

EIGHTH REPORT OF THE DARTMOOR
EXPLORATION COMMITTEE.

EIGHTH REPORT of the Committee, consisting of the Rev. I. K. Anderson, Mr. R. Burnard, the Rev. S. Baring-Gould (Secretary), Mr. J. D. Pote, Mr. J. Brooking-Rowe, and Mr. R. Hansford Worth, for the purpose of exploring Dartmoor.

Edited by the Rev. S. BARING-GOULD, Secretary.

(Read at Bideford, July, 1902.)

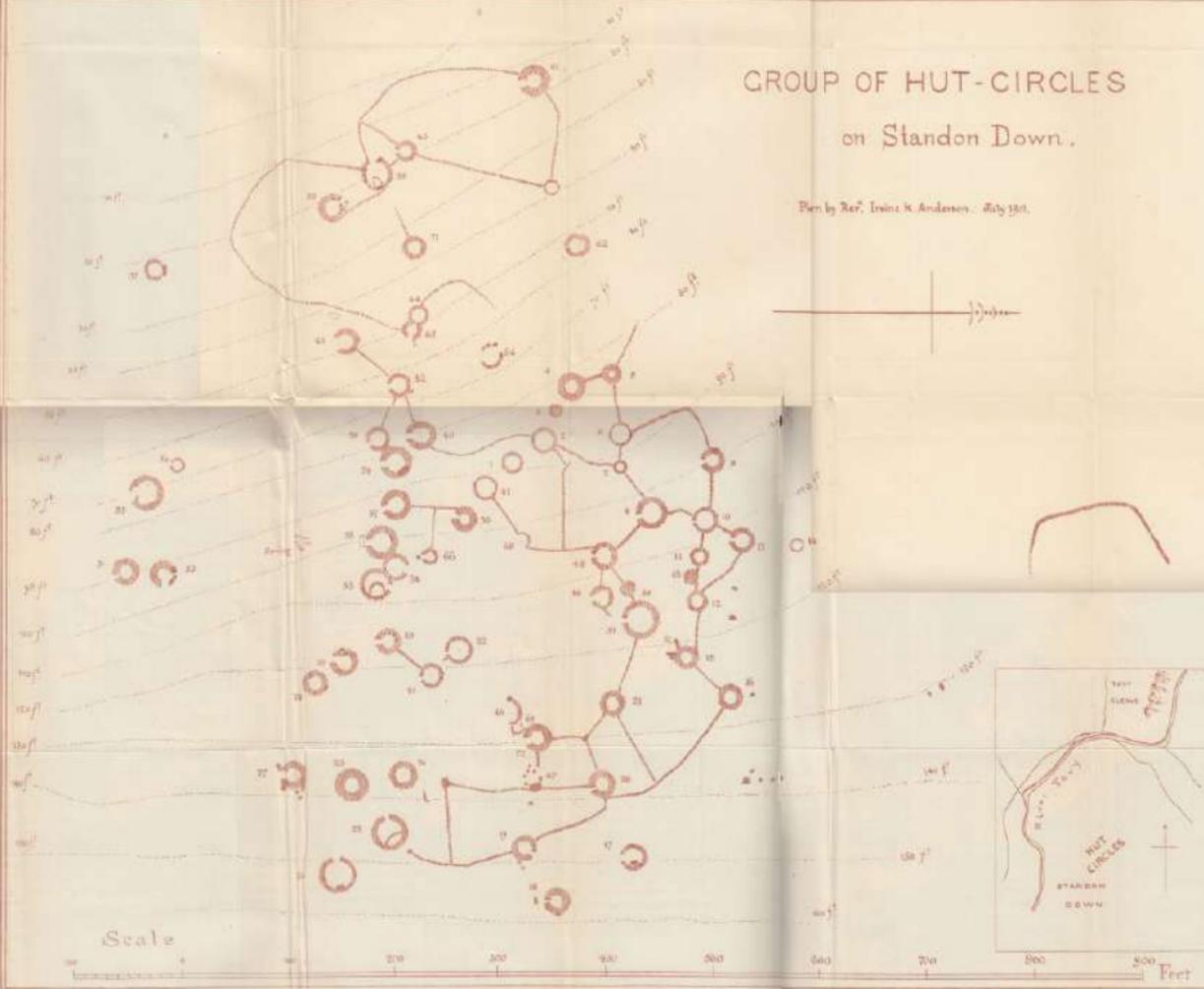
STANDON, commonly known as Stannon Down, Sheet 98, N.E., Ordnance Survey, is crowned by Standon Hill, and this again is dominated by high ground rising to over 1,700 feet, lying between the great loop of the Tavy, which, rising not far from Walkham Head, flows almost due north, then turning toward the west trends away in a southerly direction through the romantic gorge of Tavy Cleave.

