



BATTLEGORE, WILLITON, 1931

BARROW I.—General view of Cutting II through the Barrow, looking west

From a Photograph by Mr. H. St. George Gray, F.S.A.

Battlegore, Williton

BY H. ST. GEORGE GRAY, F.S.A.

I. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Included at the end of PETER LANGTOFT'S CHRONICLE (transcribed by THOMAS HEARNE, Oxford, 1725) is a Tract entitled 'A Discourse about some Roman Antiquities discover'd near Conquest in Somersetshire', par. 4 (pp. 466-472), which describes the 'Grabburrowes', or 'Grave Burrowes', at Williton.
2. EARLY WARS OF WESSEX, by Albany F. Major, F.S.A. (1913), 104, 213 (with small plan).
3. VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY, vol. ii, 529, 530, 532 (with small plan).
4. AN EXPLORATION OF EXMOOR, by J. W. Warden Page (1890), 69-71, 80.
5. THE LAND OF QUANTOCK, by Rev. W. H. P. Greswell (1903), 78.
6. HOMELAND HANDY GUIDES, no. 4, Watchet, Williton and Washford (2nd edit., 1907), 6.
7. HISTORY OF SOMERSET, by Rev. J. Collinson (1791), vol. iii, 487.
8. BATH BRANCH, SOM. ARCH. & N.H. SOCIETY, *Proceedings*, 1931, 372-3.

II. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

TWENTY years ago the writer first visited the Battlegore¹ site with the late Rev. W. H. P. Greswell, who had made reference to the place in *The Land of Quantock* (p. 78). Having observed a series of small earthworks, two tumuli (the third was hardly

¹ At that time I did not know that Mr. J. W. Warden Page had written as follows in his 'Exploration of Exmoor' (1890), p. 80: 'The stones at Battlegore, near Williton, are, I believe, the only remains of a cromlech or dolmen, unless the Whitestones above Porlock Hill are the supporters of another such structure.'

traceable) and the remains of what appeared to be a dolmen,² the writer went away determined to carry out some excavations there when an opportunity occurred. The war having put a stop to research of this character, the work had to wait until the Somerset Archæological Society was holding its annual meeting and excursions in the neighbourhood.

Before beginning a survey of the ground, the owner of the property, Mr. William Wyndham, of Orchard Wyndham (President of the Society, 1931–32) was consulted. He readily gave his consent to excavations being carried out provided the tenant of the part to be investigated (Mr. W. G. Moorman) was willing. The tenant was not only willing but very helpful during the operations. Mr. A. T. Love, Mr. Wyndham's agent, also offered every facility for carrying out the work, and he lent some tools, etc., from the estate yard at Williton.

This site has been the subject of more or less vague traditions and theories, some of which have appeared in print. The ordnance map marks Battlegore as 'Site of Battle, A.D. 918'.³ There was a raid on the West Somerset (then Devon) coast in that year, when a Danish force was defeated. The following passage is taken from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* :

'Then nevertheless they (the Danes) stole away by night on some two occasions, once up to the east of Watchet, and on another occasion to Porlock. Then they were beaten on both occasions, so that few of them came away save only those who there swam out to the ships. And these seated themselves out on the island of Flat-holme.'

In 988 Watchet was again ravaged, and Goda the Devonshire thane slain (according to Henry of Huntingdon). Watchet at

² We do not propose to discuss the origin of the name 'Battlegore' in this paper, but 'Gore', we believe, is quite common. Dr. A. Bulleid has recorded that 'Gore' was the name of a field at Paulton, Som. (*S. & D.N. & Q.* xviii, 9); and the Rev. S. E. V. Filleul refers to a number of enclosures called 'Gore Fields' at Sandford, Wareham, Dorset. He adds there are several small burial-mounds on the ground, and suggests that the name 'Gore' might arise from outcrops of red earth and perhaps red stone (*S. & D.N. & Q.* xviii, 88). The same magazine refers to the manor of Gore in West Lavington, Wilts.; then there is Gore, 7 m. N.E. of Christchurch, and several others are given in Bartholomew's *Gazetteer*.

³ Warden Page, *Exploration of Exmoor*, 71.

that time had its own mint, and coins of Æthelred II (979–1016) were struck there. Specimens may be seen in the County Museum at Taunton Castle.

Florence of Worcester records that in 997⁴ the Danes 'entered the mouth of the river Severn, and ravaged sometimes Cornwall, sometimes North Wales, and then Watchet in Devonshire' (Devon covered a large part of Somerset as we now have it defined), 'and there brought great evil in burning and man-slayings'. The late Mr. A. F. Major thought the tradition of the battle of Williton probably belonged to the 988 raid.

Bound up with vol. ii of 'Peter Langtoft's Chronicle' (see bibliography) is an account of the Battlegore site, which was copied from manuscript lent to Hearne by James West of Balliol College, Oxford, in 1722, the author of which is believed to be Robert Gay, parson of Nettlecombe (1631–72). This tract is very interesting, and we purpose quoting a part of it verbatim (pp. 466–470):

'The third Invasion on these Parts was *apud Portlocan slatino, Britt. Sþippport, alitèr Þordocan* (from Britt. Þorb, a port, and Græc. δολχείον, a dock or receptacle for Shipping) but now Þorlocke, where the Danes in the night, leaving their Shipps on the shore, plundered and burnt the said Towne, and other Places adjoyning, but were all slain by a partie of the King's Armie, which was designed for the defence of that Coast, and the present Inhabitants of that Towne speke traditionallie thereof to this day, and if they were silent, the burnt Foundation Stones of some of the antcient Houses would proclaim the truth thereof. The 4th Invasion (A.D. 988) was *apud Wecheport, aliàs Wechport, (i.e.) Watchett*. Thus the heathonish Danes having left Brittain, for the space of 19 years, at length return hither, under the command of Ohterus and Rhoaldus their Generalls, and having sailed round Cornwall, came into Seaverne, plundered and burnt upon the Sea Coast wheresoever they had opportunity, but the King had disposed his Armie into convenient places of defence from the River Avon, which runs through Bristoll, along the Sea Coasts to Cornwall, notwithstanding the Danes brake into Watchett by stealth in the night, plundered and burnt the same, and then they marched toward the other part thereof, which must be Williton, where a part of the King's Armie using (issuing) out of their fortifications, there met them, as they were coming encountered them, and slew a great number on the

⁴ This date appears to be given by A. F. Major in *Early Wars of Wessex* also as 977 (see pp. 29, 131).

place, pursued the rest to **Wlatchett**, and slew as many as could not swim to their Shippes. But the Anglo-Saxons Duke, or Generall, *Godman* (sometimes abbreviated into *Goda*) and their valiant Champion *Streame Guld*, and divers other of the King's Armie were slain also, upon which Victorie the Anglo-Saxons made two solemn triumphs, the first *in loco funeris*, the second *in loco fluminis*, according to the words of my Authors. And now let us returne, and enquire after some Remaines and Monuments of this Victorie. The Field, in which this battle was fought, must be the rich plaine or vale (now divided into meadows and pasture) betwixt **Wlatchett** and **Williton**, where the Danes were encountered, as they were coming to Williton as aforesaid.

‘The *locus funeris*, or burying place, of the slaine, I suppose, was **Gabburro**, *aliàs* **Grabburrowes**, where, it seems, the greatest furie of the battle and slaughter was, and where the remainder of three huge moles or burrowes, each 120 yeards round the Basis, and so of a proportionall pyramidall height and forme, as first appeared to be the burialls, *aliàs* **buriebillis**, of the dead. For by the often digging, and carrying away of much earth from them, to dress the ground adjoining, some times in one, and some times in another, have been found fragments of mens bones, and sometimes sepulchres composed each of three broad stones, like Tombe stones, two of them lying along on their edges, about two foot distance, and a third lying flatt on the topp, the both ends walled up closely, and the concavity containing pieces of mens bones, and these latter I take to be monuments of such Anglo-Saxons, as were slain and there buried, as the others lying confusedly, were remaines of the Danes, for which there was no such care taken. And as *res ipsa*, so *vox ipsa* **Grabburrowes**, spekes the same **Grave Burrowes**, **Graveburroe** being a Teutonick, (*viz.*) an old Germanick word, common both to the Danish and Saxons, signifying both a Saxonick Danish monument, being compounded of **Grab** and **buro**, and either of them signifies a *grave*: but **Grab** (from the Teutonick **Graben**, *to digge*) signifies properly *the pit which is digged*, **buro**, and so **burie**, signifies *the heap raised upon the pitt*, sometimes long and small, as our ordinarie Churchyard Graves, some round and high, as these **Grabbourroes**; but here **Grabb** and **buro** joyned together, to make a complete description of this complete sepulchre of the slain Saxons and Deanes. The most ancient grave, that I read of, was called in Hebrew *Keher*, and in Greek *κράββατος*, *a bed or death bed*, unde Lat. *Grabbatus*, properly *a bed to rest on in the after noone*, metaphorically *in the evening of this life*, unde Belgick **Graf**, Saxon **Gruf**, English **Grave**, Teutonick **Grab** and **Grabbam**, (*i.e.*) *grave home*, *alias long home*, and Anglo-Saxon and Danish **Grabburroe**, in which, after their furious fighting, they sleep quietly together.

‘But as these 3 **Grabburroes** are to be looked on as sepulchres of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, so also as Trophies of the Anglo-

Saxons. It was the common practice of the ancients, to triumph in, or neare, the field, where the victorie was obtained, and to erect Trophies, (*i.e.*) huge Burrowes, Pillers, Arches, &c. in the places, where victories were obtained, to perpetuate the memory, both of the victorie and the triumphe. So that, as here was a *funus* as before, so a *dominantur in loco funeris*, a domineering or triumphing in the place of the funerall, and, consequently, these 3 **G**rabburrowes were 3 Trophies also of the victorie here obtained, and the triumph here celebrated.

