


Barrows at Haddon Fields, Derbyshire.

BY JOHN WARD.

F my reader has ascended the Lathkil Valley—one of the fairest in Derbyshire—he will recollect Conksbury Bridge, a short mile below the conspicuous village of Upper Haddon. The elevated tract of pasture land, bleak and uninteresting, as is usually the case with these Peak toplands, stretching out from the right-hand side of this part of the valley towards Bakewell and Haddon Hall, is known as Haddon Fields, and some 70 years ago was open moorland. The barrows were in a field immediately above the bridge, and marked Haddon Bank on the Ordnance Survey.

It was here, last August, that some labourers engaged in collecting stone to repair a wall, and to construct a “mere” (a local term for the saucer-shaped ponds of the district—usually lined with stone), broke into a cist containing a human skeleton, the skull of which was unfortunately smashed in the proceeding. Notwithstanding its careful interment, and the obviously artificial character of the cist,—constructed partly of *gritstone* slabs (a stone not found nearer than two miles away), it was regarded as merely the skeleton of a sheep! The larger slabs were broken into suitable blocks for building purposes, and thrown amongst the stones which had formed the slight rising of the ground above the cist,—for the reader must know that these mounds were scarcely visible, their upper parts having been cleared away long ago—perhaps at the time of the enclosure. The smaller materials and sods were then replaced, and thus the skeleton was covered up again. Fortunately one of the men doubting this

sheep hypothesis, secured fragments of the skull and leg and arm-bones, and brought them to Dr. Greenhough, of Youlgreave, who at once pronounced them human. Without delay, he repaired to the spot, where he picked up (to quote his words) "several pieces of bone—two cervical vertebræ, and also a large lumbar one, with a portion of the scapula, and several fragments of skull; also a piece of iron, very much rusted, and in the form of a hook."

The next day he had the site carefully cleared, and found much of the skeleton still remaining; the upper parts, however, were disturbed and scattered—no doubt by the labourers in breaking the gritstone slabs; but, to judge from his sketch, the lower parts were *in situ*, and fully indicated the mode of burial. The corpse had been laid on its right side, with the head to the west, in a contracted attitude; but instead of the knees being brought up towards the chest, as is usually the case in such burials, it took the oriental attitude of sitting upon the feet, the feet being in a straight line with the body. The exact position of the arms and hands is uncertain. The skeleton lay upon a bed of chert-fragments, with a few pieces of limestone and sandstone, which showed signs of the action of fire. There were also one or two pieces of ironstone. This bed was somewhat below the natural surface, yet not deep enough to allow the depression to be called a grave. As we subsequently found elsewhere in the field scattered fragments of chert, immediately below the vegetable mould, it was suggested that this would account for the bed in question. But it is clear from Dr. Greenhough's account that it was more than a mere sprinkling of chert; and, besides, it was "made ground," since immediately below it were found the core and part of the skull of an ox, and near to it a long bone, much decayed (probably a rib of the same animal), touching which was a small lump of charcoal, which crumbled to bits when handled—a further evidence of fire. At a little distance, laterally, from the skeleton, were the lower jaw-bone of pig, and several teeth of ox,* and others of sheep or goat. Besides these were fragments of bone and several pig's teeth, in various positions, near the

*Professor B. Dawkins identifies it as *Bos Longifrons*.

skeleton, several of which appear to have been split for the sake of the marrow, and two short tubular pieces (from the leg-bones of sheep?) which, to judge from their polished and worn surfaces, must have been used as instruments of some sort.

Although the cist was entirely removed, there can be no doubt, not only of its existence the day before, but of its unusually careful construction. The limestone slabs were, as a rule, very thin, and well-shaped—ranging from 18 to 26 or more inches in length, and having no traces of trimming. The gritstone slabs were thicker, and, as already remarked, foreign to the immediate district.

