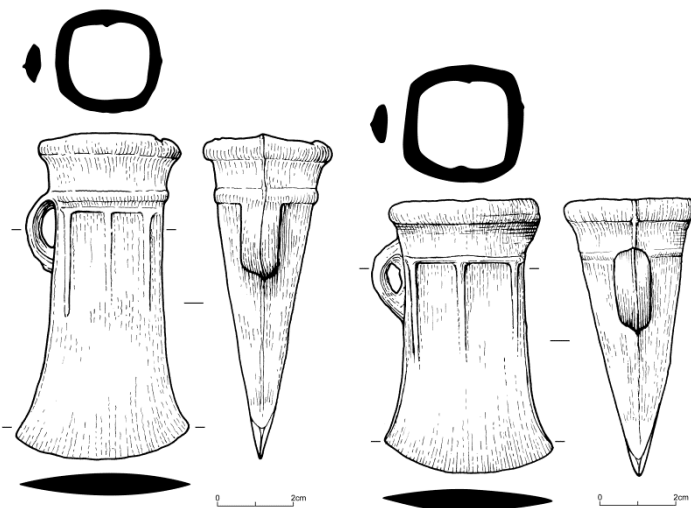


Fig 12: Axes no 23 from Hoard II and no. 9 from Hoard I

Besides the Yorkshire Type axes there are a significant number of axes which may have come from beyond Yorkshire. Hoard II is especially varied with at least two more distinct groups; ten axes of South-Eastern Type, and five bag-shaped axes, which may have come from Ireland or Scotland. The presence of the five ‘baggy’ axes is of considerable interest given the few parallels of such axes in the north of England. Undecorated axes of Class 11A are part of the most common class of socketed axes in Ireland (Class 11) and may have developed here. The distribution of Class 11A axes concentrates in the north-east of Ireland. Interestingly, this distribution overlaps with that of axes of Class 7a, which includes Yorkshire Type axes and is clearly concentrated in the north-east of Ireland (Eogan 2000, 52, Plate 116A). This may suggest that Class 11A and Yorkshire Type axes were traded and could explain their occurrence in Driffield Hoard II.

Unlike the Yorkshire Type, which is more common in the north, the South-Eastern Type occurs in vast numbers in Ewart Park hoards in south-eastern England. However, Schmidt and Burgess record six other hoards with South-Eastern Type axes in Scotland and Northern England, five of which were found in Yorkshire. Hoard II thus fits this pattern. However, unlike the Yorkshire Type axes, the South-Eastern Type axes in Hoard II are very dissimilar in size and form and various sub-types seem to be present. The five baggy axes with a potential Irish or Scottish origin are more alike than the South-Eastern Type axes, but not as distinctly similar as the Yorkshire sub-type A axes. The wider variation of ‘exotic’ axes contrasts with the uniformity noted for the local Yorkshire axes and may

suggest that items from further away were traded individually whereas more regional types were produced or acquired in larger groups.

The ‘miniature’ axes in Hoard II perhaps resemble each other enough to represent a fourth type. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find good parallels for these objects especially in the north of England. However, in southern England several similar small axes have been found (e.g. Turner 2010, 9, 10, 202). Here they are generally considered to be of the South-Eastern Type. Aside from their origins, it is important to note that the small size of these objects may preclude their use as axes. Perhaps they represent other woodworking tools. The typology, meaning and function of these small ‘axes’ requires further research.

Hoard I is less varied than Hoard II and seems to have a more regional or local signature, containing mostly Yorkshire Type axes and one Everthorpe Type axe (both common in Yorkshire). Everthorpe axes are the most widespread plain socketed axes in the north of England and Scotland (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 218). Yet they are concentrated in the south-eastern parts of Yorkshire, possibly suggesting a south Yorkshire workshop producing axes for the local market (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 221). This type may be a more specialised version of the more common and widespread Yorkshire Type, which is very similar in shape and form, but has the distinctive parallel rib decoration on the body. This may explain why these axe types often occur in hoards together (e.g. in the Everthorpe, Scalby Cliffs, Bilton, Sproatley, Westow and Pocklington hoards), all save one from East Yorkshire.

Only one out of the 14 axes in Hoard I, the Meldreth Type, is more common in the south. Meldreth Type axes are well known throughout Britain, western Europe and Ireland and are a standard socketed axe type in the Carp’s Tongue metalwork tradition in southern England and northern France (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 204, 210), dating to the Ewart Park phase. They mostly occur in southern England, suggesting they represent a southern British tradition. Here they are frequently associated with hoards that also contain Yorkshire Type axes (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 211). In the north, they occur in the same area as Yorkshire Type axes: most frequently in the east, thinning out towards the west and north (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, Plate 128). This may explain their association in southern hoards.

All of the geographic links discussed above suggest there was trade contact between the south and north of England and between England and Ireland in the Late Bronze Age. The identifiable axe types in both hoards all date to the Ewart Park phase of the Late Bronze Age (c. 950-850 BC). As many of the types discussed above seem to date to the earlier phases of this period, the hoards may in fact be dated closer to 950 BC.