‘ But there was another domineering or triumphing, besides this, and consequently other Trophies also. *Angli loco dominantur fluminis*, the Anglo-Saxons triumph or domineere in the place of the River, not in the River, but in the place of the River, (*i.e.*) Williton, which adjoynes close to the River, and indeed here was the greatest cause of joy, triumphing and domineering, when the village was so seasonably preserved, when the Enemies, like hungry Lions, greedy of their prey, were so near at hand, with open mouths ready to devour them, and all theirs. If the King’s armie *dominantur in loco funeris*, then much more Willitonians now *dominantur in loco fluminis*, and if the King’s armie erected 3 **G**rabburroes, as Trophies of this Victorie and triumphe, the Willitonians will erect 3 Crosses (in their Teutonicke language **K**reutzjes) in emulation of them. For what else could move them to erect 3 formall Corosses, so near together in one village, when scarcely one was to be found in a Royal City, but to perpetuate the memorie of this victorie and triumphe of the Christians over Pagans ? ’

III. POSITION OF BATTLEGORE

Battlegore is in the parish of Williton,—about half-a-mile N.N.W. of the centre of the town and $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile w. of the railway station, on the road to St. Decuman’s and Watchet, the harbour of which is only 9 furlongs N. of the site as the crow flies. The place is barely 100 feet above mean sea level, and in rainy seasons is liable to floods caused by the overflow of small streams including that which crosses the main road at Fowl Bridge close to the entrance gate into Battlegore. The site is not an attractive one, and it is rather surprising that it should have been made use of by prehistoric people.

The accompanying map (Fig. 1), copied from the Tithe Map of 1841,⁵ not only indicates the position of Battlegore, but is of value in showing the surroundings and giving the names of the

⁵ This was obtained through the kindness of Mr. Wyndham’s agent.

present-day fields. One notes that the lowest-lying ground is called 'Lakes' and 'Lakes Meadow' (no. 1280), whereas the actual Battlegore site is named 'Little Stone Parks'. The next field to the south is 'Stone Park'. At one time a barrow was clearly seen in the eastern half of this enclosure (called Barrow II); it is now barely traceable, and was lowered some 8 ft. (for agricultural purposes) within living memory,⁶ when a human skull is *said* to have been found and taken to Orchard Wyndham. The middle of this barrow is approximately 200 ft. from the N.E. corner of the field, 264 ft. from the S.E. corner, and about 440 ft. S.E. of the middle of Barrow I (to be described later).

The next field south bears the significant name of 'Graborough Meadow' (254), and the next again 'Graborough' (253)—otherwise Grave Burrow. Barrow III⁷ is unfortunately cut in two E. and W. by the hedge dividing plots 253 and 254; the N. part (the smaller) has disappeared to a large extent, but the S. portion (about $\frac{5}{8}$) rises to a height of some 4 ft. above the surrounding field, and has a present diameter (the mound now apparently somewhat spread) of about 130 ft.

It is worthy of mention that the low-lying ground seen in the S.W. corner of the tithe map (Fig. 1) and the land still further west is named 'War Moor'.

At a distance of just over one-and-a-half miles to the E.N.E. of Battlegore and on the outskirts of Williton parish is another round barrow in a field called 'Bleary Pate', on Rydon Farm. It is much overgrown, but it is doubtful as to whether it has ever been disturbed. The late Mr. Greswell endeavoured to ascertain if any tradition survived with regard to this tumulus, and he came across an old peasant woman at Williton who informed him that she had been told by her parents that the blood ran down the hill from 'Bloody Pate' up to the second straddle of the gates!

⁶ It had been reduced before 1890; and this appears to have been the largest of the three mounds (Page, *Exploration of Exmoor*, 70).

⁷ The centre of this barrow is approximately 216 ft. from the S.E. corner of the field (253) and 167 ft. from the E.N.E. corner.

Measured on the 6-in. ordnance sheet the centre of Barrow III is 525 ft. S. of Barrow II, and 900 ft. S.S.E. of Barrow I.

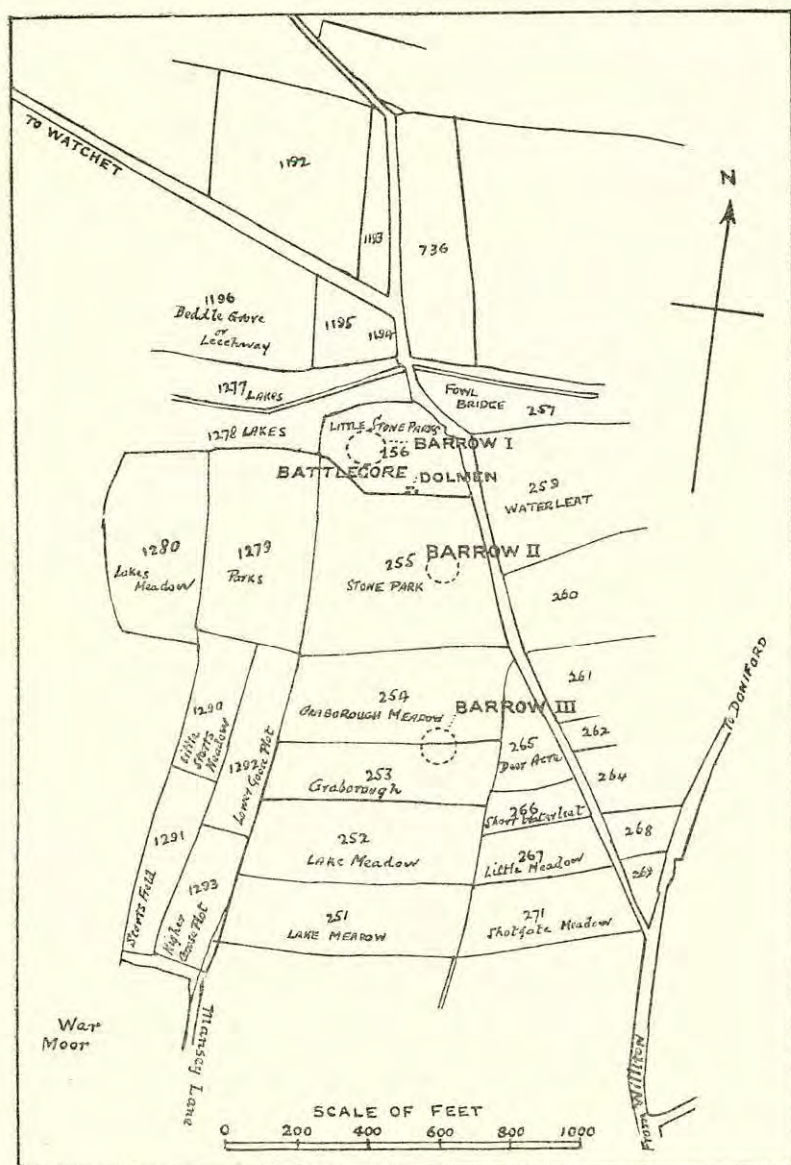


Fig. 1.—Copy of the Tithe Map, 1841, showing the fields in the neighbourhood of Battlegore with their names, to which has been added the position of Barrows I, II and III, and the Dolmen.

IV. BRONZE IMPLEMENTS FOUND AT BATTLEGORE—BEFORE THE EXCAVATIONS

It is interesting to record that six bronze implements were found at or close to Battlegore in the latter half of the nineteenth century, four of which have never previously been recorded :⁸

The small, complete dagger, or knife-dagger (Fig. 2, C) was found in draining in 'Lake's Meadow' in January 1863, at a depth of 20 in. below the surface.⁹ It formerly belonged to the late Countess of Egremont of Orchard Wyndham, but in 1877 it came into the possession of the late Mr. Spencer G. Perceval who passed it on to the late Canon Greenwell, of Durham, the well-known collector of bronze implements, in January 1883, on condition that it eventually became the property of the Somerset Archæological Society. When Canon Greenwell died in 1918, at the age of 97 $\frac{3}{4}$ years, his executors handed the dagger over to the Somerset County Museum.¹⁰

There can be little doubt,—and this is regarded by Mr. William Wyndham as almost certain,—that four other implements of bronze, which have been preserved at Orchard Wyndham for many years (Fig. 2, A, B, and Fig. 3, D, E), were discovered at or close to the Battlegore site, and were taken to the then owner of the land, the Earl of Egremont, at the time of their discovery. Whether they were found with the knife-dagger which passed for a time into the Greenwell Collection there is no positive record.

The socketed celt deposited in the County Museum by Mr. T. H. Andrew, formerly of Williton, in 1908, may have been discovered at Battlegore apart from the five implements above mentioned. It is recorded to have been found in the sixties of last century by William Towell when draining near one of the mounds. It is described in *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* liv (1908), pt. i, on pp. 73 and 107, and is illustrated on p. 72.

This celt has a circular socket (externally 30 by 31 mm.) ; below the mouth a moulded neck and below that a single loop. In this

⁸ Mr. Warden Page makes allusion to the discovery of 'armour and weapons' in *Exploration of Exmoor*, p. 70.

⁹ Extract from the *West Somerset Free Press*, 24 January 1863: 'A few days ago, while some labourers were employed on draining in a field called "Lake's Meadow" adjoining Battlegore, they discovered about 20 in. below the surface an ancient spear about 6 in. long and 2 in. wide at the hilt, having two holes through it for fastening to a handle, and running out to a very sharp point.'

¹⁰ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* lxiv (1918), p. lvii.

position the celt has no less than ten faces, and is decagonal in section.¹¹ It expands into a flat blade, well patinated and bearing one or two scratches. The crescentic cutting-edge is 59 mm.

