

Excavations at Hurtry Hill, Orchardleigh Park, 1920.

BY H. ST. GEORGE GRAY.

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE survey of the stones and surrounding mound in Orchardleigh Park and the partial excavation of the site,¹ as stated in *Proceedings*, LXVI, lxi, were conducted by the writer on behalf of the Somerset Earthworks Committee of the Som. Archæol. & Nat. Hist. Society, with the able assistance of Dr. A. Bulleid, F.S.A. (Secretary of the Committee).²

Valuable assistance has been rendered by Mr. Thomas C. Cantrill, B.Sc., of the Geological Survey (Jermyn Street Museum), and the geological notes and identification of rock-samples referred to in this report are the result of his examination of specimens. Mr. H. H. Thomas, sc.D., petrologist to the Geological Survey, concurs in the identifications of Mr. Cantrill.

This interesting site has been brought to the notice of the Society on more than one occasion. A visit to the stones was made in the earliest days of the Society (*Proc.*, I, i, 40); and again in 1875 (*Proc.*, XXI, i, 39-45), when a description of the ancient remains was given by the Rev. E. L. Barnwell, to

1. Arrangements for the work were previously made with owner and tenant (*see* Chapter VI).

2. Dr. Bulleid not only assisted in the survey and excavations, but was among those who made the exploration possible. I am indebted to him for the loan of some instruments, some of the photographs, hospitality at his house at Midsomer Norton, and for placing his car at my disposal.

which we shall have occasion to refer again.¹ A large number of the Society's members visited Murtry Hill in 1911 (*Proc.*, LVII, i, 35-40), when some interesting addresses were given, and a significant extract from notes by the late Canon J. E. Jackson (dated 18th April, 1875) was put upon record, which ran as follows :—

“ It is curious that I find from notes taken from the old papers at Longleat that the monks at Henton had property all about Lullington and Buckland ; and among them ‘ the Tithes of Mortuary’s Field.’ This is odd. ‘ Mortuary Field ’—the field of the dead—becomes ‘ Murtrey.’ ”

It is stated that digging has taken place here on two former occasions, and Mr. F. Clarke (head-gardener, etc., at Orchardleigh House) says that when a school-boy at Buckland Dinham he went with other boys to see some excavations on this site about 1872. He distinctly recollects three holes, one of which was a little to the east of the two standing-stones. He does not know if anything was found, but he says there was the common tradition about a gold coffin being buried on Murtry Hill. Mr. Barnwell (*Proc.*, XXI, i, 40) gives another tradition to the effect that the natives have a dread of passing near the stones except in broad daylight. Mr. Hutton says² that the place “ is supposed to be haunted by a lady in white.”

II. POSITION.

The ancient remains on Murtry Hill are styled “ Orchardleigh Stones (Cromlech) ”³ on the 6-inch Ordnance Sheet (No. XXX. S.W., surveyed in 1883-84, and revised in 1902).⁴ The slight mound and stones are, however, in the parish of Buckland Dinham (Denham), at a distance of about a furlong w.

1. According to the late Rev. W. A. Duckworth's diary, August 11th, 1875, Freeman and Parker were among the members present in 1875 when the Society visited Murtry Hill. “ One of the two, I think Freeman, objected to the existence of any Druids, but both agreed that the stones were ‘ prehistorical ’ monuments, to which they could give no definite date.”

2. “ Highways and Byways in Somerset ” (1912), 202.

3. See also old series 1-inch Ordnance Map, Sheet 19 (early XIX Century), where the remains are indicated by the words “ A Cromlech.”

4. Also 1-inch Ordnance Map, Sheet 281.

of Nightingale Lodge, which is only 50 yards w. of the boundary of Orchardleigh parish. To the N. of the stones is "Murtry Hill Lane," "Murtrey¹ Hill House" (now the residence of Admiral Sir George Neville, R.N., K.C.B.), and "Murtrey Hill Farm" (tenanted by Mr. S. G. Viner).

From this ancient site Orchardleigh House (the residence of Major A. Campbell Duckworth, the owner of the property here described) is $\frac{7}{8}$ -mile distant to the N.E., and Orchardleigh Church nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile E.N.E., whilst Buckland Dinham Church is $\frac{5}{8}$ -mile in a N.W. direction. Murtry is 2 miles N.N.W. of the middle of Frome, and about 385 feet above mean sea-level.

