

EIGHTEENTH REPORT OF THE BARROW COMMITTEE.

EIGHTEENTH REPORT of the Committee, consisting of Mr. P. F. S. Amery, Rev. S. Baring-Gould, Dr. Brushfield, Mr. R. Burnard, Mr. Cecil M. Firth, Mr. J. Brooking Rowe, and Mr. R. Hansford Worth (Secretary), appointed to collect and record facts relating to Barrows in Devonshire, and to take steps, where possible, for their investigation.

Edited by R. H. WORTH, Hon. Secretary.

(Read at Great Torrington, August, 1899.)

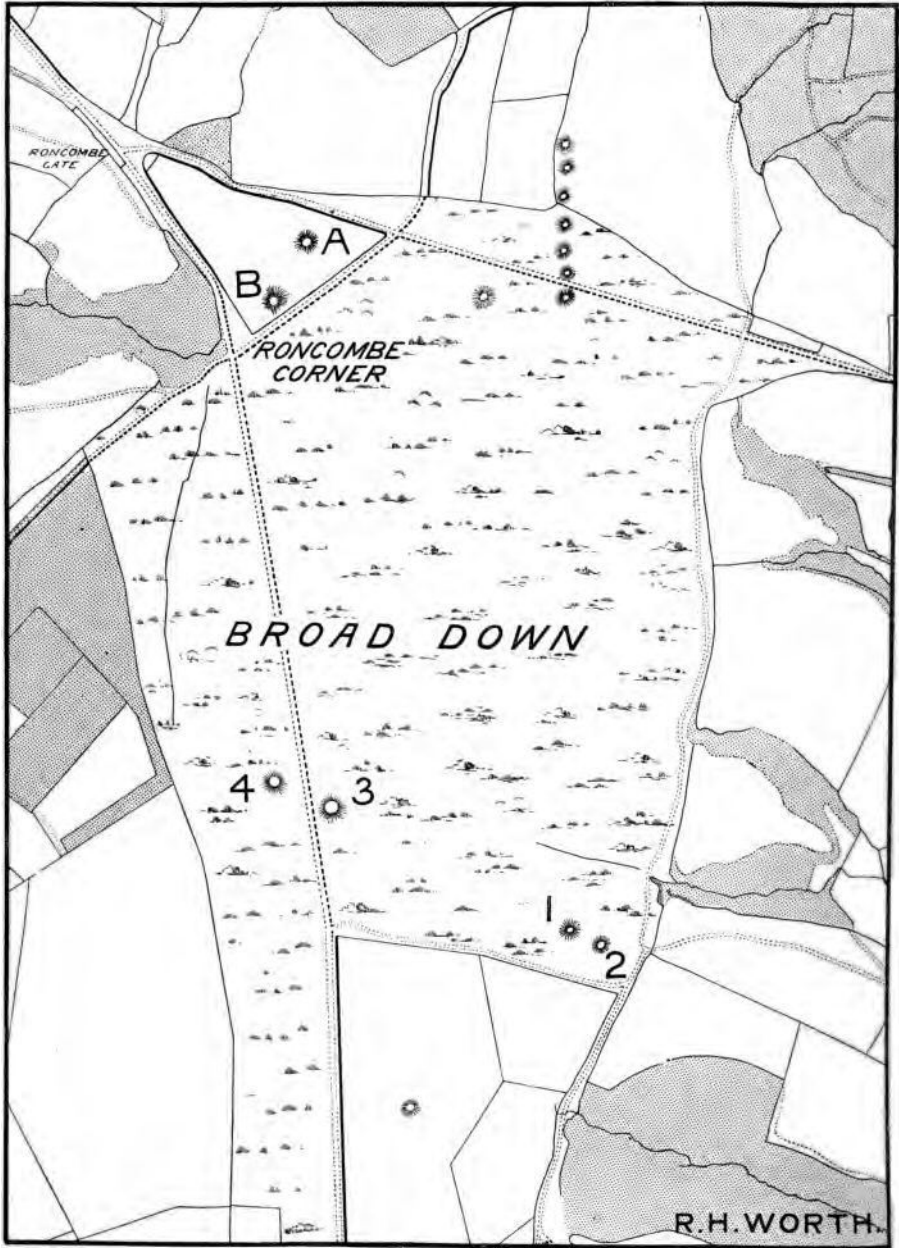
YOUR Committee's Report this year deals with the exploration of certain barrows on Broad Down, near Honiton; the exploration of barrows on Raddick Hill by Mr. Burnard; and of a barrow at Torrington by Mr. G. M. Doe.

