

THE PREHISTORIC POUNDS OF DARTMOOR.

BY R. HANSFORD WORTH.

THE prehistoric pounds of Dartmoor have received little notice, and of that little an undue proportion has been devoted to Grimspound. Grimspound is not a good point of approach to the subject, and is not sufficiently representative, the less since the unfortunate reconstruction of a considerable length of its wall.

There are many pounds on Dartmoor, especially in the south, and notably in the valleys of the Walkham, Plym, Yealm, Erme and Avon.

Classification is useful for descriptive purposes, as long, and only as long, as it is divorced from all suggestion of difference in date, origin and, largely, of purpose. The primary and only classification which I suggest is into *simple* and *compound*. The *simple* pound is a close of land wholly surrounded by open moor, from which it is separated by a stone fence; it has no subdivisions. It may have no hut-circle within its fence, or there may be one or more hut-circles. The *compound* pound is an agglomeration of two or more simple pounds, adjacent and contiguous. It would appear that this class is almost always formed by additions to an originally simple pound. The enclosure became insufficient in area for a growing need and a second enclosure was added, to be followed in some cases by a third and even a fourth. Very rarely indeed is there any sign of an enclosure, once formed, having been subdivided by an internal fence. As far as my observation extends there is always at least one hut-circle in some part of every compound pound.

There are one or two exceptional instances of simple pounds with the appearance of having been subdivided by internal fences; for instance *Round Pound*, near Batworthy, Chagford, and an unnamed example near *Bovey Combe Head*, North Bovey; both mentioned and figured by ORMEROD (*Rude Stone Remains*, privately printed, p. 11). It is not certain that these were not the subjects of late interference or addition.

The prevalent idea that pounds are normally circular or oval in plan is mistaken. The angles are certainly rounded, with rare exception; and the more part of the walls curved

in plan ; but considerable lengths of approximately straight wall are frequent ; and any fair approach to a true circle is very rarely seen. In the absence of actual survey it is easy to be in error.

The following examples have been selected for description.
SIMPLE POUNDS.

(1). *Shavercombe*, Plym Valley. Six inch to the mile Ordnance Survey, sheet cxiii. s.w., lat $50^{\circ}-28'-44''$, lon. $3^{\circ}-58'-57''$.

SHAVERCOMBE.

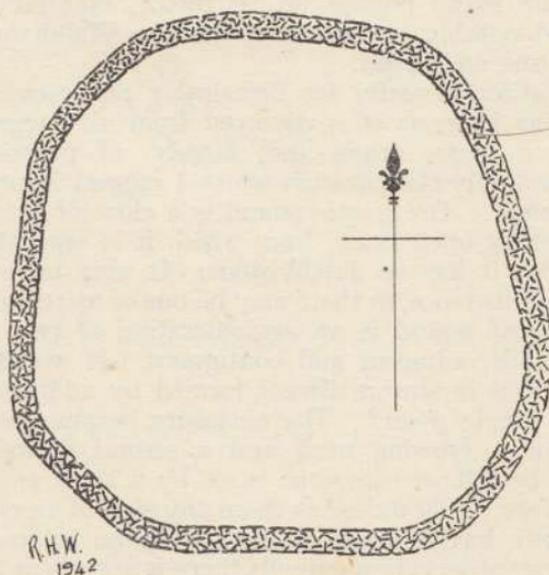
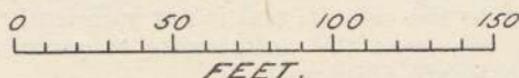


Fig. 1

Diameter N. and S. 154 feet, greatest diameter E. and W. 154 feet. Not circular, but with an approach to a symmetrical outline. Area within walls 0.458 acres. No hut-circle. Mean elevation of ground approximately 1150 ft. O.D. Ground slopes northward.

This pound, on the flank of Shavercombe Tor, in the Plym watershed, lies near the border of the granite ; the fence or wall had an original thickness of 4ft. 6ins., it is built in granite, with large stones in the bottom course ; there are many long stones, rather like broad gateposts ; these are laid lengthwise along both faces of the wall, and filled between in the centre

with small stone; the upper part was probably similarly faced, but with smaller blocks. Although there is no hut in the pound, there are two or three rather large hut-circles higher on the hill, off the granite area, and these are mounded up, rather than built, in quite small stone, mainly of altered slate, with none of the usual slabs lining the inner faces of the walls. A curious instance of indisposition to fetch building material from even a short distance.

(2). *Hingston Hill*, Meavy Valley. Six inch o.s., sheet cxii. N.E., lat. $50^{\circ}-30'-26\frac{1}{2}''$, lon. $4^{\circ}-59'-13''$.

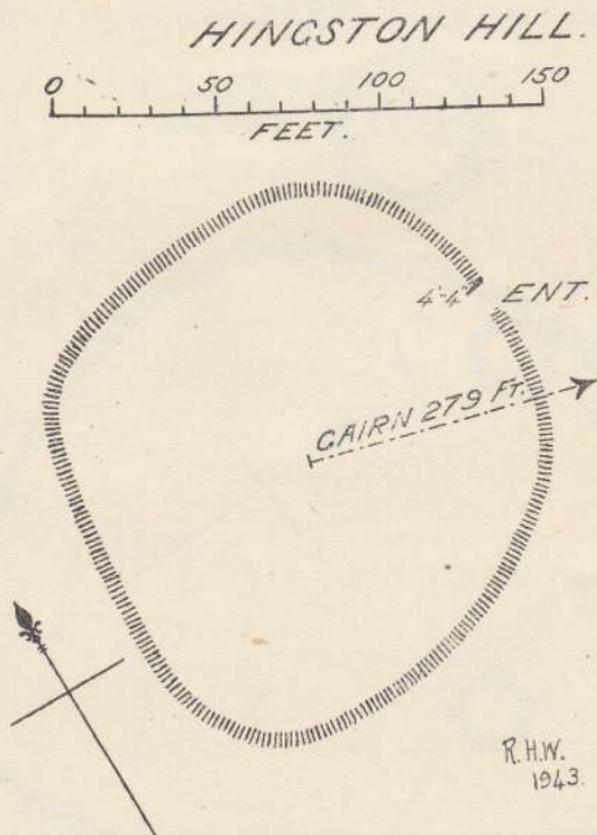


Fig. 2

Approximately E. of Down Tor and N.N.E. of Combeshead Tor. Diameter N. and S. 143ft., E. and W. 140ft. Not circular but rather pear-shaped. Area within walls 0.410 acres. Mean elevation of ground approximately 1220ft. O.D. Ground slopes slightly westward. Thickness of wall is 4ft. 6ins. The entrance is marked by a slab-like stone which extends through the thickness of the wall, and stands 4ft. 4ins. high. It is doubtful if the wall was of much greater height. Two

hundred and seventy-nine feet from the centre of the pound, in a direction 15 degrees s. of E., lies the centre of a cairn of 54ft. diameter at the base, and 36ft. diameter at the top. The Down Tor stone-row points to this cairn.

There is no hut-circle in this pound, nor any in the immediate neighbourhood.

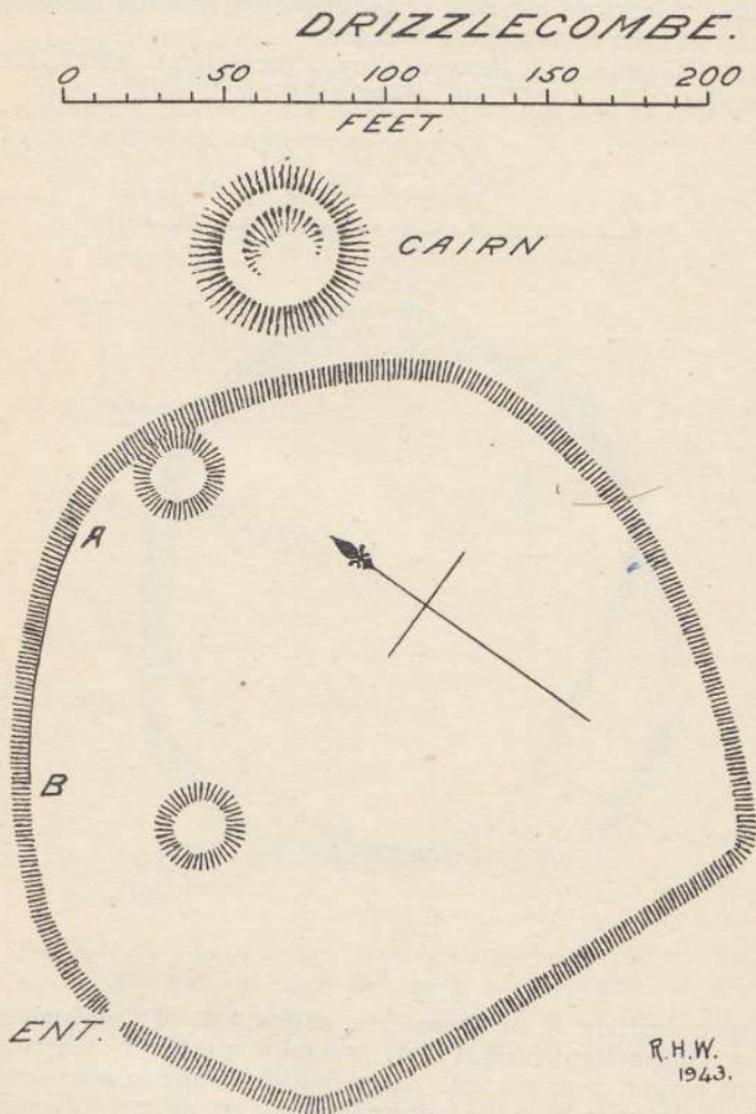


Fig. 3

(3). *Drizzlecombe*, Plym Valley. Six inch o.s. cxiii. N.W., lat. $50^{\circ}-29'-11\frac{1}{2}''$, lon. $3^{\circ}-58'-59''$.