The South Lodge of Orchardleigh Park (which comprises some 2000 acres) is called "Murtrey Lodge," to the s. of which is "Murtrey Mill" and "Murtry Bridge." To the s.w. of the stones and N.W. of Murtrey Lodge is "Murtrey Brow Plantation." To the w. of the mound across the Buckland Brook is "Barrow Hill."² From Murtry Hill, Newbury Camp³ is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in a w.s.w. direction; Wadbury Camp,⁴ 2 miles s.w.; and Tedbury Camp,⁵ $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles s.w.

III. THE SITE.

According to the Geological Survey Map (Sheet 19) the Orchardleigh Stones are situated on the Forest Marble. Less than 200 yards to the s., on lower ground, the Fuller's Earth crops out, while the Inferior Oolite occupies the valley of Buckland Brook, within $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile to the w., and that of the Mells River, situated at a like distance to the s. of Murtry.

The part of Murtry Hill which forms the subject of this report is styled "Barrow Tyning" and numbered 417 in the Buckland Tithe Map of 1841. Slight furrows are seen, which

1. The spelling "Murtry" and "Murtrey" is written exactly as given on the Ordnance Sheet. The Rev. J. D. D. Keilor informs us that in the Buckland parish registers when the name occurs it is spelt "Mortery" (1573), "Mortre" (1583), "Mortry" (1601). Collinson mentions the hamlet of "Murtree" or "Mortray."

2. *V.C.H. Somerset*, I, 183.

3. *Op. cit.*, I, 183; II, 496.

4. *Op. cit.*, I, 183; II, 477; *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, XLIX, ii, 177.

5. *V.C.H. Somerset*, I, 183; II, 476.

probably indicate that this land was formerly under the plough, but this was before the time of Mr. Sigsworth, who, in 1915, had been the Rev. W. A. Duckworth's bailiff for thirty-three years. The Tithe Map gave this area as pasture land in 1841. Trees partly surround the site at some little distance off on the s. and e. Unfortunately the mound is slightly encroached upon along its n. margin by a hedge which divides the grassland from an arable field. No trace of the margin of the mound is seen in this level field, which, against the hedge, is nearly 1½ ft. lower than the slight ditch along the s. side of the hedge.

The e., s., and w. margins of the mound appear to be fairly perfect, but the top has apparently been mutilated to some extent, and several irregular depressions—perhaps the result of former excavation—disfigure the present surface.¹

Adjacent fields to the n.w. are called "Little Barrow Ground" (No. 405) and "Water Slade Tynning" (No. 404), according to the Tithe Map. These fields have apparently been under the plough for a number of years; they are described in 1841 as arable.²

A description of the remains on Murtry Hill is to be found among the Rev. J. Skinner's MS. in the British Museum (Add. MS. 33681, vol. LXII, p. 59 *et seq.*), "Journal of Travels." Mr. Skinner visited Buckland on February 17th, 1825, and refers to his visit as follows:—³

" . . . passing in front of Sir Thomas Champneys' entrance gates at Orchardley we continued along the turnpike towards Buckland, where Mr. Richardson had promised to shew me some very strong embankments: being anxious also to visit the place of interment in Sir Champneys' grounds, which I had not seen for many years, we tied our horses to a gate and ascended the heights to the right of the road called Murtre Hill. It was sometime ere we came to the object of our search, but at length found it about

1. Stones for repairing the road were obtained by the overseers "at Murtrey Brow" in 1791 and 1795; but there is no mention in the overseers' books of the sums paid for removing stones from Barrow Tynning.

2. The information with regard to the Tithe Map was kindly provided by the Rev. J. D. D. Keilor, Vicar of Buckland.

3. This extract was copied by the Rev. J. D. D. Keilor at the British Museum.

100 yards from the Murtre Farm House, and I made four drawings. This oval tumulus, for such it undoubtedly was, measures about 50ft. in length, by 36 in width being of an oval form; a stone about 10½ft. in height, with another half that height leaning against it, still remains at the eastern extremity; a third has recently been broken in pieces. If the whole of this place of interment was vaulted similar to those at Stoney Littleton and Fairy Toot, it would have contained a number of cists for interment, but I cannot ascertain whether this was actually the fact: indeed a person whom I afterwards questioned on the subject affirmed it was not the case: that he remembered it before Mr. Champneys moved the earth, but his description was so defective, I am inclined to think the earth and stones which constructed the tumulus had been previously removed before Mr. Champneys, now Sir Thomas, had anything to do with it. The upright stone is of the kind of bastard freestone found near at hand, but that which has just been broken up and lies in fragments towards the centre of the road, is silicious. Whether this tumulus is to be attributed to the British or Danes is to me a matter of doubt . . . I have before noticed in my journals that a large tumulus on Buckland Down¹ had three stele or upright stones placed so as to form a triangle; they were, as my informant said, who assisted in breaking the stones for the road, as high as a man on horseback, that is about the height of that under our present consideration at Orchardley. The tumulus on Beacon Hill, Mendip, retains its Stele or Pillar . . .”

