

DARTMOOR BLOWING HOUSES, STRAY NOTES, III.

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(Read at Barnstaple, 23rd June, 1938.)

SHEEPSTOR BROOK.

In Vol. lxiv of our *Transactions*, on page 273, I described two mortar-stones lying near the Sheepstor Brook, by Colleytown. At that time the stones were involved in a hedge; some years later they were cleared, and it was found that, in place of the two mortars formerly visible on each, there were four on each side of either stone, sixteen mortars in all. See Plate XXXV, figs. 1 and 2, which show one face of each stone.

SHEEPSTOR, BURRATOR RESERVOIR, LONGSTONE.

In Vol. lxi of our *Transactions*, on page 402, I mentioned a mould-stone lying below top-water level of the Burrator Reservoir, and in the same volume I gave an illustration of the stone as it lay on the shore. Later, taking advantage of low-water in a year of drought, Mr. Shillibeer, the foreman in charge of the waterworks, rescued it from the waters and transferred it to the grounds of the Plymouth Corporation on the north shore.

An old hedge near the bank of the reservoir obstructed the removal of the stone, and when this hedge was taken down another mould-stone, of smaller dimensions, was found. This also was taken to the north shore. With better opportunity for measurement a slight correction is necessary in the description of the mould formerly submerged. The cavity is 20 inches long, by $15\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide, and 8 inches deep; and it is now obvious that the stone has been broken, and that it formerly bore a second and smaller mould.

The other mould-stone has a cavity of $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and 3 inches deep. As usual, it tapers in depth, and at the bottom it measures $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Plate B, fig. 2, gives drawings of these stones, and a view will be found on Plate XXXVI, fig. 1.

There is also, in the rock garden which now occupies the site of the old Sheepstor road, a mortar-stone, which is unusual in being a quartz-schist rock.

HARTLAND MOOR, POSTBRIDGE

The late ROBERT BURNARD published a short account of a Blowing House on Hartland Moor. It may be useful to supplement this. The one certain object which remains is a mould-stone, built into a stone fence. The geographical data are:—Six-inch Ordnance Survey, Devon, XCIX, S.E., lon. $3^{\circ}54'35''$, lat. $50^{\circ}35'58\frac{1}{4}''$.

The stone is roughly square, rather irregular, and the mould itself damaged by heat. The measurements are approximately, at the top, $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the depth of the cavity varies between 4 inches and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. See figure 2 in the text, and Plate XXXVII, fig. 1.

THE BARRACKS, POSTBRIDGE.

BURNARD also described, and illustrated, one of two precisely similar mould-stones which are to be found near the

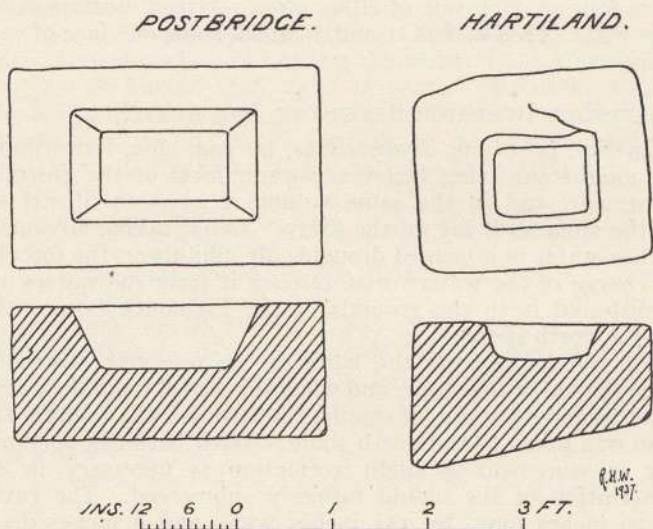


Fig. 1

ruins of the buildings known as the Barracks, on the right bank of the East Dart about 110 yards south of the main road. In August, 1937, I sought these moulds. One was still to be found in the ruins of a pigsty, where it had functioned as a trough, with a shoot for pouring in the pigs' meat from outside. The other was apparently missing. But local knowledge came to my aid, and the stone was excavated where it had lain buried under the turf—a somewhat striking

instance of the manner in which objects can be lost. It has now been rescued, and should probably remain above ground for many years.

