

SECOND REPORT OF THE DARTMOOR EXPLORATION COMMITTEE.

(Read at Okehampton, July, 1895.)

THE Dartmoor Exploration Committee, in presenting its Second Report to the Devon Association, is glad to be able to report considerable progress made in the examination of the pre-historic relics on Dartmoor.

Last year the Report dealt exclusively with Grimspound; every one of the formerly-inhabited huts within its area having been carefully excavated and planned. What remained to be done was to examine the structure of the enclosing wall, which presented characters very perplexing, and which the Committee considered deserved further examination.

Last year a small portion of the wall had been under investigation, and this portion had revealed the puzzling feature of being double, with an entrance into the space between the walls from the inside of the Pound.

This year the wall has been examined in ten additional places.

In addition to this, fresh fields have been explored, notably the very interesting and hitherto hardly-noticed collection of hut circles on the slope of Langstone Moor, in Petertavy parish, opposite Greena Ball and Mis Tor.

Moreover, a careful plan has been taken of the remains near Merrivale Bridge, by Mr. R. Hansford Worth, C.E., a member of the committee, and these have been subjected to investigation.

Stapp's Ring, a dilapidated pound containing ruined hut circles, near Post Bridge, has also been explored.

The enclosure of King's Oven has likewise been subjected to investigation.

A very interesting collection of enclosures and huts at Cullacombe Head, on Shapley Common, have been ex-

haustively explored, and a couple of hut circles on Whiten Ridge have been dealt with as well.

Finally, the very interesting Blowing House at Deep Swincombe has been cleared out and planned.

Such has been the work of the Committee on Dartmoor since the last meeting of the Devon Association, at the expenditure of considerable time and money.

The Committee desire on this occasion to omit from their Report what concerns the Blowing House at Deep Swincombe, and reserve the notice of that to another Report, as it is their wish, having done so much to the hut circles, to next turn their attention to the early tin-workings and smeltings on Dartmoor, and they would prefer to bring into one Report what they have to say thereupon.

The examinations that this Report will deal with are these: (1) Of the Wall of Grimspound; (2) the Langstone settlement; (3) that at Merrivale Bridge; (4) that at Crapp's Ring; (5) King's Oven; (6) the settlement at Cullacombe Head; and (7) the two huts on Whiten Ridge.

I. THE WALL OF GRIMSPOUND.

The Committee are obliged to admit that the structure of this wall is difficult of interpretation. At base the heap of ruins that forms the wall measures, where two faces remain undisturbed, about 12 feet. On examination of the wall, in eleven different places, it became apparent that this wall consisted originally of two, with a space between them of 3 feet 6 inches in width, or thereabouts, sometimes a little less, sometimes more. In places there seemed to be an inner face, on both sides, to this space.

Admission into this space, or passage, was probably obtained by small openings from the inside of the Pound. One of these was found last year; another, very distinct, was observed and cleared out this year. In each instance the doorway seemed to be in connection with the walls of the lunettes which abutted on the main wall below them. These doors are narrow, measuring 2 feet 6 inches, and 2 feet 10 inches—probably more at the top, when complete, but the tops are ruinous.

That there was no core of earth between the walls, which might have served as faces to it, is almost certain, as no traces of such a core remain, and it never can have existed, for the stones of the two walls have in general fallen inward. They are tilted one on another in such a manner as proves that they fell into, and encumbered, an open space.

There are not stones sufficient to have made the enclosing wall of Grimspound very high. It is the opinion of some of the Committee, after much consideration, that Grimspound can never have been erected for military defence, and that it was simply an enclosure for cattle, against wolves.

From a strategic point of view, it is held by them that an error was committed in not including within the area the granite outcrop and ridge that separates the drainage of Hookner Tor from that of Hameldon Tor. This ridge would allow assailants to command the interior with their spears and arrows. Those who erected the enclosure of Grimspound took no account of this ridge, probably purposely left it outside their Pound, because a mass of rock, producing little or no herbage for the cattle.

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.

II. LANGSTONE MOOR.

This Moor, called on the Ordnance map Launceston Moor, occupies a ridge between White Tor and Whiten Burrow, and is also connected with Great Staple Tor by a long neck of moor. It divides the Walkham Valley from that of the Tavy, and in it the Petertavy brook takes its rise in a bog that is not easily traversed. The Moor derives its name from a Long-stone, the end of a stone row, running in a direction N. and S. from a surface-water pool that occupies the site of a destroyed cairn. The stone is composed of the local gabbro, and was prostrate, but His Grace the Duke of Bedford has re-erected it in its original socket-hole. The old Lych Way ran from Whiten Burrow to it, and thence diverged into two branches, one leading to Petertavy, the other to the road between Tavistock and Hill Bridge, which it reached at Cudlip Town.

The stone row consists of very small stones, eighteen in number, and has been much pillaged, but by spade investigation it was established that it never had been furnished with stones of much magnitude, as the pits to receive the upright blocks were small. Nearly parallel with the row, but not quite so, at the distance of sixty or seventy yards, are the remains of a second stone row, leading from a cairn, formerly surrounded by a circle of stones. A very ancient "new take" wall has been built over and about this line; it includes the cairn in it, and takes advantage of some of the original standing stones.

West of this second stone row are several cairns more or less dilapidated, and the remains of a kistvaen.