The four drawings referred to show:—

(1) “Remains of an oval vaulted Tumulus on Murtre Hill above Buckland on the line of a British Trackway.” (Sketch 32, p. 61.)

(2) “Ground plan of the Tumulus on Murtre Hill above Buckland (stone measures 10½ft. high, 6 wide at the base, 3 thick).” (Sketch 33, p. 62.)

(3) “Stone of Tumulus on Murtre.” (Sketch 34, p. 63.)

(4) “Line of the British Trackway near the Tumulus from Orchardley.” (Sketch 35, p. 65.)

Sir Richard Hoare in 1821² stated that the two upright stones of a cistvaen were still remaining at Orchardleigh. In the same volume (*Roman Era*, p. 102) he recorded that there was *formerly* a long-barrow at Orchardleigh; “an upright stone still remains, by which we see how deeply it was buried, in the soil, by the apparent marks of lichens on the stone.”

1. This mound is on the western outskirts of Buckland parish, and close to the N. margin of the Frome-Radstock road.

2. “Ancient Wiltshire,” II, 116.

Phelps in his "History of Somersetshire," 1839,¹ gives a vignette of "Orchardley Cromlech," showing the stones in the position in which they are to-day.

Thurnam stated in 1867-8² that the Orchardleigh Barrow had been "rifled and partially levelled," and added that the result was unknown.

IV. THE SURVEY, 1915.

The survey was carried out on August 31st, September 1st and 2nd, 1915,³ with the assistance of a man provided by the late Rev. W. A. Duckworth (who, as the then owner of the site and a member of the Society from 1884, was keenly interested in the prospective excavations)⁴; the Plan was plotted to a scale of 10ft. to an inch. The area enclosed by surveying poles was oblong, measuring 130ft. true N. and S.⁵ by 194ft. E. and W., and covering an area of about 2,800 sq. yds. (over $\frac{1}{2}$ -acre). Sufficient levels were taken to enable us to delineate contours of 3ins. vertical height, showing a fall of 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ft. from the highest to the lowest point included in the Plan. The highest point of the mound is on the S.S.W., where it is about 3ft. above the ground at the middle of the S. margin of the Plan. The somewhat uneven top of the mound slopes from S.S.W. to N.N.E. to the extent of some 4ft.

V. THE STONES WHICH SHOWED ABOVE SURFACE, BEFORE THE EXCAVATIONS BEGAN.

Nos. I and II (Plan, and Section on line C.D., Plate V; and Plate VI). The two standing-stones, near the E. end of the mound, are surrounded by a basin-shaped depression about 1.3ft. below the average level of the surrounding turf. Both

1. Vol. II, Roman Period, p. 137.

2. *Archæologia*, XLII, 203.

3. *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, LXI, xxviii.

4. *Ibid.*, LVII, i, 35-40.

5. The Director-General of Ordnance Surveys kindly gave information that the true magnetic variation by Rücker's tables, corrected by later observations, at Orchardleigh, on August 1st, 1915, was 16° 0' + 15' west of true north.

are of fine-grained oolitic limestone, buff-coloured, containing occasional quartz-grains, and are probably from the Inferior Oolite.¹ The highest stone is on the s. side of the shorter one, and in the depression they stand at a maximum distance of 4ft. apart (minimum distance 2.5ft.). Both stones are of quadrilateral cross-section. Near the ground on the inner faces they have been rubbed by sheep.

The larger, or s., stone (No. I) tapers on the w. face towards the top to a blunt point. Its s. face is flatter than the other sides. It leans slightly towards the n. At the ground level its widest face, that on the n., measures 5.5ft. It stands at a height of 10.6ft. above the depression.

The smaller stone (No. II) leans against the n. face of the larger stone in its e. half, at an angle of some 50°. Its dimensions at the base are 3.85ft. on both the n. and s., 2.75ft. on the w., and 2.45ft. on the E. It is probable that this stone has been broken off at the top, where it now measures about 1.8ft. square. At its present slope it stands 5.65ft. above the deepest part of the hollow; and the inner face is about 5.4ft. in height. The s., e., and w. surfaces of the stone are fairly flat; the n. surface is somewhat weathered and pitted in a similar manner to the prostrate stone No. III.