Diameter N. and S. 210 feet, E. and W. 220 feet. Not cir-

The entrance is in the western wall. There are other pounds in the immediate neighbourhood.

(4). *Dewerstone Hill*, Plym and Meavy Valleys. Six inch o.s., sheet cxviii. N.W., lat. $50^{\circ}-27'-22\frac{1}{2}''$, lon. $4^{\circ}-3'-35''$.

This is unusual in that it lies within an area severed on one side from the surrounding land by an outer, double, wall. The site constitutes the south extreme of the summit of the ridge which parts the valleys of the Plym and Meavy at their junction.

The wall of the pound is now incomplete, having probably been robbed to build the enclosure wall of an oak copse. To the south the pound wall ties in on the west side with the rock exposure of the summit. On the east side it probably ran from O to P on fig. 4, and tied in similarly. In shape it is approximately rectangular with rounded angles. The area within the walls was probably 1.14 acres, the length of the pound 280 feet, and its breadth for the more part 175 feet. Mean elevation of the ground approximately 710 feet O.D., sloping slightly east and west from the centre of its breadth. There is one hut-circle, which is involved in the pound wall. The thickness of the pound wall is about 4 feet.

One hundred and fifty yards to the north of the pound the neck of the ridge is crossed by two parallel walls. These are ruined, but there is a clear space between the ruins of the outer and inner walls, averaging nine feet in width. The walls were apparently about five feet in thickness, and if reconstructed on the centres of their present ruins would stand with a clear space between them of from twelve to thirteen feet. Their plan is convex to the north, and they bend round on the east and west to tie in with natural rock exposures on the steep slopes of the hill which lie below the 700 feet contour. In fig. 4, it is to be noted that at and near B there are confused ruins of some buildings within the walls. At L the outer wall dies out, a steep slope and natural rock replacing it. From M to N there is now no wall, but the steep hillside has been scarped, the only trace of earthwork. The general slope of the hill below the 700ft. contour, east, south and west is about 1 in $2\frac{1}{2}$ with local precipices.

There is nothing on Dartmoor comparable with this, except on the summit of *Whittor*, Petertavy, where there is a double walled enclosure, the space between the ruins of the two walls varying from 10ft. to 40ft. There, also, there is no earthwork.

(5) *Trowlesworthy*, Plym Valley. Six inch o.s., sheet cxii. S.E., lat. $50^{\circ}-27'-42\frac{1}{2}''$, lon. $4^{\circ}-0'-29''$.

On the slope of Little Trowlesworthy Tor, from which it bears s.w. 800ft., diameter N. and S. 220ft., E. and W. 210ft. Not circular, but approximately pear-shaped. The fence or wall 4ft. to 4ft. 6ins. in thickness. The eastern wall is built

TROWLESWORTHY.

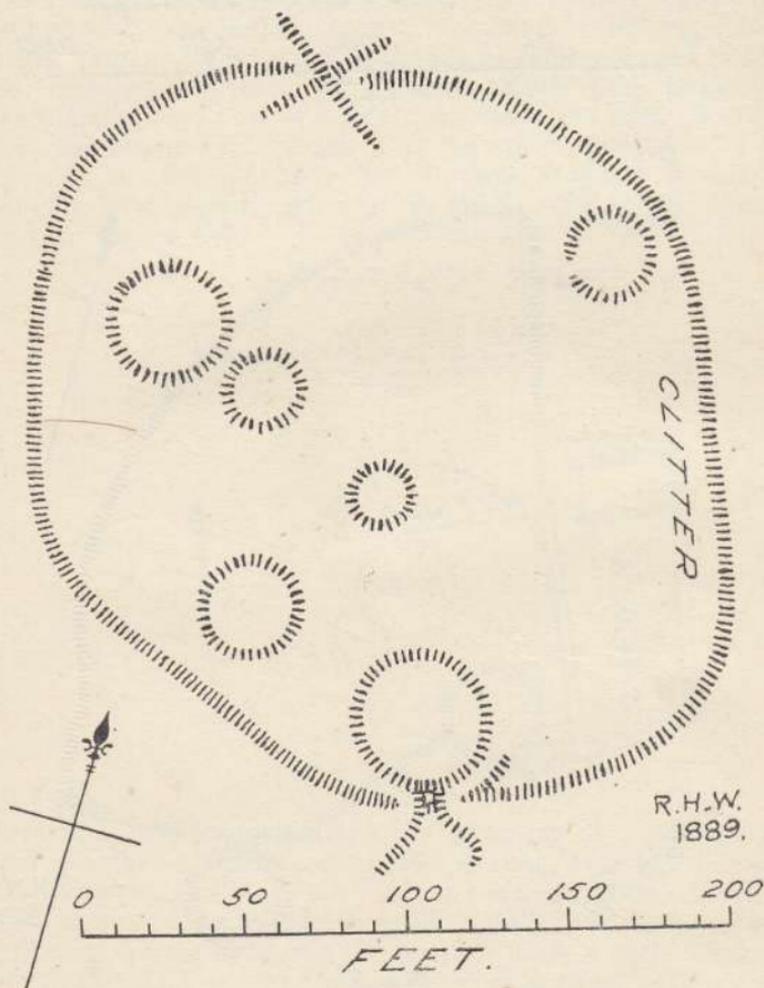


Fig. 5

for some part of its length on a clitter of rock. Area within enclosure 0.873 acres. There are six hut-circles of very varied diameters within the pound.

The curious arrangements of walls at the seeming entrances are the wing-walls of vermin traps, as to which see later, under the heading *Vermin Traps*.

Mean elevation of ground 1000ft. O.D., slopes to the west, mean gradient 1 in 6.

(6). *Merrivale*, on north of main road, south of Over Tor, Walkham Valley. Six inch o.s., sheet cvi. s.e., lat. $50^{\circ}-33'-23\frac{1}{2}''$, lon. $4^{\circ}-2'-16''$.

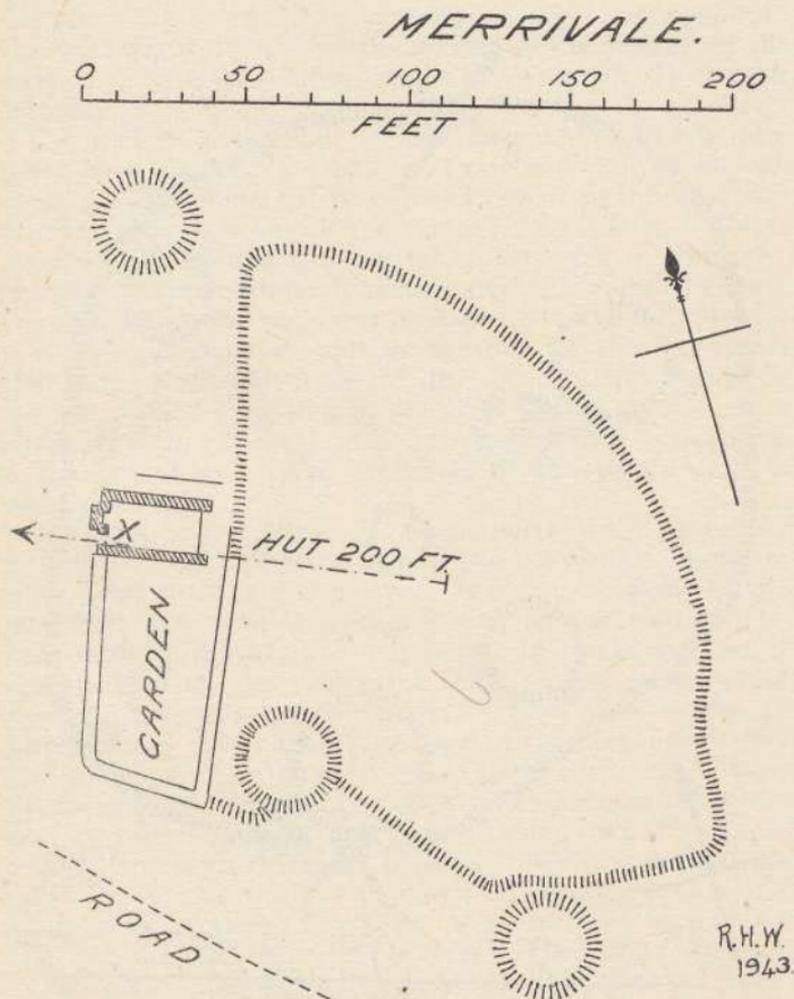


Fig. 6

Approximately triangular, with one curved side. Original thickness of wall may have been 4ft. Area within walls 0.484 acres. Mean elevation of ground 1160ft. O.D., slopes to west with a mean gradient of 1 in 13. One hut-circle involved in wall, three others outside wall.

This pound has been the subject of recent addition and slight alterations. There is now an abandoned garden

contiguous with the west wall and the foundations of a cottage lie to the north of the garden.

We know something of the history of these recent structures; BRAY, in 1802, found a man building the foundations of the cottage, under lease, as he said, from Mr. Lopez (Mrs. Bray, *Borders of the Tamar and the Tavy*, 1st ed., vol. I, p. 247). The man apparently intended taking in a few acres of ground, and possibly proposed the area of the pound as the first of his fields. But there is no evidence that he did more than build the cottage and fence the garden. Much more recently, the obliging readiness of a local inhabitant has added to the ruin the charm of tradition. At the point marked with a cross in the cottage ruins (fig. 6) there stands a squared, roughly worked slab, 3ft. 4ins. in height, 2ft. 5½ins. broad, and 10 inches thick. It formed the face of the chimney

SHAPLEY TOR.

