

UPPER WHARFEDALE EXPLORATION COMMITTEE.
 FIRST ANNUAL REPORT (1893), BY E. E. SPEIGHT, B.A.
(Communicated January 16th, 1894.)

For many years back the existence of certain ancient remains in Upper Wharfedale has been known to a few inhabitants of the district and to interested visitors, but until quite recently no examination had been carried out. The character of most of the remains is now better understood, and, as far as can be predicted from surface signs, they consist mainly of barrows, enclosed settlements, defensive works and rude monuments. By far the most interesting and extensive are the settlements, five of which are situated within three miles of Grassington village, and which are of similar construction in their details. The district along both banks of the Wharfe for a stretch of three miles, between Grassington and Conistone, seems to have been at some early period one great dwelling and hunting ground, ranged over by a people hardy and cunning. The wooded knolls and the cleared patches on both sides the river bear evident marks of former occupation: traces of long since useless walls literally abound, and from the earth itself are constantly appearing relics of war and the chase.

In the Summer of 1892 one of the barrows near to Grassington was excavated under the direction of Rev. B. J. Harker, whose account appeared in contemporary journals and in the *Antiquary*. The success of this first attempt was marked, and had its due effect in promoting further investigation into the nature of other suspected sites in the neighbourhood.

After consultation with Prof. W. Boyd Dawkins, of Manchester, Mr. Wm. Horne, of Leyburn, and Mr. Wm. Cudworth, of Bradford, I entertained the idea of forming a small Committee for the purpose of making a careful examination of the chief of the ancient remains. In November, 1892, I met Mr. J. W. Davis, who promised to assist in the formation of a Committee; also to bring the matter before the Council of the Yorkshire Geological and Polytechnic Society, and if

possible to affiliate the Committee with that body. This was duly brought about, and with promises of other assistance, the end of 1892 saw a Joint Committee formed under the presidency of the Duke of Devonshire, and consisting of Ven. Archdeacon Boyd, Sir M. W. Wilson, Prof. W. Boyd Dawkins, and Messrs. W. L. Carter, W. Cheetham, W. Cudworth, J. W. Davis, J. R. Eddy, E. T. Hartley, W. Horne, Walter Morrison, J. R. Mortimer, W. A. Proctor, C. S. Roundell, M.P., Edwin Speight, T. Tate, R. H. Tiddeman, and J. J. Wilkinson, with E. E. Speight as Honorary Secretary. In response to an appeal for subscriptions, issued by Mr. Davis, the sum of £80 was promised, including £10 from the Duke of Devonshire, and a similar sum from Mr. Walter Morrison, whilst General Pitt-Rivers was one of the first donors, sending £5.

Meanwhile, permission to excavate in Upper Wharfedale was freely granted. As early as October, 1892, the Duke of Devonshire had generously consented to work being conducted in the extensive Grass Woods: a month later Sir Matthew Wilson wrote giving us power to make any examination we liked upon his property, and expressed his interest in the work. Mr. Wm. Proctor, of Rylstone, was equally kind, the land owned and tenanted by him including the Norton Tower district and much of Bordley Moor; and verbal permission having been readily accorded by various landowners on whose property were situated interesting remains, we had almost the whole district under our charge by the date of the first Committee Meeting, March 26th, 1893.

On that day, after carefully inspecting the remains close to the village of Grassington, a short conference was held under the chairmanship of Prof. Boyd Dawkins, at which it was decided to commence work as soon as possible, the first operations to consist of the examination of certain mounds and the making of various plans.

Accordingly, on April 5th was commenced the further examination of a barrow which I had relieved of its central interment the previous summer. This mound is situated in one of the higher pastures of the Coniston Liberty, named the Capstick Back Pasture (1891 Ord. Map, sheet cxvi. 13, in parcel 64, just to right of Old Lime Kiln). It is circular, with a diameter of 62 feet and a height

of 1-3 feet above the original surface. The materials of construction consist of rolled limestone pebbles, large boulders, and earth, and the barrow is partly natural, being raised upon a hillock at the junction of two mineral veins.