On the brow of Langstone Moor, overlooking the Walkham River, is a fine circle of stones. This was first noticed by Mr. Brent, of Plymouth; it was again seen by Rev. G. B. Berry, of Emmanuel, Plymouth, and it was last year carefully examined by the Exploration Committee, and His Grace the Duke of Bedford was communicated with, who, with great courtesy and promptitude, undertook to place a party of workmen at the disposal of the Committee for the re-erection of the stones, which had all fallen, owing to the spongy nature of the peat in which they had been originally planted. The fall, however, of some of the stones must have taken place comparatively recently, as their pits were open under them, and full of water only.

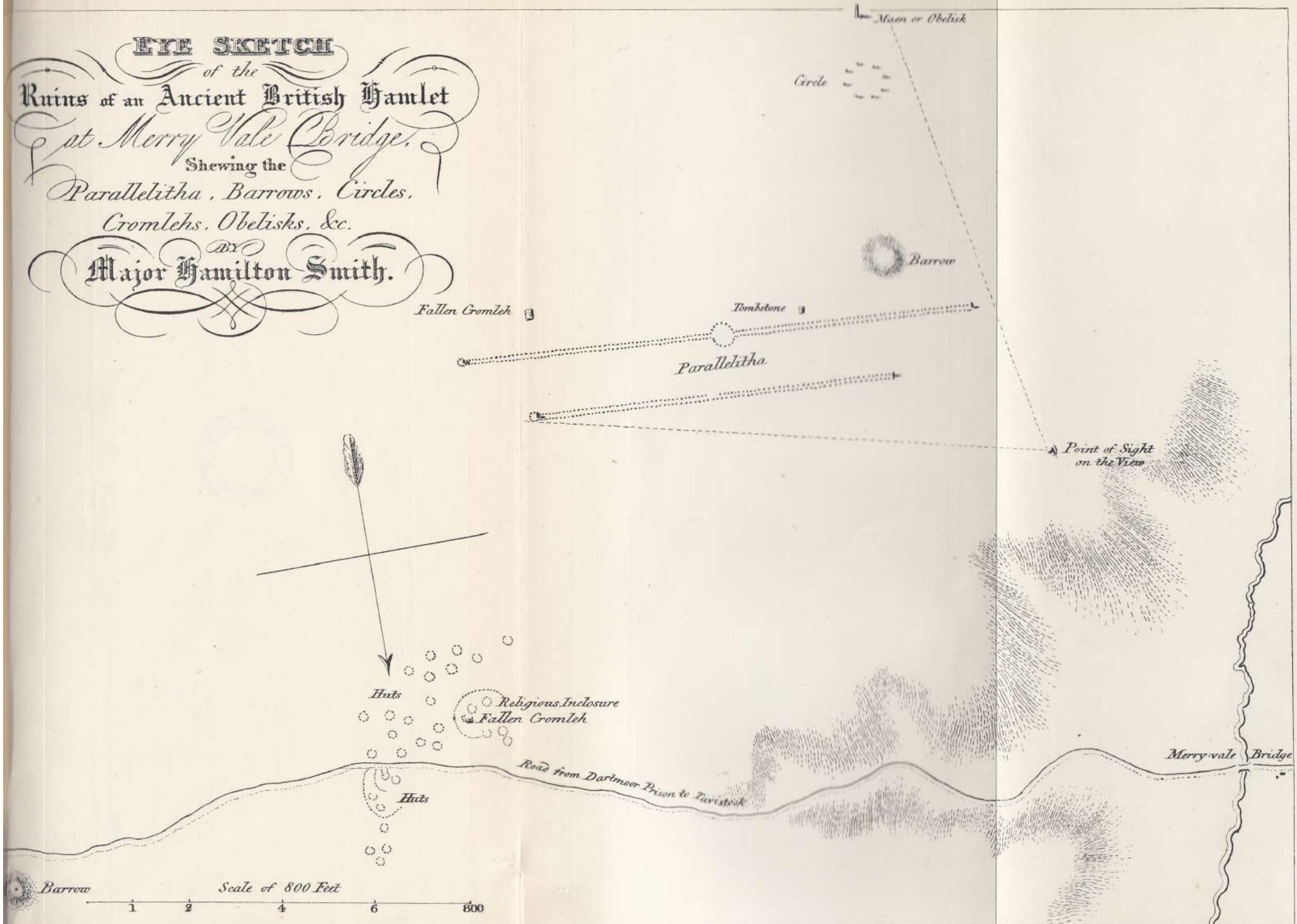
The position of the circle was one rendering it liable to being robbed for the sake of gate-posts, and indeed it seems probable that, as will be seen presently, it has already suffered on that account. When the stones are re-erected, then strict orders are issued from the Duchy Office that they are not to be interfered with; whereas stones lying on the face of the moor cannot be thus protected, and indeed are carried away without scruple by men who are confident they can do this without detection.

