

Notes on some Chambered Long Barrows of North Somerset.

BY ARTHUR BULLEID, L.R.C.P., F.S.A.

(1) STONEY LITTLETON TUMULUS, WELLOW (Plan, Plate XIII)

THIS remarkable tumulus is one of the few chambered long barrows that remain intact. It lies in a field, called 'Round Hill Tyning', in the parish of Wellow, a little over three-quarters of a mile directly s.s.w. of Wellow church. The barrow was first visited by Sir Richard Colt Hoare in 1807; then again in 1816 accompanied by the Rev. John Skinner. The last-named antiquary began its examination by making an opening through the roof into the central avenue, which was, we are told, cleared of rubbish, no doubt partly caused by this difficult and hazardous undertaking. When this stage had been reached Hoare evidently joined Skinner in the exploration, for the first-named communicated a paper on the tumulus to the Society of Antiquaries which was read on 22 May 1817 and subsequently published in *Archæologia*¹ with a plan and illustrations. At the time of reading his paper Hoare exhibited two skulls discovered in the barrow. Hoare states that the 'tumulus was 107 ft. long, 54 ft. extreme width over the barrow and 13 ft. high'. He says some years previously the tumulus 'had been resorted to as a stone quarry by a farmer', but fortunately the owner had stopped this destruction and the gap was repaired. Hoare also states that the entrance to the avenue faces N.W., whereas it faces S.E., that the entrance was about 4 ft. high and had been closed by a large stone. This, he says, 'was removed in my presence and the original entrance restored'. The discovery of the big stone and entrance was evidently made possible after Skinner had made his entry through the roof and had located the position from

¹ *Archæologia*, xix, 43-8.

inside. The dry walling surrounding the tumulus was probably then not visible but covered with a sloping bank of earth. Skinner would never have taken the trouble to tunnel down through the top if there had been any outside indication of an entrance. This large entrance stone has unfortunately disappeared. Hoare says the central passage was 47 ft. 6 in. long, and goes on to state 'our investigations proved that the interments had been disturbed and their deposits (i.e. funereal furnishings) probably removed; for in the long avenue we met with many fragments of bones, etc., which had been displaced from the sepulchral recesses, many of which had been filled up with stones and other rubbish'. We would like to know now what became of the etceteras and rubbish. Some twenty-five years ago the writer measured the avenue and recesses and in comparing the plan with that reproduced by Hoare many discrepancies will be found. For instance, at F Hoare gives the measurement of this section of the gallery as being 12 ft., my plan makes it 8 ft. 9 in. Hoare again at B gives two stones where three exist now. These and other differences are not altogether unexpected after several restorations, and also when the difficulties encountered during an examination of the tumulus are considered, my experience when taking measurements on the warmest of summer days was that the cells and gallery were dark, chilly and cramping to work in. It is impossible to say now how many interments the tumulus originally contained, but each cell must have been well occupied. Hoare gives the following details. At A there were leg and thigh bones with smaller fragments. At B there were confused heaps of bones. At C four jaw-bones, also the upper part of two crania, together with leg and arm bones and vertebræ, but no perfect skeleton. This cell had been less disturbed than the others owing to one of the side stones having fallen and blocked the entrance. At D there were fragments of an earthen vessel with burnt bones, also the bones of two or three skeletons. The two skulls found at C were probably those that Hoare exhibited at the Society of Antiquaries, and on that occasion he stated they were 'totally different in their formation from any others which our researches have led us to examine, being *fronte valde depressa*'. Dr. Thurnam says ² of

² *Crania Britannica*.

the frontal bones, one is from the skull of a middle-aged man, the other of an aged woman; both are narrow and contracted and in life the forehead must have looked peculiarly flat and receding. They have a general resemblance to the skulls found in the Uley tumulus. Boyd Dawkins states³ that 'they were identified by Thurnam with the long skulls of the Iberic population'. The skulls, after being exhibited at the Society of Antiquaries by Hoare, were returned to Skinner at Camerton, for he bequeathed them to the museum of the Bristol Philosophical Institution. At E there is a step from 4 to 6 in. in depth. The writer can substantiate Hoare's statement that in the same cell the interment of a cremated body accompanied burial by inhumation, for at G, where a rabbit or some other animal had been scraping, the earth contained fragments of charred human bone as well as unburnt. Some years after Hoare's and Skinner's excavations, Scarth seems to have examined the tumulus, and in a paper he wrote on *Ancient Chambered Tumuli*⁴ he produced a plan and drawings to some extent based on Hoare.⁵ Scarth states that in 1855 on visiting the tumulus he found two chambers had collapsed, and the centre of the mound was in a ruined condition. He thinks it was the part of the barrow where Skinner had opened it. Having received permission from the owner of the property and obtained the necessary funds⁶ from the Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society, the barrow was restored as nearly as possible to its original condition. Furthermore the encircling bank of earth was removed, entirely exposing the dry walling round the barrow.⁷ At the northern end, where the walling had been pulled down by the farmer, the wall was repaired and at the junction of the old and new work two upright stones were inserted marking the position. It is largely due to Scarth's energy and interest that the tumulus has been saved. A notice-board near the entrance gives the following information: 'This tumulus,

³ *Victoria County History, Somerset*, i, 193.