Ingots

(Plano-convex) ingot fragments are a frequent inclusion in hoards of Later Bronze Age Ewart Park date in the south of England (cf. Turner 2010, 86-7). Ingots of raw metal were transported and traded throughout Britain and Europe during the Late Bronze Age. They were often broken into fragments, ready to be smelted to make a range of bronze objects and seem to have functioned as a kind of currency (cf. Pare 2013). More than 40 Ewart Park hoards, mostly from East Anglia, Essex and Kent, but also from Wales and Pembrokeshire, contain fragments of such plano-convex ingots.

In northern England, the inclusion of plano-convex ingots or ingot fragments in Late Bronze Age hoards is rare but there are a few examples, including one from Scalby Cliffs, North Yorks. (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 229) and a large hoard from Gilmonby, Durham, which contain ‘wedge shaped’ and ‘domed’ lumps (Coggins and Tylecote 1981, 65-74). Two ingot fragments are also mentioned in relation to the Everthorpe Hoard from E. Yorks. (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 229, 230).

Complete or nearly complete plano-convex ingots like nos. 128 and 129 in Hoard II are rare, but are known from several southern English contexts, including Bronze Age shipwrecks at Salcombe and Bigbury, Devon (Roberts and Veysey 2011; Knight *et al.* 2015, 26, Plate 7, no. 109f) and an occupation area at Mountbatton, Plymouth (Pearce 1983, 450-51, Plate 35, no. 281t). In hoard contexts, complete plano-convex ingots are known from the Forty Acre Brickfield Hoard (Smith 1958, GB. 37, card 3 (3), no. 32), the Late Bronze Age Bexley Heath Hoard (Britton 1960, GB. 53,

card 3 (1), no. 11) and a Late Bronze Age hoard from the Isle of Wight (PAS ID: IOW-622CD9). The largest number of complete plano-convex ingots (seven in total) comes from the Late Bronze Age Boughton Malherbe hoard, Kent (PAS ID: KENT-15A293). All the above examples are in the south of England, which makes the inclusion of the two almost complete plano-convex ingots in Hoard II rather special.

Another interesting feature of Hoard II is the inclusion of four axes that have fragments of ingots stuffed into their sockets (nos. 17, 11, 42, 30A). The practice of ‘blocking’ the sockets of a number of axes in hoards with a variety of items (including ingot fragments) has been documented in north-western Europe in the 10th and 9th centuries BC (Dietrich and Mörtz forthcoming). The practice is often explained in practical terms, to facilitate recycling, but given its selective nature, may equally be explained in ritual terms, perhaps constituting a type of meaningful fragmentation (Dietrich and Mörtz forthcoming). About 60 deposits with one or more blocked axes are now known from England and Ireland. Most axes with blocked sockets are found in hoards of medium size (between 25-100 artefacts) in south-eastern Britain. The number of blocked axes from northern England is much lower; Dietrich and Mörtz list only one example from Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland. This lack of blocked axes in the north might be the result of fewer hoards being found in this area, but even so, the practice seems generally confined to the south.

Hoard Comparison

Although it is likely that the two hoards are somehow related on account of their close proximity, the materials included within them and the axe types present, there are some clear differences between the hoards as well. Hoard I, containing 14 socketed axes and 13 ingot fragments, is clearly a lot smaller than Hoard II, which contains 59 complete or broken axes in addition to 89 ingot fragments and two (nearly) complete plano-convex ingots. The axes in Hoard I are all complete, whereas Hoard II also includes broken or damaged axes and smaller axe fragments where the type cannot be determined. Although both hoards include axes of the Yorkshire Type, the variety of axe types is higher in the larger Hoard II, which contains a relatively large number of types that are common in the south of England. Hoard I only has three axe types that are all clearly identifiable, whereas Hoard II contains three definite types, but could have as many as eight different types. Finally, Hoard I does not contain any axes with ingot fragments blocking their socket, whereas Hoard II has four. Overall then, Hoard I is more uniform with a more regional or local character than Hoard II, which is varied in terms of its axe types, sizes and the level of fragmentation of axes and ingots. The non-regional connections of this hoard also seem stronger than for Hoard I.

Landscape Context of the Hoards

There are several Bronze Age burial mounds in the immediate area. Ancient trackways bisect the landscape, one running close by the hoards and, 500m to the east, connecting to another which soon passes through an area of known Bronze Age activity. Here two ploughed down burial mounds have been found and nearby a number of small finds from the period were found, including sherds, flint arrowheads and scrapers, a sandstone phallic object, a fragment of worked jet, pins, a side-loop spearhead, a weapon handle rivet, a fragment of gold sheet, one complete socketed axe and several axe fragments, mainly from rims. Many of these finds are likely to be contemporaneous with the hoards and appear to represent settlement activity although some may have come from the burial mounds.