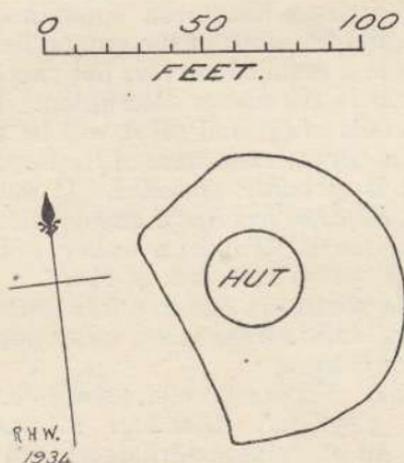


Fig 7

breast. This stone attracted the attention of a passer by and he asked a roadman who was working near whether he knew anything of it. To which the roadman at once replied that it was *Moses Bawden's grave*; he received an acknowledgment for his help, and the stranger made a note. Somewhere this potential tradition awaits publication. It may be well to record that my friend the late Mr. Moses Bawden, well known in the mining world, and sometime member of the Devonshire Association, does not lie buried by the roadside at or near Merrivale.

The *simple pounds* vary greatly in area, two extreme instances may be cited.

(7). *Shapley Tor*, Valley of the East Webburn. Six inch o.s. sheet c. N.W., lat. $50^{\circ}-37'-14\frac{1}{2}''$, lon. $3^{\circ}-50'-11''$.

This pound lies a thousand yards north of *Grimspound*, almost touching and to the north of the track from West Coombe to Bennetts Cross. Its greatest diameter is 87ft., and its least 70ft. It is very irregular in shape, and contains a hut-circle 31ft. in diameter, the area enclosed by the wall of the pound is 0.12 acres. Approximate elevation 1475 feet O.D.

(8). *Broadun*, East Dart Valley. Six inch o.s. sheets xcix. N.W. and S.W., lat. $50^{\circ}36'9''$, lon. $3^{\circ}55'41''$.

This pound was first recognised by the late Col. Arthur B. Prowse, and described in his paper on *The Ancient Metropolis of Dartmoor*, D.A., vol. xxiii, p. 311. The wall has in part been incorporated in a new-take wall, in part it is much ruined; but the outline can be clearly traced. The two longest diameters which can be drawn at right angles measure respectively 333 yards and 290 yards. The area of the enclosure is approximately $14\frac{1}{2}$ acres, and there are within it 39 or 40 hut-circles. The mean approximate elevation is 1350 feet O.D., and the slope of the ground lies S.S.E.

I have not made a detailed survey, but there is certainly no significant error in the above description. From a comparison of the details of (7) and (8) it will be seen that the ratio of 100 to 1 as between the areas of the largest structures and the smallest is certainly exceeded. It must, however, be conceded that *Broadun* has few if any equals.

(9). *Routrundle*, north, Walkham valley. Six inch o.s., sheet cvi, S.E., lat. $50^{\circ}31'41''$, lon. $4^{\circ}2'26''$.

(10). *Routrundle*, south, six hundred feet to the S.W. of (9).

For details of (9) and (10) see later, under heading *Pounds involved in later enclosures*.

(11). *Grimspound*. Six inch o.s., sheet c. N.W., lat. $50^{\circ}36'46''$, lon. $3^{\circ}50'12''$. Diameter N. and S. 490ft., E. and W. 413ft. An irregular quadrilateral with curved sides and rounded angles. Area within walls 3.943 acres. Twenty-four hut-circles within the pound, none in the vicinity outside. Mean elevation of ground approximately 1530 feet O.D., mean gradient 1 in $8\frac{1}{2}$, sloping N.W.

One must not take POLWHELE too seriously when he is writing as to dimensions, but his statement as to the wall of *Grimspound* is that "in several places where it is entire it is about six feet in height, and of the same thickness." (*History of Devon*, vol. i, p. 140.) SPENCE BATE says: "the average height of the rampart is still about six feet, but the width of the base is fully twenty feet." (D.A., vol. iv, p. 497.) ORMEROD takes the view that "the height was about six feet, and the width from six to ten." (*Rude Stone Remains*, p. 14, privately printed.) BURNARD records:— "The facing stones are many of them of large size and dry

laid—the total thickness of the wall in the most perfect portion facing the south-west being from eight to ten feet thick.” (*Pictorial Dartmoor*, vol. ii, p. 26.) The DARTMOOR EXPLORATION COMMITTEE has not been quite consistent in its description of the wall. In its first report (D.A., vol. xxvi,

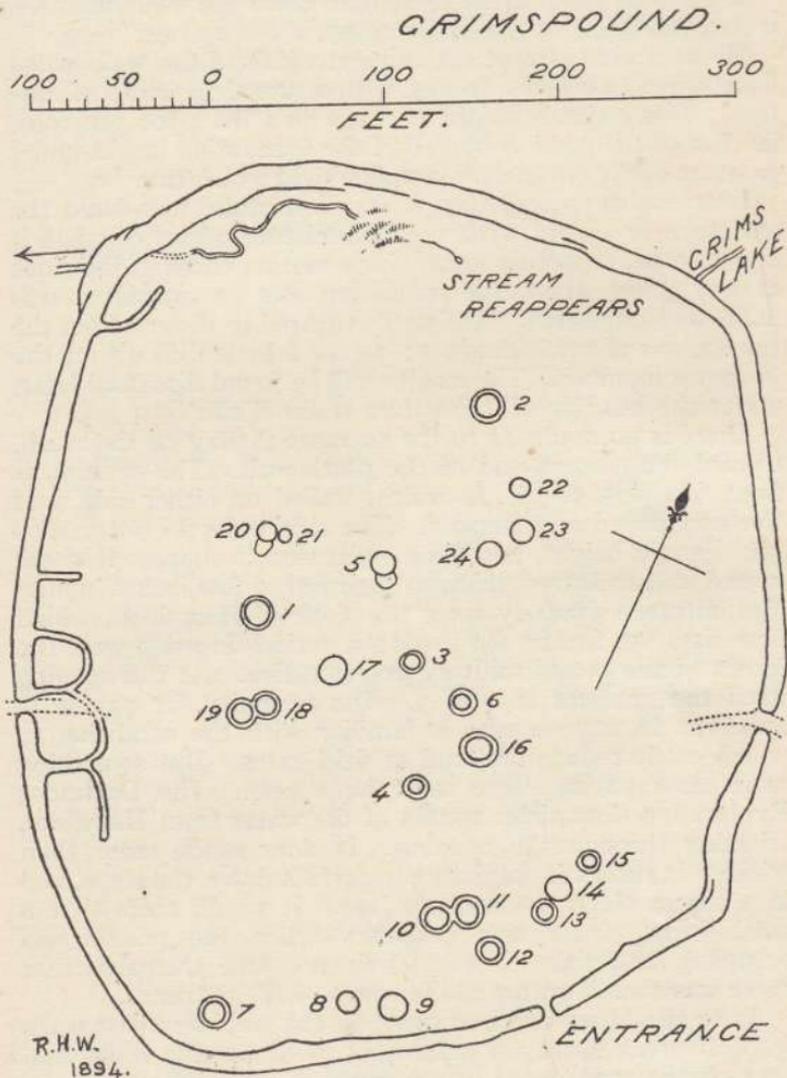


Fig. 8

p. 113) the following passage occurs:—“Twenty-five yards north of the western exit of the track which runs through the pound, the wall has both faces perfect. The width is here 9ft. from face to face. The outer face is still $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high,

the inner $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. A little further on the wall is 10ft. thick. The wall by hut vii is $9\frac{1}{2}$ ft. The inner face is there 4ft. 4ins. high." With these figures I agree. In the second report, however, the figures are varied considerably, on a general review of the wall, and it is there stated (D.A., vol. xxvii, p. 82) : "at the base the heap of ruins that forms the wall measures, where two faces remain undisturbed, about 12 feet."

My own view is that the original width of the wall varied from 8 feet to 9 feet 6 inches, with a prevalent width of nine feet. This estimate might perhaps be a little too generous, in view of the possible spread of the foundation blocks under pressure of the not inconsiderable weight which they bore.

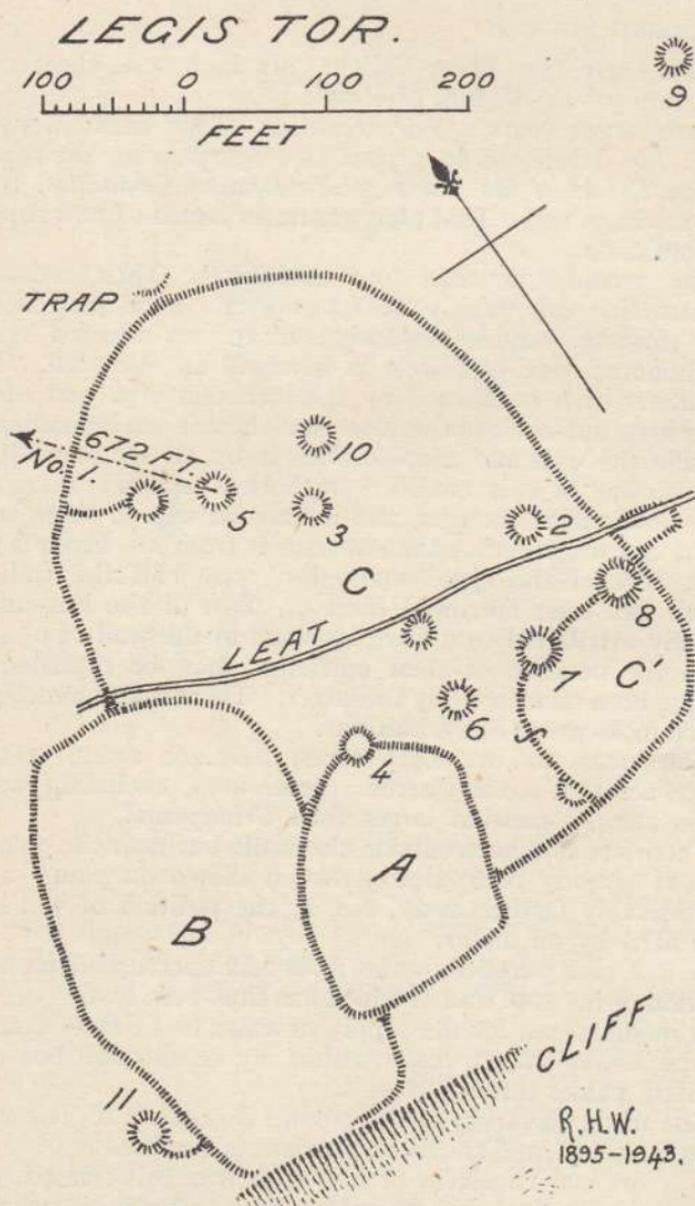
I have always held that it was a mistake to rebuild the structure to accord with the Committee's views of what it ought to be, especially as no single section through the ruins at any point where the rebuilding was contemplated was made and published. And so I ventured to dissent from the conclusions of my colleagues ; a task a little difficult for the youngest member. The matter will be found discussed later, under the heading of "*Structure of the Walls.*"

