

## A BLOWING HOUSE IN THE PARISH OF CHAGFORD.

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In the *Transactions* of the Devonshire Association for the year 1866 there appears a short but very interesting Paper by G. W. Ormerod, entitled, "On Traces of Tin Streaming in the Vicinity of Chagford." In this reference is made to numerous stream works, in many of which, in the sixteenth century, the parish wardens held an interest, but there is no mention of any smelting-place or "blowing house"; and, indeed, I do not think that such has hitherto been described as existing in the neighbourhood.

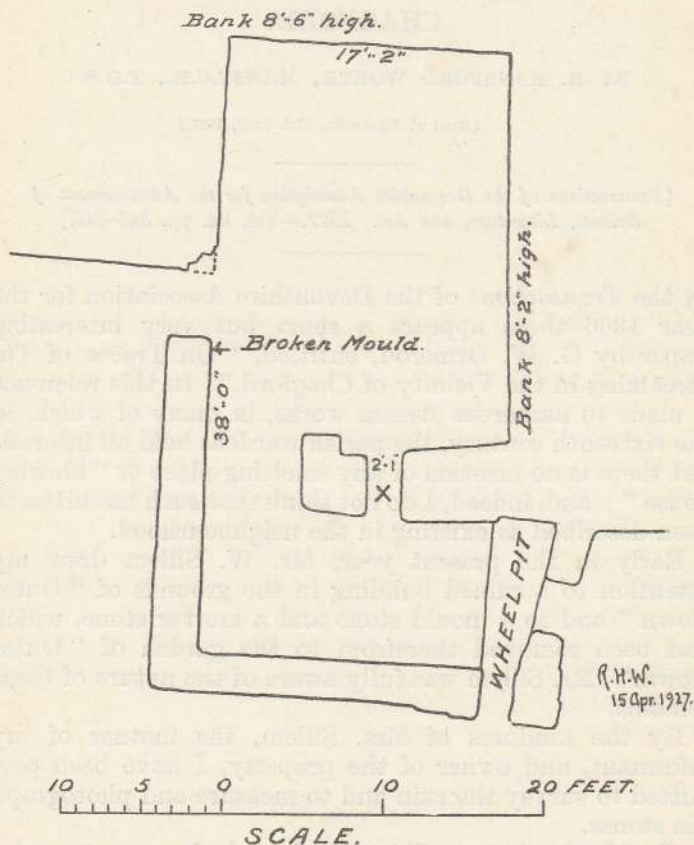
Early in the present year, Mr. W. Sillem drew my attention to a ruined building in the grounds of "Outer Down" and to a mould stone and a mortar stone, which had been removed therefrom to the garden of "Outer Down." Mr. Sillem was fully aware of the nature of these remains.

By the kindness of Mrs. Sillem, the mother of my informant, and owner of the property, I have been permitted to survey the ruin and to measure and photograph the stones.

The blowing house will be found marked as a rectangular building on O.S. Devon, six inch, Sheet LXXXIX, N.E., it is shown at the south-west corner of a small group of trees. The position being W. long. 3-51'-54", and N. lat. 50-39'-48½". It is a little above the 800-feet contour.

The building, a plan of which is here given, comprises two chambers and a wheel-pit. The internal dimensions of the two chambers, taken together, are 38 feet in length, and a little over 17 feet in width. The hill-side has been

scarped back to permit the construction of the building, so that on the south and east sides the floor level is some 8 feet or more below the ground adjacent. This had its convenience in bringing the leat to the water-wheel. Partially separating the two chambers is a wall, 4 feet 6 inches in thickness, through which is an opening 2 feet



1 inch in width. There can be no doubt that this wall is of a greater thickness than would normally be used for a mere internal partition, especially where the outer walls are less than 3 feet in thickness.

It may well be that the internal wall forms some part of the furnace arrangement, perhaps the actual furnace was built in the opening marked X on plan, which would be consistent with the arrangement found in the "iron

FIG. 1.



*Photo : R. H. Worth.*

BROKEN MOULD-STONE, BLOWING HOUSE, "OUTER DOWN," CHAGFORD.

FIG. 2.



*Photo : R. H. Worth.*

MOULD-STONE, GARDEN OF "OUTER DOWN," CHAGFORD.



FIG. 1.



MORTAR-STONE, GARDEN OF "OUTER DOWN," CHAGFORD.  
*Photo : R. H. Worth.*

FIG. 2.



CORNER OF BLOWING HOUSE, "OUTER DOWN," CHAGFORD.  
*Photo : R. H. Worth.*

mill" at Ashburton. The furnace would be a temporary structure, placed between the permanent walls, and capable of reconstruction when worn or burnt out.

At a point in the outer wall, indicated on the plan, a broken mould stone has been built in (see Plate XII, Fig. 1). The depth of the mould cannot now be ascertained, nor its original dimensions at the top; but at the bottom the cavity measures 12 inches by 9 inches; the material is fine-grained granite. The other mould stone, which has been removed to the garden of "Outer Down," is perfect, the mould measures 13 inches by 10 inches at the bottom, 16 inches by 13½ inches at the top, and the mould cavity is 8 inches in depth (see Plate XII, Fig. 2). The mortar stone, which also is now in the garden, has the usual approximately hemispherical hollow, in this instance 11 inches in diameter, and 7½ inches in depth (see Plate XIII, Fig. 1). Both these last-mentioned stones are moderately coarse granite.

The wheel was, no doubt, worked by the water of a leat, taken in from the South Teign at a point above Yeo Bridge. There is to-day a leat, at a slightly lower level, which flows along the hill-side a little below the blowing house, and acts as a pot-water leat for West Combe, it is also used to drive a wheel at that farm. This is probably the original leat, slightly varied in position. It may be that the pot-water leat was earlier than the blowing house, and the opportunity which it afforded determined the site of the latter. Fig. 2, Plate XIII, is a view of a corner of the building.

I have thought it well to place the facts on record, since, although we might be assured that in a neighbourhood where so much tin-streaming had taken place there must have been smelting-houses, we had not hitherto any knowledge of the remains of such structures in the locality. It may be hoped that, attention having been directed to the matter, other discoveries will follow.