⁴ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, viii, 52.

⁵ *Archæologia*, xix, 43-8.

⁶ The treasurer's account for 1857 gives this item, 'Repairing Tumulus at Wellow 16s.'

⁷ The advisability of this work is open to doubt, and would probably have met with considerable disapproval in these days.

declared by competent judges to be the most perfect specimen of Celtic antiquity still existing in Great Britain, having been much injured by the lapse of time, or the carelessness of former proprietors, was restored in 1858 by Mr. T. R. Joliffe, the lord of the hundred; the design of the original structure being preserved as far as possible with scrupulous exactness'.

The tumulus is now protected and scheduled as an ancient monument.

Additional measurements :

- Width of entrance between dry walling, 5 ft. 3 in.
- Width of trilithon entrance, 2 ft. 4 in. to 2 ft. 10 in.
- Height of trilithon entrance, 3 ft. 9 in. to 4 ft.
- Maximum length of large stone over entrance, 7 ft.
- Maximum height of large stone over entrance, 3 ft. 7 in.
- Thickness of large stone where exposed, 12 in.
- Height of dry walling at entrance, 5 ft.
- Height of dry walling elsewhere, 3 ft. to 4 ft.
- Depth of curve of dry walling at level of entrance, 10 ft.

(2) FAIRY TOOTE, NEMPNETT THRUBWELL

(Plan, Plate XIII)

Tradition says this site was haunted and the abode of fairies. Although several letters were written by the Rev. Thomas Bere about this tumulus in and after 1788,⁸ and the Rev. H. M. Scarth published some notes with illustrations in 1858,⁹ it is not easy to disentangle the events that led to its identification and the unfortunate destruction that followed. There is also considerable confusion regarding the ground plan produced by both writers, for neither of them apparently drew his plan to scale and some of the details shown are conjectural. Fairy Toote was a large and important chambered long barrow, situated in a field adjoining the west boundary of Nempnett Thrubwell parish.¹⁰ Up to 1787 it was as far as is known quite complete, but in that year it fell on evil days and was doomed to deplorable and wanton ruination and unpardonable obliteration. In 1835 Phelps¹¹ states that the tumulus had

⁸ *Bath Chronicle*, 1788. *Gent's Magazine*, 1789 and 1792.

⁹ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, viii, 35-62.

¹⁰ At least three of the chambered barrows of North Somerset act as boundary marks.

¹¹ Phelps, *History of Somerset*, ii, Introduction, 81.

now nearly disappeared, a lime-kiln having been built on the spot and the stones burnt into lime. The site of the barrow lies some 500 yds. E. of Butcombe church, and 630 yds. N. of Nempnett Farm, and is now recognizable by a small uneven heap of rubble-stone overgrown with thorn bushes and brambles, and near by is a ruined lime-kiln. The importance of the tumulus, and the interesting nature of its construction was first realized by the Rev. Thomas Bere, Rector of Butcombe. The following letter was written by him to the Editor of the *Bath Chronicle*, dated 27 December 1788:

‘ SIR,

Some time last year Mr. Gray, a farmer and waywarden in the neighbourhood of my Parish, employed some workmen to obtain stones from a tumulus measuring 150 ft. from N. to S., 75 ft. from E. to W., and about 15 ft. in elevation. These persons soon came to a very curious unmortared wall seemingly of or near 4 ft. high, and 18 to 20 ins. thick, its direction N. to S. The stones of which it was built were thin, small and irregular; in length and breadth less, in diameter somewhat more than the common Dutch chimney tile. Working through this wall, huge masses of rough, extensive rock fragments appeared placed in the form of the Greek letter Π , containing an area of 4 ft., which was conjectured to be an avenue of communication passing from the N. through the centre of the barrow to the S. extremity. (This excavation is shown at D in Bere’s plan, and the three cells he saw are at E, F, and I, containing human bones.) In this state the affair rested till about the beginning of the present month, when, to prevent their being discharged by the uncommon severity of the season, Mr. Gray ordered some of his people to commence their labours at the tumulus, and to begin at the S. end. I think the first day’s work brought them to an enormous flat stone of the same specific gravity, colour, and stratum, with those which in the N. end composed the Π ; its dimensions were 6 ft. long (high), 5 ft. broad, and 16 ins. thick; it inclined considerably to the W., and if my conjecture be well founded, the door to the catacombs; of this kind was that which was placed at the mouth of the sepulchre of our Blessed Saviour. The admirable unmortared wall now again presented itself, and pursuing its direction to the N. at the distance of 13 ft., they came to another similar stone having a perforation in or near its centre,¹² with a declension to the N. of 30 to 35 degrees. Working round the E. end (side) of this, a cell 2 ft. 3 ins. in breadth and 9 ft. long came in view containing

¹² Passage graves are often closed by so-called ‘porthole stones’.

human, and as it is thought animal bones (H in plan). A skull which lay against the large perforated stone was entire, the teeth sound and white. Willing to have some idea of the height of the body of which it was once a part, I took the painter's datum, and allowing 8 faces from the hair on the forehead to the chin for the length of the whole it gave me something more than 8 ft.¹³ With this agrees the length of the sepulchre which, as was before observed, is 9 ft. long. I am sorry to say that the impertinent curiosity and malevolent wantonness of idle visitors have deranged and mutilated the bones. However, within the first cell on each side of the avenue, others are discernible, that are now worked at in a manner which will give the fairest view of them. I have minutely noted every particular and mean to pay the same attention to those that may occur. Recollecting Mr. Cruttwell what disingenious tricks have been played off on the public relative to subjects of this nature, I shall not scruple to give you my name.

