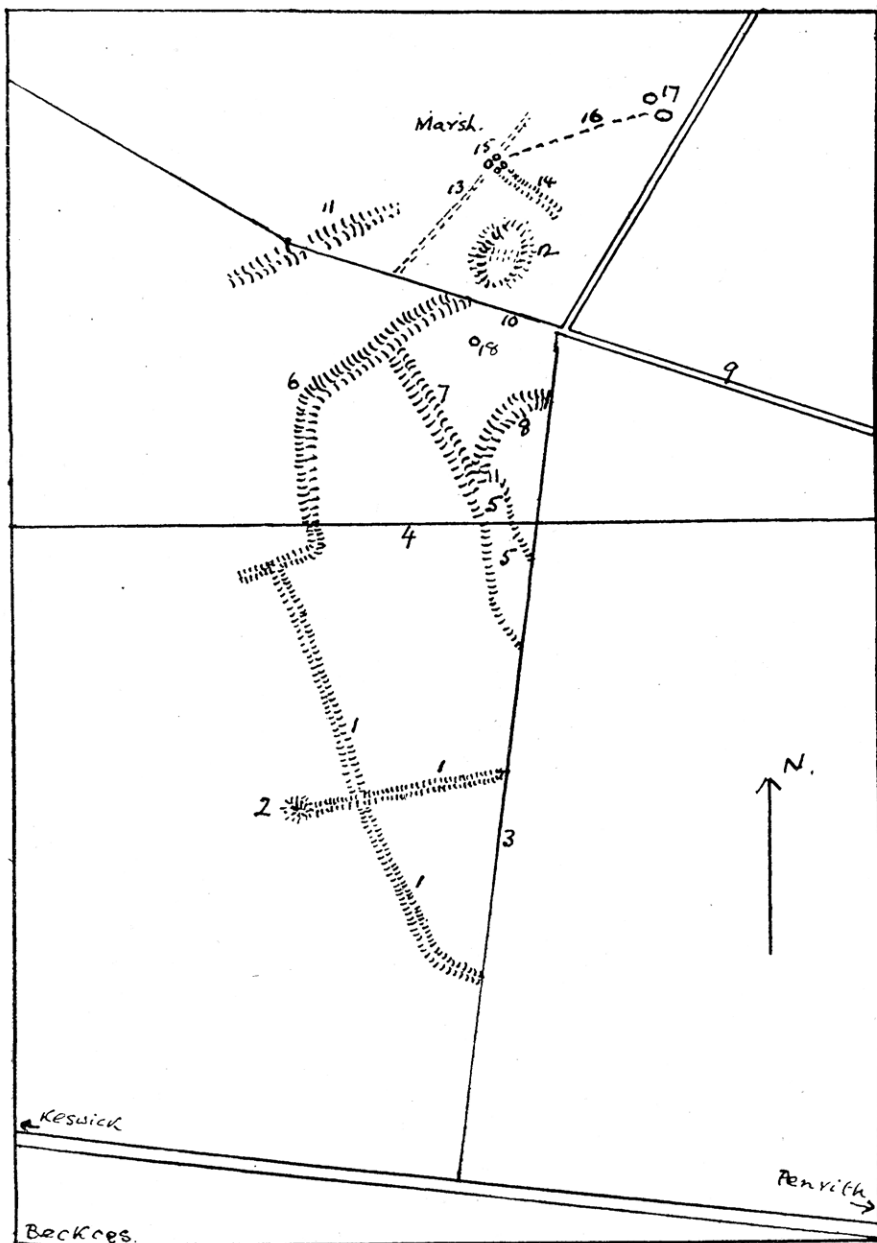


ART. IX.—*Stone Carr.* By THOMAS HAY, M.A., B.Sc.