No. III. Slightly to the n. of the middle of the mound there is a prostrate stone,—a brownish-grey glauconitic sandstone, similar to, but less weathered than Stones IV and V uncovered in the excavations (*see* p. 47).

Its upper surface is about 0.9ft. at the n. end and 0.25ft. at the s. end above the turf level. In length it measures 3.85ft., and in width 2.85ft. On excavation this stone proved to be 2ft. in max. thickness.

Stones on the surface, near by. At a distance of $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile n.n.w. of the mound, and close to the e. bank of the Buckland Brook, is a prostrate boulder of glauconitic sandstone. It is marked on the Ordnance Sheet, and is in Buckland Dinham parish.

1. As the Great Oolite does not extend farther s. from the Bath district than Norton St. Philip and Farleigh, 4 or 5 miles to the n. and n.e. of Murtry, that formation is not likely to be the source of Stones I and II.

H. B. Woodward, whose knowledge of the various Jurassic rocks was unsurpassed, refers in his *Jurassic Rocks of Britain* (Mem. Geol. Surv., Vol. IV, 1894, p. 92) to the Orchardleigh Stones as consisting of two large blocks, one about 11 feet high, of Inferior Oolite; in which case they were doubtless obtained from the valley of Buckland Brook, or from that of the Mells River.—T. C. Cantrill.

It is 5·1ft. in length, and 2·85ft. in width. At the E. end the upper surface is 1ft. above the turf, and it slopes off on the W. to the ground. Its composition is the same as Stones III, IV and V (*see* p. 47).

There is another stone lying in Egypt Lane in the same parish.—a fine-grained brownish-grey sandstone (calcareous) quite unlike the above; this was probably derived from a band of sandstone in the Forest Marble.¹

VI. THE EXCAVATIONS.

On Monday, September 27th, 1920, the writer left Taunton for Midsomer Norton; the excavations began next day, and were continued till Friday, October 8th.

The tenant, Mr. Viner, readily gave his permission, and Major Duckworth (the owner) not only consented to the undertaking, but kindly lent a shepherd's hut, wheelbarrows, fencing, planks and tools. These he had hauled to the site, and he gave the services of a man for digging on two occasions. The necessary labour² was obtained by the Rev. J. D. D. Keilor, Vicar of Buckland Dinham. He also rendered valuable assistance in other ways.

Cutting I.—Having found the old survey pegs, left in the ground in 1915, we proceeded to make a cutting, 6ft. wide and 90ft. long, N. and S., across the middle of the mound (*Cutting I*, Plan and Section A.B., Plate V).

The first discovery was a large Stone, No. IV; soon after this, Stone V was struck to the N. of the former, the E. margin of which extended into the large excavated area afterwards named *Cutting II*.

No. IV.—The N. side of this prostrate stone was found to be only 0·4ft. below the present surface; at the S., 0·9ft. deep (*see* Plan and Sections on lines A.B. and C.D., Plate V; and Plate VI). On excavation it proved to be a fairly flat block measuring 5·5ft. E. and W., and 4·15ft. N. and S., the maximum thickness (on the N. side) being 1·1ft. It rested, apparently,

1. H. B. Woodward, *Geology of E. Somerset and the Bristol Coal-Fields* (Mem. Geol. Surv.), 1876, p. 133.

2. From three to five men were employed from day to day:—James Dowden, foreman (Buckland Dinham), Walter Matthews (Lullington), John Martin (Orchardleigh) and a brother, and George Brine (Frome).

on the red earth (to be described later). All round the sides of the stone and touching it slabs of ragstone were lying about ; the largest was 2ft. long, and several of them measured about 1.5ft. by 1.75ft. In proximity to this stone, and generally in this part of the cutting and in Cutting II, a good number of large and small chippings, apparently from the stones forming the structure (? chambers), were observed during the digging.

No. V.—This prostrate stone was to the N. of Stone IV, and they were found to be at a minimum distance of 7.6ft. apart. (Plan, and Section on line A.B., Plate V ; and Plate VI). This long, narrow stone rested in a W.N.W. and E.S.E. direction, the E. end 0.7ft. and the W. 1.2ft. below the surface. Its max. length was 5.8ft., max. width 1.9ft., max. thickness (at the E. end) 1.1ft. The stone had a fairly smooth upper face—apparently the outer crust of the stone. It rested on the red earth, in which it was slightly embedded. There were some slabs of ragstone round it, but few compared with the number found round Stone IV.