At the previous examination, before the formation of this Committee, an entry was made into the centre of the mound, where was a rectangular grave, 7 feet by 3 feet, in the N.E. corner of which lay a human skeleton, under rough blocks of decomposed limestone, 4 feet below the surface of the mound. The body was laid on the left side, with the legs doubled up, the head-direction being due E. From the earth dug out of this central grave were taken fifteen human teeth, in addition to twelve found with the jaw; a third thigh bone, indicating a double interment, an iron knife (blade and haft), 4 inches long and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad, part of an iron pin or nail, and a piece of worked bone with an iron rivet.

Twelve feet S. from the centre was a hollow 5 feet E-W. by $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet N-S., sunk a few inches below the surface; this contained only the ordinary material of the barrow with a few human teeth. From here I dug a trench through to the centre with a width of 3 feet. 10 feet S. from the centre were a flint scraper and a flint chip (the only fragments of that material found in this barrow), just beneath the sod, while scattered about this portion were calcined bones of animals, pieces of charcoal and 30 human teeth. Here also I found a circular doubly-perforated button or pendant of jet or Kimmeridge shale, near which were pieces of chevron-marked pottery, including part of the rim of a vessel. 8 feet S. of the centre were portions of a bone-pin and of a bone-handle.

As the Exploration Committee had decided upon completing the examination of this mound, a trench was driven through from W. to E. This laid bare portions of the rude limestone boulder wall which entirely surrounds the barrow, 3 feet in thickness and 1 or 2 feet in height. Remains of another interment were found 15 feet E. from the centre, under a large limestone slab, and near to the skull was an iron nail. 6 feet nearer the centre was a bronze ring 1 inch in diameter, which, according to Prof. Dawkins, probably formed part of a ring-brooch. In the S.E. section of the mound, 12 feet

from the centre, were found portions of skull and several phalanges with many remains of the rat ; and at the same distance from the centre N.N.W. were found similar fragments of a skeleton, with a portion of gnawed antler and part of a bone comb. nges

In this barrow, as in the others examined, all human remains were much decayed and broken, this being due to the fact that the material of construction of the barrows in this district is mainly stone, the upper parts of which have in most cases been removed for later walling purposes. This has delayed the process of reconstruction of the bones, thereby preventing at present the issuing of detailed measurements. Examination of the fragments, however, has resulted in several observations, namely, that the skulls show strongly-marked superciliary ridges united by frontal bars, and low foreheads, and that the leg and thigh bones are strongly ridged, the tibiæ being platycnemic.

The animals represented in this barrow were the ox, sheep or goat, stag, hog, dog, fox and rat, of which last-named the jaws were abundant near any human remains.

The next work done was the excavation of a suspicious-looking mound, situated at the N. end of Lea Green Pasture (sheet cxxxiv. 1, parcel 368, N.E. end), one mile N. of Grassington. This was commenced on April 12th, 1893, a trench being run through from S. to N. The barrow is built at the summit of a natural mound, and consists of an outer wall enclosing an inner wall, the materials of construction being limestone pebbles and rubble. The diameter of the circle enclosed by the outer wall is 40 feet, that of the inner circle 16 feet, the inner wall being distant 7 feet from the outer wall at the N. end and 17 feet at the S. end. In the centre of the inner circle was a circular grave 5 feet in diameter and 3-4 feet deep, within which, under limestone slabs, was a human skeleton, laid on the right side, the head-direction W., the legs doubled up at right angles to the spine, and the hands near the head. Above the body was a pointed bone awl or netting implement (?) 3 inches in length. At the end of the N-S. trench, close under the outer wall, were portions of a human skull 5 feet from the centre S.E. were human remains interred just beneath the present surface, the skull being very thin, the

head pointing due W., the skeleton on the right side. Near the head was a bronze-ring-brooch, similar to, but smaller than that found in the Capstick Pasture Barrow. 8 feet due E. from the centre of the N-S. line were found eleven human teeth. Nothing whatever was obtained from the west side of the N-S. trench. The skull from the central interment is of the same type as that of the central interment of the Capstick Pasture Barrow, with low forehead. Two measurements were obtainable, length 6·85 inches, and parietal breadth 5·70 inches. One femur from this interment is much rat-gnawed.