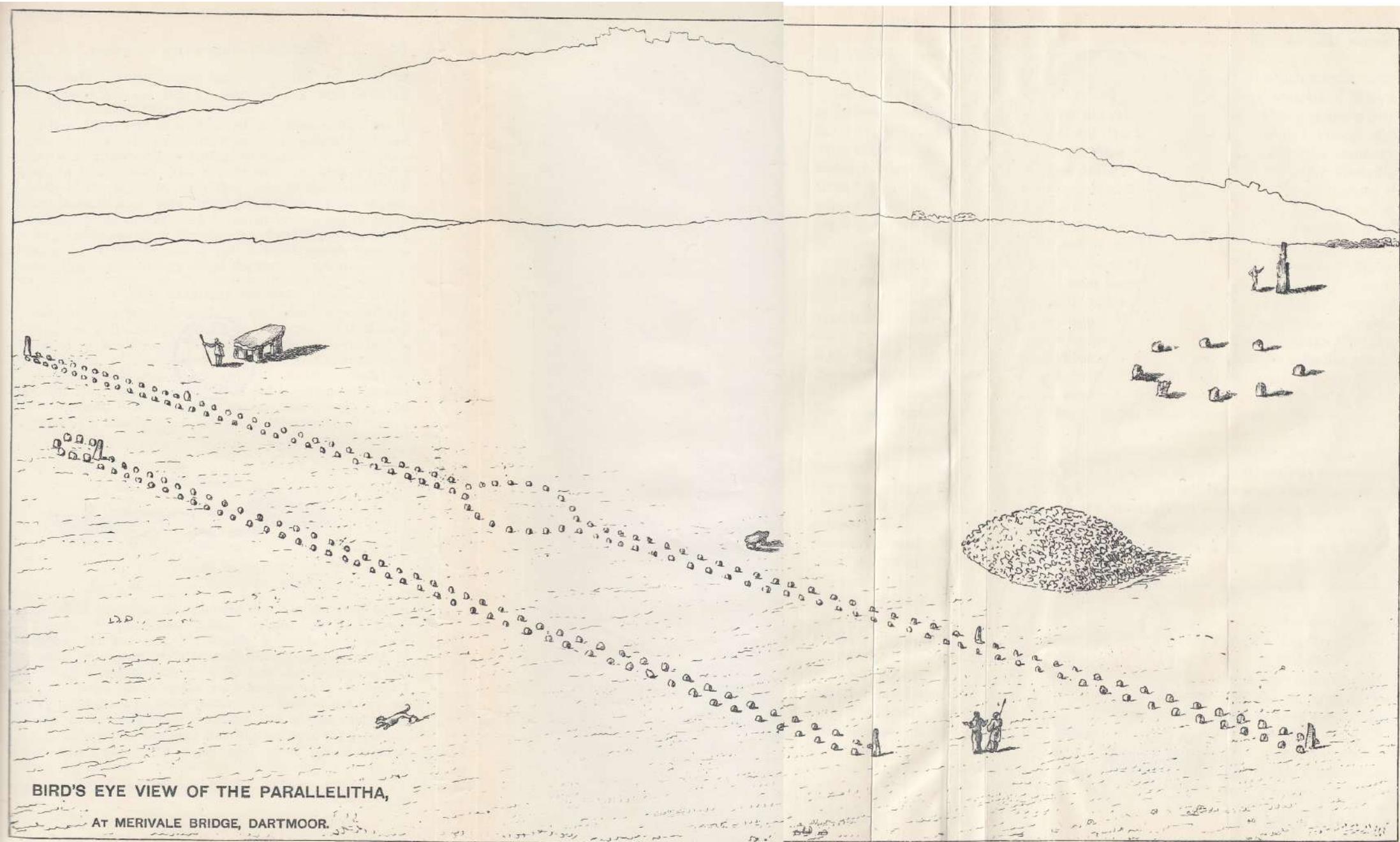
The circle measures 57 feet in diameter, and consists of sixteen stones. Outside this circle appears to have been another concentric with it; of this, however, only two stones remain *in situ*, but the pit hole of another, and the broken top of the stone taken from it remain. The singular feature of this outer circle is that the three stones are of a fine-grained elvan, entirely different from the nature of the stones in the inner circle, with the exception of one, which also is of elvan.

In the socket-hole of one of the stones a burnt stone was found, perhaps a "cooking-stone," but so burnt as to crumble between the fingers with a little pressure.

The investigation of the huts was now proceeded with. Of these there are a great number. The exploration was not carried out as happily as at Grimspound, as the workmen employed were changing every day, so that the same men could not be secured sufficiently long to be trained to dig intelligently. For this reason it was deemed inadvisable to do no more in the season rapidly drawing to an end, than uncover the floors of the huts and leave the sifting of the floors till Mr. George French could be secured in the spring.

EYE SKETCH
of the
Ruins of an Ancient British Hamlet
at Merry Vale Bridge.
 Shewing the
Parallelitha, Barrows, Circles,
Cromlehs, Obelisks, &c.
 BY
Major Hamilton Smith.





BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE PARALLELITHA,

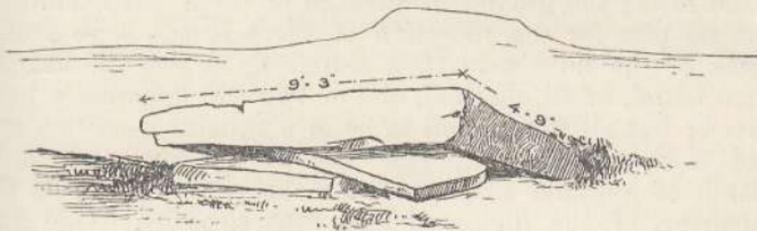
AT MERIVALE BRIDGE, DARTMOOR.