I am, sir,
Yours, etc.,
THOMAS BERE.

BLAGDON HOUSE,
NEAR BRISTOL.'

Bere also wrote letters on the subject to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, one on 25 March 1789,¹⁴ another in December 1792,¹⁵ accompanied by a drawing of the barrow, showing the excavations and a small plan giving the arrangement of the cells and avenue. Phelps,¹⁶ in his introduction to the *History of Somerset*, says with reference to Fairy Toote, that its discovery was noticed by the Rev. T. Bere, who made a drawing of the barrow, and goes on to quote from the letters Bere sent the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

The Rev. Samuel Seyer¹⁷ also gives a short notice of Fairy Toote extracted from the same source. From all these descriptions it appears that in construction it was not unlike Stoney Littleton tumulus, but according to Bere's measurements much larger, being 43 ft. longer, about 20 ft. wider, and 2 ft. higher. It was surrounded by a dry wall about 4 ft. in height and probably still higher near the entrance. It is

¹³ Bere's estimate was possibly quite incorrect; the skull may have been abnormally large; the leg bones should have been measured.

¹⁴ Vol. lix, 392-3; also 605-7.

¹⁵ Vol. lxii, 1082.

¹⁶ Phelps, *History of Somerset*, ii, 81.

¹⁷ Seyer, *History of Bristol*, i, 105.

difficult from Bere's description and plan to make out the exact shape of the s. end of the barrow, for his drawing and plan do not agree with the measurements he gives, neither do they show any curving in of the dry walling as at Stoney Littleton and Uley in Gloucestershire, and which we believe must have occurred. The large stone Bere mentions having been discovered in the forecourt near the s. end of the barrow does not seem to have been the real entrance stone, but one placed in the forecourt midway between converging dry walls and 13 ft. distant from the actual entrance to the tomb. The real entrance stone had a hole through its centre and blocked the opening to the avenue where the unmortared walls terminated. Working through the dry walling at the E. side of this perforated stone and the trilithon against which it was resting, Bere states an opening was made into the central avenue, and that this measured 2 ft. 3 in. wide, 4 ft. high, and 9 ft. long N. to S. He says it contained a complete skeleton, and in one of his letters to the *Gentleman's Magazine* we are told that it was accompanied by 'several pieces of other skulls, spinal joints, and arm bones'. Bere proceeds to describe how he entered the central avenue at great risk, but could not go farther than 9 ft. because the roof had fallen in and the passage was blocked. He mentions that with the light of a candle he saw two recesses, one on either side of the avenue, and that both chambers contained several more skulls and other bones. These cells are shown in plan 3 at C and L. Bere states that they were going to clear the central avenue and use pit-props to prevent the fall of the roof, but we are not told if this proposition was carried out. In another place he says there are many skulls in each cell on both sides of the grand avenue from A to B, a statement which implies a clearance of the central passage. In cell C, besides human remains there were found the thigh bone of an ox and a red-deer tooth. Bere also records that the barrow 'produced neither urn, ashes, coin nor weapon'. It is to be presumed the whole tumulus within the dry walling was composed of stone with a thin covering of earth over, and a sloping bank of earth outside the wall similar to that which existed originally at Stoney Littleton. In 1787 the tumulus was overgrown with ash trees and bushes. The upright and covering stones of which the

cells and central avenue were made are said to have been two or three tons in weight, of much larger size evidently than those seen at Stoney Littleton. Collinson, writing in 1791, mentions the barrow¹⁸ and says, 'It undoubtedly is one of the noblest sepulchres of the kind in Great Britain', and states that it was 180 ft. in length, 60 ft.¹⁹ in breadth, and 15 ft. in height, and covered with ash trees, briars and thick shrubs. He also says the 'two rows of cells were formed by very large stones set edgewise, and divided from each other by vast stones covered by others still larger by way of architrave. All the cells are not yet opened. In one of them seven skulls were found, one quite perfect; in another a vast heap of small human bones and horses' teeth.'