There is no doubt as to the entrance ; it lay on the south, toward the eastern end of the south wall. The opening is from 6ft. 6ins. to 7ft. in width, walled on either side, and the way paved and stepped. The side walls do not exceed 5ft. 6ins. in height, and I see no reason to suppose that the pound wall was more than, at the most, a few inches higher. The entrance squarely faces the slope of Hameldon, which here rises 150 feet in 200 yards ; a curious location were the intent of the pound military or protective. At the opening itself the gradient is 1 in 5. The necessity for paving is apparent to anyone who is familiar with the condition to which cattle reduce the land at field gates. But something more than paving there must have been. The Dartmoor Exploration Committee speaks of the water from Hameldon trickling through the opening. It does much more than trickle ; it rushes in miniature waterfalls down the steps, and in a storm blows up in one's face. It would seem that a catch-water gutter was necessary when the pound was occupied, and there is some evidence still traceable that there was such a gutter to the south of the entrance.

As to the other two entrances, in the west and east walls respectively. These are mere gaps, with no side walls, and that on the west opens into a small court built against the pound wall, the wall of which court has also been breached to permit the modern track to be formed. The alleged paving of these entrances is no more than the foundation of the wall. These openings are recent.

As to the water supply, Grims Lake runs under the wall

at the N.E. angle, disappears in bouldery ground, emerges to surface some forty yards further on, pursues a rather devious course, generally parallel to the N. wall, and passes out under



the wall at the N.W. angle. This is apparently the natural course of the stream, and the pound was built so as to enclose

a part of that course. Grims Lake dries in seasons of drought and can not have been an entirely dependable source of supply.

COMPOUND POUNDS.

(12). *Legis Tor*, Plym Valley. Six inch o.s., sheet cxii, s.e., lat. $50^{\circ}-28'-8''$, lon. $4^{\circ}-0'-55''$.

Forty-seven years ago, in reporting on my excavations at *Legis Tor*, I referred to a plan as accompanying the report (*Third Report of the Dartmoor Exploration Committee*, D.A., vol. xxviii, p. 184). That plan was never issued; I now supply the omission.

The pound comprises four enclosures. Their order of construction can readily be determined. A on plan is the only close the outline of which is in no way affected by its neighbours; one hut-circle is involved in the wall. The perimeter of B is affected by the intrusion of a part of A: there is no hut-circle in this close, but there is one immediately outside the wall and coupled with it by an arc of walling. The outline of C is modified by both A and B; there are nine huts within its area, and it may be said to share with A one hut, except that the entrance is from A. From C has been severed the space marked C', one half the wall of which has been borrowed from C. Two of the hut-circles already attributed to C were involved in the wall of C', and from the position of their entrances may be regarded as having been taken over by the latter. There is also something which looks much like a half hut.

The areas are, A..0.429 acres, B..1.200 acres, C+C'..2.631 acres, C'..0.266 acres. Total area, excluding walls, 4.260 acres, somewhat larger than *Grimspound*.

There are few huts outside the walls but near the pound; No. 11 already referred to; No. 9 shewn on plan; and, considerably farther away, No. 1, the position of which is indicated by an arrow.

A low cliff parallel to the river has encroached on B, a portion of the s.w. wall of which has thus been lost.

A modern leat, for the supply of water to Yeoland Consols in the Meavy valley, made within my recollection but now disused, passes through close C.

The mean elevation of the ground is 960ft. O.D., the slope is to the south, and the mean gradient is 1 in 8.6.

The original thickness of the walls was between 4ft. and 4ft. 6ins., sections, are given later. At the point marked "Trap" on the plan the wall has been adopted as part of a vermin trap formerly used in connection with *Legis Tor*, or New, Warren; compare *Trowlesworthy*, (5).

(13). *Yes Tor Bottom*, valley of the Walkham. Six inch o.s., cvi, s.w., lat. $50^{\circ}-32'-15''$, lon. $4^{\circ}-'1-18''$.

YES TOR BOTTOM.

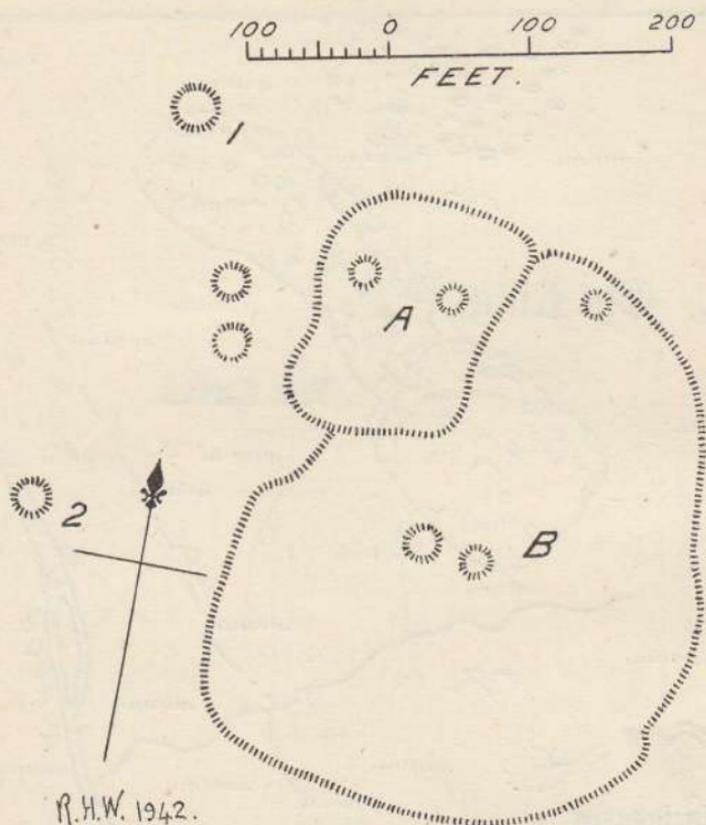


Fig. 10

The hut-circles of this small settlement were excavated by Mr. R. Burnard and the Rev. S. Baring-Gould (*Fifth Report of the Dartmoor Exploration Committee*, D.A., vol. xxx, pp. 99-104).

There are two closes of which A on plan has an area of 0.450 acre. This was obviously the earlier of the two; to it was subsequently added B, having an area of 2.144 acres. There are in A two hut-circles, in B three huts, and adjacent to the pound are four more huts, with one other not far distant; a total of ten which may fairly be said to be associated.

The walls had an original thickness of 4ft. 6ins., sections are given later. The mean elevation of the ground is 1,200ft. O.D. The slope is to the south, with a mean gradient of 1 in 9, but locally the gradient varies from 1 in 4, to 1 in 18.

Hut 1, see plan, was found to have been the subject of secondary occupation by tanners in the historic period.

(14). *Riders Rings*, or *The Rings*, Avon Valley. Six inch O.S., cxiii, S.E., lat. $50^{\circ}27'50''$, lon. $3^{\circ}51'42''$.

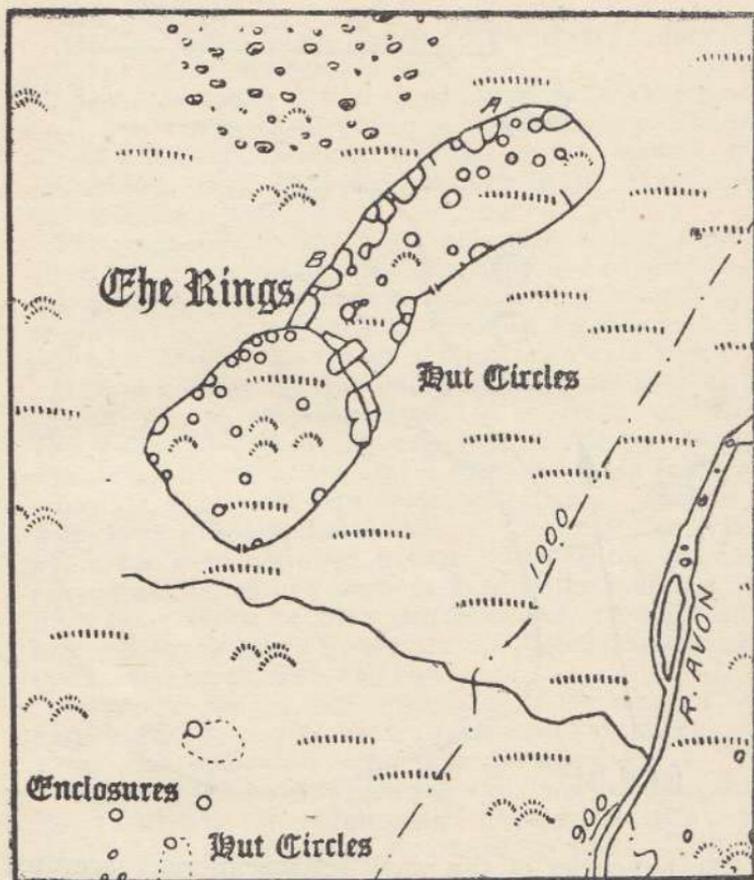


Fig. 11 Scale 12 inches to 1 mile.

