NOTES ON SOME DARTMOOR BLOWING-HOUSES

BY R. HANSFORD WORTH

THE following notes are really an adjunct to another paper by the same author in the present volume (*The Dartmoor Blowing-House*).

It has been possible to shorten them because much of the descriptive matter will be found in that paper; and for convenience each note bears a number which will be found repeated in the synopsis which forms a part of such paper.

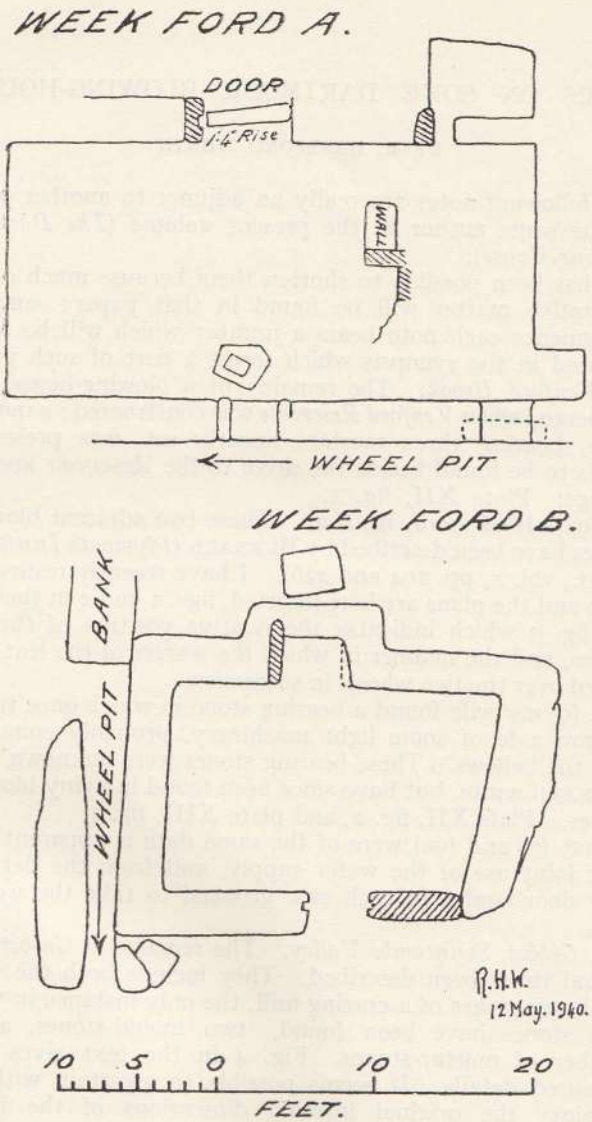
(5). *Venford Brook.* The remains of a blowing-house were submerged when *Venford Reservoir* was constructed; a mortar-stone, bearing three mortars linearly set, was preserved, and is to be found beside the drive to the Reservoir keeper's cottage. Plate XII, fig. 1.

(9), (9a). *Week Ford, W. Dart.* These two adjacent blowing-houses have been described by BURNARD (*Plymouth Institution Trans.*, vol. x, pp. 104 and 226). I have recently resurveyed them and the plans are here inserted, figs. 1 and 2 in the text, and fig. 3 which indicates the relative position of the two houses, and the manner in which the waters of the leat were passed over the two wheels in succession.

At (9) my wife found a bearing stone in which once turned an iron axle of some light machinery, probably connected with the bellows. These bearing stones were unknown when BURNARD wrote, but have since been found in many blowing-houses. Plate XII, fig. 2, and plate XIII, fig. 1.

That (9) and (9a) were of the same date is apparent from their joint use of the water supply, and from the detail of their door-jambs, in each case grooved to take the wooden post.

(10). *Gobbet, Swincombe Valley.* The remains at *Gobbet* have several times been described. They include both the upper and lower stones of a crazing mill, the only instance in which both stones have been found, two mould-stones, and a number of mortar-stones. Fig. 4 in the text gives some measured details. It seems possible to ascertain with fair certainty the original internal dimensions of the house, which would appear to have been 30ft. by 16ft., agreeing very nearly with the dimensions of (9a) at *Week Ford*; one of the mould-stones agrees with the dimensions of that at *Week Ford*.