In the Rev. H. M. Scarth's paper on *Ancient Chambered Tumuli*,²⁰ Nempnett barrow is illustrated as a symmetrical oval having a central avenue with seven pairs of cells arranged along its E. and W. sides. Bere gives eight pairs (see plans 1 and 2), and Rutter²¹ says ten or eleven pairs of cells, but adds this is conjectural. Scarth also makes the surrounding dry wall to curve in at both ends of the barrow as if there were a N. and a S. entrance. Where or how he obtained the information regarding this we are not told. It is a very unusual structural detail and differs from the plan drawn by Bere, the only person as far as is known who made notes and examined the tumulus before it was ruined. The plans, Plate XIII, show (1) Bere's, (2) Scarth's, and (3) the writer's, which is drawn to scale from measurements given by Bere. Thurnam states²² that the entrance to the avenue was a well-built doorway constructed of three stones or trilithons similar to Uley and Stoney Littleton. In the plan produced by Bere the cells between C and EF, and at the N. end are conjectural and are printed in dotted lines. It must be presumed from this that Bere did not examine the central avenue personally but made this plan from information acquired from other sources. We

¹⁸ Collinson, *History of Somerset*, ii, 318.

¹⁹ These measurements from those given by Bere, the length being 30 ft. more, and the width 15 ft. less. It is difficult to determine the margin of a sloping bank unless a level is used.

²⁰ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, viii, 36-62.

²¹ Rutter, *Delineations of North-West Somerset* (1829), 125.

²² *Archæologia*, xlii, 212.

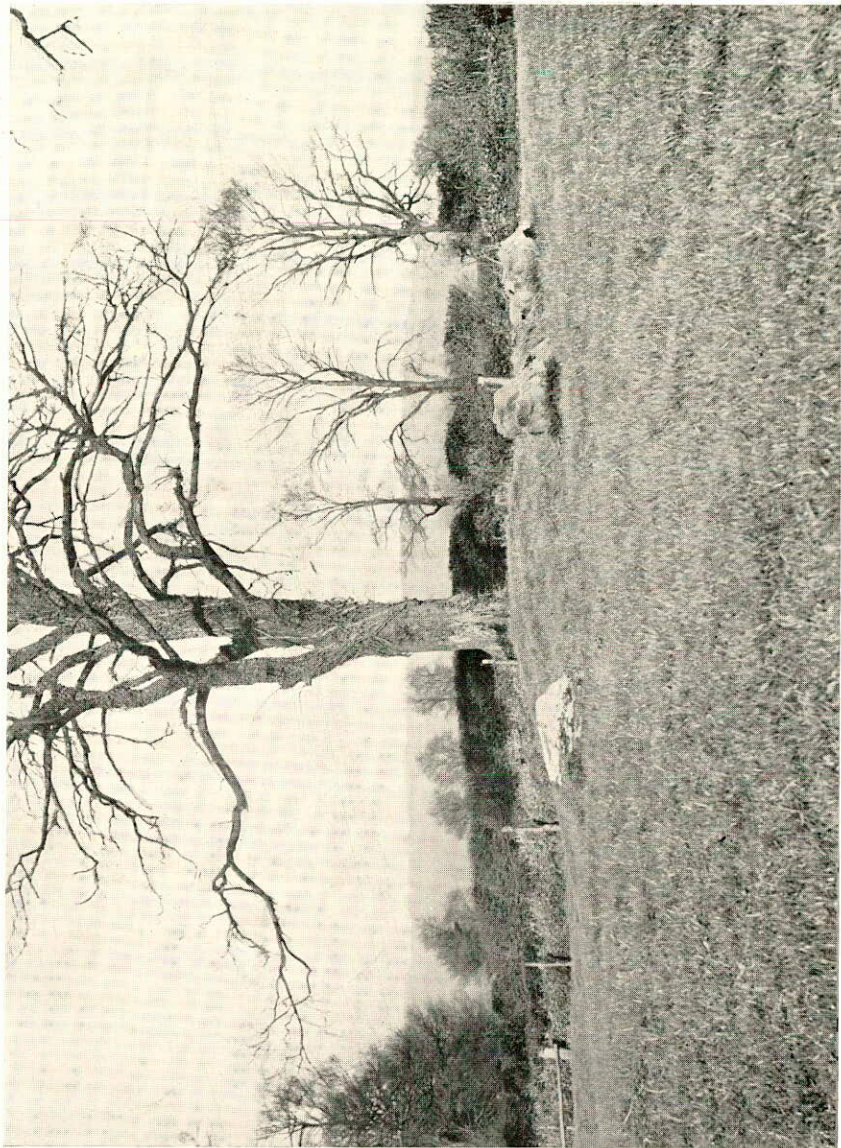
are not told how much of the central avenue was found intact, but Bere does record that every chamber on both sides of the grand avenue contained many skulls. We are deeply indebted to Bere for his letters and the notes he made regarding this tumulus ; had it not been for his interest in the matter nothing would probably have been known about it. Bere did his utmost to draw the attention of people to its importance and value, but his letters failed to attract help or any advice. In his day antiquaries were scarce and the preservation of such relics did not interest the general public. When visiting the site some years ago the writer was informed by a man (unfortunately unknown) that tradition says all the bones from the barrow were buried in a hole on the N. side of the field, and it is quite possible that this was done on Bere's advice in order to save them. Mr. William Ford, of Nempnett Farm, tells the writer he has heard that the human remains from the barrow were reburied, but nobody seems to know the exact spot. The father and grandfather of Mr. Ford occupied Nempnett Farm before him.