Two hut-circles in this pound were excavated by myself in August, 1930, and the pound wall examined. I had hoped to prepare a complete survey during the past year, but conditions have not permitted. I accordingly use, by consent, a map which has previously appeared and which is adapted from the Ordnance Survey. The pound has two compartments, of which the southern was the first built. The area of this southern section is approximately 3.24 acres, that of the northern is approximately 3.73, making a total of 6.97 acres. Each section contains at least 17 huts. Both have courts built against the walls; these courts are few in the

southern compartment, but in the northern they attain a development unmatched elsewhere on Dartmoor.

Figure 12 gives a survey which I made of a length of the

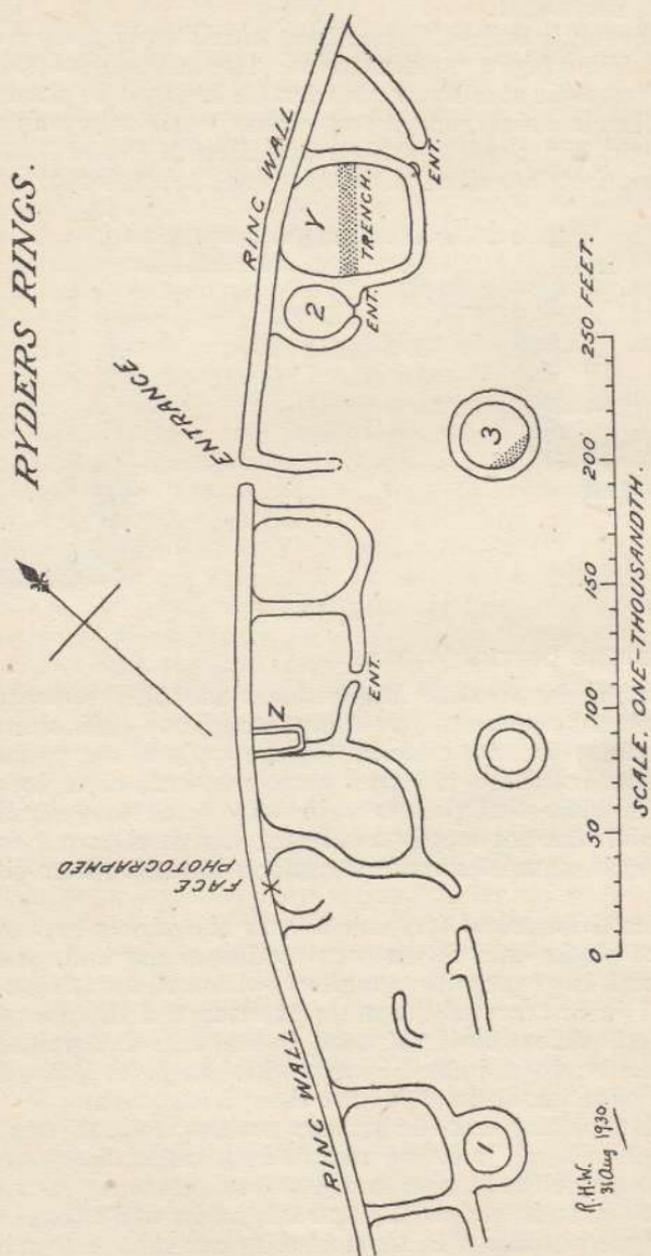


Fig. 12

wall of the north pound, that length which lies between A and B on figure 11. The mean elevation of the site is 1,100ft. O.D., the mean gradient is approximately 1 in 5, and the ground slopes south-east.

The wall is built with two faces of relatively small stones, and a filling of yet smaller stones. Its thickness is 6ft. 8ins., both faces still stand over considerable lengths; in places it is 4ft. 3ins. in height, and it was probably originally somewhat over 5ft. high; see figure 13, and *Twelfth Report Dartmoor Exploration Committee*, D.A., vol. lxxvii, pp. 116-119.

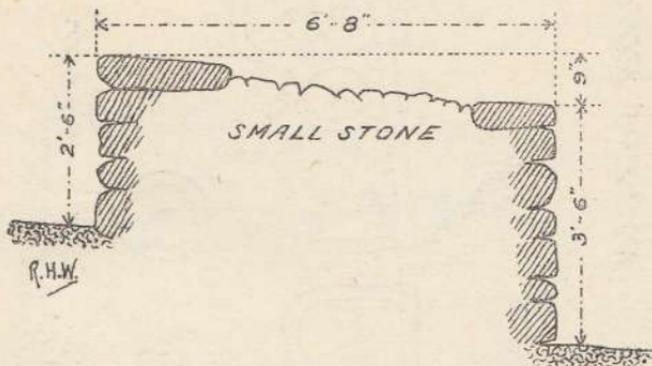


Fig 13.

STRUCTURE OF THE WALLS.

Some at least of the larger stones used in the megalithic monuments appear to have been brought to their site from a distance, but the material for the walls of the pounds is nowhere traceable to other than the immediate locality. This involves that pounds were not erected where building material was not locally available; but it does not follow that such material should be uniform in nature from site to site.

Thus *Grimspound* (11) comes near the higher extreme in size of blocks used in the construction of the wall, and the material is porphyritic granite; while *Riders Rings* (14) afford an instance of the other extreme and the use of the smallest efficient blocks of stone, in that case fine grained red felsite. And yet, judged by any other standard, *Riders Rings* are a more important structure than *Grimspound*.

It is true also that the builders not only took the material nearest to hand, but they took it as it came; nowhere can any trace be found of trimmed or broken stone; as nature yielded it, so it was used. And this might well be expected; the modern waller with his steel tools can split or trim as he will, the pound-builder of the early bronze age had but stone

hammers, and pebbles used as hammer-stones. The painfully wrought stone hammer was a work of art which would not have survived half a dozen attempts to trim a granite block, and the cruder pebble mounted in a handle or wielded in the hand would have met no greater success. The alternative was skill in making the best use of that which was available, and of that skill there was no lack.

The pound-builder picked a site where an immediate supply of building material was available, provided it was otherwise desirable. Naturally he avoided enclosing areas too greatly encumbered with surface stone; thus a visit to *Legis Tor* (12) will show that the linear clitters which descend the face of the hill were carefully evaded; but an otherwise desirable site not infrequently presented an excess of surface granite; if it were to be cleared a place of deposit for the surplus had to be found, and that place was the wall, which could be thickened to the necessary extent.

Similar problems in different ages often find similar solutions, and there are modern fences on Dartmoor the unusual height and thickness of which are made up of excess of surface stone; good examples may be seen near Wapsworthy in Petertavy parish.

Two conditions made for unusual thickness of wall, large blocks which in the absence of facilities for trimming could not be reduced to reasonable size, and surplus stone for which a place of deposit was required. Both conditions were operative at *Grimspound* (11).

Many large stones are slab-like or have at least one plane face of considerable area; such were not laid in the wall on their flat but were set upright on the inner face, exposing their greatest surface; there are walls where practically the whole of the inner face is so formed, with a minimum of ordinary walling, as, for example, *Hurston Pound* (Six inch o.s., lxxxix, s.e., lat. $50^{\circ}-38'-5''$, lon. $3^{\circ}-51'-47''$) mentioned by CROSSING; and *Shaugh Moor* (Six inch o.s., cxviii, n.e., lat. $50^{\circ}-26'-49''$, lon. $4^{\circ}-2'-18''$). This method has also been used in the historic period; a marked instance can be seen in the northern hedge of the road near *Shaugh Prior* as one approaches the village from Shaugh Bridge.

Sometimes, as on *Shaugh Moor*, the fence is lined on the inner side with slabs, and banked up on the outer side with stone and earth; an arrangement very effective in confining cattle within the enclosure, but of no value in the exclusion of any person or animal from the pound.

Where the fence consists of normal walling the pound wall is built with two faces, unconnected by any throughers or ties, and with smaller stone set in the centre. The most marked example is at *Riders Rings*. This absence of

throughers is largely due to the fact that the stones could not be cut or trimmed, and only a few would present themselves of the required length, neither so long as to project beyond the face of the wall, nor so short as not to reach, at least nearly, from face to face.

Finally it may be noted that today the normal height of a Devonshire hedge is from 4ft. 6ins. to 5ft., while the top bar of a field gate stands some four and a half feet above ground level.

See plate 29 for sections of pound walls.

The wall of *Grimspound* needs individual consideration. The Dartmoor Exploration Committee decided that the wall really consisted of two independent walls, with a space between. The Committee did not stop there. It reconstructed a length to show that the material could be so disposed; but this was no evidence, since the material could be disposed in many ways. It was held, and correctly, that if the wall were solid it could not have been more than five feet high. This, incidentally, is the full ordinary height of a pound wall. But it was also held to be "absurd that a wall of hugh stones, ten feet thick, should be only five feet high." My own view is that the wall was formed of huge stones because large blocks were all that were available. I think that nine feet in thickness is a fairer measurement than ten feet; and consider that the necessity for clearing the area of the pound, to some extent at least, caused the use of more stones than would normally have been the case. If a nine feet wall, five feet high, were an absurdity, we may consider what was substituted for it; this was an arrangement of two parallel walls with a space of approximately 3ft. 6ins. in width between them. Even so the Committee had to conclude that:—"the walls were apparently not high enough to serve as a defence against an enemy, and the hollow between the walls would, it is supposed, make the defence of them difficult." Certainly the two walls could more easily be thrown down than could the same material disposed in one structure. The defenders would less readily be able to bestir themselves in defence of the wall; and any defender who found himself in the space between the walls might as well have his hands tied behind his back. On the other hand, for a cattle enclosure, five feet is ample height of wall, and we have the fact that the side walls of the entrance are but 5ft. 6ins. in height.

There are double walls on Dartmoor, on the *Dewerstone Hill* (4) with a space between the walls or from twelve to thirteen feet, and at *Whittor*, where that space varied between ten and forty feet; room enough in either for a fighting man to give a good account of himself. Both on the *Dewerstone*

Hill and at Whittor the sites offer good defensive possibilities ; at *Grimspound* there are none.

I know no physical evidence which supports the Committee's conclusion.