FIGS. 1 and 2. A=9a, B=9.

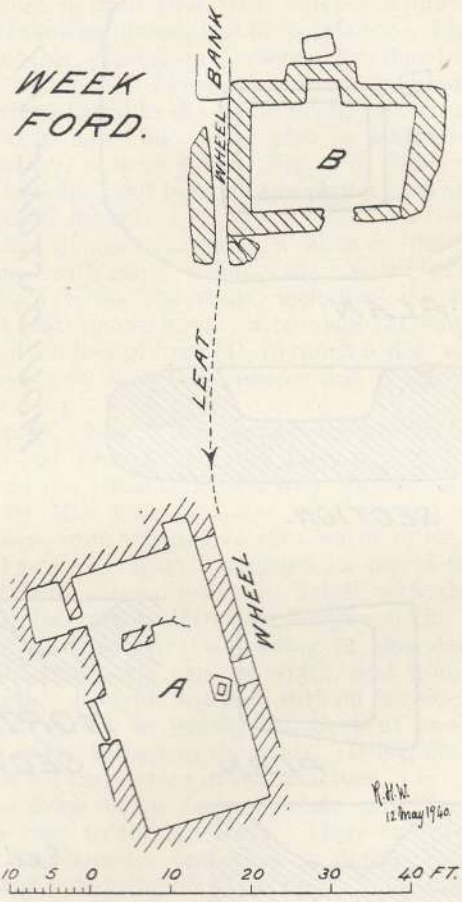

WEEK
FORD.
BANK
WHEEL
B
LEAT
WHEEL
A
H.H.W.
12 May 1940.
10 5 0 10 20 30 40 FT.

FIG. 3. A=9a, B=9.

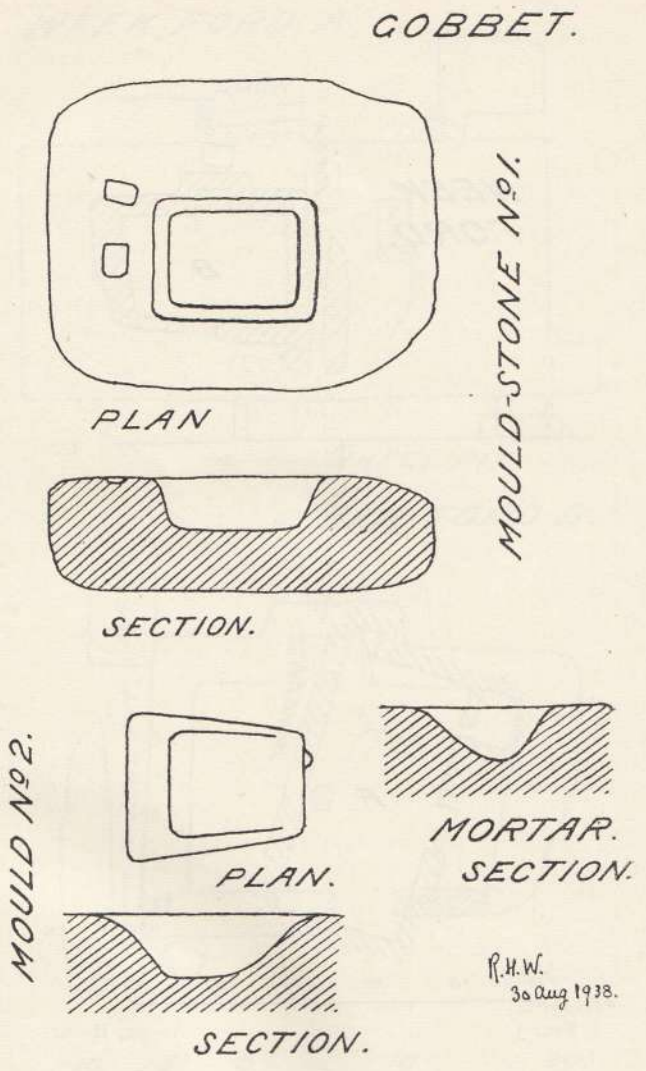

GOBBET.
PLAN
SECTION.
MOULD-STONE No 1.
MOULD No 2.
PLAN.
SECTION.
MORTAR.
SECTION.
R.H.W.
30 Aug 1938.
INS. 12 6 0 1 2 3 FT.