The Rev. Thomas Bere was rector of Butcombe from 1781 to 1814 ; he died at Bath on 28 October 1814, in his sixty-seventh year, and was buried in Bathampton churchyard.

(3) GIANT'S GRAVE, HOLCOMBE

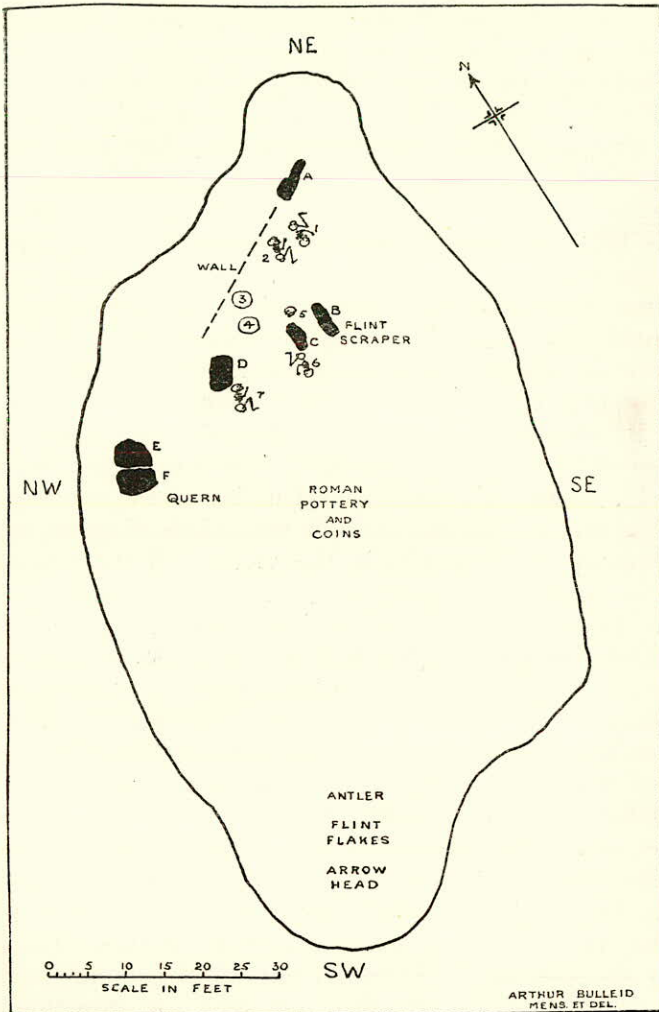
(Plate XI, and Fig. in text)

At Giant's Ground on Charmborough Hill in the parish of Holcombe there exists the mutilated remains of a chambered long barrow. The mound is practically levelled and of the large stones that at one time formed its gallery and cells only a few remain. Three of these are apparently *in situ*, standing edgeways up, two of them being placed side by side 3 ft. apart. Three other stones are recumbent, but two of these may have formed originally one large slab. The writer had first noticed the stones in 1902, and had photographed them a few years later. In August 1909 the late Rev. J. D. C. Wickham, of Holcombe Manor, attempted an exploration of the site. It was not until the end of these operations that the writer heard of the digging and on visiting the field was informed that no plan, drawing or measurements had been made. His offer to



**GIANT'S GRAVE, HOLCOMBE, SOM.,
LOOKING NORTH**

From a Photograph by Dr. A. Balleid, F.S.A.



Plan of Giant's Grave, Holcombe, Somerset.

make a rough plan was accepted and the approximate position of the human remains together with some other finds were marked on it from information given by the two labourers employed to do the excavation. Under such circumstances the plan is extremely poor and unsatisfactory. It was subsequently reproduced in Mr. Wickham's book *Records by Spade and Terrier* (1912). The excavations appeared to have been done without method, many of the holes had been filled in, and the human remains removed and mixed together before the writer arrived upon the scene. The bones had been sent to the late Dr. John Beddoe for examination. Dr. Beddoe's report states: 'These bones are those of several individuals differing in age and sex; unfortunately they are all so much fractured and comminuted that I cannot derive from them any certain or even probable conclusions as to stature, head-form or race type.' This was sad news indeed. Some time later Mr. Wickham very truly remarked to me that 'it was not the first time the contents of the barrow had been disturbed'. When the original destruction of the tumulus took place no one knows, but as there were signs of quarrying and the remains of a lime-kiln in the vicinity of the s.w. end of the mound, it is quite possible that it suffered the same unfortunate fate as Fairy Toote at Nempnett and several other chambered barrows in North Somerset. The mound now is so ruined and levelled that it is impossible to tell what the size and shape of the tumulus may have been when complete; the only measurements now available are the dimensions of an area of raised ground with a rather indefinite outline, the maximum length and width of which are 115 ft. and 60 ft. respectively. The human remains apparently consisted of four skeletons, and three other groups of bones including a skull. From this it may be gathered that there were at least five burials. The approximate position of these was given me by the workmen. At the N. side of the mound there was some dry walling passing in a N.E. and S.W. direction; the men, however, could not say if this was curved or straight. Among other finds Mr. Wickham mentions four 'third brass' Roman coins, one each of Postumus, Claudius II, Constantine I, and Constantius II, dating from A.D. 259 to 300. There were also a number of fragments of Roman pottery, but how these

remains became associated with the mound is not easily explained. Mr. Wickham also says, 'flint flakes abounded, one or two of which were worked up into implements such as arrow-heads and scrapers. The site where these were found was a deep channelled pit, probably once flanked with stone'. The size, shape or even the depth of this depression is not stated, neither do we know the exact position. It is sad to think that the information given in these brief notes is practically all that is known of the tumulus that at one time must have been a conspicuous feature on Charmborough Hill.