About sixty yards S. of this hill, and separated from it by a water-worn dip, is a curious place which I first noticed some six years ago, and which several members of our committee had examined and thought worthy of trial. A massive limestone wall surrounds a series of nearly twenty small enclosures, all irregularly constructed and arranged, the shape of the whole being an imperfect oblong, 80 yards by 50 yards. Before excavation, the walls, which are not easily distinguishable from the surrounding outcrops of limestone, were not more than 1 foot in height, but the digging has made them 3 feet normally, whatever their original height was. Two of the smaller enclosures contained rudely-constructed fireplaces in the S. corners; in almost all was found charcoal or turf-ash, the remains of past fires made in the sheltered parts. Animal bones, mainly burnt, were most abundant, and were found in seventy-one out of the seventy-two holes and trenches made. The finds were as follows :—

I. POTTERY. (Prof. Boyd Dawkins' List).

1. Lathe-turned; grey; ornamented with lines of square stick-marks; glazed yellow-green; similar to some unglazed Roman ware found near Maidstone.
2. Coarse, thick red ware, with flat bottom; fragments glazed yellow-green; without sanded paste.
3. Thinner ware; also without sand.
4. Thin red ware, with sand; outer surface with polished grains.
5. Fine red ware; possibly pseudo-Samian.
6. Coarse, black ware; with sand.

II. STONES.

- 8 Portions of millstones ; lowerstones, of Roman pattern.
- 16 Whetsoues, of various shapes.
- 2 Small primitive-looking mortars.
- 1 Finely-drilled stone, possibly for hanging weight.
- 32 Flint flakes and chips, several worked.
- Small portion of cut volcanic compact stone.

III. IRON.

Portions of a vessel.

- 8 Kuives, of similar type to that found in Capstick Pasture Barrow.
- One pin, one wedge, and one gouge.

Besides these were found a bronze pin, with flat, perforated (5 holes), coin-shaped head, along with a small pointed bronze sheath (?) 2 inches long, and ornamented with criss-cross pattern. These were taken from a hole 4 feet deep in the N.W. end of the settlement. There were also found a perfect bone spoon, a bone pin, and part of one of the dorsal vertebrae of a young animal, perforated as for a pendant. Though a fairly extensive examination was made of the interior of all smaller enclosures, yet the greater part of the ground within the larger walls is still untouched. A plan of the place, as so far excavated, has been prepared, but need not be published until a complete examination has been made.

On June 13th, 1893, a rock interment in one of the pastures E. of Lea Green was opened. This, too, is situated on a natural hillock, but, though signs of a grave were seen, only two small portions of human skull were found, the place having obviously been disturbed and the upper stones of the cairn removed.

After a stoppage of two months, further work was carried out, this time still on Lea Green, but nearer and within sight of Grassington itself. On a commanding ridge of this extensive pasture stands a strange pile of loose shuttered limestone, which, before we opened it, resembled, more than anything else, the mouth and surrounding surface mound of a pit. At the instance of Prof. Dawkins, who discredited the local opinions as to its formation, an examination was made during the last week of August, 1893, with the result that the pile turned out to be a barrow with similar contents to the others

examined. The diameter was 66 feet N-S. and 76 feet W-E., and the central portion had fallen in, making a dip 4 feet lower than the surrounding ridge, which formed a ring whose diameter was 27 feet. Commencing from the interior, a careful examination of that part and of the encircling mound was made. A depth of 4 feet of limestones at the centre of the hollow was underlaid by a stratum of clay 3 inches in depth, below which was the limestone. The whole mound was constructed simply of stones, chosen at random and placed together without divisions or walls. Our finds were :