No traces of pottery, or flint implements, were found. The iron hook was turned up by the men; but from what could be gathered from them, it was not in the cist, and probably had nothing to do with the interment. Although considerably rusted, it is not so much so as one would expect, if it had been underground from the date of the interment,—in fact, one has but to inspect the iron of the Bateman collection at Sheffield to see the truth of this. It is said that this Haddon Bank was a favourite gipsy camping-ground before the enclosure; and if this be so, it will furnish a reasonable explanation of its presence.

Thus the matter stood for several weeks—the iron hook figuring meanwhile in the short newspaper notices as “the handle of a sword” in one local paper, and as “part of a barrow,”—the correspondent evidently missing the exact nature of the *barrow* in this case—in another. At length the writer accompanied the Doctor to the site, when their attention was called to a fragment of a quern (to be described in due course), amongst the *débris* of the barrow; and a closer inspection of the broken gritstone slabs brought out the fact that they had been used for some purpose,—the surfaces being worn smooth, and the edges rounded. This might be attributed to “weathering,” but it must be remembered that it is a peculiarity of this stone that it either remains unaffected when underground, or else perishes *throughout* its substance, thereby becoming soft and crumbly. As an example of the former, the writer noted a small gritstone slab (that probably had formed part of the cist itself), as rough and sharp as if it had only just been

quarried. These worn slabs were perfectly sound and extremely hard, and their smooth surfaces had an earthy ferruginous discolouration, which slightly penetrated the stone; they were also dented in places, as though by hammering. One slab (which, when the pieces were collected together, measured 19 by 18 inches, and about five or six inches thick), had several grooves from one-eighth to one-quarter inch broad on its smooth surface, evidently caused by sharpening some pointed instrument,—the hollow in breadth-section being V-shaped.

We then turned our attention to three of the other low mounds in the field. The first, a small circular mound, about 180 feet to the west of the above, gave no signs of an interment, although we cleared nearly all of it away, and dug down to the undisturbed ground. Only a few splinters of bone and stag's horn were picked up. The next, about half-way between the above, covered a larger area, the circular sweep of which was most noticeable, except on the south side, where were signs of the mound having been on some former occasion dug into. We cleared out the central region, and soon found evidence of its artificial character in two small pieces of grit-stone, one of which was smoothed on one side, and a fragment of pottery. Fragments of bone were picked up—one possibly human, and a large limestone slab, which may have formed part of a cist at one time, but it was very evident that the barrow had been previously rifled. The fragment of pottery (which is about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches thick), has not been submitted to an expert, but all I have shown it to, consider it Romano-Celtic: however this may be, it is of quite a different colour and paste from the "Celtic" pottery of the barrows. Internally its paste is of a light brick red colour, but which changes to a pale orange at the surfaces, which are rough and devoid of glaze; and quartz-sand, to probably the extent of 25 per cent., is present. It must have belonged to a globular bowl of some eight or nine inches in diameter, and wheel-made: this is clearly indicated by striæ on the inner surface. Bateman records the occasional presence of "red pottery"—presumably of the same kind as the above, and also of wheel-made pottery in the barrows of the district, but in no case do we read of them as associated with "Celtic"

interments. In the Sheffield Museum is "a narrow-necked vessel of red clay" (in Bateman's "Catalogue"—"A Romano-British Vase"), which accompanied an extended interment (Saxon?) at Bruncliff, with which was an iron knife. So far as the writer recollects, its material was very similar to the fragment in question.

Our next mound was a very small one to the south of the first barrow; it gave no results at all, nor any signs of being artificial.

We must now return to the first barrow. The sex of the skeleton could not be satisfactorily determined, but it undoubtedly belonged to a person in the earlier part of middle life, of slender build and short stature,—the femur being $17 \frac{3}{8}$ inch, which, when calculated as 27.5 per cent. of the whole stature in life, gives a result of 5 feet $2 \frac{1}{2}$ inches for the latter.