On the left bank of the Tavy, on the north-west slope of Standon, is a level plateau about 200 feet above the bed of the river. This is wet and boggy, but where it slopes gently toward the west the ground is dry and boulder-strewn. On this favourable surface are the remains of over seventy hut circles in a fair state of preservation. In some the walls are massive, 3 to 4 feet high, built up with large stones placed vertically; others again appear to have been rebuilt so as to form shelters for sheep and shepherds.

None of the huts examined contained raised platforms of stone, as at Grimspound, Shapley Common, and Broad Down; but some of the circles had interior walls forming inner compartments. The floors of many of the huts were regularly and wholly paved with flat stones, and nearly all had some. This accounts for the paucity of the finds, for potsherds and other articles could get no further than the

GROUP OF HUT-CIRCLES on Standon Down.

Plan by Rev. Irwin K. Anderson. July 1881.



paving. Where the floor is earthen they have a chance of preservation, for they pass through this medium and thus ensure some manner of protection.

A reference to the accompanying plan will show the great extent and importance of this prehistoric village. Many of the huts appear to have been connected by walls forming a complicated system of cattle and sheep pens. There is no suggestion of protection from anything but the weather and possibly predatory animals. As far as this went it must have been effective, but doubtless somewhat smelly. It was warm, and in the winter this must have been a great consideration.

Forty-three hut circles were explored during June of last year, occupying the attention of four men for eight days. Some members of the Committee were present during the whole of the time occupied in digging.

The survey was carried out with the utmost care, and the result is a plan of great interest and importance. There is a water-supply in the village between huts numbered 35 and 53, and this never failed during the dry summer of last year.

DETAILS OF EXPLORATION (all boulders and stones granite, unless otherwise specified):—

Hut Circle No. 1. Circular, but irregular. No entrance visible. Floor paved with thin, flat stones, and on this some wood charcoal, part of a rim of a pot ornamented with twisted thong pattern and some fragments of the wall of the vessel, three small sparry pebbles, and a dozen "cooking" stones, some fired.

Hut Circle No. 2. Remains of entrance. One door jamb fallen, the other standing. Several "cooking" stones.

Hut Circle No. 3. Very irregular and ruined. Some wood charcoal, a rubbing stone, and a few "cooking" stones.

Hut Circle No. 4. No sign of human occupation.

Hut Circle No. 5. A good deal of wood charcoal and some "cooking" stones.

Hut Circle No. 6. Wood charcoal, "cooking" stones, some small sparry pebbles, and a large Tavy pebble, 6 inches long, 3½ inches wide, and 1½ inch thick. Had been used as a pounder; one end much bruised.

Hut Circle No. 7. A little wood charcoal and a few sparry pebbles.

Hut Circle No. 8. Blank.

Hut Circle No. 9. "Cooking" stones, a small sherd of reddish pottery, and a slate showing half of perforation.

Hut Circle No. 10. A large river pebble 12 inches long, smooth surfaces, no sign of use; "cooking" stones; sparry pebbles and peat ashes.

Hut Circle No. 11. Another large river pebble and a roughly shaped broken stone which might have served as a weight or upper stone of a rude quern.

Hut Circle No. 12. Fragments of peat, indicating turf used as fuel; flint flake with some secondary working; a large pebble, a "cooking" stone, and smaller pebbles which may have served as sling-stones.