1. 7 feet E.N.E. of the centre, at a depth of 5 feet from the surface of the hollow, the remains of a giant skeleton, much broken, as usual. Head-direction due S., body straight out, laid on its back, one hand near the head, the other among the vertebræ.
2. 6 feet N.N.E. of the centre, human remains consisting of seven well-preserved teeth, five phalanges, portions of lower jaw and of the skull.
3. 12 feet S.E. of centre, remains of skeleton ; head due W., straight out on left side ; skull fragmentary, lower jaw complete.
4. 16 feet N.W. of centre, among the dry outside stones of the encircling mound, remains of skeleton, with which was the first skull we found with frontal bones present and the upper jaw preserved ; certain phalanges and portions of limb bones also present.
5. 7 feet N. of No. 3, fragments of skull and jaw, with several teeth and phalanges.
6. 8 feet S. of centre on N.E. line, skeleton, much decayed ; head due W., legs doubled up, feet S.W.
7. 9 feet S.W. of No. 1, many phalanges with a few fragments of skull.
8. Four knives, similar to those previously found ; a small bronze pin ; part of a spiral bone pin ; and a sharpened bronze blade-implement perforated at one end.

This concluded the active work of the season, but I should mention that the result of a constant search by various helpers, amongst whom we are especially beholden to Parker Birch and his nephew James, has been the finding of many interesting flint implements,

mainly arrow-tips and thumb-flints. These flints are of East Yorkshire origin, and are numerous on the higher parts of the river slopes; near the ancient remains they exist in great profusion, and they have recently been discovered in the enclosures at the low part of Grass Woods.

On July 29th, 1893, by kind permission of Mr. E. T. Hartley, a second Committee Meeting was held at the Skipton Grammar School. Mr. R. H. Tiddeman occupied the chair, and among the propositions carried were the following.

1. That Rev. E. Jones, Rev. W. Shuffrey, Rev. T. Nowell, Rev. B. J. Harker, and Mr. W. Cash be elected Members of the Committee, subject to their consent.
2. That Messrs. J. Ray Eddy, E. T. Hartley, and J. J. Wilkinson be appointed as Legal Representatives of the Committee, with a hold on the finds.

With regard to the former of these resolutions, Messrs. Jones, Shuffrey, Harker and Cash have signified their willingness to serve on the Committee. In contrast with these powerful acquisitions, the Committee has suffered a very severe loss by the death of three of its members, Archdeacon Boyd, Mr. W. Cheetham, and Alderman J. W. Davis.

To Mr. Davis almost alone is due the formation of this committee, in addition to which he was present at Grassington the greater part of the time during which the preliminary excavations were carried on; when, though unfortunately prevented by illness from regularly visiting the workings, he nevertheless took the greatest interest in the explorations, and was ever ready with advice and assistance. In Archdeacon Boyd too, the work had a firm supporter, and though neither he nor Mr. Cheetham was able to attend the meetings owing to failing health, both gentlemen readily accorded their support, and expressed their interest in the proceedings. The members of the committee desire to place on record their appreciation of the past services rendered by such right earnest workers as Dr. Boyd, Mr. Davis, and Mr. Cheetham, and to express their keen sense of personal loss inflicted by their death.

It is a matter of much gratification that at this critical point of

time the Committee should have acquired the hearty support and welcome advice of Mr. J. Ray Eddy, of Carleton, whose influence in the whole region of our explorations is unique. This gentleman has visited the workings on several occasions, and, in addition to subscribing liberally, has taken an active part in the management of the Committee.

Such is the account of our first years' work, and though the results are promising, it is to be remembered that what is already done is very little compared with the amount of work before the Committee. So far only the least likely and least important sites have been examined, whereas there is still four or five years' full digging in hand, together with much planning and photographing of remains. Under these circumstances the Committee feel justified in asking the 1893 donors to become annual subscribers, and in appealing to those interested in our branch of research for further subscriptions.