All the skull fragments (of which there were several dozens) that could be found, were carefully collected by Dr. Greenhough; but it was impossible to reconstruct more than the calvaria—*less* its basal bones, and much of its sides. The writer in putting the fragments together, observed two sets of fractures,—the one recent—the work of the labourers, and the other consisting of several bold fractures (one transversely from the one temporal bone to the other), indicative of some remote breakage of the skull. It is, to use words of Sir William Turner of Edinboro', to whom it was submitted—"an excellent example of a Dolicho-cephalic skull, belonging to a pre-Saxon race"; and he decides the sex as male, his reasons being,—

1. "The massiveness of the supra-orbital arch—always more pronounced in the male skull, and well shown in this specimen;

2. The prominence of the superciliary ridges—also well seen here; and

3. The absence of a bulging outwards of the occipital bone, superior to the external occipital protuberance."*

In the lateral aspect the contour line presents the usual oval curve—at first, almost vertical for an inch above the supra-orbital arch, and then it takes a sharp, but rapidly diminishing curve until it reaches its

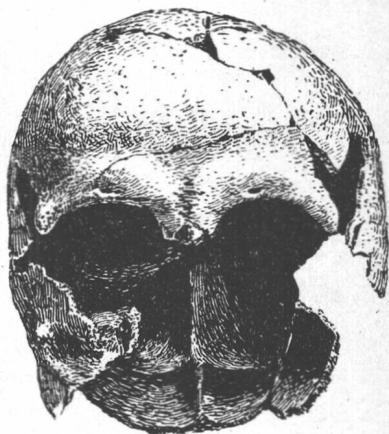
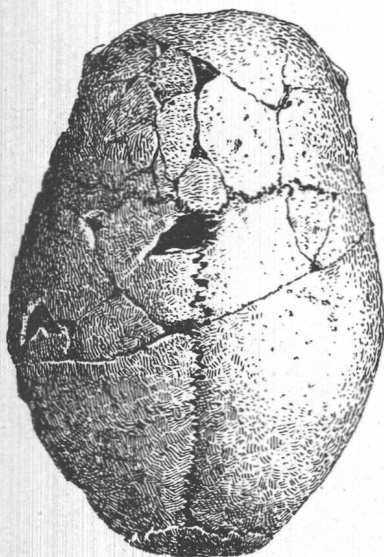
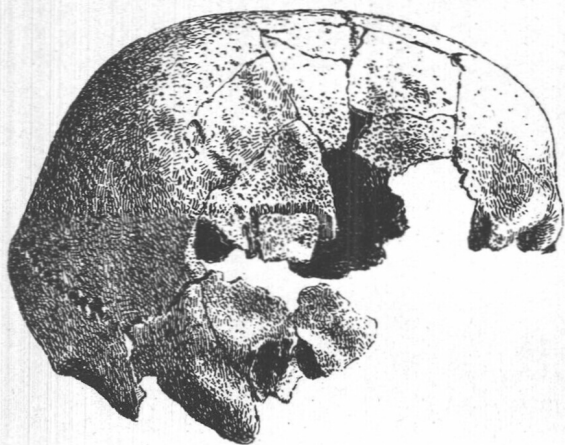
* * This latter statement I do not understand: it seems to me to be just the reverse of the case.

highest level at the juncture of the coronal and sagittal sutures, which level is maintained for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. rearward, and then follows the oblique slope (so characteristic of these skulls, as opposed to the precipitous sinking of others), terminating with the prominent occipital squama. The forehead is low, but by no means retreating, and its *tubera* are full, and sinuses well developed. In its vertical aspect, the elongated oval contour is very striking, the parietal eminences, as usual, being well forward, and the forehead narrow. Altogether the calvaria has a well filled appearance, and, both in this aspect, as well as the former recalls the female skull of Sherburn Wold (page 608, Greenwell's "British Barrows"), except that in that skull the superciliary ridge is not so prominent.