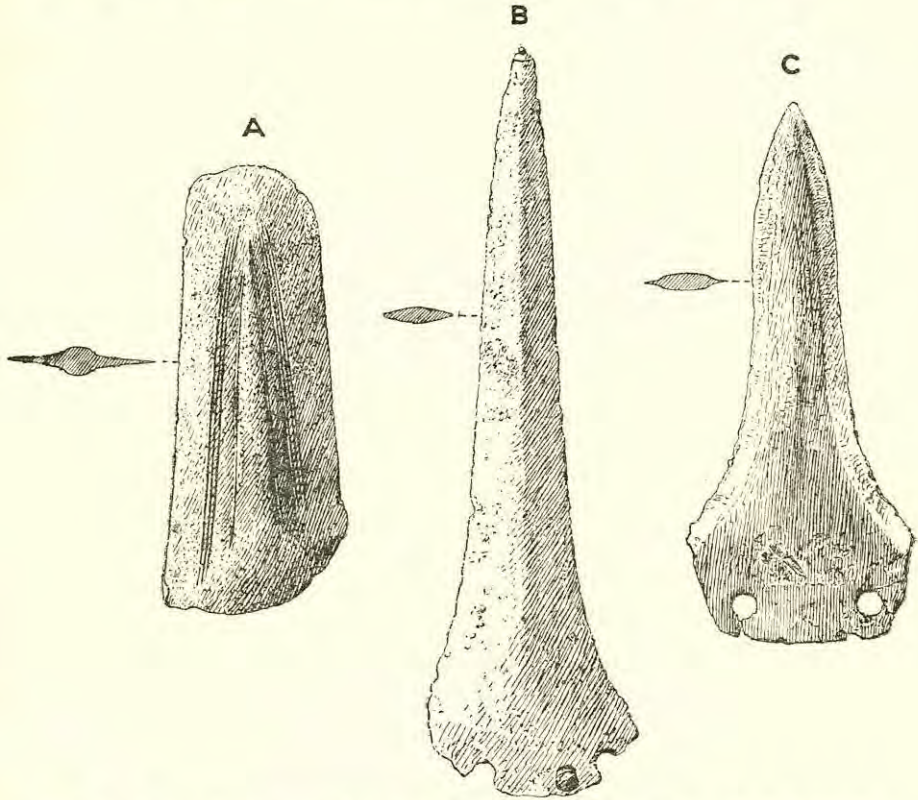


Fig. 2.—Bronze Implements found at Battle-gore, Williton, Som. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$ linear.

A, Part of Dagger converted into a Knife. B, Rapier-shaped Dagger blade.
C, Knife-dagger found in 1863.

From Drawings by Mr. E. Sprankling.

($2\frac{5}{16}$ in.) wide, and the length of the celt 107 mm. ($4\frac{3}{16}$ in.). Weight 211 grammes.

The knife-dagger (Fig. 2, C), before alluded to as having been found in 1863, is 143 mm. ($5\frac{5}{8}$ in.) in length, of a graceful form, the

¹¹ Evans, *Ancient Bronze Implements*, p. 129, quotes one from Dreuil, near Amiens.

edges having an ogee outline. The greater part of the blade is thickened (4 mm.) into a wide type of midrib, the blade near the edges being more or less fluted. At the squared base (max. width 57 mm.) there is a rivet-hole (diam. 6.5 mm.) on either side. It is in good condition, but not finely patinated; weight 81 grammes. In general outline it is not unlike the dagger found near Kinghorn, Fifeshire.¹² It is also similar to the blade found in 1929 on Pitney Moor, Somerset.¹³

It now remains to describe the four implements owned by Mr. Wyndham :

(a) Winged celt (Fig. 3, E), with sides hammered over so as to form a kind of semi-cylindrical socket on either side of the blade. There is a loop on one side, but no stop-ridge. At the butt a notch or opening is observed which originated in there having been two runners by which the metal was conducted into the mould, which when broken off flush with the mould left two projections or jets at the top of the blade. These were hammered over inwards so as to round the external angles and flatten the ends to form a loop. Length of celt 169 mm. ($6\frac{5}{8}$ in.); width at cutting-edge, which is broken, 39 mm. ($1\frac{1}{2}$ in.); max. thickness 39.5 mm. ($1\frac{1}{2}$ in.); well patinated; weight 444 grammes.

This type, which is common in France and Germany, is comparatively rare in Britain.¹⁴ Perhaps the nearest parallels are the specimen found with a founder's hoard on the shore below Beachy Head, Sussex;¹⁵ and eight specimens associated with socketed celts in a hoard found at Donhead St. Mary, Wilts., in 1896 (Pitt-Rivers Museum, Farnham, Dorset).¹⁶

(b) Greater part of a broken dagger, subsequently (probably in the Bronze Age) converted, by the rounding and sharpening of the ends, into a knife (Fig. 2, A). Present length 119 mm. ($4\frac{5}{8}$ in.); max. width 45 mm; max. thickness 7 mm.; well patinated on one surface; weight 116 grammes.

This specimen has a thick, narrow midrib bounded on either margin by a small bead, and between it and each of the original cutting-edges is a band of four parallel incised lines running up each side about 9 mm. from the edge and meeting near what was once the point of the dagger.

¹² Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 245, fig. 307.

¹³ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxxvi, p. lxxx.

¹⁴ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 94, quotes a few examples found in England.

¹⁵ This hoard was found in 1806 and consisted of four gold bracelets, two other palstaves, two socketed celts, part of a sword, and three pieces of copper-cake (*Archæologia*, xvi, 363, and pl. LXVIII, and *Bronze Age Guide*, *Brit. Mus.*, 2nd edit., 1920, Plate IV, fig. 3). See also O. G. S. Crawford in *Antiq. Journ.* ii, 31.

¹⁶ *Wilts Arch. Mag.*, xlv, 373-6.

A complete dagger of this type was found at Camerton, Somerset (Bristol Museum)¹⁷; and another at Martinstown, Dorset.¹⁸ The bronze dagger found in wooden sheath in a barrow at Martinstown by Mr. C. S. Prideaux and myself in 1903 was ornamented in similar

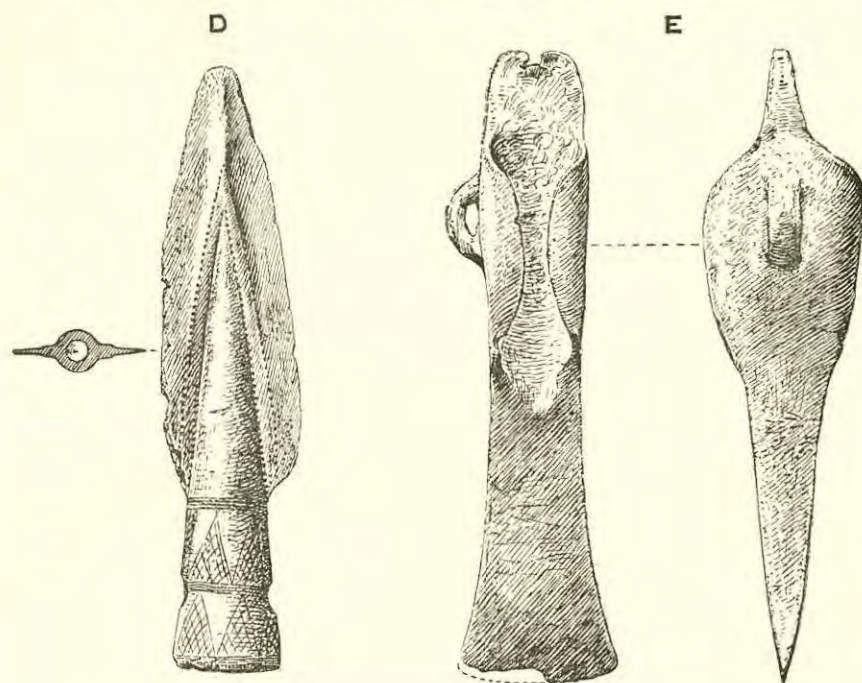


Fig. 3.—Bronze Implements found at Battlegore, Williton, Som.

Scale $\frac{1}{2}$ linear.

D, Ornamented Spearhead. E, Winged Celt or Axe.

From Drawings by Mr. E. Sprankling.

fashion, but less elaborately.¹⁹ The two latter are in the Dorset County Museum. Another specimen was found in a bell barrow at West Cranmore (Soc. Antiq. Museum).²⁰

¹⁷ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* viii, 44; *Archæologia*, xliii, 453, fig. 157; Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 243, fig. 303.

¹⁸ *Proc. Dorset N.H. and Arch. Soc.* lii, plate facing p. xlvii, and other references given there.

¹⁹ *Proc. Dorset Field Club*, xxvi, Martinstown Plate 4, fig. 28A; Abercromby, *Bronze Age Pottery*, ii, 28, and Plate CVIII, O .11.

²⁰ *Archæologia*, xliii, 453, and Plate XXXV, fig. 2.

Mr. R. S. Newall, F.S.A., has recently published a list of ogival bronze daggers with grooves and midrib found in England.²¹

(c) Rapier-shaped dagger blade (Fig. 2, B), plain, damaged at the tip, length 198 mm. ($7\frac{3}{4}$ in.). It is strengthened by a midrib which gives a flattened lozenge-shaped cross-section (max. thickness 4 mm.). There are three rivet-holes cut through the margin of the base. Originally there may have been four. In the perfect hole a rivet (length 13 mm.) still remains. It is better patinated on one surface than on the other. The present width near the base is 54 mm. ; weight 107 grammes.

(d) Spearhead (Fig. 3, D) having a large socket 28 mm. in diameter externally, through opposite faces of which there is a large rivet-hole (somewhat damaged, but approximately 7 mm. in diam.). The socket gradually tapers towards the point of the spear, and serves at the same time as a strengthening midrib, the top of which is solid. The point is slightly damaged ; present length 160 mm. ($6\frac{1}{4}$ in.). The midrib-socket is bounded by a lesser rib which is ornamented on both margins by a row of small circular punch-marks, as seen in the drawing.

Below the blade the socket of the implement is elaborately ornamented with engraved lines. This space is divided into two zones divided off by three bands of four encircling horizontal lines. In the upper zone there are two vandykes on either side (four in all) pointing upwards, the alternate triangles filled with crossed lines running parallel to the sides. At the sides, in this zone, there are upright double bands of herring-bone pattern (partly seen in the drawing). In the lower zone there is an encircling band of six vandykes pointing upwards ; the alternate triangles are filled with crossed lines running parallel to the sides, as in the upper zone. There is no herring-bone pattern in the lower zone.

The blade has been damaged, especially along one side. The implement is fairly well patinated ; weight 126.5 grammes.

V. DESCRIPTION OF THE BATTLEGORE FIELD IN WHICH THE EXCAVATIONS WERE CARRIED OUT

The Plan (Plate XI) of the ground surveyed²² in 1931 covers an area of about 4.25 acres ; but the excavations were confined to ' Little Stone Parks ' only, which represents about 1.91 acres. The marginal lines of the plan are directed to the points of the compass. On the right the high road, measuring about 20 ft.