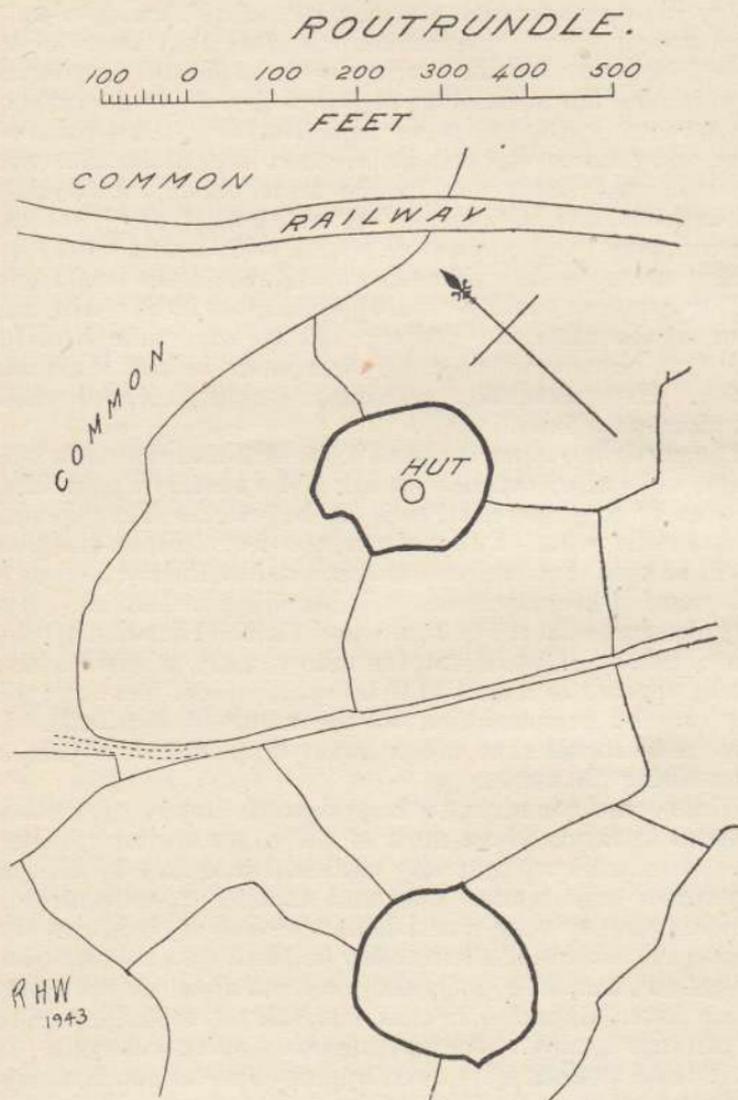


Fig. 14

POUNDS INVOLVED IN LATER ENCLOSURES.

The pound-builders selected the most favourable sites, but often at an elevation unsuited to modern agriculture. None the less they sometimes occupied land which has since

found favour with later enclosers. Thus pounds and hut-circles alike are to be found on modern farm-land, and the pounds themselves have sometimes preserved their individuality in the new role of fields. *Roundy Farm* in the Meavy valley (six inch o.s., cxii, N.E., lat. $50^{\circ}-30'-48''$, lon. $4^{\circ} 0'-22''$), most probably owes its name to the fact that many of its little fields are still readily recognisable as prehistoric pounds, in which are fair sprinklings of hut-circles. The doorway of the old farmhouse, now removed to Burrator, bears the date 1668, and there is reason to believe that in or about that year the land was taken in. In the same valley, at *Stanlake* (six inch o.s., cvi, S.E., lat. $50^{\circ}-31'-20''$, lon. $4^{\circ}-1'-0''$), at least one compound and one simple pound, with a number of hut-circles, preserve their identity among the farm enclosures.

The instances could be multiplied almost indefinitely, and from all the moorland border; but we may take Nos. (9) and (10) already referred to, *Routrundle* in the Walkham valley. Here there are two simple pounds, each of which functions as a field.

The northern pound contains 0.601 acre and there is a hut-circle, not quite centrally placed. The southern pound has an area of 0.734 acre, there is no hut-circle. The distance between the walls of the two is 400 feet. From the plan it will be seen that the pounds stand out distinctively even in this group of irregular fields. *Routrundle* is at least a reasonably old tenement; the first mention of which I have knowledge is in a survey of Walkhampton manor, 1585, where Richard Worth appears as tenant of *Rowtrendall*, under lease of 1556. The present pronunciation of the name is *Rutrundle*. It may be ventured that the roundels or pounds had part in determining the name.

While some pounds have in prehistoric days been utilised as fields in farms where most of the closes are later, others have been used without any addition save that of a court and square-built house. One such transfer to more modern uses has already been mentioned, *Merrivale* (6); others are, *Willings Walls*, in the Plym valley (six inch o.s., cxii, S.E., lat. $50^{\circ}-28'-26''$, lon. $4^{\circ}-0'-10''$), and *Brockhill Foot*, in the valley of the Avon (six inch o.s., cxiii, S.E., lat. $50^{\circ}-28'-22''$), as good an instance as any. The list might easily be enlarged. In effect these pounds have been appropriated as small, ready-made, newtakes.

LYNCHETS.

Lynchets are ridges or terraces formed where the plough has been used on hill-side enclosures and arise from the furrow being turned downhill. Dr. E. C. Curwen claims to have found them in the Dartmoor pounds, and cites *Trowles-*

worthy (*Antiquity*, vol. i, pp. 281-284). Mr. E. H. Rogers (*Torquay Natural History Society, Transactions*, vol. viii, pp. 177-8) quotes CURWEN, accepts that the pounds on *Trowlesworthy* are lynchetted, and adds that the pound on *Legis Tor* (12) is well lynchetted. But he doubts whether the accumulation of soil against the foot walls of the pounds can be fairly attributed to cultivation. Very certainly there are other means by which such a result might come to being through the ages; there has been for instance a growth of soil of from eighteen inches to two feet over the floors of the hut-circles since they were abandoned, even over the floors of huts which were reoccupied in the sixteenth century by the tinner. Nor do I think that we may credit man in the early bronze age with the possession of ploughs; more probably his best tool for breaking the soil was a digging stick.

Statements of this nature send one into the field once more; it is not enough that one has no note of lynchets, nor ever suspected their existence. I have revisited *Trowlesworthy* and *Legis Tor*, and the sections of the walls of these pounds, plate 29, will show that at *Legis Tor* (12) there is nothing whatever in the nature of accumulated soil against the inside of the lower wall of the pound, while at *Trowlesworthy* (5) the greatest depth of soil so accumulated is 9 inches, and this dies away to nothing in a width of 6 feet. At *Yes Tor Bottom* (13) the greatest accumulated depth is 5 inches, which dies away to nothing in a width of 7 feet 6 inches. Lynchets may be removed from the picture.

POUNDS AND HUT-CIRCLES.

As I have said, simple pounds may have no hut-circle within the enclosure; they may or may not be in the immediate vicinity of huts. Thus there are huts quite near the pound at *Shavercombe* (1), while there are no huts within a quarter of a mile of *Hingston Hill* (2).

Where there are huts obviously associated with a pound, whether simple or compound, they may all lie within the enclosure, as with the 24 huts at *Grimspound* (11), or some may be within and some without the wall, as at *Yes Tor Bottom* (13).

A pound is not a necessary adjunct of a cluster of hut-circles; at *Whittenknowles Rocks*, Plym valley (six inch o.s., cxii, s.e., lat. $50^{\circ}-29'-8''$, lon. $3^{\circ}-59'-39'$) there is a cluster of twenty-three huts, but no pound; six hundred yards south, on *Eastern Tor*, is a pound enclosing one hut. At *Watern Oke*, on the Tavy (six inch o.s., lxxxviii, s.e., lat. $50^{\circ}-37'-58''$, lon. $4^{\circ}-1'-49''$), there is a group of sixty huts, with only some slight connecting walls, but no certain pound, and there is another group of eighteen huts devoid of connecting walls;

while *Riders Rings* (I4) enclose at least 34 huts, although there are none outside.

"CELTIC FIELDS."

On or near the borders of cultivation attempts have been made at enclosure from time to time. The small fields then formed are marked most usually by their rectilinear fences and sharp angles; in complete contrast, not only with the work of the pound builders, but also with that of the earlier agriculturists of the historic period. A great part of these enclosures have gone back to the moor; many of them were formed on lands where hut-circles existed. There has been a tendency to couple the enclosures and the circles, and term the closes "Celtic Fields." ORMEROD (*Rude Stone Remains*, p. 10 and map) describes and figures a group of such enclosures near *Teigncombe*; these are so modern in type that they are even provided with accommodation roads. But ORMEROD held that the hut-circles were "the dwellings of the old workers and washers of tin" and is prepared to accept that they would have been in use during the first ten centuries of the Christian era, and as the streaming for tin in the district near Chagford appears to have in a great measure ceased by the time of Queen Elizabeth, the time between those periods may, he held, probably be taken as that when the huts were abandoned. In justice it has to be remembered that he wrote before the spade had done its work.

Another group of such fields that has been cited is at *Foales Arrishes*, on Pil Tor (six inch o.s., cviii, N.W., lat. $50^{\circ}-34'-6''$, lon. $3^{\circ}-46'-55''$) where the mere fact of the enclosures retaining the name of their tenant should have warned off all celtophiles.

CONCLUSIONS.

The pound walls were normally from four to five feet in thickness, and five feet in height. Very rarely, and under exceptional conditions, the walls were from six feet to nine feet in thickness, and some, perhaps, were six feet in height. One form of structure, where the wall was banked-up on the outside and stone-faced within, was efficient in enclosing, and wholly inefficient in excluding. There is no trace of strategic method in the selection of site. Sir Gardner Wilkinson held that *Grimspound* was "well placed to command the passage over the hills." It commanded nothing, and could be bypassed on either side, over ground presenting no difficulty.