Stones IV and V were similar to Stone III—a yellowish-grey glauconitic sandstone, once calcareous but no longer so. It consists of grains of quartz, somewhat loosely packed, and cemented together with growths of secondary quartz. There are numerous scattered grains of dark brownish-green glauconite, and a few hollows formerly occupied by fragments of fossils. Probably from the Upper Greensand of Corsley or Maiden Bradley, 5 or 7 miles to the S.E.—(*T. C. Cantrill*).

Between Stones IV and V the seam of red earth was well seen ; it extended for some distance southwards, as shown in the sectional diagram.¹ Between the stones, the bottom of the red earth was 2.3ft. below the surface, and the average depth to the top of the seam was 1.7ft. Below this the natural rock (ragstone) was removed for a length of 7.5ft. and a max. depth of 1ft., to prove that it was undisturbed ground.

Working further northwards the buried part of Stone III was examined. This stone has already been described on p. 45. The red earth ceased half-way between Stones V and

1. Both these stones have been projected into the Section on line A.B. of Plan.

III, where the rock-bottom was reached at rather less than 2ft. below the surface.

We excavated still further northwards to the s. boundary of the hedge, as it was thought possible that one or more stones on the margin of the barrow might be found in position, had any revetment or peristalith formerly existed. At some 8ft. from the n. end of the cutting, the excavation was carried deeper than the mixed mould for a length of 4ft., and a thickness of 1ft. of clay was met with overlying the natural rock, as shown in the Section.

As the diagram shows, the solid rock was reached at a depth of 3·6ft. below the highest point, at 14ft. from the s. end of the cutting. In this position the turf mould was 1·1ft. thick, with 0·8ft. of mixed mould and ragstone below it. This was followed by slabs and lumps of ragstone with very little admixture of mould except at the top.

The remains found in Cutting I are tabulated on pp. 54-55. Forty-two fragments of pottery (all very small, with one exception) were collected, at an average depth of 1·43ft. (min. 0·7ft., max. 3ft.). All of it is of Romano-British type, the colours being black, brown, reddish-brown and grey. In addition, a flint core, a small flint chip, a fragment of shaft of human radius, and a few bits of iron slag.

Cutting II (Plates V and VI).—Adjoining Cutting I a large excavation was made extending 30 feet eastwards as far as the standing-stones; the area was irregular, owing to extensions in excavating, and measured 27ft. from n. to s. at the w. and 16ft. at the e. end.

Structurally this work proved interesting, and no less than 34 blocks of glauconitic sandstone were uncovered and measured. The Plan shows their exact position,—numbered from A. to Z., and continuing again from AA. to JJ. These stones varied in length from 0·9ft. to 3ft., and their upper surface was at an average depth of only 1·45ft. below the turf. Details of every stone have been recorded, and have been filed with other material which, for the want of space, cannot be given here.

Along the n. side of the cutting numerous blocks and slabs of the brown-coloured ragstone were found in the second spit

and above the red earth. A few of these slabs measured up to 2·1ft. in length, and one was 1·75ft. by 1·75 ft. by 0·35ft. Probably they are the remains of overlapping roofing-slabs, such as one sees in the chambered long-barrow near Wellow. Along this side a hole or trench (length 6·3ft.), running N. and S., penetrated the solid rock to the extent of 0·7ft. (Plate VI). It was cleared out and found to contain some loose ragstone and red earth.

In the S. half of the cutting the largest slab of ragstone was uncovered (broken by the pick-axe) at a distance of 7ft. W. of Stone I and 2ft. deep ; it measured 3·5ft. by 2·5ft. by 0·45ft., and may possibly have been a side-stone of a chamber.

A burnt area (No. 1) was met with at a depth of 1·9ft. (see Plan) ; some of the larger pieces of ragstone were reddened, as if by fire ; others, similar, had wood charcoal and a very calcareous greyish-white material (probably wood ashes) adhering to them. No pottery was found. A second burnt area was found to the S., at the same depth in the ordinary mixed mould and ragstone, and just above the layer of red earth. Charcoal and white ash covered an area about 2·5ft. by 1ft. ; a flint flake was also found.

The seam of red earth, met with in Cutting I and shown in the sectional diagram on line A.B., extended at the same level throughout Cutting II, practically up to the standing-stones. It nowhere exceeded a thickness of 0·55ft. and consisted of a red clayey material, non-calcareous, with a small admixture of fragments of wood charcoal.¹ Possibly it was laid down here as a floor. It was met with continuously over the whole of this area. Mr. Cantrill suspects that, if strictly confined to the site, this earth was brought from elsewhere. "It looks like a natural clay, such as could be got from the red Keuper rocks, for instance, of Mendip."