THIS ancient site has been labelled as a camp on the Cumberland Sheets LVII N.E. and LVII S.E. of the ordnance survey. It lies on the north of the Penrith-Keswick road at a distance of seven miles from the former place. The top of Black Hill, north of Beckces, is littered with big erratics of Borrowdale rock lying on the limestone foundation. The latter is here thinly covered with drift through which the limestone often crops up. Consequently, the ground consists of a succession of dry limestone patches interspersed amongst boggy bits where the drift holds up the water. The site has no position of strength as a camp except protection in places by bog and is probably nothing but an enclosed hamlet where the boundaries are marked out by ditches between built-up banks. Some of these may have served as sunken trackways which are a common feature of old settlements.

The boundaries on the southern ordnance sheet are distinctly smaller than those on the northern one and the difference is brought out by the markings on the sheets. Considering that the southern part consists of a flat piece of ground without any definite drainage and the northern part rises gently to the 900 ft. contour, with the limestone near the surface, the difference is possibly caused by a tendency of the surface markings to become more easily toned down and obliterated in the southern damper half. This settlement shows how easy it is for such relics to be lost. In several cases the trenches run up to a modern fence and then disappear completely. On the one side they have been levelled out without leaving a vestige. Some fortunate accident has preserved them on the other. This



STONE CARR.

may be enlightenment on the part of the owner or worthlessness of the ground from an agricultural point of view or its traditional use as the scene of sports and junketings. In addition to the not very noticeable trenches and banks of the southern half and the more emphatic markings of the northern, there is at the south-west corner a perfectly flat circular space which may have formed a prepared base for a big hut. It measures 20 yds. across, but shows nothing of the usual built-up rim. There is also on the east side of the northern portion a lower terrace which has been levelled.

But the most interesting part of the settlement is not shown on the ordnance maps at all. The site is bounded on the north by a big modern wall (No. 10 on the map) which is another instance of the way in which these constructions have been driven through old sites without regard to anything but modern convenience. The lowest tier of the walling consists of big boulders referred to later on. Immediately on the north side of this wall and exactly where the main trench reaches it, there is a large sinking divided into two parts by a medial line. These two more or less circular hollows are probably sites either for large huts or for an assembly of huts. The excavation has been made on the east side of a slight bluff and the rim has been built up so that two saucer-shaped depressions have been formed. The whole result is like the charcoal-burners' platforms in a hilly district but larger. One big boulder still remains on the outside rim of the northern sinking. It is, of course, conceivable that these depressions are surface quarries but they have no resemblance to that at all. It seems much more likely from their shape and from their position on the more elevated patch of land that they mark the site of the main dwellings of the settlement. They are on a dry place in the lee of a small swelling of the ground which would protect them from the westerly gales.

These two oval sinkings measure 20 yds. each across the

level and the over-all measurement from rim top to back wall top is 24 to 27 yds. There are some slight indications of wall foundations inside the hollows. At a point 137 yds. west along the wall there is another ditch (No. 11), with embankments exactly like those described above. It is seen on both sides of the wall and runs N.E. and S.W. crossing the line of the wall obliquely. It must not be confounded with a later modern field division now disused, No. 13 on map. This trench and the sinkings were part of the settlement but are not shown on the ordnance map. The latter was the result of a survey in 1860 but was revised in 1898-99, and at that time the ground to the north of the wall was almost certainly occupied by a plantation which has since been felled. This may account for the omission of these parts of the original design.

We must now turn to the not inconsiderable references dealing with Stone Carr in local authorities. The first to be taken is Clarke, the author of "A Survey of the Lakes of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire" of which the second edition is dated 1789. He deals fully but very discursively with this site and says, amongst matter much too long to quote, "From this place (Motherby) the remains of a roman road may easily at this day be traced to a fort upon this common, near the end of Whitbarrow fields" . . . . "But be this as it will, certainly there has been an encampment of the Romans at this place, for the military road leads exactly to and from it" (p. 50). Horsley and Camden had also apparently mentioned the place. But in any case here we have the Roman origin of the site full blown in Clarke's day. He then mentions that "upon Stone Carr there have been held, time out of mind, races and other sports; such as wrestling, leaping, tracing with dogs, etc." . . . . He continues with a lengthy pastoral by a Mr. Relph in the provincial dialect followed by a very amusing account of a terrific combat that arose out of these sports.