There is a slight asymmetry—noticeable also in the frontal and dorsal aspects, the right side, particularly in the temporal region and the adjacent parts, being somewhat flattened. The forehead, also in the vertical aspect, is on this side a little fuller in a forward direction than on the other side (see Plate I.); and, in the frontal aspect, a decided fulness is seen in the upper parts of the right parietal and frontal bones, over and above what obtains on the opposite side. There is little doubt that this asymmetry is correlated with the discoloration and roughness of this side of the skull, and that both have a posthumous origin,—the former being brought about by the weight of the skull exerting a pressure upon this side, which, as the reader will recollect, was the side upon which it lay, and the latter by the damp earth with which it came in contact. In such a flattening-out of the temporal bone with its squama, and the lower part of the parietal, a lateral thrust would be exerted upon the surrounding parts, which would tend, especially where the skull was thin or weak, to heap it up, and thus bring about the observed fulness in these parts.

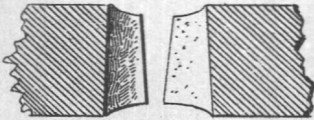
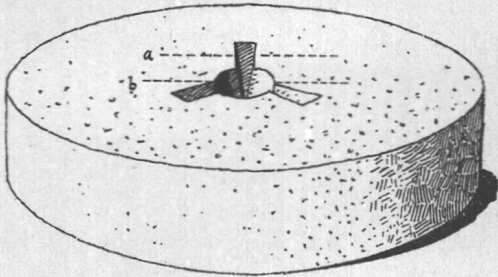
Internally, the sagittal and lambdoidal sutures are obliterated, and the coronal suture shows traces only of its existence. Externally, the former two are quite open, but the latter only partially so.

A portion of the left parietal bone is lost, leaving an open space of about 2 in. by $2\frac{1}{2}$ in., and bounded on the one side by part of the lambdoidal suture, and on the other by the old transverse fracture above alluded to, and below by part of the squamous suture. The



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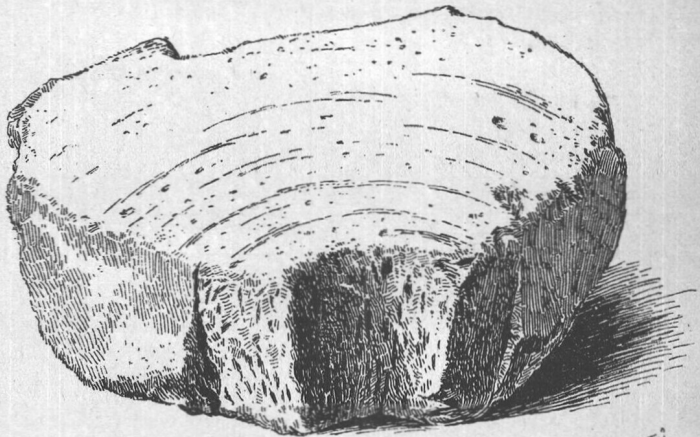
DOLICHO-CEPHALIC SKULL FROM HADDON FIELDS.



Section at b.



Section at a.



J.W.

QUERN FRAGMENT FROM HADDON FIELDS.

fractured *edge* of the remaining part of the parietal bone, that forms the top boundary of this open space, shows unmistakable signs of having been gnawed by rats. The surface of this edge is at first *vertical* to the *plane* of the outer surface of the bone (as, indeed, is the case with all the other edges of fractures of this skull), and then it becomes a bevel, consisting of a succession of hollow scollops at an obtuse angle to the outer surface, in each of which can be distinctly seen the double teeth gougeings of rats. It is clear from this that the fracture existed before the gnawings, in fact, that it furnished an edge for the rats to operate upon : otherwise, it is difficult to imagine how they could have attacked a smooth and unbroken surface of bone. Why should rats attack this skull? It seems to me to be very improbable for them to cut through into a dry and empty skull. I can only conceive of such an attack taking place while as yet the skeleton formed part of a corpse, and that their object was to reach the brains. If so, this would make the old set of fractures to be practically contemporary with the burial of the individual, and perhaps actually connected with his death.