Hut Circle No. 13. A few potsherds, not ornamented; large pebble which had been used as a pounder; a "cooking" stone and pebbles of the sling-stone type.

Hut Circle No. 14. Blank.

Hut Circle No. 15. Yielded one small potsherd.

Hut Circle No. 16. A considerable amount of pottery, portions of a shallow pot, and some "cooking" stones.

Hut Circle No. 17. A well-preserved hut circle; wall in good condition. A little charcoal and a "cooking" stone.

Hut Circle No. 18. A few "cooking" stones and small pebbles.

Hut Circle No. 19. One small piece of pottery, river pebbles of various sizes, and a little charcoal.

Hut Circle No. 20. Both door jambs standing; "cooking" stones and a worked flint flake of the knife type.

Hut Circle No. 21. "Rubber" stone, small pebbles, and charcoal.

Hut Circle No. 22. Peat ashes, "calm" or subsoil reddened with fire, and a very large broken pebble.

Hut Circle No. 23. More large pebbles and a lump of Horndon Blue (local stone).

Hut Circle No. 24. Yielded some "cooking" stones.

Hut Circle No. 25. Large and small pebbles and a flint flake.

Hut Circle No. 26. A fragment of flint.

Hut Circle No. 27. Blank.

Hut Circle No. 28. A large pebble, 15 inches by 11 inches by 5 inches, and four "cooking" stones.

Hut Circle No. 29. More large pebbles and "cooking" stones.

Hut Circle No. 30. Blank.

Hut Circle No. 31. Pebbles and a "rubber" stone.

Hut Circle No. 32. "Cooking" stones.

- Hut Circle No. 33.* A pebble 20 inches by 12 inches by 3 inches.
- Hut Circle No. 34.* Three "cooking" stones.
- Hut Circle No. 35.* A "rubber" and "cooking" stone.
- Hut Circle No. 36.* Blank.
- Hut Circle No. 37.* Small pebbles and a piece of micaceous slate.
- Hut Circle No. 38.* Portion of a hone, a very large river pebble, and a few "cooking" stones.
- Hut Circle No. 39.* A "rubber" and a "cooking" stone, and a small crystal of quartz which has the appearance of having been rubbed down.
- Hut Circle No. 40.* Blank.
- Hut Circle No. 41.* One of the rebuilt circles; no finds.
- Hut Circle No. 42.* A fragment of flint and some "cooking" stones.
- Hut Circle No. 43.* Small pebbles, one potsherd, and a "cooking" stone.

The little pottery found was hand-made and the ornamentation of the early Bronze Age type. No cooking or fire holes were observed. Pebbles which had been fired and then used for cooking purposes were numerous.

No metal of any kind was found. None has yet been discovered in any of the Dartmoor hut circles.

Flint objects were few and far between, and those which turned up were unimportant.

The feature of the exploration was the pebbles.

Some very large ones were suitable for use as anvils and pounders, smaller examples possibly as sling-stones, whilst the small sparry pebbles might have been used as counters in games.

There is an inexhaustible supply of pebbles in the bed of the Tavy.

The fuel used was wood and peat. Some of the huts had plenty of charcoal and ashes strewn about their floors, indicating considerable occupation.

Notwithstanding this, very little was found, nor could any traces of middens be discovered outside the huts.

The only other hut circles explored during last summer were three out of a small group of four on the newtake south-east of Fernworthy. Only one of these gave any sign of human use, in the shape of a little charcoal and one fragment of flint.

About 350 yards south-east of Grey Wethers is a small circular "pound" measuring 75 feet north to south and 66 feet east to west. The bank forming the inclosure is from 6 to 8 feet wide, 3 feet high, and is composed of small stones and earth. There is an entrance on the west side with one door jamb standing. This was dug out, but nothing was found except a very fine flat stone resting on the "calm" or subsoil. It is 9 feet long and 3 to 4 feet wide. Trial pits were sunk within the inclosure without success. The ground around this small "pound" is now very boggy; it was probably drier when the inclosure was used.