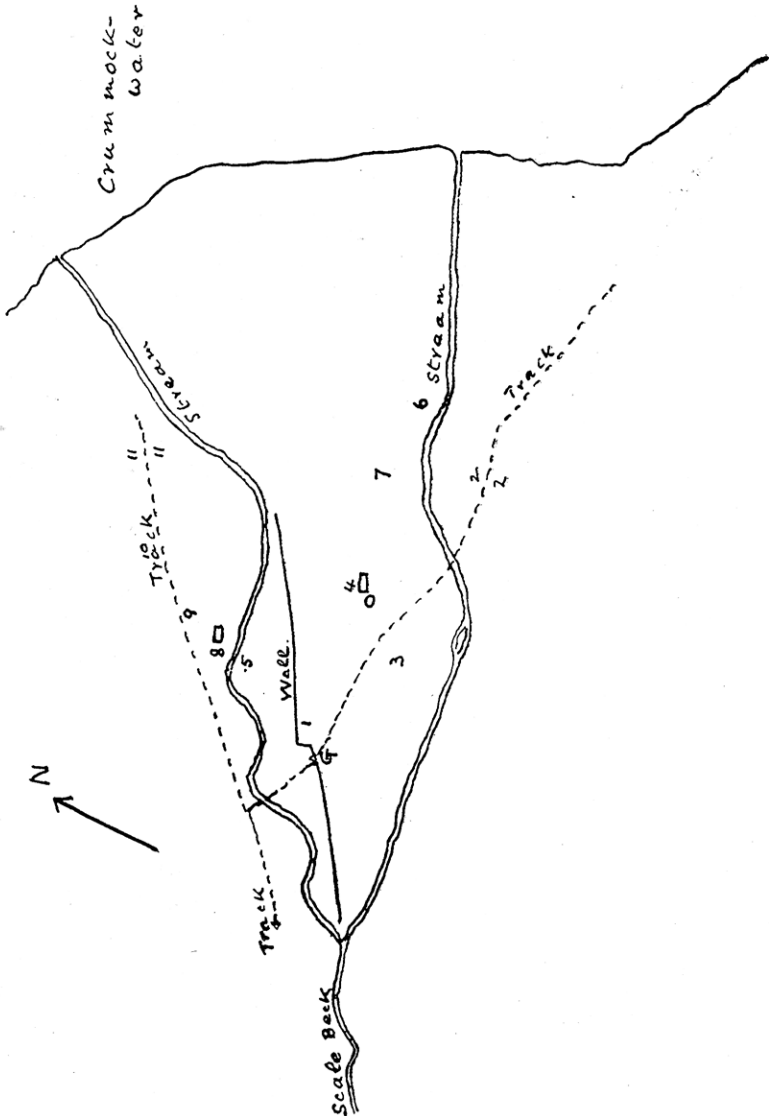
As Stone Carr had been used for so long as the scene of

vigorous sports it is impossible to say how much the visible parts of ancient structures have been altered in the process. This traditional use of the place may also explain how the immediate area was preserved in something like its old form and how the surface markings were not obliterated as they evidently have been in the adjacent fields.

The fifth edition of West's "A Guide to the Lakes of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire" is dated 1793. Although he does not mention Stone Carr by name it is clear that he is dealing with this place at p. 143 when he says "And a little beyond the eighth mile-post, on the left, at Whitbarrow are strong vestiges of a square encampment. The Roman road beyond that, is met with in the inclosed fields of Whitbarrow." Thus the association of the place with a Roman origin is again emphasized.

Our society was founded in 1866 and in No. iv of the old series (1879-80) R. S. Ferguson wrote an article called "An attempt at a Survey of Roman Cumberland and Westmorland, Part IV." He deals in this article at some length with Stone Carr and he classed it definitely as a Roman camp. He suggested its connection with the Roman road which he said went between the two Mell Fells through Matterdale. Incidentally Clarke also has something to say about this road. Ferguson gives a plan of Stone Carr but it is almost impossible to reconcile what he shows either with the features on the site or with what is shown by the Ordnance Surveyors on the two maps already mentioned.