²¹ *Wills. Arch. Mag.* xlv, 448-456.

²² The Director-General of the Ordnance Survey kindly informed me that the magnetic variation for Battlegore on 1 May 1931 was $13^{\circ} 34'$ West of True North.

in width, is seen running in a N.W. direction towards St. Decuman's. The stream passing under Fowl Bridge falls from west to east.

The slight earthworks take a somewhat zigzag course on the W. side of the road, and in the W. half of the plan follow the boundary dividing 'Lakes' from 'Little Stone Parks' (clearly shown in the tithe map). From the deepest angle of the earthwork another, still slighter, proceeds westwards and then southwards for a short distance, extending to the N.E. margin of a round barrow (Barrow I) which had every appearance of having been dug into, perhaps on more than one occasion. At the present time the summit of the tumulus is only 4 ft. above the average field level, although about 100 ft. in diameter. On all sides of the barrow (and through it on its western margin), shallow trenches for draining the field were observed in all directions (*see* Plan); and small earthenware drain-pipes were met with in three places in Cutting II and one in Cutting VIII (*see* Plan and Sections). To the E. and S.E. there were five *very* small and slight mounds; and on the margin of the plan and to the S.E. of Barrow I a group of large stones were noted close to and resting against the hedge dividing this field from 'Stone Park'. These stones were mentioned by Warden Page.²³

Another large stone was observed under the hedge and close to the eastern end of the earthwork.

VI. EXCAVATION ROUND THE GROUP OF STONES, S.E. OF BARROW I

(Plan, Plate XI, Photograph, Plate VIII, and Plate IX, lower figures)

This excavation was called Cutting I²⁴ and before removing any turf the two large stones then visible, although somewhat

²³ *Exploration of Exmoor*, 70, where a third and smaller block is mentioned as being 'nearly concealed by brambles'. Page adds, 'The local story is that they were cast there from the Quantocks by the devil and a giant, who had engaged in a throwing match. The print of Satan's hand still marks the leaning stone!'

²⁴ The writer was on the ground nearly every day for six hours during which the excavations and survey were in progress,—13 April to 2 May 1931; some of the filling-in was done after that date (till 8 May). The men employed for

overgrown, were photographed. In the first place, Stones I and II (Plate IX) were cleared, but the latter was left in its reclining position against the N. side of the hedge.²⁵ The digging was then extended westwards, when some much smaller stones were traced. In this position and to the north there was a small ridge or mound of earth which had probably been thrown up in recent times. In digging this away we found a flint arrowhead (F 1),²⁶ a small flint core (depth 0.5 ft.), a piece of burnt flint probably part of a scraper, and three flint flakes. No human nor animal remains were found in Cutting I.

Later the excavation was continued eastwards²⁷ from the E. side of leaning-stone No. II, and as the plans show another stone, No. III,²⁸ was found resting in a deep hole (about 3.5 ft. by 2.5 ft.) in the gravel, the bottom of which could not be properly cleared owing to the presence of water.²⁹

Search was then made for a socket-hole in which Stone II originally stood, and it was found, measuring about 3.25 ft. by 2.75 ft., and 1.7 ft. deep below the surface of the natural gravel which was 4.15 ft. lower than the top of Stone II (*see* Photograph, Plate VIII). Its filling consisted of fine sand.³⁰

It had now been determined that Stone I was 10 ft. in length and 4 ft. in maximum width; thickness at both ends 2.25 ft.

the excavations were W. E. Young (foreman, of Ebbesborne Wake, Wilts., who made some notes in my absence), Wm. Wedlake (of Camerton), and two local men, Thomas Tipper and William Trebble.

²⁵ According to Page this stone was upright some fifty years before he issued *An Exploration of Exmoor* in 1890. He says: 'It was toppled against the hedge by some young men anxious to test the truth of the legend that it was immovable' (p. 71).

²⁶ Rough arrowhead of unpatinated grey flint, length 30.5 mm.; worked along one edge only, the other edge sharp; it is of the hollow base variety. Found depth 1.3 ft. below the surface. Figured in Plate X.

²⁷ In clearing Stone III a little charcoal was found at a depth of 3.5 ft., which has been identified by Mr. J. Cecil Maby, B.Sc., as '*Quercus sp.*, apparently Common Oak, mature wood'.

²⁸ A *very* small part of this stone showed on the surface of the ground, and that was hidden by grass.

²⁹ Stones II and III and the small stones were all in the modern hedge-ditch.

³⁰ The centres of the two socket-holes were about 8.5 ft. apart.



BATTLEGORE, WILLITON, 1931

Group of Stones, which probably formed a Dolmen, taken from the west after being cleared by excavation
The stone lying against hedge is 7'4 ft. in length.

From a Photograph by Mr. H. St. George Gray, F.S.A.

It is much pitted by water action upon the softer spots, and is much overgrown in patches by moss and wild plants.

Stone II³¹ was 7.4 ft. in height and 3.75 ft. across at the thickest part; whereas Stone III appeared to be 5.5 ft. in height (it leaned considerably in a N.E. direction and was hidden from view when we began to excavate in this part); it was difficult to estimate the thickness of this stone, but it was 1.5 ft. on the S. side.

The small pieces of stone on the W. side covered a length of 6 ft.; maximum width 2 ft.

With regard to levels, the top of Stone II is 1.35 ft. higher than the highest part of Stone I, and the bottom of Stone III is 6.7 ft. lower than the top of Stone II and 3.2 ft. lower than the top of Stone III. It is just possible that Stone III may have been lowered somewhat in recent times or the upper part may have been broken off, as it might have been found to be an obstruction to the flowing of water in the modern ditch.

From the above description, with dimensions, it has been possible to suggest a reconstruction of a dolmen in this position (see Plate IX, with explanatory title). It is now generally agreed (following Mr. O. G. S. Crawford, etc.) that the so-called dolmens in this country are only the surviving chambers of ruined (long) barrows and that of the latest 'false passage grave' type. If that be so they may well fall, as Professor V. Gordon Childe suggests, within the beaker period. (See 'Concluding Remarks').

Dr. H. H. Thomas, F.R.S., petrographer to the Geological Survey, reports that the stones are a conglomeratic sandstone with a calcareous matrix in which are somewhat small often rounded pebbles of red marl, grit and other rocks. He adds: 'The rock certainly belongs to the New Red Sandstone, and I expect it to be purely local. At any rate, even if transported, it need only have been brought a short distance.'

³¹ Stone II is a little pitted in the parts which have been most exposed.

VII. EXCAVATION OF BARROW I³²

(Plan, Plate XI, Sectional Diagram, Plate IX; Photograph, Plate VII; and Relics, Plate X)

This excavation, extending E. and W. across the highest part of the mound, was called Cutting II, and measured 110 ft. in length by 10 ft. in width (at the grass level). A narrow extension was made at the west end.

Allusion has already been made to this barrow on p. 19, but it remains to be said that although a surrounding ditch was clearly visible in parts round the foot of the barrow, this feature was entirely obliterated by modern drainage-work on the W. and N.W., and on the N. and S.E. there were slight gaps where apparently the foot of the mound had been reduced in height to form approaches to the higher parts of the barrow (perhaps for agricultural purposes).

In carrying out this excavation two 'pillars' (A. and B.) of the barrow material were left in the middle of the cutting, 30 ft. apart, for contour and measurement purposes. (See Photograph, Plate VII).³³

The summit of the barrow between these points showed considerable evidence of previous excavation, and it soon became clear that two fairly large trenches had been sunk from the top, more or less at right-angles to our own cutting; and these excavations had been carried down to the level of the old surface, judging from the lack of stratification in the soils in these parts. This observation was strengthened by the fact that a modern glazed shard was found at a depth of 3.75 ft. Medieval pottery (P 13) was also found (p. 29).

³² I turned my attention to the excavation of this barrow without any preconceived theories. When I excavated the famous Wick Barrow, near Stogursey, N. Quantocks, in 1908, it was thought by certain archaeologists that evidence might be forthcoming of its having been erected, or made use of, in the Anglo-Saxon or Viking period, and that explorers might be rewarded by the discovery of a historic burial, possibly of the Danish chieftain, Hubba. But the tumulus proved to be a very interesting one of the early Bronze Age. (Fully described and illustrated in *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* liv, ii, 1-78).

³³ Between 'A' and 'B' the central picket is seen on the Plan (marked C. P.).

One of the trenches appeared to be exactly through the centre of the barrow, and in this part, at the level of the old surface, the foreman found a shallow trial-hole which had been dug into the undisturbed gravel with a modern spade!

No trace of the primary interment, therefore, remained for our investigation.

In other of the higher parts of the barrow which had not been previously disturbed by modern man the layers of reddish-brown earth and gravel were much broken up by masses of grey clay,—not of a very tenacious character (a kind of flood-soil) brought to the site to supply material for the body of the mound. This clay was never less than 18 in. from the surface.

The old surface line was faintly indicated in several places by a somewhat ochreous or rust-coloured line of slight thickness, and its level can be fairly well seen in the photograph (Plate VII).

At first the work proceeded from W. to E., but before this was properly completed a start was made from the east and the first discovery was a rather shallow encircling ditch, the position of which is well seen in the foreground of the photograph (Plate VII). This proved to be about 4·5 ft. wide at the level of the undisturbed ground. Owing to the presence of some water it was difficult to clear out the bottom, which however was reached at about 2·5 ft. below the surface.

Here, at a depth of 1·75 ft. a fragment of plain black pottery (P 6), probably of Bronze Age type, was uncovered. Still deeper, in fact on the bottom, a piece of plain black pottery (P 9) of a fine sandy texture was found. Another piece of numbered pottery (P 10) was found at a depth of 1·6 ft. It is plain and weathered, terra-cotta outside, black on the inner surface; thick and coarse, but with very little grit. Two other small fragments of pottery and four flint flakes were found here.

The next structural point of interest was the circular post-hole, 2 ft. in diameter and 1 ft. deep at the old surface (seen in the Plan and Section). There were no contents to record except a few fragments of charcoal (oak)³⁴ down to the bottom, but there were no packing-stones. The filling consisted of rather loose blackened soil.