BROAD DOWN.

This work was undertaken at the kind invitation of W. Edmonds, Esq., of Wiscombe Park, Colyton. Mr. Edmonds not only gave permission for the exploration of barrows on his own property, but also obtained similar consents from the owners of adjacent land, and himself provided all labour.

In the *Transactions* of this Association, 1868, Honiton meeting, will be found the record of the examination of three barrows at Broad Down by the Rev. R. Kirwan, M.A. From the character of the "finds" then reported, it appeared that considerable success should attend the present operations.

Only one member of the Committee, the Hon. Secretary, could arrange to attend, but the whole work was carried out under his constant supervision, except the refilling of some of the excavations. The results obtained are chiefly interesting as an addendum to Mr. Kirwan's paper. The one "find,"



General Plan of Broad Down.

made only when the refilling was in progress, supplied just that which was wanting to his results, an article of bronze.

It is to be regretted that no plan accompanied Mr. Kirwan's paper, as the exact locality of the barrows he opened is a matter of some doubt. It appears evident that other barrows have been opened at some unknown time from which no results have been reported; possibly these were disturbed before his explorations.

Three barrows were examined in the course of the present operations and another partially opened.

On the plan accompanying this report these barrows will be found indicated by the respective numerals 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The first barrow opened (No. 1) was a cairn of stones which had been collected from the surface of the adjacent ground and piled into a heap 25 feet in diameter and 2 feet 9 inches high above the subsoil. A circle of 11 feet diameter was cleared in the centre of this barrow, and a trench carried right through to the southern circumference.

A considerable quantity of charcoal was found at and near the centre, but no trace of either bone, metal, pottery, or manufactured flints.

The second barrow (No. 2) was a similar cairn, having a diameter of 24 feet and a height above the subsoil of 1 foot 9 inches. A trench was taken out on a north and south line across the whole width of the barrow, and another on a line east and west through the centre. A large quantity of charcoal was found a little to the north of the centre, and scattered charcoal over the general surface of the subsoil at the centre. A small, round flint stone, not apparently derived from the flints of the Down, was also found. Here again there was no trace of bone, metal, pottery, or manufactured flint.

In both these cairns the excavations were carried as far toward the margin as any trace of charcoal could be found. The margins seemed in each case to be formed by stones which had rolled down from the cairn.

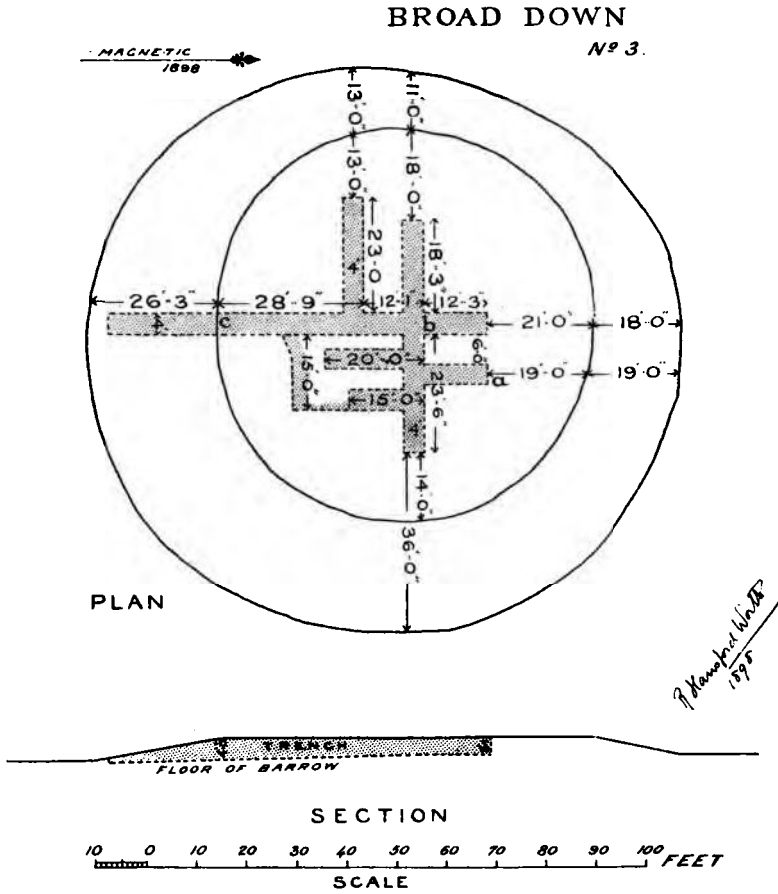
Number 3 was a large barrow, having an extreme diameter north and south of 118 feet 4 inches, and east and west 110 feet 9 inches. The height varied from 4 feet to 3 feet 1 inch, and the summit presented a broad and almost level surface, approximately circular and measuring 74 feet 1 inch in diameter from north to south, and 77 feet 9 inches from east to west.

