

EXCAVATIONS ON STANTON MOOR.

By J. P. HEATHCOTE, M.A., F.S.A.

THIS report deals with the excavation of a Bronze Age barrow in August 1953. It is numbered T.36 on the map of Stanton Moor published in *D.A.J.*, 1936. The excavations were carried out by a party of boys from Chesterfield School assisted by Mr. D. Hancock and Mr. D. Hooley and supervised by the writer. The work was done on Stanton Moor through the kind permission of H. B. Davie, Esq.

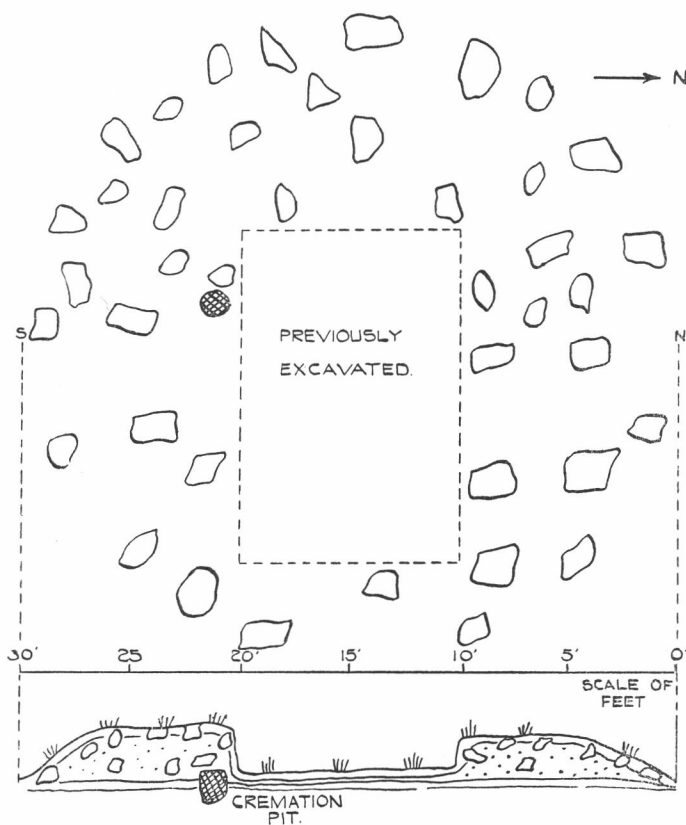
The barrow was roughly circular, 30 feet in diameter, with a maximum height of 2 feet 6 inches, on sloping ground and close to other barrows excavated and recorded in *D.A.J.*, 1930, 1936, 1939. Discoveries made in the nearby quarry and recorded in *Reliquary*, 1900, also refer to the late Bronze Age. The barrow had a cutting about 10 feet square dug out of its centre, probably in the early 19th century. No records can be found which refer to this particular mound but the excavation had taken out more of the centre than was usually the case in those days. The stones from the centre of the mound had apparently been thrown over on to the outer edge of the barrow, making it appear somewhat like a ruined square hut with the east side open.

The whole of the cairn was cleared out to a depth of 6 inches below the original surface. Nothing was found in the previously excavated area and it seems evident that the interment we discovered, although 6 feet south of the centre, must have been the only one made in the barrow. No outer curb of large stones could be identified, in which case the builders may have taken very little care to find the centre.

The interment of cremated bones had been placed in a circular pit dug 1 foot below the original surface and

the deposit was approximately 6 inches above this surface. The pit was about 1 foot 6 inches in diameter. The stones in the vicinity of the pit were not noticeably different from the others in the mound and very little attempt at protective covering could be seen. The whole cairn was composed of stones of all sizes and shapes.

Nearly at the bottom of the deposit of bones and charcoal, but not in the centre, was a small stone axe-hammer. It was perhaps placed there before the bones had been put in, as there were few bones below it.



Plan and Section of T. 36 Stanton Moor.

The whole material of the cairn was re-erected on the assumption that in Bronze Age times it was a simple bowl-shaped mound.

The axe-hammer was submitted to Miss L. F. Chitty and Professor F. W. Shotton and the cremated bones to Dr. I. W. Cornwall and their respective reports are here produced.

PERFORATED STONE "BATTLE-AXE" FOUND IN T.36, STANTON MOOR, DERBYSHIRE.