These moulds are the best worked that are to be seen on Dartmoor. The stones are squared and dressed, the cavities carefully formed, and obviously to determined dimensions, since the two agree so precisely. The cavities measure $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches x 14 inches at the top, $16\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the bottom, and are 8 inches in depth. If one of these moulds were run full it would hold nearly seven hundredweight of tin. See fig. 1 in text, and Plate XXXVII, fig. 2, which shows the mould after it had been uncovered by excavation. It is surmise only, but has great show of probability, that these came quite late in the history of tin smelting on Dartmoor.

SOUSSENS COMMON.

Six-inch Ordnance Survey, Devon, XCIX, S.E., lon. $3^{\circ}-52'-34''$, lat. $50^{\circ}-36'-0''$. In the west boundary fence of Soussons Common.

Mr. Withycombe, of Greyhound Farm, Postbridge, formerly of Soussons, told me that he had built into the wall between Soussons Common and Runnage a mortar-stone. Last August I found this. It is quite a large stone, with four mortar cavities on the side facing east, the mean diameter of the mortars being approximately 7 inches, and the depths varying between 3 and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. On the west, or Runnage, side there are two mortars, 7 inches diameter by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, and 8 inches by 3 inches, respectively. See Plate XXXVIII, figs. 1 and 2, views of the east and of the west faces. The staff which shows in these photographs is 3 feet 6 inches in length.

The remains of the blowing-house lie on the Runnage side of the fence, and the old leat can still be traced from the Wallabrook.

THE ERME, NEAR IVYBRIDGE.

On the right bank of the Erme, above Ivybridge—a short distance above the old reservoir in the woods, which is now a bathing pool, and close to the river bank, a stone 4 feet 5 inches in length, with one mortar worked in it, the diameter of the mortar being $10\frac{7}{8}$ inches, and the depth $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches. There are no recognisable remains of any blowing-house. See Plate XXXIX, fig. 1.

VALLEY OF THE BOVEY, RIDGE LEY.

Six-inch Ordnance Survey, Devon, LXXXIX, S.E., lon. $3^{\circ}-51'-54''$; lat. $50^{\circ}-38'-15''$.

The River Bovey leaves the unenclosed moorland about half a mile south of Hurston. If from this point one follows the outer fence of Hurston north-westward for about one thousand feet one reaches Hurston Moor Gate; still following the fence a ruined farm (Ridge Ley) is reached, which was formerly approached directly from the open moor. The ruin is about four hundred yards in a direct line from the River Bovey.

Two small troughs are to be found on this old farm, the one quite near the ruin, and the other a short distance away in a field to the east. Both are most probably mould-stones, taken from some blowing-house on the banks of the Bovey. This diversion of mould-stones to farming purposes is by no means rare; an example is given above, where a mould-stone has become a pigstrough at Postbridge. The moulds measure respectively, 20 inches by 13 inches, and 13 inches by 11 inches, and both are $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches in depth. See Plate XXXIX, figs. 2 and 3.

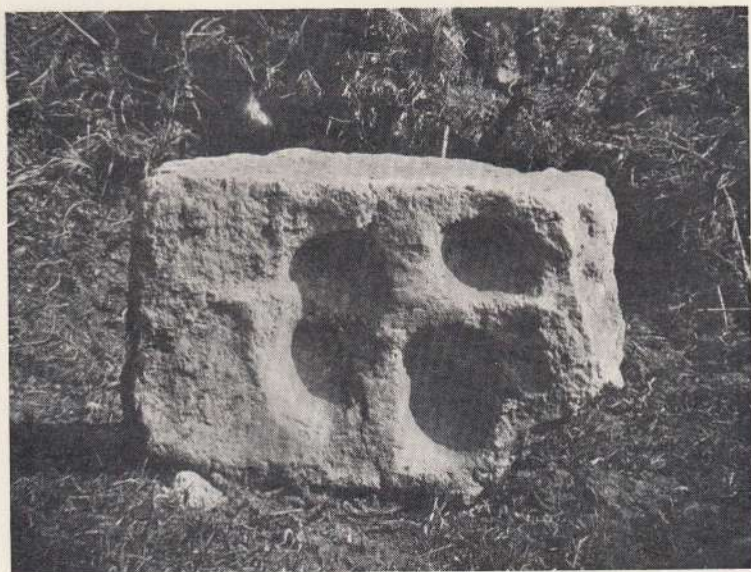


Fig. 1.