These huts presented very similar features to those at Grimspound, a raised dais, a hearth, and cooking-hole being found in several of them.

Eleven huts were excavated. The interiors were much ruined. In one the platform, or dais, was well defined, and there were more or less distinct indications of such platforms in four others. The hearths were not always in the middle of the huts; in many they were at the sides. One hearthstone was of very fine, smooth elvan, much burnt. Several cooking-stones were found, in most cases so burnt as to crumble away. A flint core and five flakes were found, also a scraper-knife, and a polished red pebble brought from a distance. Also in one of the huts a rubber-stone.

III. MERRIVALE BRIDGE.

Several days were devoted to the examination of the remains so well known, near Merrivale Bridge. Sir Massey Lopes very kindly and readily gave his consent to the investigation of these remains, and the Committee considered that considerable importance attached to them, owing to the fact that here the hut circles, and the stone rows, and other megalithic monuments were in close proximity, and apparently mutually connected, and contemporary.



THE "FALLEN CROMLECH."

FROM A SKETCH BY THE REV. S. BARING-GOULD, 1851.

The first object to be examined was the so-called fallen cromlech. This had been noticed by the Rev. E. A. Bray, in 1804. It was described by Mr. S. Rowe, in 1830. A drawing was made of it by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, in 1851. It was also noticed by Sir Gardiner Wilkinson, and others. Some years ago a man who lived at Merrivale Bridge, and dealt in stone posts to the farmers, cut two out of the quoit and further mutilated one of the supporters, which he split in half, and then further split off a portion such as he wanted from one of these halves. So it was left in a sad condition.

The Committee raised the two pieces of the quoit, and then the construction of the monument was plain enough. It proved not to be a cromlech, but a kistvaen, running N. and S., and measuring, internally, 7 feet by 2 feet 9 inches at the head, contracting to 2 feet at the foot. It consisted of a head and a footstone, one large block on the W. side measuring 7 feet long by 3 feet 6 inches high, which had been split by the mason. The east side consisted of two stones, one 4 feet 10 inches long and the same height as the opposite side stone, the other a smaller stone that fitted into the gap, and was apparently removable at will, for it was not bedded in a groove cut in the calm, but rested on a step of calm about a foot high.

In the kistvaen, near the head, were found a flint scraper, a flint flake, and a polishing-stone.

The Committee further examined some depressions in the surface of the turf near the so-called "Sacred Circle" and found several pits dug to the depth of a foot or eighteen inches in the calm, with triggers lining them, and in one a flint flake. These had apparently been the sockets of menhirs, or standing stones, which had been removed either to serve as gate-posts or for the construction of a new-take wall hard by.

Near the great menhir are indications of the starting of stone rows; the ground in advance of these was examined, but no pits for the reception of more stones were found. Some of the huts were then searched; in two the hearths were found, in all charcoal, one or two had apparently been paved; but all were found to be in a ruinous condition and had been worked over, apparently by the road makers, in search of suitable stone at the making, or afterwards the repairing, of the high-road that runs close by. One flint flake only was found in one of the huts. In all, six hut circles were examined, of these two gave no signs of human occupancy.

At the E. end of the double northern stone row, it was surmised that there had formerly existed a circle. The stones there lying were examined, no pits were found. Some of the stones proved to be outcrops of rock, and others to be shapeless lumps that had never been planted erect.

The Committee is glad to be able to reproduce here two plates, from plan and bird's-eye view, of the remains at Merrivale Bridge, as taken in 1828 by Colonel Hamilton Smith, F.R.S. As usual with plans and drawings taken before the last thirty years, they are inaccurate. The tombstone on the plan becomes a cromlech on the bird's-eye sketch.

This is really a small cairn that contained a ruined kistvaen, from which a small row starts, unnoticed by Colonel Smith. The barrow between the stone rows and the circle and menhir has since been ruined; in 1851 it disclosed remains of a kistvaen or inner circle, and an outer ring of stones.



BARROW IN 1851.

FROM A SKETCH BY THE REV. S. BARING-GOULD.

The circle interrupting the double range of stones to the S. contains a cairn. There is no circle at the E. end of the northern double row, but there seemed to have been one before the place was investigated. It would be interesting to know if this row ended to the west with a tall monolith, as represented in both plan and bird's-eye sketch. If so, this has disappeared. The southern row ends to the E. in two, and not one, upright stones and the remains of a cairn. In the plan, within the so-called "Religious Inclosure," which is in reality a cattle-pen, Colonel Smith indicates a "fallen cromlech"; this is actually a stone that has been cut by moormen to form a crusher, either for apples or for gorse, and never removed; it was probably cut at the beginning of this century, or the end of last. The barrow marked on the plan on the N. side of the road to Princetown has been removed by road-menders. On the plan is a circle at the E. end of the southern range of stones. No such circle ever existed.