Two ruined cairns in Teign Head Newtake were examined. One possessed a small pit sunk in the "calm," and this contained wood charcoal.

About a mile beyond Watern Tor, in a direct line with Hound Tor, there is a ruined cairn with a short reave running up to it. The cairn contained the remains of a very fine kistvaen, the longitudinal lie of which was north-west to south-east. One side and one end stone remain. The kist contained a circular pit dug into the "calm" to the depth of 18 inches, and in this a little wood charcoal was found.

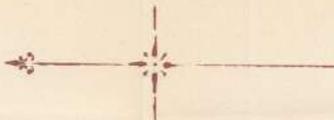
When complete this kistvaen must have been an exceedingly fine one, for the side stone is 7 feet long and the end stone 4 feet 4 inches.

Two large flat stones close to the cairn were probably used as coverers.

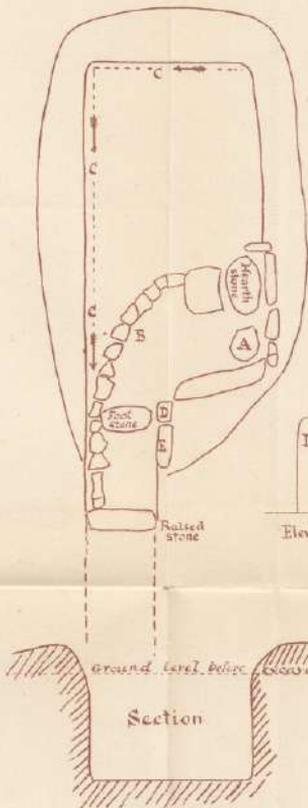
The exploration of the Red Barrows on Soussons Common was commenced at the end of last August, and was continued for several days. These barrows are very large, and it will take several days this summer to complete the exploration. An account of these is held over until the next Report.

Near the present left bank of the East Dart in Greyhound Marsh, Postbridge, is another and higher bank which at some remote time was probably the bank of the river. There is a depression in this bank with signs of an entrance from the direction of the river. It was explored, with the result that an interesting "dug-out" hut was disclosed.

The accompanying plan explains itself. The east and north sides were drained as well as the neighbourhood of the hearthstone. It was probably a summer shelter only, and, judging from the objects found, once harboured some mediæval tin-

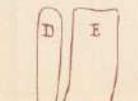


Plan of Hut in bank,
Greyhound Marsh,
Post bridge.

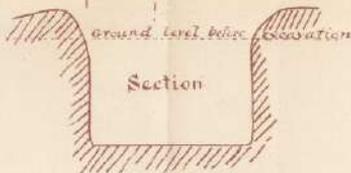


- A. Potsherds found on this stone; also lump of much-corroded iron.
- B. Covered drain. C is carried into this & thence under raised stone to exterior. C not covered.
- D and E side stones of entrance: none on the other side of such large size; there appeared to be a few small ones, but bank here is firmer and handier.

Scale $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to 1 foot.



Elevation of D and E.



streamers. There are plenty of "old men's" workings in the marsh. The floor of the "dug-out" was the hard gravel existing under the "calm," and on this were found strike-a-lights of flint—some of the pieces of flint had evidently been in a fire—lumps of much corroded iron, potsherds, and a piece of wasted oak 22 inches long. The whole of these objects were covered by a layer of vegetable fibre, probably the remains of the "vag" roof, and this in its turn was covered with stones and soil.

The potsherds are portions of a vessel of no great size, wheel-made, paste well mixed, fired red. Exterior of sherds black; this is superficial and scales off. The pot had evidently stood in the ashes and smoke of a fire. No ornamentation.

Period, mediæval—perhaps thirteenth or fourteenth century, or even earlier. Much charcoal on or near the hearth-stone.

There are the sites of two blowing-houses near; one is below the bridge amongst the ruins of a modern house known as Barracks—here two mould-stones may be found—and the other in Hartland Moor, on the right bank of the Stannon Brook. The blowing-house has disappeared, but there is plenty of slag on the site, and the mould-stone has been built into the newtake wall.