(4) FROMEFIELD TUMULUS, FROME

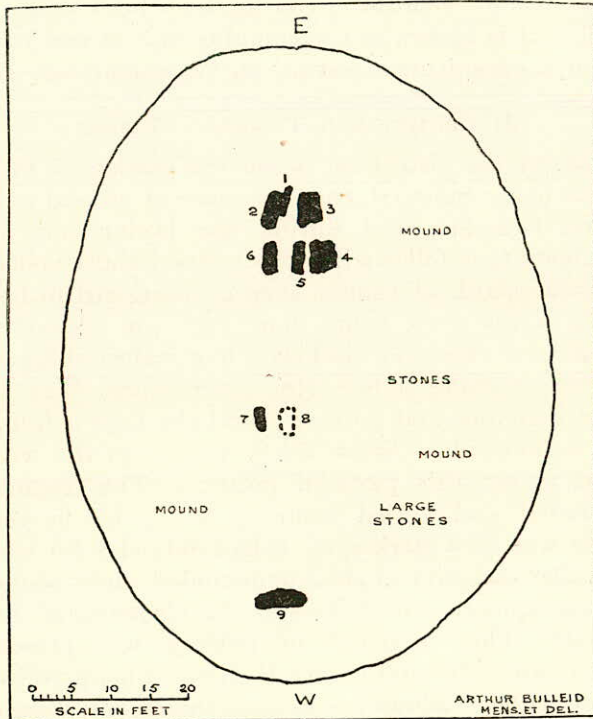
In or about the year 1820, when the garden of Fromefield House was being enlarged, the new piece of ground included a chambered tumulus, and during the laying out and the improvements that followed, it was opened and levelled. The late Miss Sheppard, of Frome, then a young girl in her teens, remembered this work being done and was present when a large stone was removed disclosing five walled compartments constructed of stone slabs. Her diary states that the cells contained skeletons and pottery; and she kept a fragment of a pot as a memento. Some thirty years ago the writer was permitted to see this piece of pottery. The fragment was unornamented and varied from $\frac{5}{16}$ to $\frac{7}{16}$ in. in thickness. The paste was of a dark grey colour mixed with much grit and a smaller quantity of shell or pounded shelly stone. The surface was smooth with almost a burnished look, and of a buff colour. This fragment of pottery was presented to Somerset County Museum by Mr. H. Byard Sheppard in 1912.²³ The skeletons were allowed to remain intact and were covered with earth, but the large stone was later placed upright either over or near the site in the middle of a round flower-bed, and was seen by the writer in this position many years ago. Mr. George Gordon, the owner of Fromefield House, tells me that 'the stone now stands in a wood and that it is 5 ft. in height above ground and leaning at an angle of about 45°'. It did not appear to me that this single stone was large enough to cover five cells, and we surmise there may possibly have been others not mentioned by Miss Sheppard.

²³ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lviii, i, 108.

(5) THE DEVIL'S BED AND BOLSTER, BECKINGTON

(Plate XII, and Fig. in text)

At Mount Pleasant on the northern boundary of the parish of Beckington, and 700 yds. east of Rode old church, there are the remains of a chambered tumulus, locally known as 'The Devil's Bed and Bolster'. The mound has been sadly dis-



Plan of the Devil's Bed and Bolster, Beckington, Somerset.

turbed and nearly levelled, especially over the N.E. quarter; other parts of the tumulus are fairly well defined. The maximum dimensions are 85 ft. E. and W., and 65 ft. N. and S. Nine large stones, parts of either the chambers or central corridor, remain, six standing and three recumbent. These are, roughly speaking, arranged parallel with the central line of the long diameter (see accompanying plan). One of the recumbent stones, No. 8, is nearly lost in the grass and could



LOOKING EAST



LOOKING WEST

**"THE DEVIL'S BED AND BOLSTER,"
BECKINGTON**

From Photographs by Rt. Rev. Abbot E. Horne, F.S.A.

not be measured accurately without digging. The dimensions of the other stones are as follows :

1. Length 3 ft. 11 in., width 10 in., height 1 ft. 7 in.
2. Length 5 ft. 6 in., width 1 ft. 10 in., height 3 ft. 6 in.
3. Length 4 ft. 10 in., width 2 ft. 9 in., height 3 ft. 7 in.
4. Length 4 ft., width 3 ft. 6 in., recumbent.
5. Length 4 ft. 4 in., width 1 ft. 1 in., height 3 ft. 1 in.
6. Length 4 ft. 3 in., width 2 ft., recumbent.
7. Length 2 ft. 11 in., width 1 ft., height 2 ft. 5 in.
8. Recumbent and overgrown.
9. Length 6 ft. 5½ in., width 2 ft. 10 in., height 3 ft. 6 in.