IV. CRAPP'S RING.

Some of the circles lying within Crapp's Ring, which is a ruined "pound" on the slope of Lake Head Hill, were examined, but it was found that all except one had been dug over for stones. The comparatively undisturbed circle was 15 feet in diameter, with remains of dais, and a hearth, in a good state of preservation. The "cooking-hole" was in the hearth, and was 5 inches deep and 10 inches square, and this was full of what appeared to be peat ashes. No wood-charcoal was observed. Owing to the disturbed character of these circles their further examination was abandoned.

V. KING'S OVEN.

The original King's Oven, that is to say the smelting-place of the tin which was the Royal due, was destroyed probably some time during last century, and was further dilapidated on the construction of the buildings of Bush Down Mine, which are hard by ; but the site is still indicated by a pile of stones in the midst of a pound that is rudely circular. At the S.W. side of the pound are the remains of an oblong rectangular structure. This was examined, but proved to have been so worked over by the masons engaged in building the houses of Bush Down, and now ruinous, that nothing could be made out, to show when it was erected.

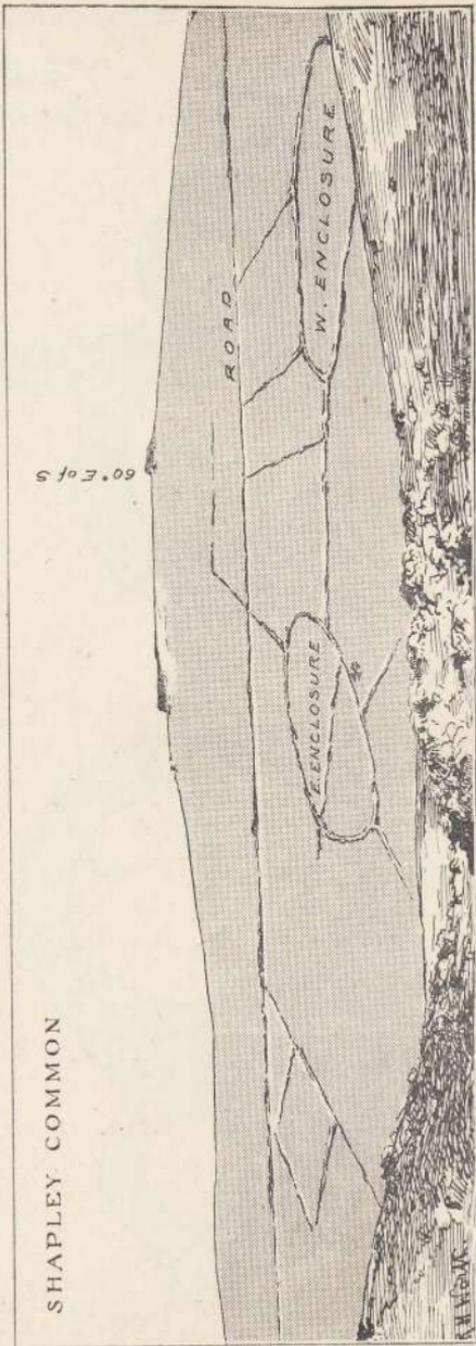
As traces of upright stones in an arc were observable to the N. of the enclosing pound, the pick and shovel were brought to bear there, with the result of uncovering a portion of a circle of upright stones that formerly enclosed a cairn, with probably a kistvaen in the centre, some of the stones of which remained. The investigation was not made, however, without yielding something of interest, as, in the first place, it determined that the construction of the pound was subsequent to that of the circle and cairn, and secondly, because a beautiful flint scraper was picked out from between two of the upright stones, between which it had been wedged. Fragments of charcoal were also found at the foot of these stones.

VI. CULLACOOMBE HEAD.

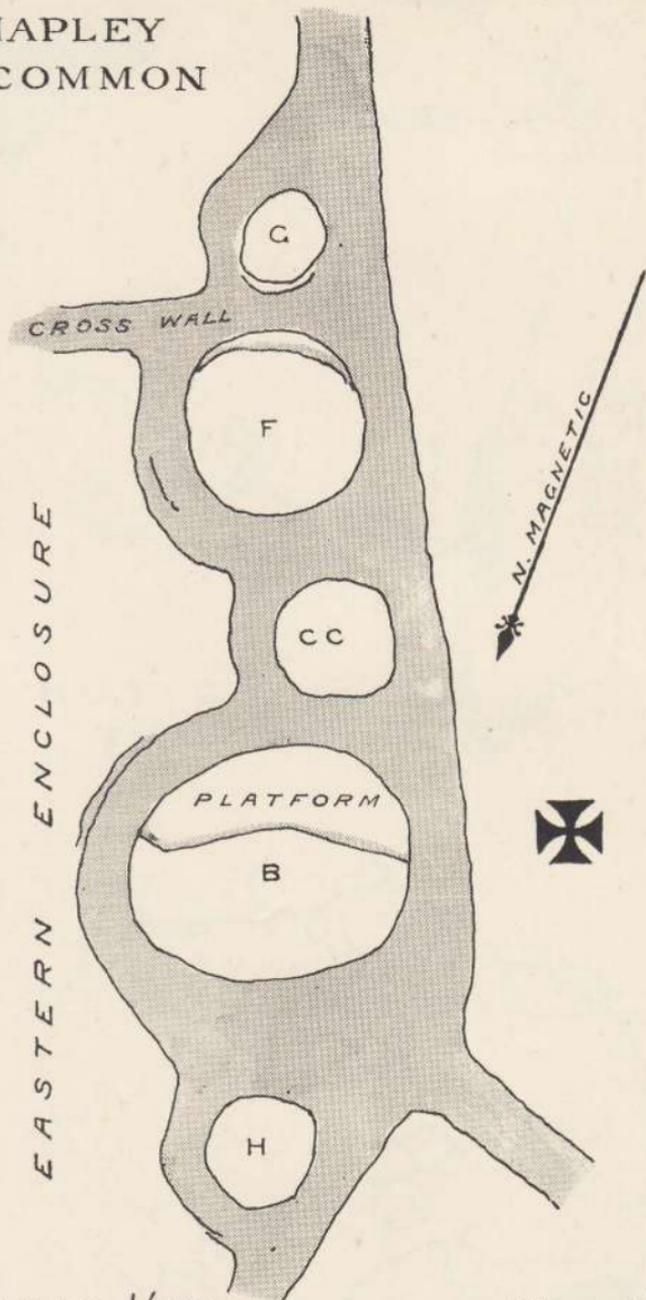
Thus far all the collections of huts examined, those at Grimspound, at Broadun, at Broadun Ring, at Tavy Cleave, at Langstone, and Crapp's Ring, have been singularly unanimous in the tale they have been asked to disclose. They have yielded flint flakes, cores, scrapers, polishing-stones, cooking-stones; nothing more, not the smallest particle of pottery. Every indication given pointed to a very rude and primitive condition of existence among those who occupied them.