The axe-hammer belongs to the category of "double-expanded battle-axes", the use of which overlapped the transition from burial by inhumation to that of cremation at an advanced phase of the British Early Bronze Age. The Stanton Moor form — the butt-end a truncated cone with a developed oval hammer facet — is normal in a cremation context.¹

It has been a lovely implement, $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches long (120 mm.), symmetrical, and finely ground and polished. The surface, light brownish-grey in colour, is still in fair condition, but the outer film of pale brown polish has been largely pulverised and the body slightly pin-pitted, while half the cutting-edge, with one side adjacent, has been broken and cracked, evidently by contact with a cremation inserted while hot. Two small flakes from the side, already loose, broke off during examination.

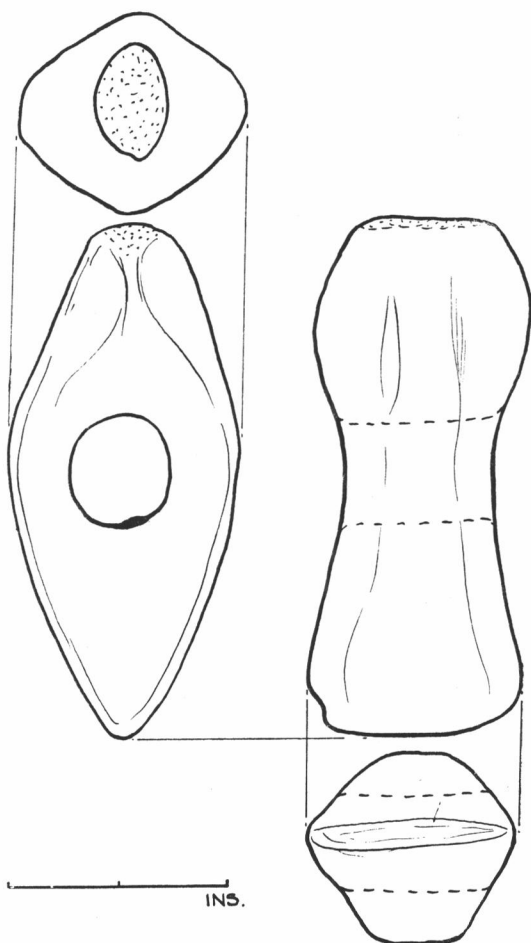
The breadth of the implement at the level of the hole is 54 mm., the height of the sides 31 and 33 mm. The faces expand almost equally, to a height of 47.5 mm. above the perforation and to 48 mm. at the edge. Between them the surface is smooth, with bevelling towards the sides from the rim of the hole. The sides are curved.

At the butt end, four large facets have been ground down obliquely, leaving a rounded ridge 25 mm. long down the faces and a broad polished ridge along the sides, i.e. the butt end is actually octagonal in form, but with the angles so gently merged as to be scarcely perceptible. The termination of the butt has a definite pointed-oval hammer facet, flattened and apparently used.

¹ See Reginald A. Smith, *Archæologia*, LXXV (1926), No. IV, 77-108, "The Perforated Axe-hammers of Britain", especially Figs. 28, 29 (Wilts.), 34 (Staffs.).

Axe-Hammer is, of course, the appropriate generic description, but on my cards, for convenience of record, I use the term "*Battle-Axe*" for such finely-made (and usually fairly small) specimens as that from Stanton Moor, which were suitable for use as weapons and were probably at least "weapons of parade". I keep the term "Axe-Hammer" for the (usually) larger artifact that is so obviously a ponderous tool. On my maps these two main divisions are marked by distinctive symbols. (Unpublished except in Varley and Jackson's *Prehistoric Cheshire*, 1940, Fig. 26, which includes Derbyshire).

At the opposite end, the blade has a low curve; the face of the cutting-edge is straight and blunt. Towards the edge along the top of one side, a shallow longitudinal line has been scored; this may be accidental, but might have been intended for the beginning of a flanking groove such as is fairly common on similar expanded battle-axes.²



Stone "Battle Axe" from T. 36, Stanton Moor.

² Cf. Smith, *op. cit.*, Figs. 29, 39, 40, etc.

The hole is nearly central, bored slightly nearer to the butt to give a perfect balance; the shaft (21 mm. diameter) is cylindrical and lustrous inside; the lips are bevelled inward (diameters 24 x 27 on one face, 26 x 27 mm. on the other), showing that the perforation was countersunk; the lines of rotary grinding are visible within the shaft. The weight of the implement is 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ ozs.