The remains found in Cutting II are tabulated on pp. 54-55. Fifteen fragments of pottery (all small, except one piece 2½ins. long) were collected at an average depth of 1·1ft. (min. 0·6ft., max. 1·6ft.). As in Cutting I, all of it is of Romano-British

1. Some of the wood charcoal found in the excavations was kindly examined by Mr. Arthur H. Lyell, F.S.A. He identified Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Other specimens were undeterminable,—possibly a Willow.

type, the same colours being represented. In flint,—14 flakes were found at an average depth of 1·2ft., 2 cores and 1 scraper; also 3 flakes in the red earth (average depth 2·3ft.).¹

At 39 on Plan, at a depth of 1·3ft., a “third brass” coin of barbarous type of the third century was found; it is much defaced, although a radiated head is seen on the obverse.

A large number of mixed human bones were found at the N. end of the cutting and particularly in the area to the W. of and very near the standing-stones. Such “finds” were made at 15, 18, 21, 29, 33, 34, 36, 37, 40 and 46 on Plan, at depths varying from 0·8ft. to 1·8ft. (average depth 1·14ft.). Some of the Romano-British pottery was found with or quite near the bones. In fact the flints, pottery and human bones were all found within a foot-and-a-third of the surface.

Cutting III.—This was a trial-hole, 5ft. square, to the W. of Cutting I. The solid rock was reached at a depth of 2ft.; a continuation of the red earth was noticed on the E. side at a depth of 1·6ft. Some large loose slabs of ragstone were met with, one measuring 1·7ft. by 1·1ft. No relics were found here.

Cutting IV.—A trial-hole, of similar dimensions to Cutting III, was made on the E. side of the standing-stones, where the solid rock was reached at a depth of 1·9ft., with a thickness of 3ins. of red earth above it. At levels above 1·4ft. were found:—

Twenty-nine fragments of Romano-British black, brown and grey pottery—mostly very small (No. 47); and a small thin much defaced Roman coin of barbarous type, found in the mixed mould just above the red earth (No. 48).

Standing-Stones (Nos. I and II).—We read in the Rev. E. L. Barnwell’s account of the Orchardleigh Stones (*Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, XXI. 1875. i. 42) that “Prebendary Clutterbuck the vicar of the parish stated that after digging at the foot

1. Mr. Reginald Smith, F.S.A., writes:—“The samples of flint flakes, etc., from Murtry which you have sent me are ordinary, have no distinct character, and are probably unconnected, being chance inclusions in the soil, but all of course are ‘human.’ As is often the case, there is more than one period of chipping and use on individual pieces, and this can be easily explained by the local rarity of the raw material.”

of the large stone, to a distance equal to its height above the ground, the labourers were unable to reach to the bottom of it, so that the actual length of it is not known," etc. Our excavations, however, told a very different tale, and showed how necessary it is to check the statements made by antiquaries of the middle of last century. In continuing the excavation of Cutting II eastwards, we exposed the w. face of Stones I and II below the present surface, and found that the stones penetrated the ground only to the extent of about a foot-and-a-half! (See accompanying drawing; photograph, Plate VI;

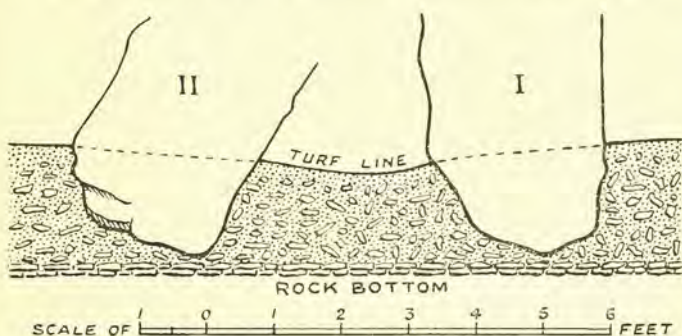


Diagram showing the position of Stones I and II (w. side), as revealed by the excavations in 1920.

Murtry Hill, Orchardleigh Park. *H. St. George Gray, del.*

and Section on line C.D., Plate V). They barely reached the surface of the natural rock, which we found at a minimum depth of 1.3ft. below the lowest part of the depression between the stones. The excavation proved that Stone I was 11.5ft. and Stone II 7.75ft. in length, including the 1½ft. now below ground.