FIG 4

(11). *Deep Swincombe, Swincombe Valley.* This building has been described both by BURNARD (*Plymouth Institution Trans.*, vol. x, p. 111), and by BARING-GOULD (*Book of Dartmoor*, p. 114). Both claim it as a blowing-house, and BARING-GOULD gives a plan, which needs correction. In justice it must be said that both authors wrote when our knowledge of blowing-houses was in its infancy. I have given elsewhere in this volume my reasons for denying to this building all status as a blowing-house. I have only to add that the pottery found in the house might be consistent with Celtic or Saxon date, but might also be attributed to the fifteenth century, or even later. Fig. 5 in the text gives a plan of the building, and inset on the plan a plan and section of the supposed mould.

The building is constructed in a heap of tinners waste, the inside lined with rubble walling, the least width of the top of bank which forms the walls, including the walling, is 4ft. 6ins., at places considerably more, and the bank extends to a width at the foot of from 8ft. to much wider, very irregularly. I have only shewn the inside face of the walling on the plan.

(14). *Glazebrook.* Near the blowing-house on the *Glazebrook*, described in our *Transactions*, vol. lxiv, p. 275, but on the other bank of the stream, lies a partly worked stone. This was found by Miss Cole of *Brent*, who shewed it to Mrs. Eckett Fielden, from whom I in turn learnt of its existence.

It proved to be a " float " intended for use in the base of the furnace, and corresponding in detail with the furnace base still in place above *Merrivale Bridge*, on the *Walkham*.

Fig. 6 in the text gives a drawing of this stone. It is 4ft. 3ins. in length, 1ft. 7ins. in width, and from 11ins. to 15ins. in depth. Roughly squared, with on one side a channel 3ft. in length, 11ins. in width, 1in. deep at one end, and running out at the surface at the other. It is quite obviously a " float " in an early stage of manufacture.

(16). On the *Erme*, below *Lower Drylake*, a mortar-stone lies in the river close to the left bank. There are two mortars, each 9½ins. in diameter and 7ins. in depth. No building identifiable as a blowing-house is near. A sketch is given, fig. 7 in the text.

(39). *Little Horrabridge, Walkham Valley.* Our member, Mr. Sydney Taylor, has drawn my attention to some mortar-stones at *Little Horrabridge*. This site is unique since one of the stones, which has been built into the foundation of a shed, contains four mortars lineally arranged. A view of this stone will be found on plate XIII, fig. 2, the length of the stone is 2ft. 7ins. The mortars are 6ins. in diameter, and from 2½ to 3ins. deep.