³⁴ A sample was submitted to Mr. J. Cecil Maby whose identification is, '*Quercus sp.*, apparently Common Oak, old wood'.

At a distance of 35 ft. from the E. end of the cutting and about 6 ft. further W. than the post-hole, two pieces of oak,³⁵ max. thickness 1.5 in., were found in clayey mould at a depth of 2.75 ft. One piece, 5.5 in. wide, was 1 ft. long; the other piece, almost at right-angles, was 1.25 ft. long and 4 in. wide.

Slightly further west a thin plank of oak³⁶ protruded 2 ft. from the N. face of the cutting, in the position of the pick-axe seen in the photograph, Plate VII (*see also* Plan and Section). This was also on the old surface, at a depth of 3 ft. below the turf.

Cremation.—Digging a little further westwards we discovered a cremated interment of the Bronze Age of some interest, on the S. margin of the cutting, at a distance of 43 ft. from the E. end and 20 ft. to the east of the approximate centre of the barrow. The position is marked in the photograph (Plate VII), and in the Plan and Section. This secondary interment had not been disturbed in recent times.

The rounded bottom of the hole containing the cremation was found to be 4.9 ft. deep from the present surface of the barrow, and 1.5 ft. deep below the old surface. The diameters of the hole at the old surface level were 2.25 ft. N.W. to S.E. and 1.9 ft. N.E. to S.W. It penetrated the undisturbed ground below the old surface to the extent of about 1 ft.

Only the lower portion of the urn (P 12) at the bottom of the hole remained intact, and even in this position it was badly cracked. This part contained the actual interment consisting of a mass of calcined human bones compressed so hard that it had to be 'chiselled' out with the point of a trowel.³⁷ The cremation occupied about 5 in. of the urn.

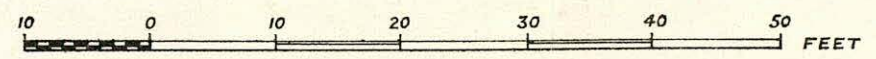
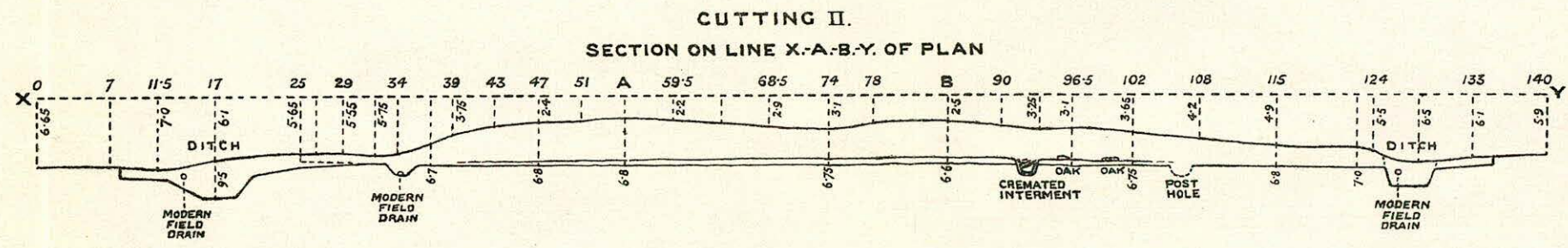
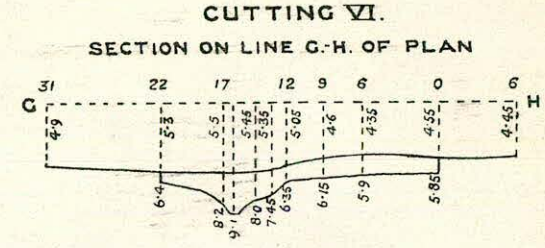
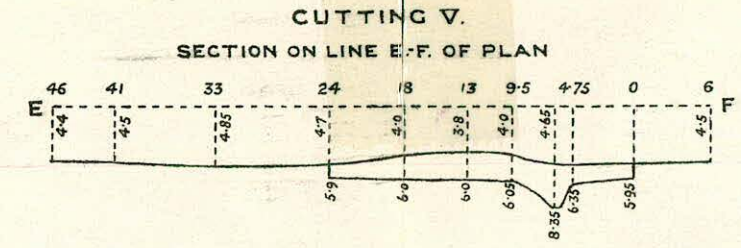
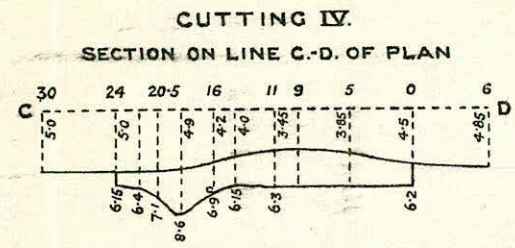
The upper part of the urn was much broken and displaced, and some of the fragments lining the hole were the wrong way round, the outer surfaces of the pot sometimes facing inwards.

Above this again were the remains of a flat circular wooden

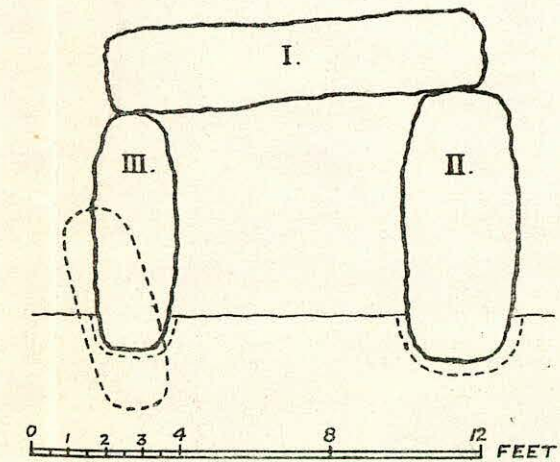
³⁵ Mr. Maby reports on this: '*Quercus sp.*, apparently Common Oak (*Q. robur* or *sessiliflora*), mature wood'.

³⁶ On this Mr. Maby reports: '*Quercus sp.*, several fragments submitted, some "knotty", mature wood, apparently Common Oak.'

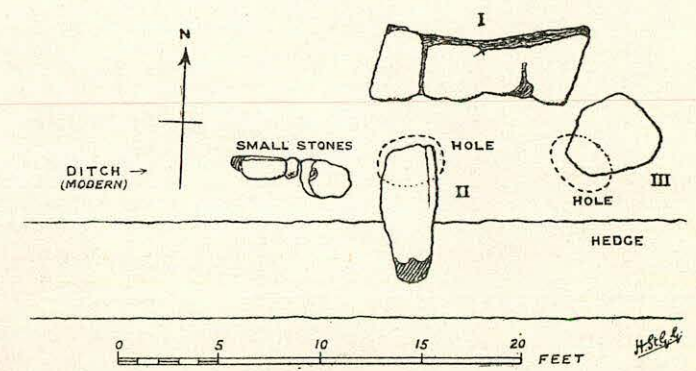
³⁷ The space between the cover and the cremation would cause a certain amount of drainage, and water percolating through the gravel might well be responsible for the hard nature of the cremated remains.



H. St. G. 1934



Sketch to scale showing the probable original position of the three stones forming a Dolmen at Battlegore. Stone I is about 10 ft. in length and 2.25 ft. in thickness. Stone II, 7.4 ft. in height, is shown in its vertical position, standing in its socket-hole. Stone III is shown as 6.5 ft. in height. (It has perhaps been broken). What remains is represented in dotted lines in the leaning position in which it was found.



Plan of the Remains of a Dolmen (?), Battlegore, Williton, Som.

(oak) cover, which appeared to be about 1.2 ft. in diameter. It was made of a thin piece of oak and when found had traces of a rather thick turned-over rim, this flange showing upwards. The cover, as well as being upside down, was found in a sloping position, *i.e.* from the top of the hole on the N.E. side to the level of the cremated contents on the S.W. side. Mr. J. Cecil Maby, B.Sc., has examined a fragment of the cover which he describes as follows: ' *Quercus sp.*, apparently Common Oak, mature wood.'

Several fragments of the urn were found above the cover, but the greater part was below it. No rim pieces have been identified.

From these remarks it may be gathered that the cremation occupied a comparatively small part of the urn, and when the cover finally decayed and suddenly fell inwards the upper portion of the rimless urn collapsed with it. This collapse may of course have occurred at the time of burial.

Other fragments of pottery of similar type were found on the old surface close to the N.W. edge of the hole. Probably they are part of the same urn, and all the pieces have been kept together.

The pottery is of the soft Bronze Age type, rather more than half-an-inch thick. On the inner side it is black; on the outer reddish-brown (like so many of the fragments of pottery found in the barrow).

The flint knife (F 19, Plate X)³⁸ and one flint flake were found on the surface of the cremated remains.

Sir Arthur Keith, F.R.S., has kindly reported upon the cremated remains as follows:

' These cremators have done their work so thoroughly that they have left a multitude of fragments so minute that not much is left to guide the anatomist.

' There is a fragment of upper outer part of left orbit: that is either of a woman or of a lad or youth. I think of a youth.

' The fragments of the skull are rather thin, 3-4 mm., but parts of the ends of the femur are preserved and they are those of a person having a stature of at least 5 ft. More I cannot say.

³⁸ This finely worked knife has a very smooth under-surface and prominent bulb of percussion. Length 55 mm., max. width 31.5 mm.

'There is a fragment of skull (occipital) which looks as if it had been cut by a sharp weapon before death, but in cremations, as you know, fire often causes a clean cleavage.'

Turning to the w. end of the cutting there was a considerable hollow in the contour of the barrow owing to the presence of a modern drain. As the Section (Plate IX) shows a small ditch was dug 1 ft. deep into the undisturbed gravel to lay a pipe, but the true barrow extended another 9 ft. to the west of this.