KING, ORMEROD and SHORTT all held that *Grimspound* was a fold for cattle; ORMEROD extends that view to other

pounds. It seems that such was their one effective use. It is quite true that a wolf or a human enemy could pass the wall; but with either the true danger was that they might stampede or drive away the animals. Against this a substantial fence was complete protection, as long as the gateway was held, or any breach in the wall. In the early bronze age, and much later in early feudal times, raids and shock tactics were the order of the day, theft the principal inducement. Such tactics must either succeed of first intention, or fail. The delaying effect of the pound wall was effective in precluding immediate success.

And, if we consider uses in times of peace, the storms of Dartmoor would drive flocks and herds far from their intended lairs, wolves might scatter them, and even well mannered animals are apt to stray on their own initiative. Pastoral peoples might well sleep sounder at night in the knowledge that their wealth was safely disposed within a fence.

It remains to be considered whether the pounds were not only folds but also fields in which crops were raised. The presence of the animals does not appear consistent with growing crops, and the manner in which the huts are scattered over the pound is often such as would leave little ground without a right of way across it to some one or other. But crops there may have been, if the possibility of wooden fences is conceded.

As to the courts which line the inner face of the walls of some pounds, it seems probable that they were cattle and sheep pens; if so the animals might have been confined therein, leaving space available for crops. But nowhere, except in the northern half of *Riders Rings*, are such courts in any way a marked feature.

It is to be noted that the builders were content to rely upon the presence of neighbouring streams for their water supply; and took rather a generous view of the word "neighbouring." For them it meant some source, not too far off, to which the cattle could be driven for watering, and from which water could be fetched for human needs, while it is not to be thought that those needs were exacting. There are exceptions; in some few pounds the wall is an arc, the chord of which is the bank of a stream; such an instance will be found at *Raddick* in the Meavy valley (six inch O.S., cvi, S.E., lat. $50^{\circ}-31'-30''$, lon. $4^{\circ}-0'-31''$).

VERMIN TRAPS.

This subject is admittedly a by-lane in archæology, but it chances to lead direct to the subject of pounds. SPENCE BATE, writing in 1871 (D.A., vol. iv, pp. 501-2) mentions the pound on *Trowlesworthy* (5) and its "entrances," of which

he says:—"I think that these two kinds of works at the gateways or entrances to the camp are evidence of the military character of the enclosure, since they were evidently designed to prevent a rush of many men, it being impossible for more than one person to pass at a time. . . . The whole plan, I think, is an interesting specimen of ancient military engineering." In 1889, when preparing my paper on *The Moorland Plym* (P.I., vol. x, pp. 299-300), I accepted the views which SPENCE BATE had expressed, and with the enthusiasm of

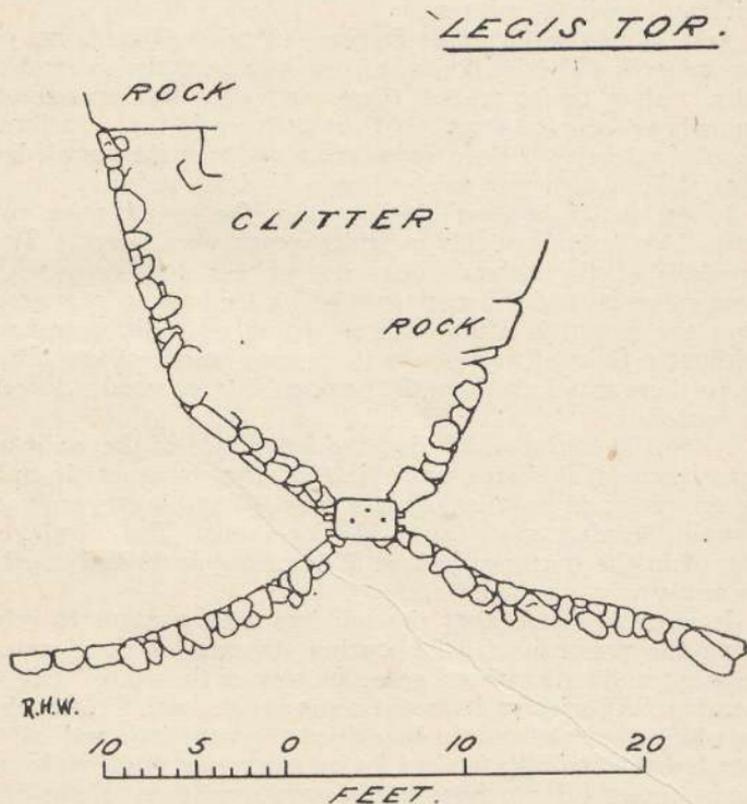


Fig. 15 a.

youth soon added to the list of these works of fortification. Another pound adjacent to (5) was found to have entrances similar to the northern entrance of (5). There were openings in the warren walls provided with similar approach wings, and there were even clitters of tors in the same sort "defended." This embarrassment of riches should have warned me, especially when I found the structure on *Legis Tor*, presently to be described. None-the-less I published my

finds as military works, and contented myself with treating the *Legis Tor* example as an unsolved mystery.

Such a contented frame of mind could not well continue, and I had the happy thought of approaching my friend, Mr. Richard Lavers, the warrener at Trowlesworthy. He could tell me that he had heard that the structures were vermin traps, for the elimination of stoats, weasels and other small animals of prey; but he did not know how the traps were set. Richard Lavers died on the 15th March, 1914, at the age of 94.

The traps in their complete form—most are now somewhat ruined—consisted of short tunnels, usually 3ft. 6ins. in length, about 4ins. wide and 11ins. high in the clear. The bottom paved with granite, and the sides built in the same stone, covered in with a slab of granite 3ft. 6ins. in length and from 1ft. 6ins. to 2ft. in breadth. At each end of the tunnel the sides were vertically grooved so that shutters might fall in the grooves and close the ends of the traps. Three or four holes, sunk in the top of the coverstone, were obviously used in connection with the tripping apparatus which let down the shutters and sprang the traps. Leading up to either end of the tunnels were wing walls. Any stoat, passing that way, would find it easier to run through the tunnel than to climb the low wing walls. The animals were permitted to use the passage unmolested, until one day the trap was set, tripped by the animal on his way through the tunnel, and the beast confined. Fig. 15, a, b, c, d, give details of the trap on *Legis Tor*, and fig. 16 is a plan of the coverstone of a trap on *Gutter*.

These two traps are at the foot of the summit rocks of their respective tors, and both *Legis Tor* and *Gutter* will be found within the area of six inch O.S. sheet, cxii, S.E. But the traps are not marked on the survey.

I have been puzzled as to the material from which the shutters of these traps may have been made; recently when revising the plan of *Legis Tor* pound (12) I noticed that the north wall had been used to form two of the approach wings (fig. 9, p 285) to a tunnel which had itself been ruined, and, by chance, I found, tucked away in a crevice in the pound wall, two roofing slates cut to the correct shape for shutters, each perforated for suspension, and each worn by use. Since which I have been able to confirm the use of roofing slate in other instances. See plate 31, figs. 1 and 2. Nothing better than slate could have been adopted, indestructible by weather and unperceivable by the teeth of rodents or carnivores.

See plate 30 (figs. 1 and 2) for views of *Legis Tor* trap, fig. 3, gutter, coverstone.

We can not fix a date as that of the first construction of the

traps. The only hint afforded is by the coverstone at *Gutter*; this has been split to reduce it to an appropriate size, and the split has been made by the old "slot" method which was in universal use up to the end of the nineteenth century,

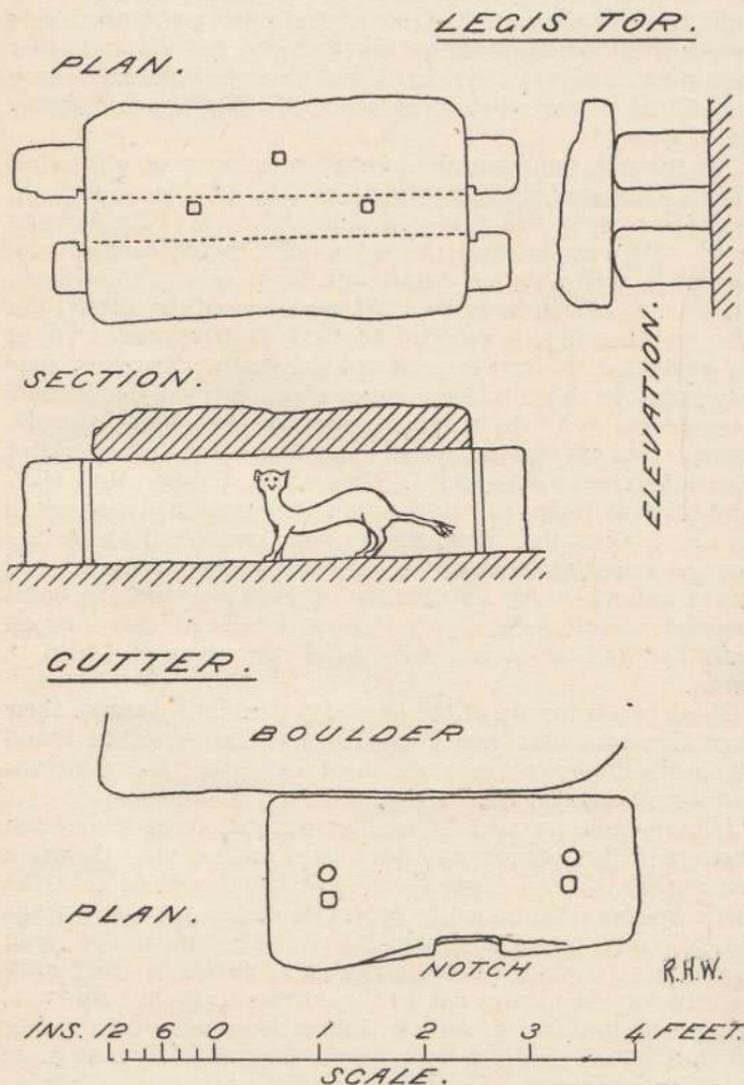


Fig. 15 b c d, and Fig. 16

and was later displaced by the "drill." Nor do we know when they fell into disuse; MOORE (ROWE's *Perambulation of Dartmoor*) first edition, Appendix v, p. 236) has a note:— "These animals [rabbits] are preserved in warrens, at Dits-

worthy and Trowlsworthy on the moor, surrounded by enclosures to prevent them from straying. Traps are set in the walls, whence most of the wild animals of the preceding list have been obtained." These words were written in 1847-8, but do not necessarily involve that the traps were still operated. From the fact that LAVERS was not fully informed as to the method of their use it would appear that they must have fallen into disuse some years before 1847.