In conclusion, I have great pleasure in conveying the following gratifying news to members and subscribers. At a Council Meeting of the Society, held on Feb. 17th, 1894, it was decided :

1. That Mr. Percy F. Kendall, F.G.S., and Mr. Godfrey Bingley be elected Members of the Exploration Committee.
2. That a photographic camera and outfit, not to exceed £10 in cost, be purchased by the Society, and loaned to the Upper Wharfedale Exploration Committee.

NOTE.—Since the above Report was written there is a further record of work to be rendered. With the return of Spring last year, a move was made to the Grass Woods, for the purpose of examining certain remains which had for long interested visitors to Upper Wharfedale. At the highest point of the Woods, on a knoll overlooking for many miles the surrounding country, is a series of enclosures resembling those existing in other parts of the valley, but densely covered with brushwood. The kindness of the Duke of Devonshire enabled us to proceed quickly with the work, and extensive trials were made in every part of the ruins, but to no end, as the natural limestone was soon reached, and nothing but a

few fire-marked stones was obtained. However, failure on the height was more than compensated by success in the recesses of the wood below, and, after the repairing of damage done on the summit of Far Gregory, work was continued for two months near the Park Stile, with daily discoveries. Here a naturally defended glade, running up the hill-side into the heart of the wood, has been further fortified by the raising of a boulder-wall on the north side. Between this wall and the limestone cliff on the south, was a row of circular enclosures, through the middle of which the present path has been cut. At the base of the wood, running south, were more enclosures, bounded by a continuous wall irregularly arranged; and on the north side were other walled-in divisions. In this portion of the field of exploration our finds were of a similar nature to the previous ones, but yielded us richer results. Especially noteworthy was the large quantity of British and Romano-British pottery discovered, some of the enclosures being littered with fragments of many varieties of ware, about 400 specimens of which have been removed to the show-room at Grassington. Several portions of antler were obtained, some evidently intended for use, a fact made more probable by the later finding of a perfect little knife, whose blade (similar to those haftless knives found in Lea Green) was fitted into an antler-tip. Mill-stones, potboilers, crushers, and other stones of use were unearthed and removed to a place of safety; and one of the last, though certainly not the least important, discoveries was that of our first coin, a bronze Constantinopolis of Constantinus Magnus. The date of the Grassington remains had been provisionally fixed by Prof. Boyd Dawkins as *circa* 350 A.D., the coin found being struck a few years before that date; hence, and from the similar nature of all the remains excavated, we may fairly accurately fix their historical position. It will be noted that the rare occurrence of actual Roman articles, and the primitive nature of the remains in general, preclude the idea of Roman *occupation* of the district. This point was firmly insisted upon at the outset by Prof. Dawkins, and one result of the excavations has been to emphasize his conclusions.

I have a real pleasure in recording the value of the services rendered by our two workers, Mr. Wm. Hill and James Birch, who

have proved themselves most capable and enthusiastic explorers. To Mr. Hill the thanks of the Society are especially due, as much of the work has been carried on under his sole oversight, always with unceasing care and intelligent direction; to his young companion we are indebted for an activity and diligence which has been the means of preserving many little objects of interest which might easily have been overlooked. It is to be hoped that in the future explorations the experience of these tried helpers and speedy workers may be always utilized.

There only remains now the task of bidding farewell to the work which during two Summers gained for me so many friends. Unlooked for changes have brought about that I enter a new sphere of life, and I feel true regret in leaving at its commencement a task of such promise and one which I have certainly found "large and health-giving." I can only wish that the Society may enjoy complete success in all future operations, and I heartily thank all those members and distant subscribers by whose aid so much has already been achieved towards an explanation of an important phase of our northern early history.

ERNEST E. SPEIGHT.

Oxford, March, 1895.