These stones may *originally* have formed part of the chambers of a long-barrow, but it is evident from their present position, the absence of socket-holes in the rock, and the short distance the stones penetrated the ground, that the erection one sees to-day is one of comparatively recent date. Mr. Barnwell had recorded (*Proc.*, XXI, i, 40) a "modern tradition that these stones are not ancient at all, but were erected by a former owner of the estate," etc.

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

There can be no doubt that the mound and stones at Murtry Hill represent all that remains of a chambered long-barrow of the Neolithic age, and of the type of that so well preserved at Stoney Littleton, near Wellow. The stones one sees on the surface, however, are not in their original position; Stones IV and V, and the smaller stones (parts of larger blocks), uncovered during the excavations, may also have been moved from their original place to some extent. Unfortunately there is no record giving the results of any previous exploration.

In 1839 Phelps saw the two standing-stones in the position in which they remain to-day. In 1825 Skinner drew up an interesting description of the site and its surroundings (p. 42-43), showing apparently little change between his day and the present. Hoare, in 1815, regarded Murtry as the site of a long-barrow, although it had to a large extent disappeared. Beyond this there are, I think, no early nineteenth century records, and very naturally we ask ourselves the question,—At what date or period was the site “rifled and partially levelled” (p. 44)? In the area covered by our excavations in 1920 we discovered no pottery, implements, or human remains which could be ascribed to the Neolithic period. All the small objects found (indicated by figures on the Plan) were of the Roman period (including two coins), and from this fact one is inclined to think that this barrow may have been disturbed firstly during that period. (See the discovery of Roman remains in the central area of Wick Barrow, Stogursey, and in other barrows, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, LIV, ii. 32-36).

Now that the Report has been written and the Plan completed, one feels that the results would have been more satisfactory if we had been able to examine more ground on the east of Stones I and II and on the west of Stones IV and V; but time, and the exhaustion of the small fund at our disposal,¹ prevented more being done on this occasion.

1. The subscriptions for this work were as follows:—Dr. A. Bulleid, £3 3s. 0d.; Mr. W. S. Clark, £2 2s. 0d.; Mr. H. H. P. Bouverie, £2; the Earl Waldegrave, and Messrs. J. E. Pritchard, W. M. Tapp and C. Tite, £1 1s. 0d.



View taken from the W.N.W. showing the stones laid bare by excavation and the depth of Stones I and II below the surface,

MURTRY HILL, ORCHARDLEIGH PARK, SOM.

VIII. OTHER GEOLOGICAL SPECIMENS.

In addition to the rock specimens already mentioned as being examined by Mr. Cantrill, we sent him other items which he has kindly reported upon.

In the excavations were found several pieces of coarse shelly oolitic limestone or 'ragstone,' having an abnormal red colour. It is probably from the Forest Marble. The red colour is possibly natural,¹ but is more likely to be the result of fire. Other specimens of coarse shelly limestone were fresh and little weathered and of a normal buff colour, and are probably Forest Marble. Another sample submitted was a sandy oolite, fine-grained and of a rose-red colour. Mr. Cantrill points out that "the normal colour of weathered Oolitic rocks is yellow or brown; the red colour is quite abnormal, and when present the action of fire may be suspected." He goes on to say that he is very uncertain as to the origin of some of these red specimens. "Reddening is a well ascertained effect of the burning of oolitic limestone, wherever the rocks contain (as they do in the Bath district) small quantities of iron. But Woodward states that sometimes the Forest Marble is red, though he does not appear to quote any locality where such red oolite occurs."

We also submitted a chipping of a waterworn pebble of pale red colour which had probably been used as a hammerstone. It may be of the same origin as Stones IV and V—Upper Greensand—and the redness may be due to the action of fire. "If, on the contrary, the colour is natural, the stone is probably from the Old Red Sandstone. This formation crops out along the crest of Mendip and reaches Chantry (3 m. s.w. of Murtry), emerging again in the Frome Valley near Oldford, within a mile of the site."

Another sample was a burnt waterworn pebble, of fine-grained sandstone, probably Greensand, from the gravels of the river Frome, and ultimately derived from the Greensand escarpment to the s.e. It may, however, have come from the Millstone Grit of the Mells Valley.

