

## FIFTH REPORT OF THE BARROW COMMITTEE.

FIFTH REPORT *of the Committee—consisting of Mr. C. Spence Bate, Mr. G. Doe, Mr. P. O. Hutchinson, Mr. E. Parfitt, Mr. J. Brooking Rowe, and Mr. R. N. Worth (Secretary)—to collect and record facts relating to Barrows in Devonshire, and to take steps where possible for their investigation.*

Edited by R. N. WORTH, F.G.S., Secretary.

(Read at Exmouth, August, 1883.)

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THE Barrow Committee have the pleasure of presenting in their Fifth Report a statement of the results of the exploration of three barrows at Berry Down, Berrynarbor, by their colleague Mr. G. Doe, as the first instalment of their work of independent investigation.

J. BROOKING ROWE, *Chairman.*  
R. N. WORTH, *Secretary.*

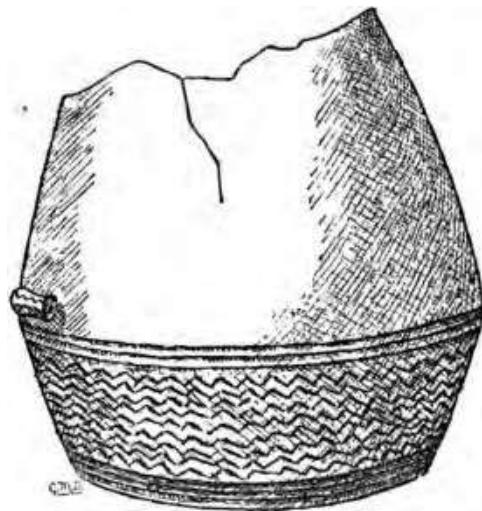
### BERRY DOWN BARROWS.

AT the request of the Secretary of the Barrow Committee I undertook the examination of some of these barrows, which are shown on the Ordnance Map, and are mentioned in page 4 of the First Report of the Committee; and on the 29th of May last, with the able assistance of the Rev. Treasurer Hawker, Dr. Slade King, and Mr. Alfred Berry, the tenant of the land, who had obtained the kind permission of Mrs. Bassett, the owner, a partial examination was made, the result of which convinces me that a more searching exploration would lead to more important disclosures, and induces me to express my earnest hope that I may have the privilege of taking part in the work.

The barrows we examined are in a large field, originally

part of Berry Down, in the parish of Berrynarbor, upwards of eight hundred feet above the sea-level, and commanding a magnificent prospect of many miles. Two workmen commenced by making a cutting into the north-west mound, close to the Ilfracombe road, whilst two others proceeded to open the south-eastern mound. In the former we only succeeded in finding layers of fine clay streaked with charcoal.

In the latter, which was similarly constructed, a few fragments of pottery were unearthed within a foot of the surface, and about ten feet south-west from the centre. A careful removal of the earth soon revealed a sepulchral urn in an inverted position, the bottom of which had been smashed (probably by the plough when the field was last broken), and several pieces of which were found inside, resting on earth, under which were small fragments of burnt human bones, so warped and contorted by the action of fire as to render it difficult to identify them. Dr. Slade King, however, informs me that among them there was part of the sagittal suture of a skull, with pieces of a femur, forearm, and ribs. The height of the urn from the mouth to the broken part near the bottom is 16 inches; its diameter, 16 inches at the mouth, 19 inches at its largest part ( $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the mouth) where there are two well-formed handles, and  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches at the bottom. From the handles to the mouth the urn is encircled by about nine zigzag lines, on either side of which are three straight lines. All these lines were evidently produced by



the pressure on the moist clay of a twisted cord. The handles bear a zigzag ornament of the same description, and the edge of the mouth, which is carefully bevelled on the inner side, is similarly ornamented with straight lines.

The urn is composed of coarse red clay, and appears to have been imperfectly baked. Its average thickness is about half an inch, the inner half of which is blackened. Mr. Berry handed me a flint chip found by him just inside the urn, embedded in clay with signs of charcoal, below which he turned up some stones and worked clay, of a slate colour, free from stone, and having the appearance of putty. Whether this piece of flint be an ancient implement or not, I must confess my utter inability to decide. With regard to the probable date of the interment, my own opinion is that it may be assigned to a period somewhat earlier than the Roman occupation of our country; but the more I see and hear and read, the more I believe that it is unsafe, if not impossible, in the absence of coins, weapons, or manufactured articles, to give a decided opinion on the subject. It has been said that the somewhat uncommon (?) position of an urn with its mouth downward is believed to denote rank; but I fear we must still confess, with Sir Thomas Browne, who wrote his *Hydriotaphia* more than two hundred years ago, that "why certain urns are placed with their mouths downward remains yet undiscovered."

We made a partial examination of another barrow near that last described, and just below the surface found some small fragments of pottery and burnt bones, with clay and charcoal, a fuller description of which I do not deem necessary.

GEORGE DOR.