A fully dimensioned plan, showing the nature and extent of the explorations, accompanies this report.

Proceedings were opened by driving a trench four feet wide from the southern margin of the barrow northward across the centre. Near the centre some charcoal was found on the floor or subsoil. Another trench was then driven east and west, the southern side of which again uncovered charcoal. Further trenches were then opened, but none of those to the westward of the north and south central trench yielded even charcoal, and neither the north and south central trench nor any other yielded charcoal north of the east and west central trench. Two shallow depressions in the subsoil, at the points marked by crosses on the plan, were found filled with charcoal, and the whole area shaded on the plan was subsequently excavated, with the result that the extent of the charcoal bed was found to be practically limited to this area. A rounded flint pebble, apparently foreign to the soil, was the only object found. A clean-cut vertical section of this barrow revealed a series of superimposed whitish streaks of soil, separated by dark streaks of a little less thickness; the streaks were nowhere continuous horizontally. Careful examination showed that each white streak with its superincumbent black layer represented a turf cut from the surface of the Down, a series of which heaped together formed the barrow. The black layers are formed by the surface soil and vegetation of the turf, and the white streaks are formed by portions of the subsoil lifted with it. The appearance of the whole is distinctive and characteristic. No stone enters into the building of this barrow.

Much of the excavated material was turned back into the old trenches as new trenches were dug, or otherwise turned over for a second time; but it was not until the final refilling that any manufactured object was found. A concretion of iron oxide, about 3 inches long by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, was seen to have a tubular form; iron concretions were frequent, and many had been examined without result as the excavations proceeded. On examination it was found that in the present case the iron had segregated to and around an article of bronze, the only certain feature of which was its tubular form.

The bronze was fully oxidised, in part apparently converted into carbonates, and was exceedingly friable; the iron oxide, on the other hand, although in places soft, was in other parts extremely compact and unyielding; the whole presenting an extremely interesting problem, to remove sufficient iron to uncover the bronze without utterly crushing the latter in the process. A penknife was sacri-



Plan and Section of Barrow No. 3, Broad Down.



ficed to science, and the iron "nibbled" off and coaxed away with the small blade, the process being ultimately successful in revealing the nature of the bronze object, although much refractory iron still adheres to it. The spear- or lance-head, as it proved to be, has at present an extreme length of $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The greatest diameter is just under $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, the least is half an inch, beyond this last the point is missing; restored on the same curve as the remaining portion, it would add a little over half an inch to the length. This lance-head has been formed from bronze plate lapped so as to present two thicknesses at practically every point, and apparently welded at or towards the point. The interior of the lance-head is comparatively slightly encrusted with iron, probably because the wood of the shaft long protected this portion; at the small end fragments of this wood still remain in good condition, apparently protected from rot by mineral impregnation. Photographs and a restoration of this object accompany the report. The restoration has been limited to the present length plus a point, but it is possible the original length was greater.

Compared with Mr. Kirwan's finds this may not be very imposing, but added to them it acquires importance as completing the series.