There are, however, on Dartmoor circular huts of a different character; they are better constructed, and they are usually found in connection with paddocks or enclosures often rudely rectangular.

Such a series of huts is found on Shapley Common, at Cullacoombe Head. It was thought advisable to explore this settlement in order to ascertain whether it belonged to the same age and stage of civilization as the other



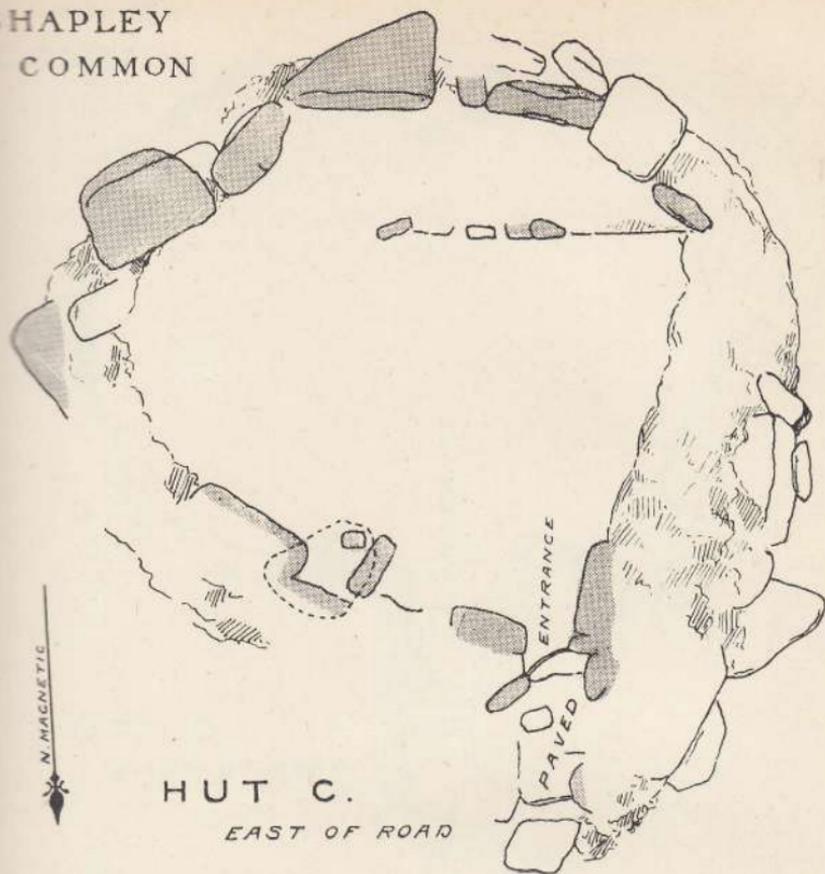
SHAPLEY
COMMON



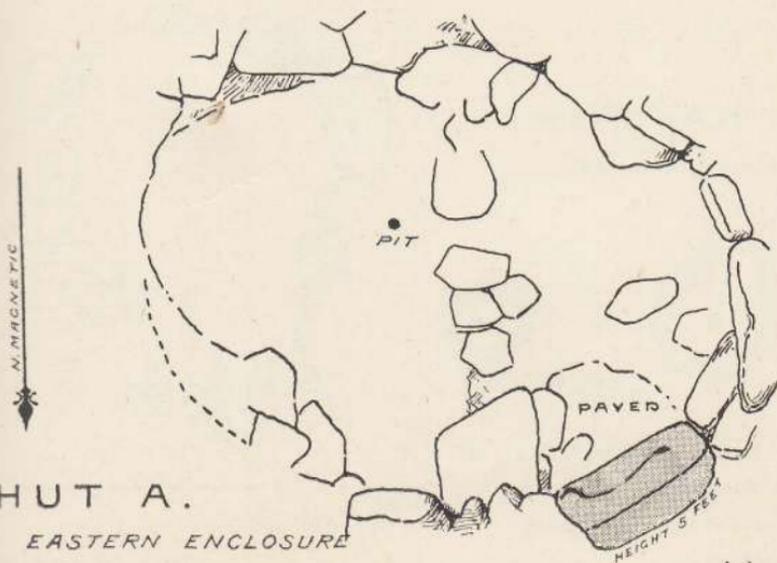
SCALE 1/192

R. Mansford *Woods*

SHAPLEY
COMMON



HUT C.
EAST OF ROAD

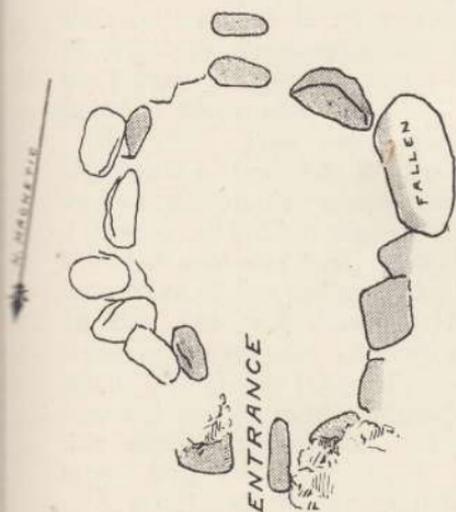
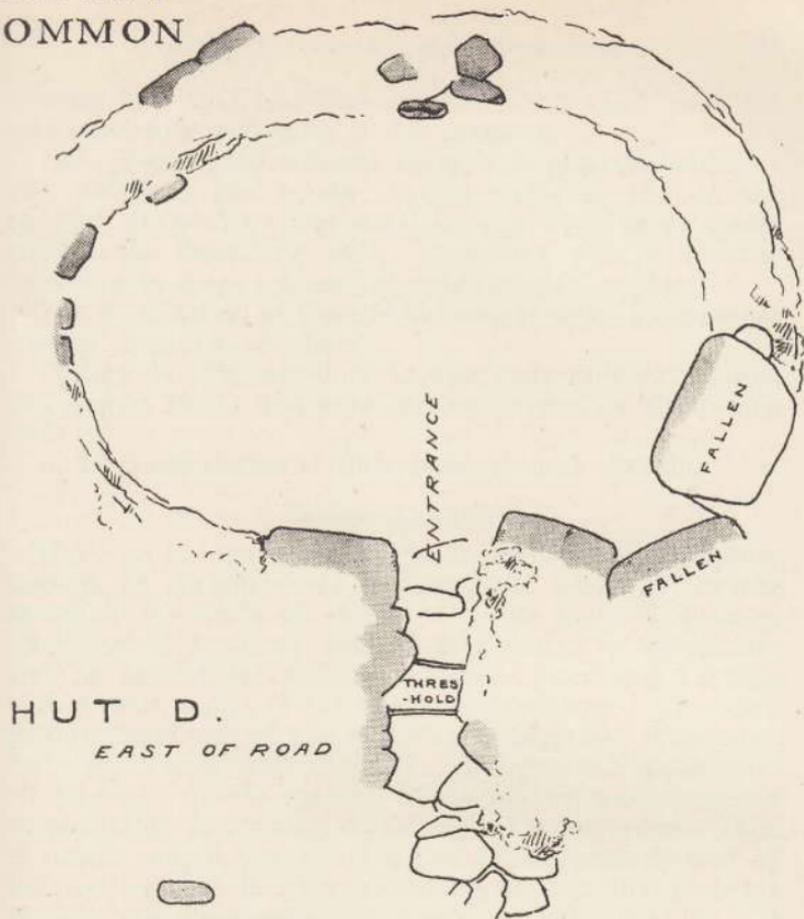


HUT A.
EASTERN ENCLOSURE

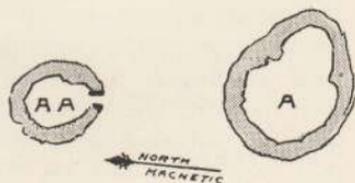
SCALE 1/36

R. Mansford Works

SHAPLEY
COMMON



HUT AA.
EASTERN ENCLOSURE



RELATIVE POSITION
OF AA AND A

Scale. 30 feet to 1 inch

SCALE 1/96

J. Mansford Ward

circular huts that had been examined, and which were not associated with enclosures of this character.

Here is an oblong enclosure (eastern on plan) that contains one well-built hut inside; in the enclosing wall of the paddock are at least five small huts growing, so to speak, out of the boundary wall. Adjoining this is another enclosure, in shape a truncated cone (western on plan.)

The examination of these habitations revealed a somewhat changed condition of affairs.

Pottery was discovered, of an extremely rude description, and several stones that were apparently used for sharpening tools.

A closer description of these habitations is advisable.

Eastern Enclosure.

Hut A, of a singular pear-shape, had in it a wall, apparently modern, or comparatively modern, built across it; as the stones of the circle are 4 feet 6 inches high, it appeared likely that it had been utilised as a refuge by shepherds; and, in fact, recent pottery was here discovered, together with a tobacco-pipe of the seventeenth century. The other pottery found was of a very different character. The entire floor was strewn with charcoal. Owing to the disturbance of the stones for the erection of the modern wall, there was no possibility of arriving at the original arrangement within. A hearth, indeed, was found within the segment formed by the wall erected in more recent times; but this probably belonged to the shepherd or moor-man, who used it as a temporary refuge. Remains of the original hearth were found in the centre.