In spite of much excavation in the large number of round barrows (over 70 at least) on Stanton Moor,³ this appears to be the first record of the discovery of a "battle-axe" of any of the types sometimes found associated with Bronze Age burials in Derbyshire and elsewhere. I have a note of one labelled as from Stanton Moor, Derbys., in the British Museum, which will need to be followed up and studied. It may well have derived from some unrecorded dig.

In the Bateman Collection in Sheffield Museum, there is a very large axe-hammer found on Stanton Moor in 1833 (Catalogue, J.93-2), and a smaller one found in the 18th century (J.93-4, Photo.). There is also a beautiful little Pestle-Hammer, with cylindrical perforation (J.93-14, Photo.), found in digging sand on Stanton Moor, 1859.

As is well known, quite a number of fine "Battle-axes" have been unearthed from the round barrows of the Peak District and, if time allowed much might be said of them in relation to the new find.

An unusual feature of our Stanton Moor "battle-axe" is the ogival shaping of the butt half, of which I can recollect no local analogies; but there are two instances of such treatment on larger, finely-worked axe-hammers from Cheshire, viz. the big polygonal "battle-axe" found in draining below Beeston Castle, in 1885, together with a small stone celt and a larger stone axe that may well have been a Cumbrian club;⁴ and a medium-sized axe-hammer with lateral knobs and sides inclining and then expanding to a long oval hammer-face at the end of the butt, which was found at Haslington, near Crewe, in 1927.⁵ Perhaps there may be affinities with a monster axe-hammer from Hungry Bentley, Derbyshire, in the Bateman Collection (J.93-1, Photo.); certainly the ogival butt end is akin to that of 3 "boat-axes" from Yorkshire in the Collection (J.93-10, Photo.), and 2 broken examples (J.93-19 and J.93-22). These in turn link on to the Loose Howe and similar axes from the North Yorkshire Moorland.

LILY F. CHITTY, F.S.A.

³ J. P. Heathcote, *Birchover Guide*, and *D.A.J.*, 1927, 1930, 1936, 1939.

⁴ Shone, *Prehistoric Man in Cheshire* (1911), 34, 36, Figs. 9, 2, and 7; Varley, *op. cit.*, 30, Fig. 3 (2nd Part, p. 32).

⁵ *Antiq. Jn.*, VII (1927), 522-3, Fig.: Varley, 31, 32, Fig. 3, 3.

PETROLOGICAL REPORT.

In his letter referring to the axe-hammer, Professor F. W. Shotton says "The rock is a dolerite but in detail is different from any of the other dolerites represented by specimens in your museum. I must have a look at the Sheffield Museum Collections to see if I can match up exactly any of these materials with places like Calton Hill and other well-known Derbyshire exposures of dolerite".

The dolerite specimens mentioned in this report are a large Stone Axe-Hammer from Great Longstone, a half Battle Axe and a half Pestle Hammer from Curzon Lodge, "suggestive of a local rock but I do not know an equivalent". None of these has been published.

REPORT ON CREMATED HUMAN REMAINS FROM
BARROW T.36, STANTON MOOR.

The bones were completely calcined and very thoroughly broken up, so that practically nothing, save a few skull fragments, small phalanges of the hand and the roots of a few teeth, was still recognisable.

Nothing was found to suggest that more than a single individual is represented.

The cranial sutures were for the most part open. In only a few instances had synostosis begun on the cranial aspect. This points to an age for the individual in the early 20's. A single tooth-root, probably of the 3rd molar was still incompletely closed, supporting the conclusion as to age.

The bones of the vault, none larger than half-a-crown and much distorted by heat, were notably thin, even for a young adult, so that the sex is likely to have been female. A fragment of the supraorbital region of the frontal, bearing the supraorbital foramen, showed that here the superior margin of the orbit was sharp — a further indication of the female sex. Another, including the glabella, proved that this point, generally prominent in the male, was only slightly developed.

The only long bone of which a fragment could be surely identified was the fibula, which has a characteristic quadrilateral section. This piece showed the fibula to have been of very slender build in comparison with other human material available here — another suggestion of probable female sex.

Two points agreeing on the age and four which were unanimous as to the sex afford fairly good grounds for the conclusions that the subject was a young female and was aged about 20 years. Beyond this such fragmentary material will not take us.

Associated charcoal was all of oak, apparently from sticks no more than 2 inches in diameter.

I. W. CORNWALL.