The barrows opened by Mr. Kirwan had defined areas of burnt earth and charcoal, with calcined bones; the present barrow corresponds somewhat with these, but the charcoal area was ill-defined, and calcined bones, if present, are represented by a grey ash only. Mr. Kirwan found in one barrow a Kimmeridge coal "drinking-cup, with pointed elliptic base, a handle, and incised chevron ornament, of a height of $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches and a width at mouth of 3 inches; in another barrow, an 'incense-cup' of unusual form, 2 inches high and 3 inches wide at mouth, made in $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pale brown earthenware and ornamented with incised chevrons, and containing bone; from the same barrow came some large fragments of pottery, devoid of ornamentation. The third barrow yielded an urn, estimated to have been 7 inches high, 6 inches wide at the mouth, and 7 inches wide at the base of the rim; 8 inches greatest diameter, and 3 inches at base. The exterior is quite plain, with the exception of a single horizontal line of impressed cord or thong, which encircles it at that point where it attains its greatest diameter. The surface of the rim is filled in with diagonal and horizontal lines. The exterior edge of the rim is punctured by large dots or indentations."

Mr. Kirwan also took from this barrow a "food-vessel" of pale red pottery, about $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height and 5 inches greatest diameter, ornamented by a series of horizontal incised lines parallel to the rim.

From a barrow at Love Hayne, near Broad Down, a winged bronze celt was taken about A.D. 1760.

The find now reported is, however, the first record of bronze from barrows on Broad Down itself.

Barrow No. 4 of the present series was only partially explored; some previous inquirer had made an excavation in the summit, but his excavation had not reached the floor. So far it has not yielded anything beyond charcoal. That the barrows on Broad Down belong to the Bronze Age can now no longer be doubted, and although the results of the latest work have been somewhat meagre, there is everything to encourage further investigation. (R. H. WORTH.)

BARROWS ON RADDICK HILL.

There are four barrows on the slope of this hill. Two are near the Devonport leat, another a short distance north of this, and the fourth still further in the same direction.

The two nearest the leat are 16 and 22 feet in diameter respectively; the smaller was about 15 inches above the surface of the ground, the larger 3 feet.

Neither was surrounded with a circle of stones.

The larger had evidently been dug into, whilst the smaller appeared to be quite untouched.

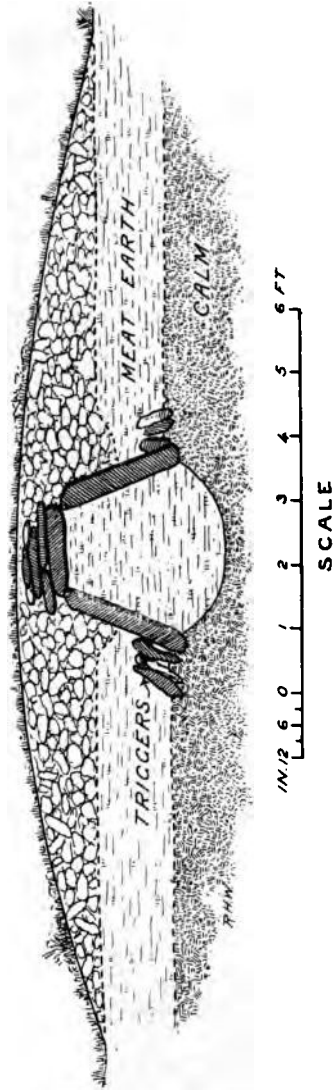
The latter was thoroughly explored, and a very curious kistvaen was disclosed. The side stones were sloped so as to form a kist, requiring only small stones to form the cover.

The barrow was formed of small stones, and the kist and pit in the "calm" were filled with "meat" earth and "calm" mixed together with a few fragments of wood charcoal. Heather roots abounded inside, so that if bone ashes had been placed in this grave they would long ago have been eaten up by vegetation.

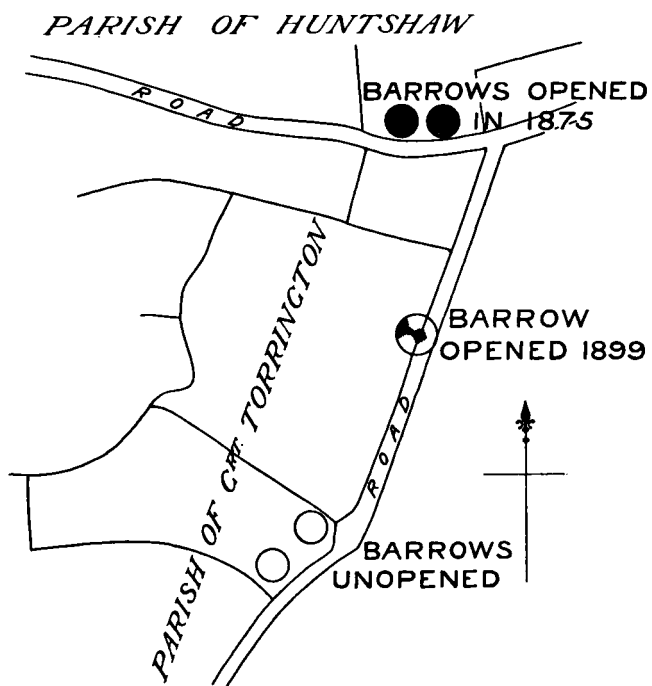
The larger barrow had been previously rifled. It contained a kist 3 feet long (internal) and 18 inches wide, with a depth in the centre of 2 feet. It had been cleared of its contents and the cover-stone was missing.