Geophysical Survey

The ancient trackways, burial mounds and Bronze Age finds from the vicinity of the two hoards demonstrate that the local landscape was used in the Bronze Age. To gain more insight into the nature of Bronze Age activity in this landscape and to place the hoards within a wider archaeological context, Dr. Hugh Willmott and his colleagues carried out a magnetometry survey in a 30m by 30m grid (Willmott 2016). Despite a problematic geology, the site responded well and a number of curvilinear anomalies probably representing the presence of backfilled cut features were found, representing a track or hollow way, a palaeochannel and several ditched land boundaries. The hollow way and field ditches seem to be related and may be of a similar date. They were found in close

proximity to the hoards and may relate to them. However, further investigation is necessary to determine the dates of these features and to place them within the context of the hoards.

Similar Hoards

Several other hoards found in northern England and Scotland contain similar axe types to the Driffield ones, including the Sproatley, Pocklington, Westow, Kirkby Malzeard and Bilton hoards (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 223-37). Some of these hoards also contain other materials, including sword fragments, spearheads, and tools such as gouges and chisels but the majority only contain axes. Several hoards listed above also have axes of a south-eastern origin, often in combination with types also found in Driffield II. Thus, the Driffield Hoards fit into a regional pattern of hoard deposition.

However, as discussed above, the inclusion of large amounts of ingot material and axes with a blocked socket set the Driffield hoards apart from others in the north of England. The fact that they were found so close together and are probably related is also unique, as most hoards are single finds. Moreover, Hoard II is bigger than any of the hoards above. Indeed, this hoard is the largest ever found in East Yorkshire. Though large hoards are relatively common in southern England, there are only two other large hoards in the north that share characteristics with Hoard II. One of these was found at Brough on Humber, East Yorkshire in 1719, and contained a large number of socketed axes and casting moulds (Briggs *et al.* 1987). Another large hoard is the Late Bronze Age Gilmonby Hoard (Durham), which contains c. 125 bronze items, including socketed axes, other tools, ornaments, weapons and ingot fragments (Coggins and Tylecote 1983). The hoard contains a large number of faceted axes (presumably of Type Meldreth) and two Yorkshire Type axes. It also contains a number of axes with a ‘baggy’ appearance (nos. 11-13) and an axe with a blocked socket. Like in Driffield Hoard II, these features suggest long-distance trade links.

Summary and Conclusion

Two hoards found in the same field near Driffield consist of ingot fragments and socketed axes dating to the Ewart Park phase of the Late Bronze Age (c. 950-850 BC). The two hoards fit in with an established tradition of metalwork deposition in the Late Bronze Age in the region. However, they share several characteristics that set them apart from most other hoards in the north of England. Firstly, the hoards were found in close proximity to each other and a number of factors suggest they may be closely related. Aside from a similar content with axes and ingot fragments, there may be a direct link between both hoards as reflected in the close similarity of an axe in Hoard I to an axe in Hoard II. Both hoards also contain a mixture of local or regional axe types (e.g. Yorkshire and Everthorpe), in addition to types that may have southern affinities (South-Eastern and Meldreth).

This link with the south of England is another feature that characterises the Driffield hoards. It is reflected not only in the axe types but also in the large numbers of ingot fragments, the blocked sockets of some axes and the large size of Hoard II, all of which are more common in the south. The presence of five bag-shaped axes in Hoard II hints at links with Ireland or Scotland which need to be further investigated given the fact that there are few parallels for such axes in the north of England.

One final feature that sets the hoards apart from other Late Bronze Age hoards, not only in the north of England but elsewhere too, is the fact that they have been excavated and recorded in a controlled manner, providing us with a detailed insight into their arrangement. It seems the hoards were carefully placed in their pits, possibly in organic containers, and that there was some structuring in the location of axes versus ingot fragments, particularly in Hoard II. Moreover, it is possible that Hoard II was reopened and revisited after some time. This raises a number of interesting questions about the function of these hoards, the reason for their deposition and their position in the local landscape. These questions cannot currently be resolved, but further research into the structure and composition of the hoards, as well as their immediate landscape context, may elucidate some of these issues.

There are several other interesting avenues for further research that are worth exploring. The proposed subdivision of the Yorkshire Type into five sub-types should be tested by comparing the Yorkshire Type axes in the Driffield Hoards with Yorkshire Type axes in other hoards, systematically studying their weights and dimensions. Further research into the weight and size distribution of the axes and

ingot fragments within the hoards would also be interesting. Comparisons of Hoards I and II suggest there are pronounced differences and an element of selectivity in terms of ingot and axe size and weight. To examine this selectivity and the hoards' structure further, and to assess if the objects were deposited together or not, the plans produced during the excavation could be studied in more depth. Refitting ingot fragments within and between the hoards could provide further insight into deposition practices and the relation between the two hoards, whilst testing the metal composition of axes could shed light on whether they were made in the same workshop or in different ones. This may provide insight into the trade patterns implied by the various axe types within the hoards. The ingots could also be tested to see if they do indeed have a different metal composition to the axes. Finally, the local and regional landscape setting of the hoards requires further study, so these unique deposits may be further contextualised.

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