COLLEYTOWN, SHEEPSTOR.

R. H. Worth.



Fig. 2.

COLLEYTOWN, SHEEPSTOR.

R. H. Worth.

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Fig. 1.

LONGSTONE, SHEEPSTOR.

R. H. Worth.

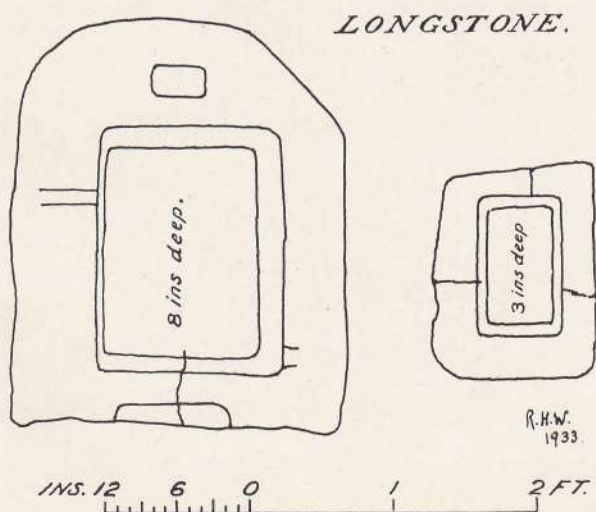


Fig. 2.

Blowing Houses—To follow Plate XXXV.



Fig. 1.

HARTLAND.

R. H. Worth.

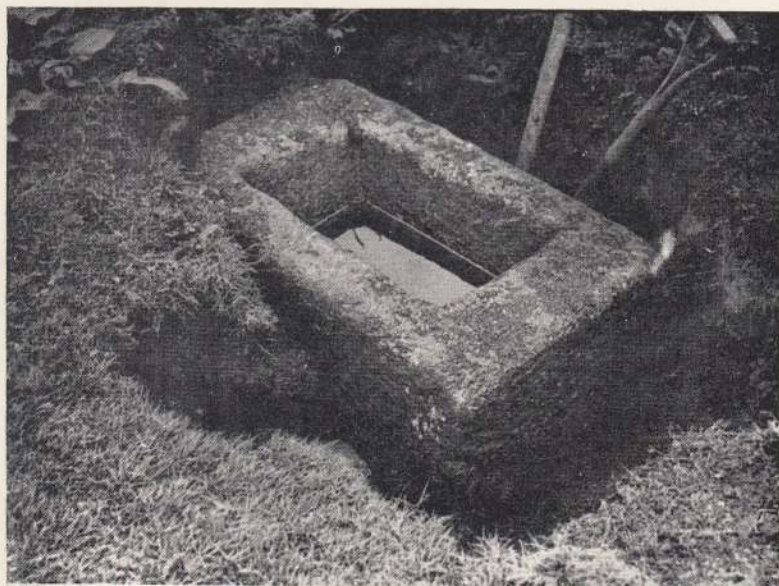
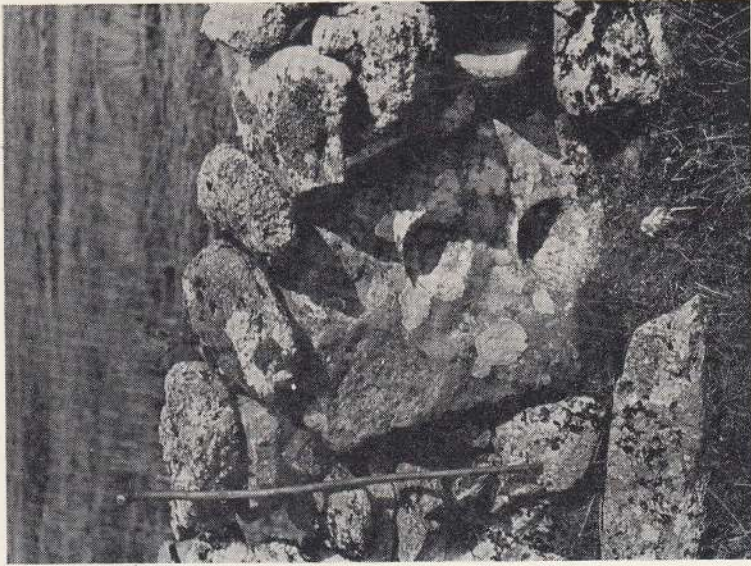