As appears above, the Survey was made in 1860 and revised in 1898-99. Ferguson wrote in or about 1879, so that he could have had access to the first edition of the Survey maps. Possibly this did not show Stone Carr but if it did Ferguson made no use of it for his plan is absolutely different. But he had one advantage over the surveyors. He knew that part of the site existed to the north of the modern wall and he shows it on his plan.



In visiting the so-called camp it is at once evident that the survey map, as far as it goes, is correct. This is, of course, exactly what one would expect. Ferguson's map is

absolutely misleading. It gives no idea of the correct shape of the trenches.

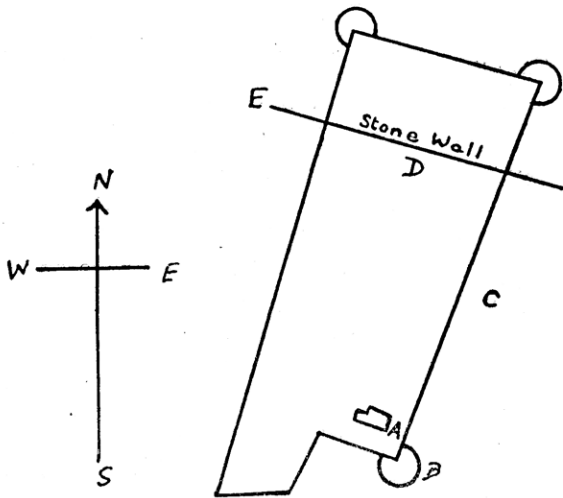
The map that accompanies this article accepts the correctness of the survey work and only adds to it those parts which the surveyors did not notice. The result is a plan which shows no resemblance to anything that suggests Roman work. It is true that another reference to Stone Carr occurs in N.S. xxiii in Mr. W. G. Collingwood's Inventory of Cumberland Redstone camp or "Stone Carron." "Over half a mile E. of Whitbarrow Hall; irregular rectilinear enclosures partly destroyed; circle near S.W. corner of the main area enclosed"—so runs the reference along with the mention of Ferguson's article. In this latest description there is no allusion to Roman work.

If Ferguson's plan had been correct or if the articles which Clarke declared were found at Stone Carr could be produced and were of Roman origin, then Stone Carr might pass as a Roman camp but in default of these requirements it may be suggested that this site is an example of a British hamlet protected by marshes and possibly furnished with sunken trackways.

With regard to the plan, Nos. 1-10 are all shown on the Ordnance maps, the remaining numbers are not. Nos. 1, 6, 7, 8 and 11 are all embanked trenches. 6, 7, 8 and 11 are a good deal bigger than 1 and may also have served as sunken ways. 2 is the circular area described in the text and may be the site of a hut which has been cleared. 2 is a modern field fence while 4 is the division between sheets LVII N.E. and LVII S.E. 5 is a levelled terrace. 12 is the most remarkable object of the whole settlement after the trenches. It has already been fully described as a sinking cut into two portions by an intermediate division. It is very largely on the presence of this primitive site for habitations and on the evidence for the existence of a former stone circle that the argument rests for a British origin for this so-called camp. Ferguson states that a

stone circle was destroyed here and evidence of this exists in the large boulders now in swallow-hole C and in the lower tier of wall 10.

13 is a modern field fence now disused, 14 may be another trench like 1 or 6 or it may be an artificial drainage cut. It taps the marsh by 15 which is a collection of big erratics. 16 is a slight track continuing the direction of 11 right down to 17 which shows natural swallow-holes in the limestone. 18 is the swallow-hole mentioned by Ferguson as the receptable of the big boulders.



WHITBARROW CAMP.—R. S. Ferguson.

Ferguson's sketch is given so that it may be compared with the map accompanying this article. "Stone-wall" on the former is No. 10 on the latter and C on the former is No. 18 on the latter. Beyond these two key points it is difficult to find any other resemblance. As can be seen from the map there are many places where the trenches are nearly rectilinear but it seems that it is the over-emphasis of this rectilinearity which may have helped to give the idea of a Roman origin to what seems to be in reality a British settlement.