An extension was made westwards from the middle of the main cutting for a distance of 17 ft. (width 3 ft.) chiefly for the purpose of tracing the barrow ditch. This was found to extend a foot deeper than the corresponding section of ditch at the e. end of the main cutting. It was originally about 5 ft. wide at the top, but its w. side had been cut into in recent times to the extent of 3 ft. to lay a field-drain (shown in the Plan and Section). The presence of water gave considerable trouble here. It is seen, therefore, that the ancient ditch was found under the e. bank of the modern drain, and the bottom was 3·7 ft. deep below the present turf.

The 'finds' here consisted of a fine flint core (F 23) in the middle of the ditch, depth 2·75 ft.; also two flint flakes and a small piece of bronze slag.³⁹

Structurally there seems to be little more to be said with regard to Cutting II; but had time and funds permitted we should have made a n.-s. cutting. It remains to describe the miscellaneous 'finds' uncovered as this large excavation proceeded.

FLINT

A record was kept of the minor artefacts found in the barrow material throughout the whole of the cutting:

Layer I (down to 1·5 ft.): Flint flakes, 57; chert flakes, 3; pieces of burnt flint, 12.

Layer II (1·5 ft. to 2·5 ft.): Flint flakes, 13; chert flakes, 2; pieces of burnt flint, 7.

Layer III (2·5 ft. to the undisturbed gravel): Flint flakes, 27; pieces of burnt flint, 2.

³⁹ A few other pieces of bronze slag were found in the places excavated.

The following are some details of the numbered flint implements :

F 3. Scraper of clear black flint, of duck-bill shape and having a long dorsal ridge ; length 48 mm. Depth 0.85 ft. Figured in Plate X.

F 4. Rough core of grey flint. Depth 0.5 ft.

F 5. Hollow scraper of dark flint, formed from a hinge-flake. Depth 1 ft.

F 6. Greater part of a large scraper with cortex on the back. Depth 1.25 ft.

F 7. Knife of brown flint, finely worked on both edges ; length 45 mm. Depth 2 ft. Figured in Plate X.

F 8. Scraper of dark grey flint, flat and thin ; length 38.2 mm. Depth 1.25 ft.

F 9. Rough scraper of grey flint. Depth 1 ft.

F 10. Prismatic core of dark greyish-brown flint. Depth 2.75 ft.

F 11. Small end-scraper of grey flint of triangular cross-section. Depth 0.5 ft.

F 12. Rough core of dark flint. Depth 1.5 ft.

F 13. Small core showing on one face the cortex of the pebble. Depth 2.75 ft.

F 14. Rough scraper, nearly all the back covered with cortex. Depth 2.75 ft.

F 15. Knife of dark clear flint with cortex along the back. Depth 1 ft.

F 16. Very finely ground and polished knife of grey flint,⁴⁰ length 110 mm. (4 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.), made from a long and narrow flake. It has been evenly ground and bevelled on both sides of the cutting-edge. There is a little fine secondary flaking at the pointed end. A portion of the cortex left serves as a back to the knife. On the bulbar side the grinding marks continue beyond the bevelled edge near the bulb of percussion. Figured in Plate X.

It was found at a depth of 2 ft. (3.85 ft. w. of point ' B ' , and 7 ft. from the s. side of the cutting).

⁴⁰ Two flint knives with ground and polished cutting-edges were found in Barrow 3, Martinstown, Dorset, and have been figured (*Proc. Dor. N.H. & A. Field Club*, xxvi, Pl. VI, figs. 5, 18).

Two flint knives (one polished and similar in some respects to F 16 from Battlegore), four partly polished flint axes, five flint arrowheads, a scraper and a flake, two boars' tusks and a perforated deer antler hammer (or socket) were found together in a long-barrow near East Ayton, East Field, Scarborough ; Greenwell gift, British Museum, 1879. (F. Elgee, *Early Man in N.E. Yorks*, 40-41 ; *Archæologia*, lxxi, 121 ; *Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc.* iv, 104 ; *Guide to Stone Age Antiquities*, *Brit. Mus.*, 3rd edit., 1926, p. 104).

F 17. Small knife made from ochreous pebble-flint. Depth 1.75 ft. in E. ditch, which was crossed obliquely by a modern field drain at a depth of about 1.5 ft.

F 18. Small scraper of horseshoe form, broken across the butt. Depth 1.5 ft.

F 20. Small scraper of black flint. Depth 3.6 ft.

F 21. Finely-worked discoidal scraper of black flint, almost circular in plan and having a plano-convex cross-section; fairly steep-sided; half the back covered with cortex. Depth 1 ft. Figured in Plate X.

F 22. Rough core of dark flint. Depth 0.5 ft.

F 26. Scraper of black flint, with cortex on the back. Found in filling-in at the w. end of the cutting. Figured in Plate X.

F 27. Small, finely-worked knife. Found in filling-in the cutting. (Four flint flakes were also found in the filling-in.)

POTTERY

The following are some details of the fragments of prehistoric pottery :

P 1. A few fragments of beaker pottery (mostly small), found at a depth of 1 ft. below the surface of the barrow. The inner and outer surfaces are of terra-cotta colour, the interior black; thickness about 6.5 mm. The largest piece has the characteristic hyphenated ornament,⁴¹ and has been figured in Plate X.

With this pottery some charcoal was found, a specimen of which was submitted to Mr. Maby, who describes it as '*Prunus sp.*, presumably Plum or Cherry—apparently wood from small branch'.

P 2. Small fragment of coarse, gritty, grey pottery, somewhat weathered; unclassified. Depth 1 ft.

P 3. Small piece of rather thick pottery of Bronze Age type, containing coarse grains of quartz. Depth 3 ft.

P 4. Small piece of thin pottery, plain, apparently of beaker type. Depth 2.1 ft.

P 5. Fragment of soft pottery free from coarse grit; light reddish-brown outside and black on the inner surface. Depth 2 ft.

P 7. Two fragments of rather thick plain pottery containing a small proportion of grit; Bronze Age type. Depth 2.2 ft.

P 8. Several fragments (one of rim, Plate X) of coarse black

⁴¹ Mr. Stuart Piggott has seen this piece and thinks the 'cord' ornament may have been made by a series of short jabs with a point rather than actually impressing a cord, as the individual impressions are rather sharp. We wish to take the opportunity of thanking Mr. Piggott for his drawings of this fragment of pottery and also of P 8 and P 16.

pottery 'with frequent grit particles, hard and with a tendency to break in flakes and laminae. The exterior and interior surfaces are smoothed, the former particularly so, being almost burnished on some of the fragments and with an almost soapy feel. The flat rim was probably slightly everted and the decoration extends inside as well as on the outside and edge' (Stuart Piggott). The ornamentation is of short 'maggots' of impressed cord, with a maximum length of 10 mm. and width of about 2 mm. Depth 2.35 ft.

P 11. Piece of plain, thick pottery, terra-cotta on the outside, black inside; no grit. Depth 2.85 ft.

P 13. Large fragment of the base of what appears to be an early medieval cooking-pot with very slightly sagging base; black externally, dull pale brown on the inner surface. Also a small piece of pottery of Bronze Age type, red externally, black on inner side. Depth 3 ft. in the part which had been disturbed.

P 14. One piece of pottery similar to P 5, 10, 11, 15, etc.; also two fragments of pottery, without ornament, of the texture, etc., of P 8. Depth 3.15 ft.

P 15. Four fragments of soft Bronze Age pottery precisely similar to P 5, 10, 11 and 14. Depth 3 ft.

P 16. One large and two much smaller fragments of beaker pottery. The large piece is black on the inner and red on the outer surface, the latter being ornamented with parallel lines of hyphenated oblong punch-marks. Depth 1.5 ft. in the previously disturbed part of the barrow. The large piece is figured in Plate X.

P 17. Small fragment of Bronze Age pottery found associated with two very small pieces of burnt bone, at a depth of 2.6 ft.

P 18. Fragment of an overhanging shoulder of a large cinerary urn of soft pottery, free from grit; thickness at shoulder 26 mm.; slight trace of stabbed decoration.⁴² Depth 3 ft. from the disturbed area.

P 23. Fragment of soft Bronze Age pottery, black except thin coating of brown on outer surface. Depth 3.5 ft. from the disturbed area.

VIII. EXCAVATION OF DITCH OF BARROW I, Cuttings VIII, IX and X. (Plan, Plate, XI)

The two sections of the ditch of the barrow opened at either end of the large Cutting No. II have already been described on pp. 23, 26.

The ditch was examined at three other points, *i.e.* Cuttings

⁴² Cf. Urn found at Martinstown, Dorset (*Proc. Dor. N.H. & A. Field Club*, xxvi, Pl. VIII).

VIII, IX and X, all of which measured 11 ft. long by 7 ft. wide at the surface. As seen by the Plan, the maximum width of the ditch at the top of the undisturbed ground was 5 ft. and the minimum 4.25 ft. The Plan also shows that the ancient ditch was circular and enclosed an area 104 ft. in diameter. The modern ditch round the barrow is not a true circle, but follows the line of the ancient ditch more or less.

It was estimated that the ditch at Cuttings VIII and IX was 2.75 ft. deep and Cutting X 3 ft. deep, below the present surface. The width at the bottom varied from 2.25 ft. to 2.5 ft.

In Cutting VIII on the n. side of the barrow the silting consisted of grey clay to the bottom, and the sides were loamy and not gravelly as in some other places. In Cutting IX the sides were rather steeper than elsewhere, the counterscarp steeper than the escarp. In Cutting X the silt again consisted for the most part of grey clay, especially at the bottom; here the escarp was rather steeper than the counterscarp.

It now remains to describe the relics :

Cutting VIII.

F 24. Core of greyish-brown flint. Depth 2 ft.

F 25. Small, thin knife of brown flint, finely worked along the cutting-edge; the back edge consists entirely of cortex. Depth 2.25 ft. near the outer side of the ditch. Figured in Plate X.

Cutting IX.

P 25. Two or three very small pieces of black pottery, of fine texture and sandy; one fragment, thick, has a bead rim. Depth 2 ft. and 2.5 ft. in the middle of the ditch.

Two flint flakes were also found, one depth 1 ft., the other 1.75 ft.

Cutting X.

P 26. Fragment of thick black pottery, soft, apparently Bronze Age. Depth 2.5 ft. in the middle of the ditch.