One or two pieces of hæmatite (kidney iron-ore) were met with. Mr. Cantrill thinks that this might have come from a pocket of hæmatite at Nunney (3 m. to the s.w.), or from some of the iron-ore deposits in the Carboniferous Limestone and Dolomitic Conglomerate of the n. slopes of Mendip.

each; Messrs. H. M. Gibbs, J. Morland, and A. F. Somerville, £1 each; Mr. W. de C. Prideaux, 10s. 6d. In addition we had to use the greater part of the £10 contributed by the Viscount Portman for the general work of the Somerset Earthworks Committee.

1. H. B. Woodward, *Geology of E. Somerset and the Bristol Coal-Fields* (Mem. Geol. Surv.), 1876, p. 133.

IX. RELIC TABLES.

(a) FLINT. (All Cutting II, unless otherwise stated).

NO. ON PLAN.	DESCRIPTION.	DEPTH.
4	Small chip*	0.7ft.
14	2 small flakes	1.0ft.
16	Tiny flake	1.3ft.
17	Flake†	2.5ft.
19	Small flake†	2.0ft.
20	Ditto†	2.3ft.
22	5 flakes. (One has "the bluish white patina found on the Cotswolds, but the 'finds' there are equally difficult to date."—R. A. S.)	1.5ft.
25	Small flake with prominent bulb of percussion	1.5ft.
26	Implement showing two periods of work	0.8ft.
28	Flake	1.0ft.
30	Flake with dorsal ridges following the edges; "conceivably intended for an arrowhead, but unfinished."—R. A. S.	2.0ft.
35	Flake with two dorsal ridges; slightly used along both sides	1.2ft.
38	Small round scraper, with prominent bulb of percussion (but not symmetrical as most scrapers of the type)	1.8ft.
42	Small flake	1.0ft.
44	Core, rough and weathered	1.2ft.
45	Core, small and weathered	1.3ft.
—	Core*	0.8ft.
Burnt Area 2)	Flake	1.8ft.
—	9 pieces, found in filling-in Cutting II	—

(b) FRAGMENTS OF ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY.

(All small fragments, unless otherwise stated).

NO. ON PLAN.	DESCRIPTION.	DEPTH.
CUTTING I.		
1	3 fragments, black and brown	0.7ft.
2	2 do., grey	1.0ft.
3	2 do., brown	1.0ft.
4	1 fragment, reddish-brown	0.7ft.
5	2 fragments, grey	†1.8ft.
6	13 do. (12 black, brown and grey; 1, containing large grains, of prehistoric type, but perhaps of Romano-British date)	1.0ft.
7	2 fragments, brown	1.3ft.
8	3 do., do.	1.3ft.
9	3 do., grey	2.0ft.
10	5 do., grey and reddish-grey	2.3ft.
11	5 do., grey	3.0ft.
41	1 medium-sized fragment, grey	1.1ft.

NO. ON PLAN.	DESCRIPTION.	DEPTH.
CUTTING II.		
13	2 fragments, black and brown	0·6ft.
16	1 fragment, grey	1·3ft.
23	1 do., brown	1·5ft.
24	2 fragments, brown	1·0ft.
27	1 piece of rim, black (also piece of whetstone) . . .	1·6ft.
31	2 fragments, grey	0·8ft.
43	2 do., (1) grey, (2) red inside and out, grey in the interior	0·6ft.
40	2 fragments, grey and brown. Found with human bones	1·3ft.
46	1 fragment, black ; and piece of rim, brown, length 2½ins. (largest piece found). (Uncovered with human bones)	1·3ft.

(c) HUMAN BONES.

(All Cutting II, except No. 12,—found in Cutting I).

NO. ON PLAN.	DESCRIPTION.	DEPTH.
12	Fragment of shaft of radius	1·0ft.
15	Fragment of shaft of fibula	0·8ft.
18	Fragment of skull bone (also 2 pieces of burnt bone found near)	1·0ft.
21	Fragment of rib-bone	1·0ft.
29	Parts of 2 ribs and 1 phalanx	0·8ft.
33	Incisor tooth and three-fanged molar	0·9ft.
34	1 phalanx	1·2ft.
36	2 metacarpal or metatarsal bones	1·3ft.
37	2 phalanges and part of a clavicle	1·8ft.
40	Number of broken bones, including part of femur, ulna, vertebræ, metacarpal and metatarsal bones, phalanges and fragment of skull bone (thickness 8mm.) ; also charcoal and 2 pieces of Romano-British pottery	1·3ft.
46	A few fragments of broken bones, including 2 pieces of skull and fragment of ulna and fibula ; also an incisor tooth. Found with 2 pieces of Romano-British pottery and charcoal	1·3ft.

* Cutting I. † In the red earth. ‡ Approximate.