

RESEARCHES INTO SOME ANTIENT TUMULI ON DARTMOOR.

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IN continuation of the explorations which I reported in 1872 to this Society that I was carrying out into the tumuli on Dartmoor, I have to state that during the early part of this summer, in company with Mr. Brooking Rowe, and Mr. Tucker, the lord of the manor, on whose property the barrow is situated, I opened the tumulus mentioned in my Memoir of last year, under the name of Single-barrow.

Single-barrow (*Plate, fig. 1*) is situated about one furlong due north of Two-barrows: it is like them in general character, but not so high, and larger in circumference, circumstances which may have arisen from the settlement of the general mass of material being more rapid and extended.

It is by measurement about three feet and six inches in height near the middle, and is about sixty-six feet in diameter north and south, as well as east and west, and forms a very perfect circle; but the substance of the barrow has so gradually thinned away at the margin of the mound, that it is not in all places quite easy to define the exact limit. This tumulus, like the preceding, we opened on the south and east side, and in the course of two days removed about one quarter part of the whole. Soon after commencing the work, the men reached a mass of irregular stones; these seemed to correspond with those in the previous mound which formed the circle within the margin. In this mound the stones were larger in size, and formed a more important wall of circumference, which both in this and in the previously opened barrow I presume corresponds with the original circumference of the mound. All the earth on the outer side of this low circular enclosure has resulted from depression of the soft material with which the mound was built. On the south

were found several stones (*a*) lying flat upon the surface of the ground beneath the mound; these were placed in a slightly curved line, somewhat like a pavement placed on wet or marshy ground, as a causeway leading to the barrow, and ended at the stone embankment that encircled the mound. In spite of the regularity of their appearance, I am inclined to think that they were accidentally in position, and had no connection with the interment.

Several stones of large proportions were also met with in the excavation, one in particular (*b*) was very suggestive of having been the cover stone of an interment. It was about four feet long by two and half broad, flat, and quadrilateral. On being raised, it was found to rest on the yellow subsoil that naturally forms the surface of the ground beneath the peat earth.

About six feet from the middle of the tumulus, (*c*) towards the south-east, one of the men threw up a small piece of bone. We then carefully removed the surrounding material, and with our knives and fingers turned over the heap from whence the bones came; these gradually increased in quantity until we found the centre of the little heap to be a solid mass

of comminuted bones, amongst which Mr. J. Brooking Rowe found a bit that I was enabled to determine to be the palatal fang of a human upper molar tooth. These bones had evidently been burned. With them also we found one or two fragments of charcoal. Examining the mass carefully, we turned up from the soil close by the heap of bones a thin square-shaped implement of flint. (*Plate, fig. 2.*) It is of the flake character, and is a very fine specimen of the kind. It is about two inches and three-quarters long, by two inches wide. It has one side (on which



is shown the bulb of percussion) flat over the entire surface, being the result of a fracture at a single blow; the other side has a ridge following a curved line from one of the upper angles to near the centre, about an inch from the base, where there are also two or three smaller surfaces of distinct fractures.

One of the lateral edges rounds inward at the base, and the other follows somewhat a parallel line, and the implement appears to be well adapted when placed in a curved handle to become a formidable weapon of offence, somewhat after the plan of a tomahawk or hatchet, of which this flint formed the cutting blade,* as we have shown in the annexed wood-cut. Not finding anything more in the soil in the neighbourhood of this interment, we proceeded with our excavation, and after some time came to some stones near the centre of the mound. These we gradually disinterred, and exposed a small cairn of loose stones about three feet high, very neatly and perfectly put together. The smaller ones were on the top and the larger towards the bottom, and at the bottom were two stones rather larger than the rest, each being about eighteen inches long by a foot broad. These were lying side by side, and upon being carefully removed exposed nothing but the natural soil that underlies the peat generally throughout the district.

That there was no evidence of any interment beneath the cairn is a very remarkable fact, but one that corresponds with the results of the exploration of the previous mound at Two-barrows on the same hill. At Two-barrows the cairn was much smaller, and built with stones of less size; but like this at Single-barrow it occupied the centre of the mound. Like this also the interment was some six feet or thereabout distant from the central cairn on the south-east. They resembled each other also, inasmuch as in each instance the bones were burned, and not enclosed within an urn or vessel, but placed in a small heap by themselves; close to which was also interred in one case a bronze dagger, with a pommel of amber inlaid with gold to the handle, and in this the flint cutting blade of a wooden-handled tomahawk. In Two-barrows the style of interment differed from that of Single-barrow by having large stones placed horizontally over the bones, while in this there were none.