Nothing is known as far as we are aware regarding the destruction of this barrow. Judging from the size of the trees growing on the site no disturbance has taken place for at least a century, except as to the number of stones now seen above ground. At a meeting of the Bath Field Club on 23 October 1889, Mr. Medley, when addressing the members assembled at the site, said ²⁴: 'From a rough calculation the number of stones lying about was then 22 or 23, five of these being upright. One stone near the w. margin measured 3 ft. 7 in. high, 6 ft. broad, and 2 ft. 5½ in. thick.' This is evidently No. 9. It is quite possible that in the course of fifty years many of the missing stones have become overgrown, but might be discovered by digging.

(6) MURTRY HILL TUMULUS, BUCKLAND DENHAM

This ruined chambered tumulus, situated in Orchardleigh Park, was carefully examined by Mr. H. St. George Gray in 1920, and an exhaustive illustrated account of the excavation, together with the history of the mound, has been recorded by him.²⁵

(7) BUCKLAND DOWN TUMULUS, BUCKLAND DENHAM

Adjoining the N. side of the Radstock to Frome road and some 500 yards S.E. of the lodge of Ammerdown Park, there was a chambered tumulus at the beginning of the last century. The remains of this barrow can still be seen, a mound 2 or 3 ft. in height being clearly defined. Until a few years ago it was

²⁴ *Bath Nat. Hist. and Antiq. Field Club*, vii, 88.

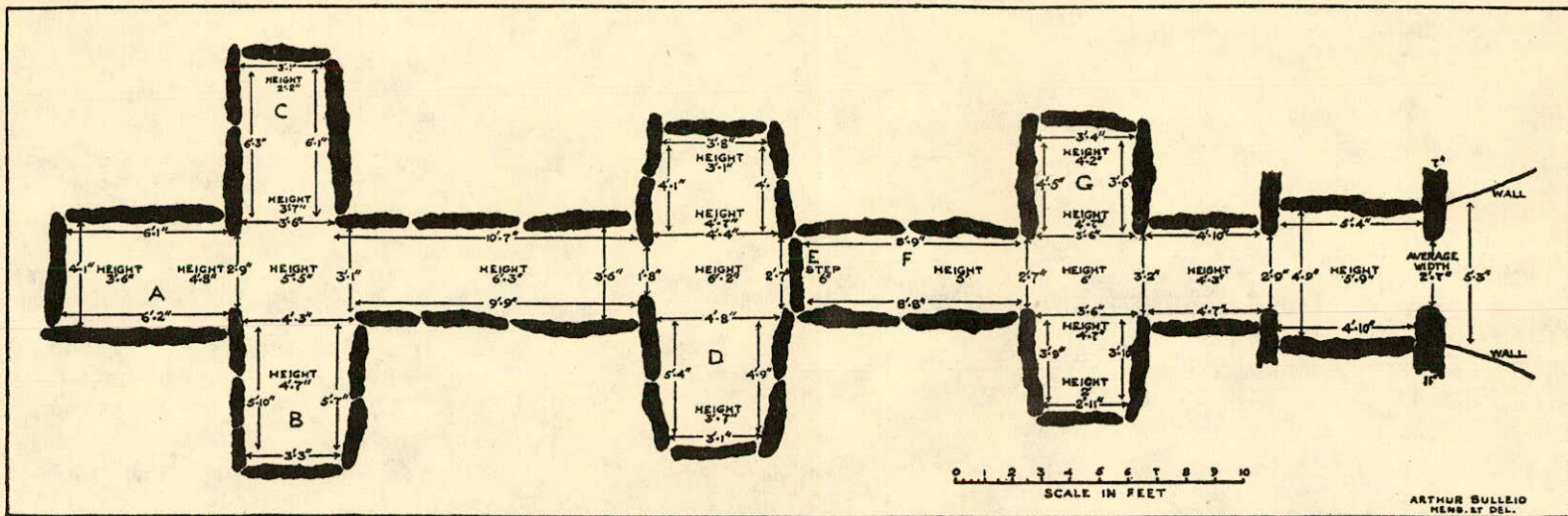
²⁵ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxxvii, 39-55; lxxv, 57-60.

marked by a large wych-elm that grew on the highest part of the ground. This tree was evidently well known and of some importance, for it is shown in the Somerset 6-in. Ordnance Map, Sheet XXIX, N.E., and is called 'The Big Tree'. It was blown down during a severe gale and after a lapse of several years is still lying as it fell untouched, being allowed to gradually decay away. It has not been removed, the writer was recently informed, because it is on a burial-place. The circumference of the trunk about 4 ft. above ground-level measured 13 ft. 6 in. The destruction of the tumulus took place in or about 1820 when the new Frome road was constructed, and it appears that the s.w. margin of the mound reached as far as the hedge—now bordering the highway, or even extended beyond this to the verge at the road-side. This is shown by the hedge bank being slightly raised above the general level as it passes over a section of the mound. Skinner says in his diary: 'I have before noticed in my journals that a large tumulus on Buckland Down 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 horse-back. That is, about the height of that at Orchardleigh.' When visiting the site recently the writer measured the mound. The n.w. and s.e., and n.e. and s.w. diameters were respectively 125 ft. and 110 ft. The latter measurement being made up to the hedge bordering the road is no doubt less by at least 10 ft. the original diameter.