P 27. Much weathered fragment of a straight thin rim of red Samian pottery (*terra sigillata*); first century A.D., probably Flavian. Dr. T. Davies Pryce, F.S.A., describes it as 'Form 15/17. Part of the rim and wall, profiled externally. There is no lip and the fragment shows the internal "step" below the rim which is characteristic of this shape'. Depth 2 ft. near the inner side of the ditch.

How the fragment got into this position it is difficult to say, but owing to the drainage of the field from time to time, as evidenced by the presence of modern ware pipes in four out of the five ditch

cuttings made on the margin of the barrow, archæological remains have become so mixed in the ditch as to be practically valueless for dating purposes.

P 28. Fragment of black pottery of exactly the same type as P 26, and probably part of the same vessel. Depth 2.5 ft., in the middle of the ditch.

COIN 2. Threepence of Elizabeth, 1561. Found over the position of the ditch, depth 0.5 ft.

Also found : Two flint flakes, one chert flake and a piece of burnt flint at 1 ft. deep, and a flint flake at 2.5 ft.

IX. THE EARTHWORKS

(Plan, Plate XI, and Sectional Diagrams, Plate IX)

The slight earthworks, before alluded to on p. 19, enclosed the N. half of Barrow I and divided it from the river on the N. and the main-road on the N.E. The N. and W. parts of the earthwork coincide exactly with the boundary of the plots known as 'Lakes' and 'Little Stone Parks' (see Plan, Plate XI, and tithe map, Fig. 1). On the east the earthwork stops short at the roadside hedge, and there is no sign of an earthwork extending still further eastwards on the other side of the road.⁴³

Cutting IV.

We made a cutting, 24 ft. in length and 7 ft. wide, across the highest part of the earthwork near the E. end, and the plotted section on line C.D. of Plan shows the height of the bank to be 1.55 ft. above the adjoining field level and 3 ft. above the undisturbed gravel. Here we found an outer ditch cut, somewhat roughly, into the natural gravel, which extended to a depth of 3.7 ft. below the present surface. It was about 7 ft. wide at the top (on the level of the undisturbed ground) and 2 ft. wide at the bottom. The presence of water prevented the bottom of this ditch and those on Cuttings V and VI being cleaned out thoroughly. The silting was of brown colour and

⁴³ It was pretty evident that the earthwork was earlier than the modern field drains (dotted on the Plan), as there are breaks in the earthwork in two places for drainage purposes.

of a clayey consistency mixed with a few stones, as in Cuttings V and VI.

The following objects were found :

Rampart. Flint only.

Crest to 1 ft. deep,—3 flakes, 1 small core.

1 ft. to 1.85 ft.,—6 flakes.

1.85 ft. to 2.5 ft.,—4 flakes, 1 rough scraper, 1 flake with saw-like edge.

2.5 ft. to 3 ft.,—2 flakes.

Ditch.

Cut Halfpenny of Henry II,⁴⁴ in poor condition, found on the inner margin of the ditch, depth 2.25 ft. below the surface; marked in Plan and Section by a small circle. This coin, of the York mint, was struck *circa* 1180 or a little later.⁴⁵

The following objects were also found down to a depth of 2.35 ft. below the surface: Piece of greenish window glass; a piece of glazed ware, perhaps sixteenth or seventeenth century; an oyster-shell; and two flint flakes.

Between 2.34 ft. and 2.75 ft.: Piece of green glass; two pieces of coal; a burnt flint; and a flint flake.

Cutting V.

This cutting in the N.E. angle of the earthwork was of the same dimensions as Cutting IV, and the plotted section on line E.F. of Plan shows the height of the bank. Here, again we found an outer ditch, not so roughly cut as in Cutting IV. It was V-shaped and 3.7 ft. deep below the surface. At the undisturbed level it was 4.75 ft. in width.

No numbered relics were found at a greater depth than 1.2 ft.

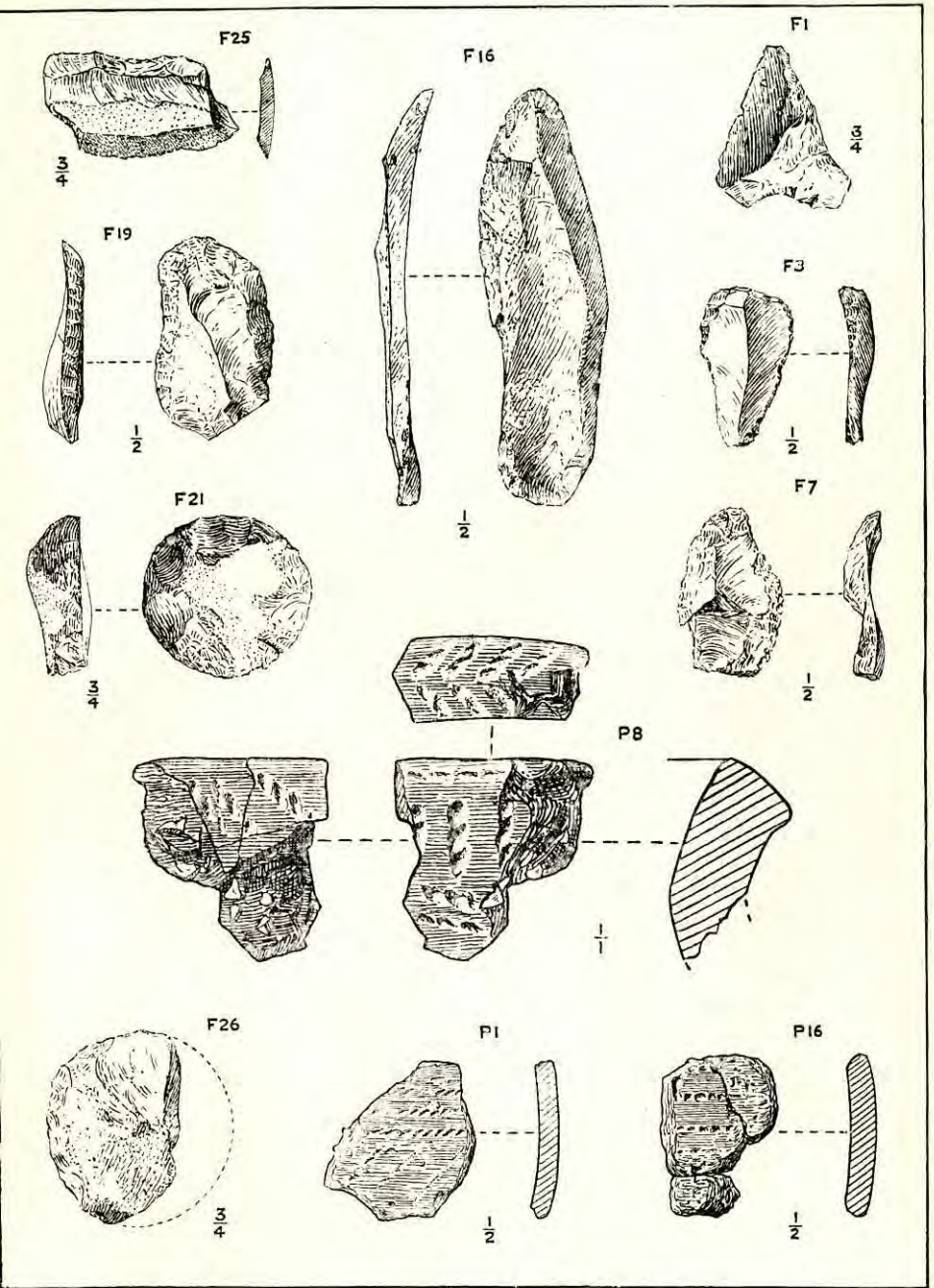
P 19 to P 22 consisted of a few shards of black pottery, depth 0.5 ft. to 1 ft.

P 24 was a large fragment of black pottery with carination, depth 1.2 ft.

All the above pottery is of precisely the same type and apparently late medieval or even later than that. Four similar pieces of pottery and three flint flakes were collected from the cutting, but not specially numbered. In addition modern glazed ware and pieces of glass were found down to about 1 ft. from the bottom of the ditch. No other objects occurred below that level.

⁴⁴ A penny of George III, 1806, was also found in this cutting, depth 1 ft.

⁴⁵ Cut halfpennies are not very common, but it was the usual practice at this time. This piece was identified at the British Museum.



BATTLEGORE, WILLITON

Relics found in the Excavations, 1931

Flint Implements drawn by Mr. E. Sprankling. Pottery by Mr. Stuart Piggott

Cutting VI.

This cutting was made through the most northern length of the earthwork, which formed the line of a field boundary. The cutting was 22 ft. in length by 5 ft. in width, on the line G.H. of Plan and Section. The outer ditch was found to continue in this position and to extend to a depth of 3.6 ft. below the surface. On the s. side, or escarp, there was a ledge in the ditch, as shown in the Section, which rendered the upper level of the ditch much wider than would have been expected (7 ft.).

No ancient remains were found in this part of the ditch and bank. Down to 1 ft. there were a few fragments of modern glazed pottery and a few fragmentary bones of horse and rabbit.⁴⁶ A piece of modern bottle-glass was found within 1 ft. of the bottom of the ditch.

The cutting of the ditch (Sections IV, V, VI) *seemed* to be too clean and 'business-like' merely for the purpose of a modern drain; but on the whole we think the earthwork with its ditch was probably part of a land drainage system rather than a defensive earthwork. There was no stratification in the silting which, as in Cuttings IV and V, was of a dark clayey nature and appeared, judging from the 'finds', to be all of one age, namely, modern!

The coin of Henry II has no datable value, and happened to be mixed with the soil.

Cutting VII.

A small cutting, 24 ft. in length by 5 ft. wide, was made through a small supplementary earthwork connecting the deep angle of the larger earthwork with Barrow I. This bank of very slight relief makes a right-angle turn as it approaches the barrow, and it was at this angle the excavation was made (Plate XI). At the turf level it showed a very slight ditch on either side, but no ditch had been dug into the undisturbed gravel to any appreciable extent. The bank consisted of surface humus, and the turf was rather less than 6 in. higher than the surrounding field. The only 'find' here was a flint flake.

⁴⁶ No animal bones of any interest were found in the Battlegore excavations.