The following calvarial measurements will interest craniological readers of this magazine :—

Extreme breadth	..	..	..	5'37 in.
Extreme length*	..	..	..	7'43 "
Fronto-inial length*	..	..	..	7'12 "
Circumference	..	..	..	20'7 "
Maximum frontal width	..	..	..	4'5 "
Minimum do.	..	..	..	3'62 "
Parietal arch	..	..	..	5'37 "
Frontal do.	..	..	..	5'37 "
Cephalic Index	..	..	..	72'2 "

But perhaps the most interesting relic of this barrow is the fragment of quern, which is of millstone grit. It is, I believe, a part (roughly speaking, about one-fourth) of the upper stone ; and in the sketch at the foot of Plate II., the lower or grinding surface is shown uppermost. The reader will there observe part of the curved side of the central hole or "eye," which has been roughly "pecked" into shape

* These measurements are taken from a spot immediately above the "glabella."

with some pointed instrument, by which means also, the top and the outer edge of the stone have been shaped; and on each side of it a band of similarly "pecked" surface, flat, and about $2\frac{3}{8}$ in. broad, and extending from the top to the bottom of the stone. These two flat surfaces would, if produced, make with each other an angle of about 115° , and each ends laterally in a projection forward at a right angle (distinctly seen in the sketch), beyond which a fracture-surface extends to the outer edge of the stone. The stone, when complete, probably took the form indicated above on the same plate, having a central hole or "eye" with three lateral adjuncts or "gaps" arranged in a radiate manner, the stone having a diameter of 24 in. and a thickness of $4\frac{1}{4}$ in.

In section the "eye" and its adjuncts are peculiar: *a* and *b* are sections, in the directions of the dotted lines in the upper figure, which the reader must suppose to have its grinding surface downwards, as it would be in use. He will observe that while the "eye" becomes narrower upwards (being $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. in diameter at the top, and $5\frac{3}{8}$ in. at the bottom), the adjuncts or "gaps" become narrower downwards, to form three narrow slits, each about $2\frac{3}{8}$ in. long, on the bottom surface.

The *use* of these slits is somewhat puzzling. Mr. Jno. Evans (author of "Ancient Stone Implements") suggests that they were for the insertion of a "mill-rine," and that the stone was "driven by machinery from below as in modern mills, the spindle being either of the same piece as the "rine," or keyed into it." But this cannot be, for not only are these adjuncts *perforations*, instead of grooves on the lower surface as is usually the case, but they narrow in the wrong direction to allow the arms of the rine to be wedged in them so as to support the stone. Several millers who have examined the stone have acknowledged this upon fuller consideration. The Editor of this magazine seems to have hit upon a more feasible solution, he regards "the arms or adjuncts to the central piercing as perhaps intended for the corn to run through, the central hole being occupied by a pin (of oak probably) brought up from the base of the lower stone." When perfect a nave of oak, having a conical hole on its lower surface, would be driven into the central eye, and would be made to revolve upon a

peg of the same material from the lower stone and fitting into this hole of the nave. A peg, firmly wedged into the top stone near its edge, would serve as a handle, and the three wedge-shaped piercings would be fed with parched corn from the hand or a suitable vessel, and would be well adapted for allowing the grains to be caught between the stones.

So far the writer has failed to meet with any other quern of this type, and, therefore, can offer no opinion as to its age. Those to whom he has submitted photographs and sketches of it (Professor Boyd Dawkins, Mr. Augustus Franks, and the above-mentioned two gentlemen), are unanimous in declaring it to be of Roman or post Roman age. Mr. Franks regards it, as to shape, as a Roman rather than British quern ; but the material not being Nieder mendig stone, his statement seems to imply that it might be of British or Romano-British make, but after the Roman model.

Roman coins have, on several occasions, been found more or less associated with contracted interments, the earliest form of barrow interment in this district ; but the ease with which coins can slip through interstices of a cairn, or be drawn down by burrowing animals, makes them but a doubtful index of the age of the interment. Not so, however, in this case ; the close association of this stone with the interment of Haddon Fields makes it of great value in determining the antiquity of the latter.