These two interments from their singularity indicate a custom that is common to one people, and from the dissimilarity of these barrows to those that are generally found in other places on the moor, they seem to tell of a people of strange and foreign habits.

The circumstance of flint being found in one barrow, and bronze of an early type in the other, is very suggestive that the period of the interment may be considered as that of the early bronze age. All of which appears to support the hypothesis

* The charcoal found may have been the remains of the burned tomahawk; but I think not, as the flint exhibits no evidence of having been in the fire.

Fig. I.

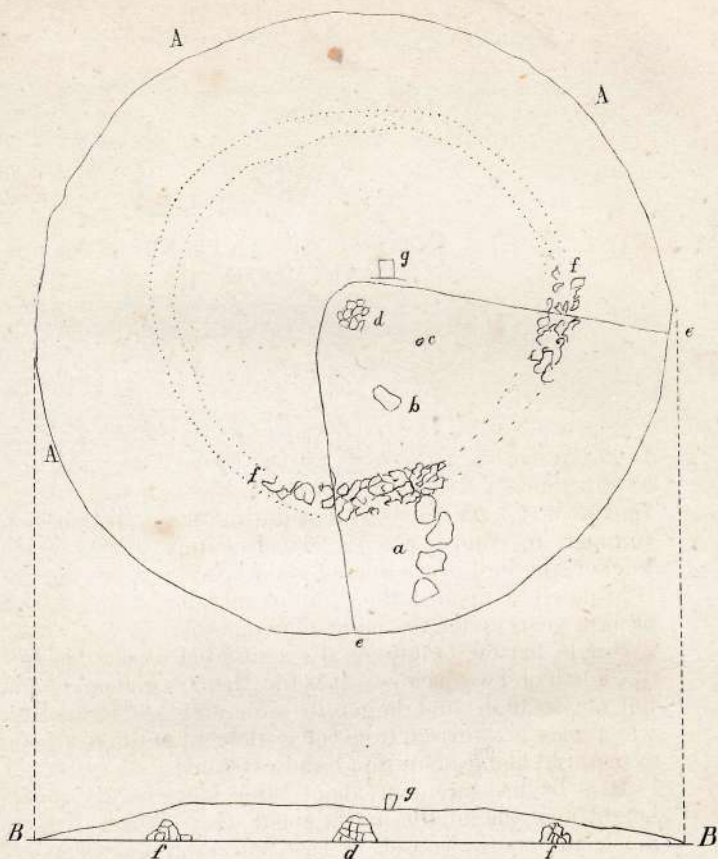
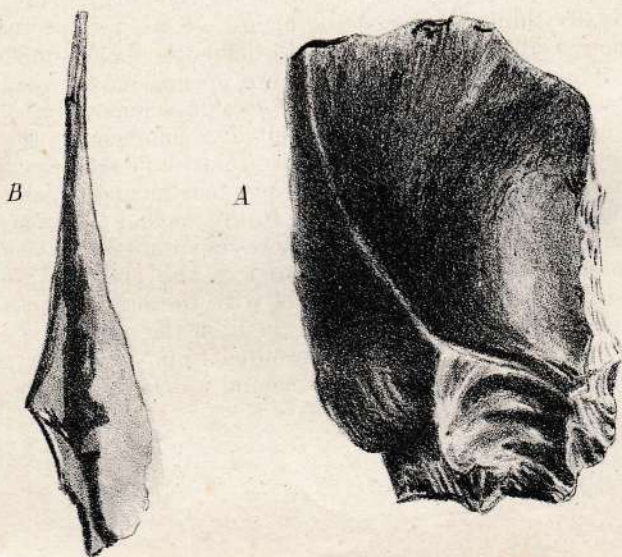


Fig. II.



elsewhere mentioned, that we have here evidences of an early Scandinavian incursion in this primitive age, probably in search of tin.

REFERENCE TO PLATE.

FIG. 1.

- A. Single-barrow, line of circumference.
- a. Several stones, like pavement.
- b. A rough flat stone.
- c. Position of interment and flint.
- d. Central cairn.
- e. Line of the extent of excavation.
- f. Bank or loose stones, supposed original circumference of tumulus.
- g. Bound stone on mound.
- B. Venticle section of the same. Letters refer to the same position as in A.

FIG. 2.

- A. Thick implement found in the above barrow.
- B. Side view of same.