Fig. 2.

"BARRACKS," POSTBRIDGE.

R. H. Worth.

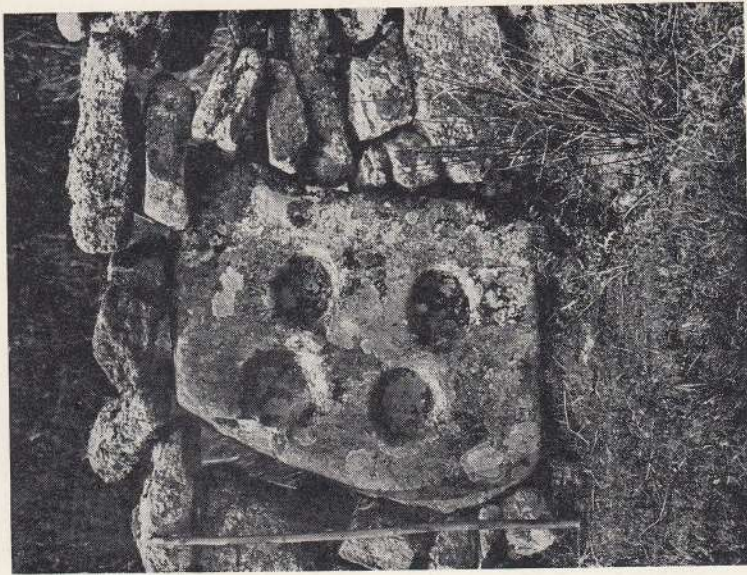
Blowing Houses—To follow Plate XXXVI.



R. H. Worth.

Soussons.

Fig. 2.



R. H. Worth.

Soussons.

Fig. 1.

Blowing Houses—*To follow Plate XXXVII.*



Fig. 1.

ERME WOODS.

R. H. Worth.

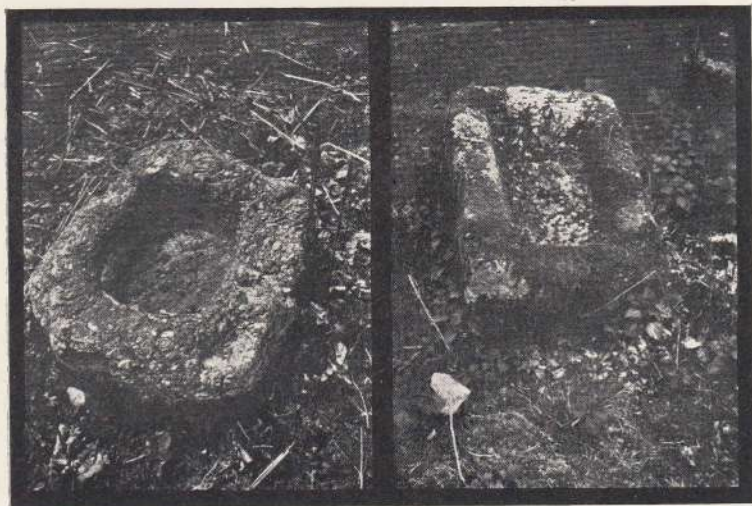


Fig. 2. RIDGE LEY.

Fig. 3. RIDGE LEY.

R. H. Worth.

Blowing Houses—*To follow Plate XXXVIII.*