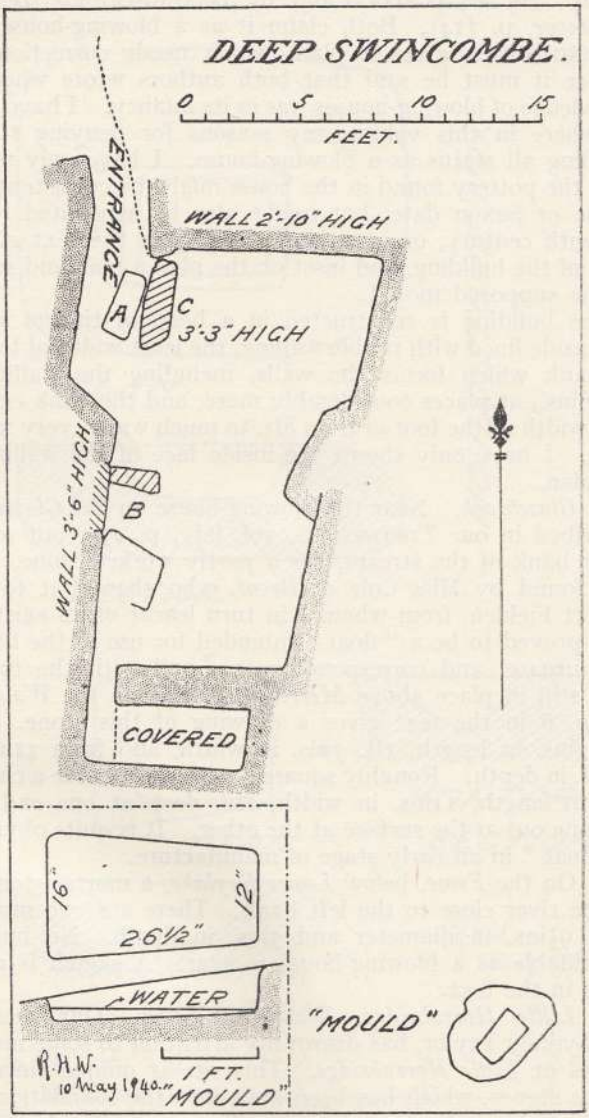
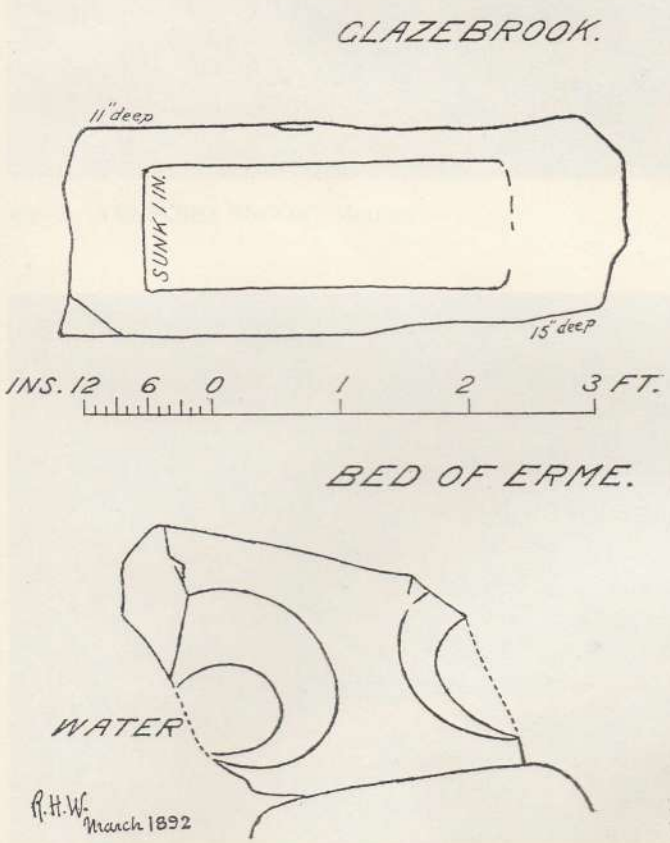

DEEP SWINCOMBE.
0 5 10 15
FEET.
ENTRANCE
WALL 2'-10" HIGH
A
C
3'-3" HIGH
WALL 3'-6" HIGH
B
COVERED
16"
12"
26½"
WATER
"MOULD"
1 FT.
R.H.W.
10 May 1940.
"MOULD"

FIG. 5.

The following are the locations of the various sites above referred to.