The third barrow had also been previously disturbed, and this was not explored.

The fourth and most northerly example is 45 feet in diameter, and it had been explored by means of a pit sunk



Section of Smaller Barrow near Leat, Raddick Hill.



Sketch Plan showing Barrows in Parish of Great Torrington.

in the centre. This pit was cleared out, and a very fine and perfect kistvaen was uncovered; the internal measurements are—length 4 feet, breadth 2 feet 4 inches, and depth 2 feet 8 inches.

The cover-stone—4 feet 2 inches by 4 feet 10 inches—had been partially moved off the kist so as to give access to the interior. In searching for any small articles which the previous riflers may have left behind, a small thin and highly corroded piece of bronze was found. It is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide, irregularly shaped, and just weighs down a threepenny-piece.

Of the large number of barrows which I have assisted to open on Dartmoor this is, thus far, only the second which has yielded this alloy. The great majority have given ashes and charcoal only. In a very few instances urns or fragments of same have been found, sometimes with flint implements, but oftener without. (ROBERT BURNARD.)

EXAMINATION OF A BARROW IN THE PARISH OF GREAT TORRINGTON.

This barrow is one of a series of five, two of which were opened in 1875, and were made the subject of a paper by my late father, read by him at the meeting of this Association here in that year.

The one in question is much larger than any of the others, being from 70 to 80 feet in diameter, and from 4 to 5 feet high. As, however, the highway passes over it, it has probably been considerably lowered.

The accompanying plan will show the relative position of this barrow to its companions. The exploration was commenced on the 26th June last by digging a trench on the north-west side at right angles to the road. In a very short time the workmen came on a mass of whitish grey clay with irregular layers of charcoal, in some places more than an inch in thickness, with here and there a stone which appeared to have been subjected to the action of fire. This lay on the natural clay of the surrounding land. On getting near the centre of the barrow a layer of very different character was discovered. This extended for about 24 feet, and was of varying thickness, from 3 to 14 inches. A thin layer of the greyish white clay with the streaks of charcoal was spread under it, and it was capped over with the same, the streaks and masses of charcoal in this capping of clay being very distinct, and appearing to follow the

curve of the barrow. The layer in question consisted of fine reddish earth mixed with burnt matter of a totally different composition from that of the charcoal in the clay. A few small stones which seemed to have been burnt, together with small pieces of quartz, were interspersed in this mass, one being a good-sized rock crystal, and in places pieces of blackened burnt bones were imbedded. Parallel with the road, and at the foot of its boundary hedge, was a perfectly straight line of loose "acre stones," a foot in width and height, which ran through about the centre of the barrow for a length of 60 feet, and on the level of the ground. These stones *may* have been placed for drainage purposes when the road was made, as they passed through the clay, etc., of the barrow, the layers of which were continued on each side of the stones. On reaching the hedge the trench was discontinued, and the centre of the barrow was cleared away to the ground level, which was carefully examined, but without finding any traces of its having been previously disturbed. After working for a week lack of funds prevented further exploration, but it appears not improbable that the actual interment consisted of the mass of burnt matter and bones. It may be, too, that at the making of the road the barrow was disturbed; nevertheless it has only been very partially explored.

There was no indication of a capping of stones around this barrow, as in those previously opened in 1875. A piece of rusted iron 3 inches long, 1 inch wide, and about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick was found imbedded in the clay, etc., in the centre of the barrow, but as it was very near the line of stones before mentioned, it may have got there when the road was made.

(GEORGE M. DOE.)