Hut AA. This was a small hut, in which were found fragments of the same kind of pottery, some flint fragments, and a considerable quantity of charcoal.

Hut B. This hut was paved throughout, and the dais on the west side was fairly perfect. Charcoal was found in the interstices of the paving. The hearth could not be identified. In this hut was found a semi-lunar scraper, similar to those employed for making arrow-shafts. Adjoining this hut is a small one (CC); the floor was so thickly covered with charcoal, and contained so many fragments of pottery, that it was thought probable it had served as the kitchen to the larger hut.

A small hut, F, near the large hut B, was found to be like that beside B, and to have served as a place for cooking. It yielded a good cooking-stone, some fragments of rude red

pottery, and two small flakes of flint. G and H are small huts similar to CC.

Western Enclosure.

Hut No. 1 is a fine structure, but yielded nothing save charcoal, and near the hearth, which was merely the clay floor of the hut, was a part of the rim of an earthenware vessel, and some more fragments of pottery; also two pieces of chalk flint, and two nodules of greensand flint.

One interesting feature may be noticed with regard to Hut A. In it, not exactly in the centre, was found a circular hole cut in the calm, 8 inches deep and 4 inches in diameter, a "gob" of charcoal was at the bottom. Presumably this hole once contained the base of a central support for the roof. An exactly similar hole, sunk in the calm, was observed in one of the huts on Langstone Down.

Hut C, on the east side of the road had several peculiar features in it. The bed or dais was double, that is to say, it occupied two segments of the circle. There was paving on the dais. The hearth was near the centre of the hut, but charcoal was strewn over the entire floor. A unique feature here was a small cupboard fashioned in stone, in the depth of the wall near the entrance. In this hut were found a polisher and a fragment of pottery.



CUPBOARD IN HUT C.

Hut D. The peculiarity of this hut consists in the number of pointed stones set on edge in the calm. These were probably bond stones of a double bed, as in C, but the platforms, if they had existed, had been removed. Here were found a pretty flint scraper and some fragments of flint.

Hut E. This hut, as also C and D, had a paved entrance; in the centre was a great heap of peat ash. Only one planted stone, probably the curb of the platform, was found remaining.

VII. THE HUTS ON WHITEN RIDGE.

The new features disclosed by the huts on Shapley Common made it advisable to explore others of a similar character, connected with enclosures, and the Committee proceeded to examine those on Whiten Ridge. Up to this point only two have been excavated.

Hut I. 16 feet in diameter by 14 feet, had a curved paved approach to the entrance, like some at Grimspound and one or two on Shapley Common. Charcoal in abundance covered the floor, but no hearth or platform could be made out. The objects found here were several fragments of extremely coarse, badly burnt pottery, a flint flake, and two fragments of another, ten cooking-stones, or parts of same, and a muller, upper stone, having a surface of 12 inches by 9 inches. Height of the stone $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Hut II. Diameter 13 feet; in this was found the same sort of pottery as in No. I. and at Shapley. One cooking-stone and two portions of others. Also a cooking-stone that seemed to have been ground down at the end.

By the little stream which supplied these huts with water were found three flint scrapers.

It is probable that the huts last examined belong to a somewhat later age than the others examined previously; or else that they were more permanent habitations than those first explored. The total number explored consists of 20 at Grimspound, 11 at Langstone Moor, 20 at Broadun and Broadun Ring, 4 at Tavý Cleave, 2 at Crapps Ring, 6 at Merrivale Bridge, 11 on Shapley Common, 2 on Whiten Ridge. In all 73. Of these only those at Shapley and on Whiten Ridge have yielded pottery.

It is proposed by the Committee next to investigate a very fine collection at Leggis Tor, on the Plym.

In conclusion, the Committee has to express its regret at the loss of one of its most zealous and indefatigable members, the Rev. W. Gordon Gray, who has left the country for another sphere of work. In his place has been elected the Rev. G. B. Berry, vicar of Emmanuel, Compton Gifford, who yields to none in zeal for the exploration of the antiquities of the Moor, and who is more intimately acquainted with the eastern portion than any of the other members of the Committee.

One fact has been rendered probable, as already said, by the recent excavations — that of the hut circles some are perhaps a little more recent than others; but the Committee are unable at present to express any opinion as to the age of the hut circles in which pottery occurs. Further investigations are necessary, and these will be undertaken next autumn. It has, therefore, been deemed advisable to continue the investigation into the age of, or period during which, these hut circles were erected; after which it is their desire to direct their attention to the Blowing Houses and early tin-workings on Dartmoor, a matter as yet little studied, but one of great interest.

It should be added that Mr. Hansford Worth is not in agreement with the views before expressed regarding the double character of the wall at Grimspond, and that he reserves his opinion upon this and the question of strategic error.

S. BARING-GOULD.
 ROBERT BURNARD.
 R. N. WORTH.
 R. HANSFORD WORTH.
 J. BROOKING ROWE.
 J. D. PODE.
 GEORGE B. BERRY.