This method of trapping was not confined to the warrens of Ditsworthy and Trowlesworthy; I have seen cross walls on the summit of *Sheepstor*, obviously the remains of traps. These were in better order and condition when, in 1802, BRAY visited the tor. (*Borders of the Tamar and the Tavy*, first edition, vol. i, p. 234.) He noted:—"We discovered near the top of the tor two stone ridges, almost covered with turf, that intersected each other at nearly right angles, and formed a cross. In the middle was a flat horizontal stone. Measuring from this central point, the ridge to the east was twelve paces, west six, north seven, and south eleven. We afterwards discovered a larger one below, at the south side of the tor. At first we conjectured they were sepulchral monuments; and afterwards thought they might have been folds for sheep. . . . But, after all, these conjectures are entitled to little attention."

My late friend, Mr. C. W. Dymond, could tell me that similar structures at Worlebury had puzzled him, but that he had been told that those also were traps and connected with a warren.

In conclusion it may be permissible to anticipate another difficulty which may arise in connection with the pounds, the presence of shallow granite troughs in the walls of two of them. These will be found on *Shaugh Moor* (six inch o.s., cxviii, N.E., lat. $50^{\circ}-27'-9\frac{1}{2}"$, lon. $4^{\circ}-1'-45"$) and on the southern slope of *Butterton Hill*, above Addicombe, Erme valley (six inch o.s., cxix, S.E., lat. $50^{\circ}-24'-29"$, lon. $3^{\circ}-53'-54"$). The explanation in either instance is the same; the stone-masons have never hesitated to use prehistoric walls as quarries and have selected from them such stone as suited their needs; their habit in the past was to work the stone on the open moor where found and to bring home the finished article. It results that part-finished work lies here and there upon the moor. These troughs are only part-finished, and lie in the pound walls because, in those walls, stone was found suited to conversion. Archæologically they must be described as recent.

PERIOD.

Of the localities mentioned above, huts have been excavated at *Broadun* (8), *Foales Arrishes*, *Grimspond* (11), *Legis Tor* (12), *Merrivale* (6), *Riders Rings* (14), *Watern Oke*, *Whittor*, and *Yes Tor Bottom* (13), with results everywhere consistent with the period being that of Early Bronze.

The word "*recent*" has been used in this paper as synonymous with the phrase "*within the historic period.*"

NOTE:—References to the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* are indicated by the initials "D.A.", where the reference is to the *Plymouth Institution* the initials "P.I." are used.

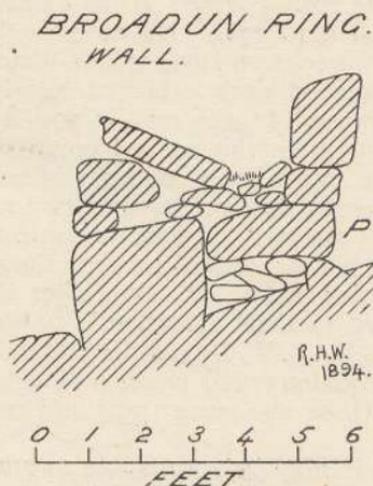
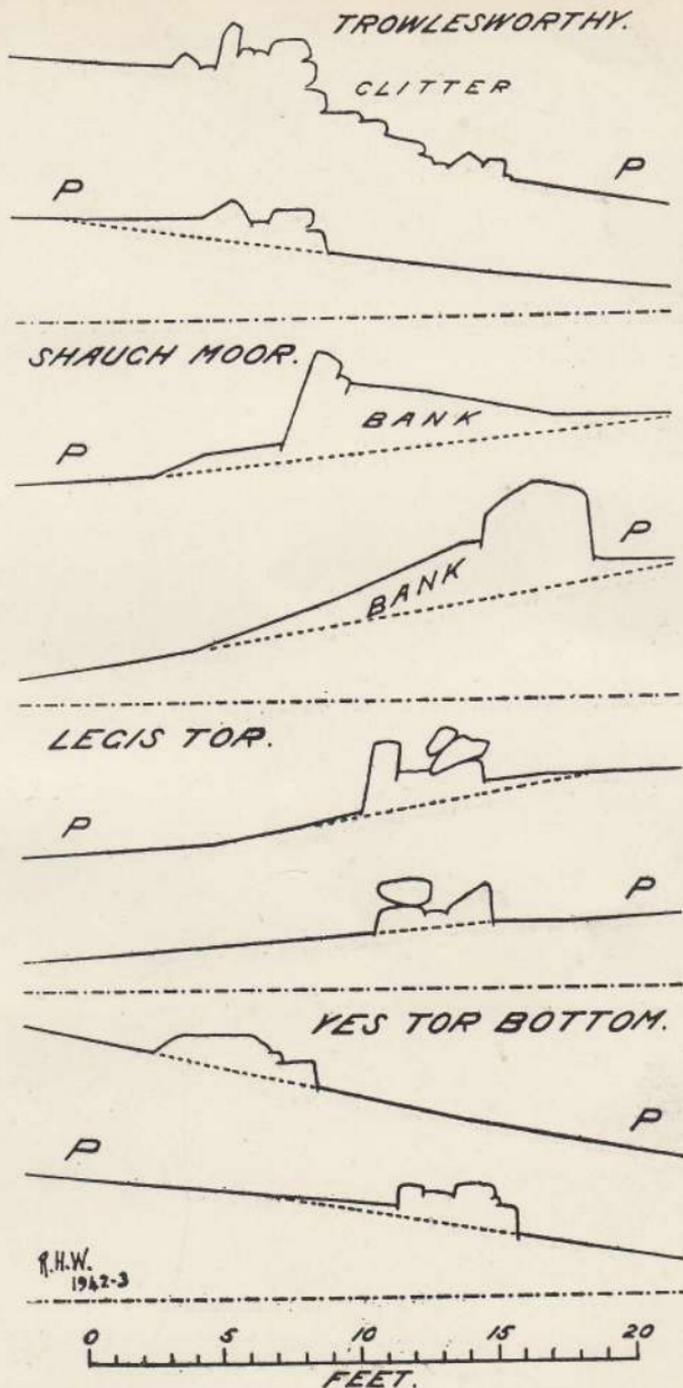


Fig. 17. A SECTION OF WALL OF BROADUN RING,
a good example of one type.

CORRIGENDA, VOL. LXXIV.

- p. 177, l. 31, for *Iceland* read *Ireland*.
 p. 180, l. 30, for *suevived* read *survived*.
 p. 185, l. 11, for *carly* read *early*.
 p. 186, l. 33, for *hankinhorn* read *Lankinhorn*.
 p. 189, l. 46, for *sequal* read *sequel*.
 p. 190, l. 47, for *face* read *fact*.
 p. 190, l. 48, for *Tavistock with Mutley* read *Taviton with Nutley*.
 p. 191, l. 6, for *1083* read *1086*.
 p. 192, l. 44, for *Alas* read *also*.
 p. 195, l. 13, for *H. J. Kempe* read *A. J. Kempe*.



SECTIONS OF POUND WALLS

Dartmoor Pounds—To face page 302

1



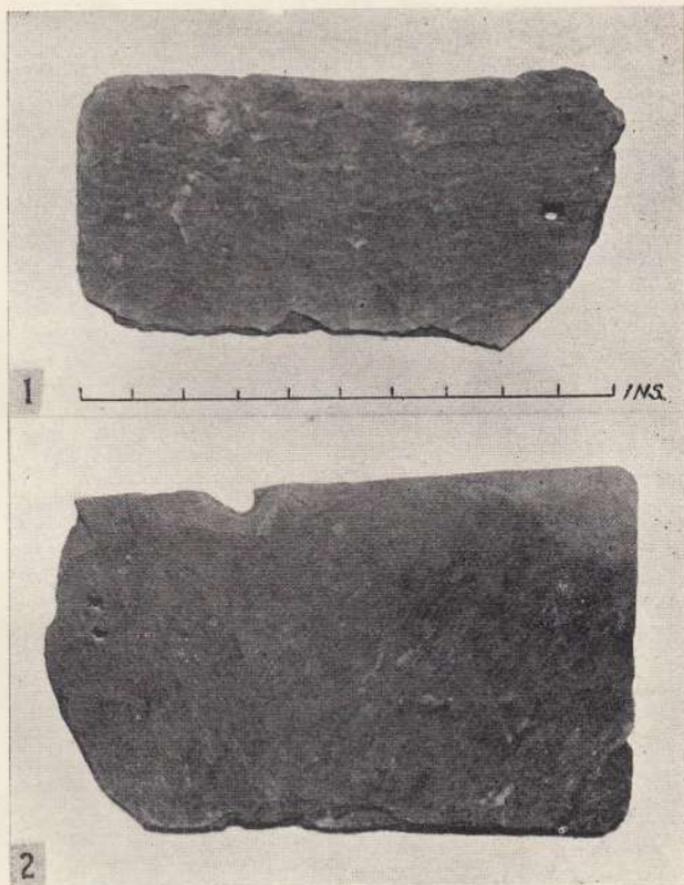
2



3



VERMIN TRAPS. FIG. 1. LEGIS TOR, side (top) view. FIG. 2. LEGIS TOR, end view. FIG. 3. GUTTER, side (top) view.
R. H. Worth



VERMIN TRAPS

R. H. Worth

FIG. 1. SLATE SHUTTER, LEGIS TOR POUND

FIG. 2. SLATE SHUTTER, near SHADYBACK TOR