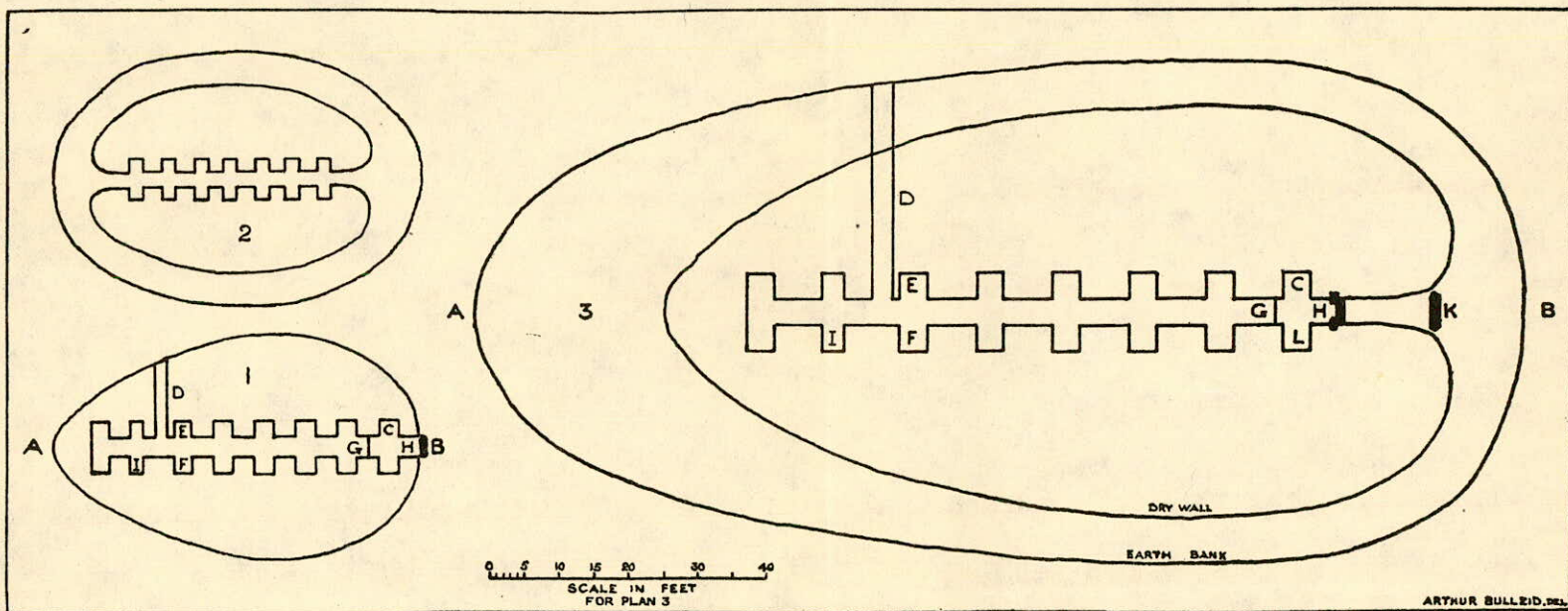
We have been unable to obtain any other information regarding the construction of this barrow.

(8) FELTON HILL TUMULUS, WINFORD

At the s.w. corner of Felton Hill Common there is a long barrow situated in the parish of Winford. The mound is egg-shaped, the long diameter lying n.e. and s.w., with the large end towards the n.e. The writer's measurements were as follows: Maximum length 79 ft., maximum width 50 ft., and maximum elevation 4 ft. What appears to be an old disturbed area is seen near the centre. The depression is occupied by several large stones and may be due possibly to the collapse of a central chamber or to excavation. The



STONEY LITTLETON TUMULUS, WELLOW



FAIRY TOOTE, NEMPNETT THRUBWELL

1. THOMAS BERE'S PLAN. 2. H. M. SCARTH'S PLAN. 3. A. BULLEID'S PLAN

PLANS OF CHAMBERED LONG BARROWS, NORTH SOMERSET

n. end has been disturbed more recently, an area measuring roughly 8 ft. by 11 ft. having been carted away, it was stated, to fill a hole on the common. The barrow is now scheduled as an ancient monument. As far as is known no record exists of any examination of this tumulus, although the central depression points to digging having taken place: we cannot state definitely that this barrow is chambered.

(9) CHEWTON MENDIP

Several other long barrows are to be found in North Somerset. One of these is situated on the brow of the hill lying n. of Chewton Mendip village in a field adjoining the w. side of the Bristol road. It has been so much disturbed that it is now difficult to say if originally there were two barrows or only one long mound. No record exists, as far as we know, of an examination or of the date when it was disturbed. The mounds appear to consist of blocks of lias.