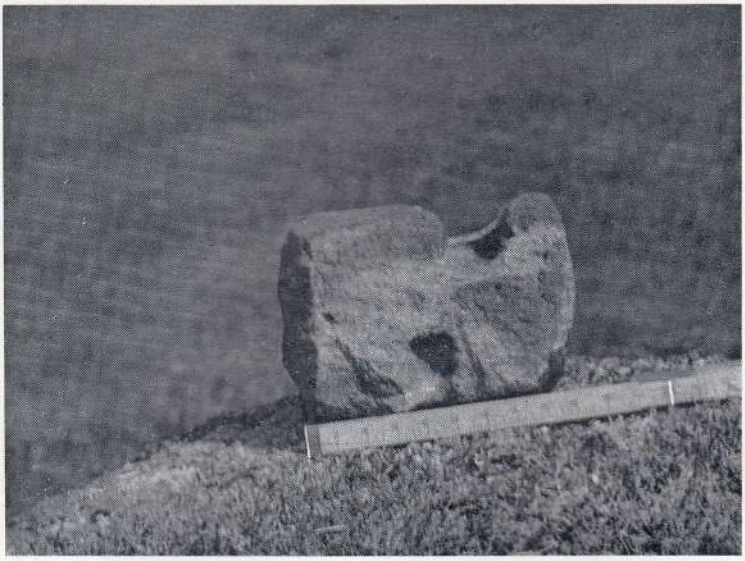
(5). Six-inch O.S., cvii, S.E., lat. 50°-31′-20″, lon. 3°-51′-26″
(9). Six-inch O.S., cvii, S.E., lat. 50°-32′- 6″, lon. 3°-53′-18″
(10). Six-inch O.S., cvii, S.E., lat. 50°-32′-19″, lon. 3°-54′-44″
(11). Six-inch O.S., cvii, S.E., lat. 50°-31′-50″, lon. 3°-54′-56½″
(14). Six-inch O.S., cxix, S.E., lat. 50°-25′-37″, lon. 3°-52′-29″
(16). Six-inch O.S., cxix, N.E., lat. 50°-28′- 9″, lon. 3°-54′-51″
(39). Six-inch O.S., cxii, N.W., lat. 50°-30′-25″, lon. 4°- 5′-40½″



FIGS. 6 and 7.

RHW

Fig. 1. VENFORD BROOK, Mortars.



RHW

Fig. 2. WEEK FORD, 9. Bearings.

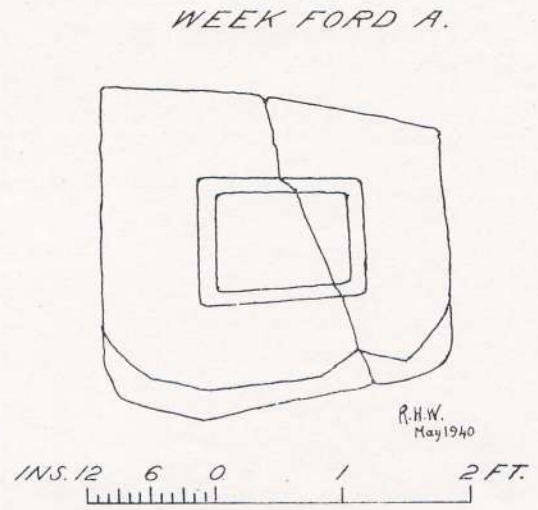


Fig. 1. WEEK FORD, 9a. Mouldstone.

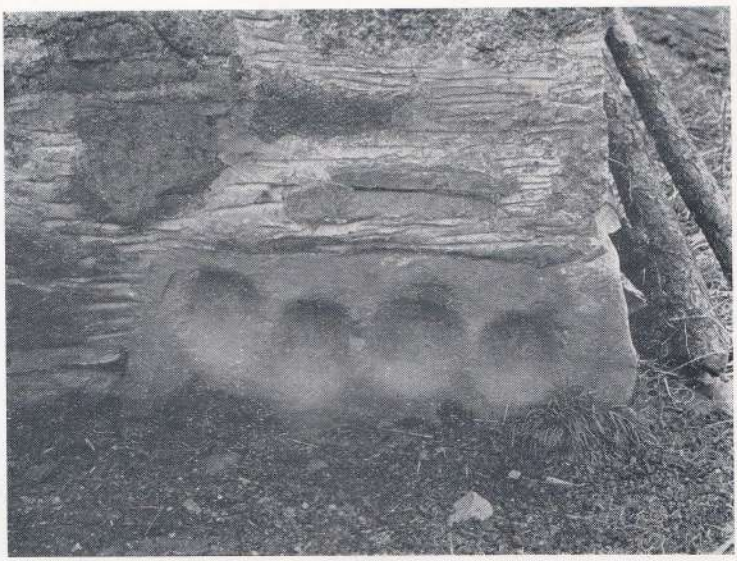


Fig. 2. LITTLE HORRABRIDGE, Mortars.