X. OTHER SMALL CUTTINGS

(Plan, Plate XI)

Cutting III.

Close to the hedge and near the E. end of the earthwork a large stone partly showed at the surface (and is marked on the Ordnance Sheet). Round it we made a cutting about 12·5 ft. by 10 ft. to ascertain the extent and character of the stone, which Dr. Thomas regards as conglomeratic sandstone (New Red Sandstone).

This stone seemed to be in its natural bed, but the small loose stones and some pebbles which we uncovered at the S. end of the cutting appeared to have been thrown here into a swampy place. No relics were found, and the cutting was lacking in archaeological interest.

Cutting XI.

In the E. and S.E. parts of 'Little Stone Parks' we noticed a group of five small tumps, each 12 ft. in diameter and 1 ft. in height.

A cutting, 8 ft. by 4 ft., was made across one of them (*see* Plan), and the undisturbed gravel was reached at a maximum depth of 1·75 ft.⁴⁷ Only three flint flakes and a piece of slag were found.

XI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

With regard to the acquisition of relics from a museum standpoint the Battlegore excavations were on the whole disappointing, but the archaeological results have been highly interesting, and it has been satisfactory to determine the modern origin of the slight earthworks. The former notion that the place marked the site of a conflict with the Danes in A.D. 918 (or at any other date) has certainly not been proved—in fact no remains of the period have been found in that portion of Battlegore which has been examined; and of the previous 'finds' made there or in the adjoining fields, namely six imple-

⁴⁷ The tumps may have been such as one sometimes sees round apple-trees in an orchard

ments of bronze, all have reference to the Bronze Age, dating from the earliest part of that period down to the time of the socketed celt.

All three barrows had previously been interfered with; Barrow I had been dug into considerably and modern drainage had somewhat altered its form. Barrow II had, for agricultural purposes, been reduced so much as to be hardly traceable; and Barrow III had been mutilated in the construction of a hedge through the northern half.

Barrow I, which received most of the writer's attention in this exploration, revealed some interesting features, including the encircling ditch which showed the barrow to be circular and 104 ft. in diameter within the ditch. In it we discovered no large stones,—the remains of burial-chambers. A very interesting cremated interment had escaped the spade of previous diggers: its most striking point was the remains of a cover of oak for the cinerary urn.

A piece of another cinerary urn (P 18) was also found in the barrow in the disturbed material, as also were the fragments of a vessel (P 8, Plate X) of the well-known Peterborough or Mortlake type which, without any further evidence, places the tumulus *very* early in the Bronze Age, if not in the overlap period at the end of Neolithic times. This is the most westerly point in S.W. Britain (so far as the writer is aware) in which this ware, decorated with the typical 'maggot-pattern' and having a hard flaky texture, has been found.

The barrow, moreover, has produced some specimens of beaker pottery (P 1 and P 16, Plate X), some of which was found in a part of the mound previously undisturbed. The earliest forms of beaker pottery are identified with the dawn of the Bronze Age.⁴⁸

The flint implements include a large knife with ground and polished cutting-edge (Plate X) of a rare type.

Little more remains to be said with regard to the group of

⁴⁸ Beakers sometimes occur in chambered long (and round) barrows, e.g. Capel Garmon (*Arch. Camb.* lxxxii, 1-43; Giants' Graves, Arran (*Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* xxxvii, 44-52); Dunan Beag, Arran (*Ibid.* xliii, 343-350). I am grateful to Prof. Childe for these references. In Skye beaker fragments have been found in a chamber lying at a higher level than the 'Neolithic' shards.

stones, apparently the remains of a dolmen, which, as a type, comes earlier than the adjacent early Bronze Age round barrows.

In England, dolmens are usually free-standing, but originally these groups of stones (three or four uprights and a cap-stone) formed a chamber within a barrow which in the course of ages has become destroyed. They are classified as belonging to the Neolithic period like the long-barrows containing a long stone passage with a terminal burial-chamber, of which the barrows at Stoney Littleton (Som.) and West Kennet (Wilts.) are such well-known specimens.

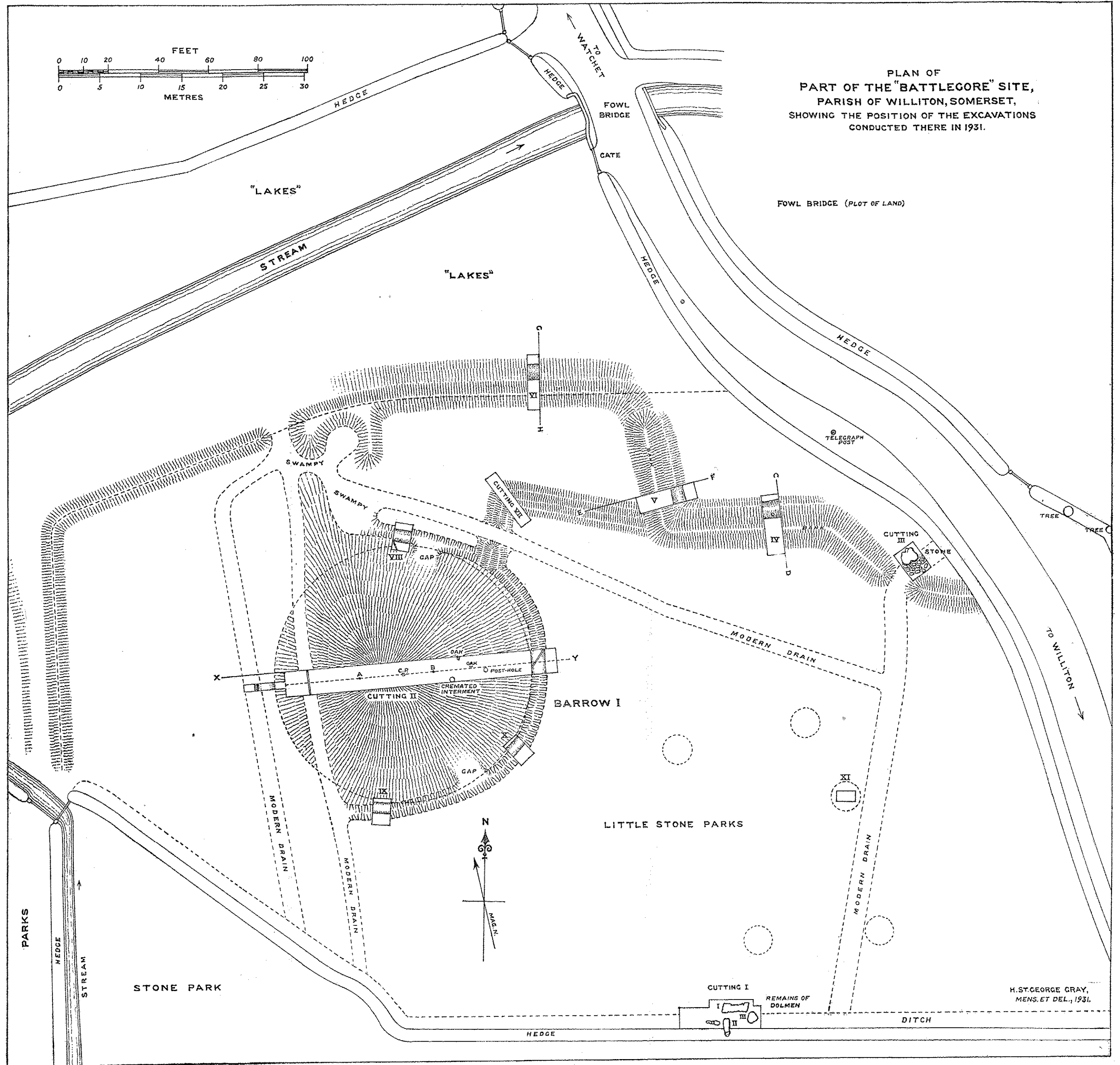
If our dolmen is all that remains of a long-barrow, then it would appear that long-barrow man came into contact with the round barrow people in the S.W. and may have been influenced by them. This was certainly the case in Durham and on the Wolds where Neolithic remains have occasionally been noticed in round barrows.⁴⁹ Neolithic pottery of the Windmill Hill type was found under some round barrows at Towthorpe (No. 18) and Howe Hill, Yorks.⁵⁰

In the present state of our knowledge we are not prepared to say definitely that the Battlegore dolmen was erected much before the barrows—they may be almost contemporaneous; and the few objects found near the stones do not help us to decide upon the precise date of this megalithic structure.

DONATIONS TO THE BATTLEGORE EXCAVATION FUND.—Anonymous Benefactor for ex-Service Men through the Society of Antiquaries, £10; Dr. W. M. Tapp, F.S.A., £5; Mr. H. D. Badcock, Dr. A. C. Fryer, F.S.A., Mr. C. F. Moysey, Mr. Clement Salaman, Mrs. Frederick Samuel and the Taunton Field Club, £2 2s. each; the Rev. Prebendary Reeder and Mr. A. F. Somerville, £2 each; the Very Rev. Dom E. Horne, F.S.A., £1 10s.; Mr. C. A. R. Radford, F.S.A., and the Bath, Northern and Weston-super-Mare Branches of the Som. A. & N.H. Society, £1 1s. each; the late Sir Walter Trevelyan, Bt., £1; Mr. Philip Sturdy, 10s. 6d.; Dr. R. L. Meade-King, 10s.; Mr. C. E. Little, 8s. 6d.; Mr. Hugh Way and Mr. S. G. Williams, 5s. each; Miss C. H. Allen and Mrs. Pollock, 2s. 6d. each; Box collections, 9s. TOTAL, £40 19s. 0d.

⁴⁹ F. Elgee, *Early Man in N.E. Yorks*, 67.

⁵⁰ Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches in the Burial Mounds of E. Yorks*, pp. 9, 37. With the pottery under No. 18 were found six contracted skeletons apparently crowded into a small space.



PLAN OF
PART OF THE "BATTLE GORE" SITE,
PARISH OF WILLITON, SOMERSET,
SHOWING THE POSITION OF THE EXCAVATIONS
CONDUCTED THERE IN 1931.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY,
MENS. ET DEL., 1931.