

## NOTICE OF A BRITISH SETTLEMENT AND WALLED TUMULUS, NEAR PULBOROUGH.

BY P. J. MARTIN, ESQ.

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THE following remarks on some Ancient British remains in the neighbourhood of Pulborough, were read to the Philosophical and Literary Society of Chichester, in the year 1834, and, at their request, left in the hands of its officers.

Not long after, the manuscript got into the possession of the editor of a periodical called *The Garland*, then being published at Chichester, and was printed (p. 46), without the writer's concurrence, and without the accompanying illustrations, which were required for a better realisation of the subject in the mind of the reader, than could be effected by mere verbal description. It having been lately suggested that its appearance, in companionship with matters of a kindred nature, would be desirable, it is here republished.

The writer does this the more willingly, because Nutbourne Common, the site of these interesting remains, has been lately enclosed. One mound has been levelled in the process of smoothing the cricket-ground, and the other is suffering under the classical and significant symbol of obliteration, "the plough is passing over it," and it is sinking into the level of the adjoining plain.

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"The rare occurrence of Celtic or Ancient British remains in this county, out of the range of the chalk downs, will probably give this short notice more importance than, from its slight and imperfect nature, it could otherwise claim. To those who are conversant with the South Downs, the traces still visible of the habitations, works of convenience and defence, places of sepulture, and more rarely, perhaps, of religious

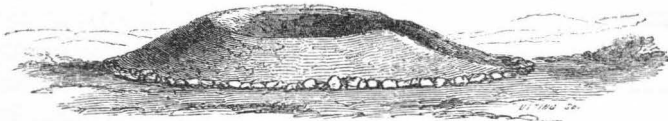
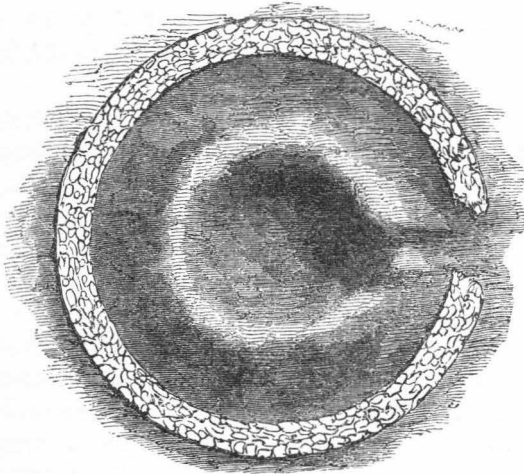
observances, of the Ancient Britons, are perfectly familiar; made so by the frequent contributions of various antiquaries and topographers, from the times of Stukeley and Gale, and perfected by the researches and discoveries, in the kindred districts of Wiltshire, of Sir Richard Colt Hoare, under whose guidance we may now traverse our downs and waste lands with an interest before almost unknown, and in direct communion, as it were, with the character and domestic habits of their primitive inhabitants.

“Although, for obvious reasons, the most numerous traces of a nomadic and pastoral people would be found upon the open districts and superior pasture lands of the chalk downs, there is no reason for supposing, with Sir R. Hoare, that they had not made advances into what are now the more cultivated parts of the country, before the arts of Rome had taught the rude barbarians to extend their operations farther inland. Unreclaimed forest, doubtless, then occupied the greater part of our interior, but there is still sufficient evidence remaining of the preoccupation of our sandy lands and river borders. The stone and copper axes which I deposited, some time since, in the Chichester Museum, were found by the gravel-diggers upon our commons; sepulchral barrows are not rare; and I have now to notice another curious specimen of Celtic economy from the same locality.

“In the summer of 1818 or 1819, I pointed out to my then neighbour and friend, the Rev. Edmund Cartwright, the continuator of Dallaway’s *History of Sussex*, two remarkable mounds upon an elevated part of Nutbourne Common, in the parish of Pulborough, with the remark that they were broader and lower than the usual run of sepulchral barrows. They lay within twenty paces of each other; the southernmost measuring 90, and the northern 80 feet diameter, and were perfectly circular.

“Mr. Cartwright conjectured they were sepulchral; and, under his directions, cross sections were made in the larger one; but it appeared to be composed entirely of sand, and there were no signs of sepulture; the search, therefore, was abandoned, and no further attempt made to investigate their nature. A labourer, who remembered the circumstance, came to me two or three months ago, and told me he had accidentally dis-

covered, when searching for stone, that the northern tumulus was partially surrounded with stones set endways in the turf, above which they here and there protruded. Finding this to be the case, I directed him to clear away the earth, and endeavour to complete the exposure. In doing this, we not only



Barrow and Foundation of Wall.

found that the circle was complete, but that it was also the outer line of the foundation of a wall four feet in thickness, the remainder being packed in without<sup>1</sup> cement; with a doorway to the east four feet in width, the stones there being wanting.

“Within this circle of stones the mound rises to about three feet perpendicular in height, into a platform, with a depression in the centre, like the pond-barrows of the South Downs.

“Upon the supposition that a smaller concentric circle

<sup>1</sup> This important word was misprinted “with” in the *Garland*.

might have existed upon the crown of the mound, the search was continued in that direction; but a few stones only were found, packed in upon that part of it, facing the doorway in the wall.

“Cross-sections were then made to the bottom, and into the undisturbed sand-rock, but nothing more was discovered, save a few fragments of pottery, like coarse Roman ware, and a fragment of a quern or millstone; both near the surface, and near the centre of the mound.

“It was thus satisfactorily proved that neither of these tumuli was sepulchral. What, then, was their purpose; and what was the use of the wall, or the circular layer of stones?

“Before I attempt to give an answer to this question, I will proceed shortly to describe the situation of what I believe to be a British settlement, about a quarter of a mile south of these mounds. It is a triangular headland of sandy soil, partly waste and partly arable, now called Winterfield, enclosed on two sides by streams which flow through low meadows, in earlier times unquestionably woody marshes, like the neighbouring unreclaimed peat bogs. On the third it is defended by a broad ditch and vallum, having the perfect character of the Celtic encampment, not improved, as many of them were, by subsequent Roman works. The area of the peninsula thus enclosed may be about six or eight acres. I do not know that any relics of the Celtic or Roman character have been ploughed up in the cultivated part of it, but on the adjoining lands of Hurston and Wiggonholt, Roman coins, pottery, and other marks of the habitation of Romanised Britons, have been discovered.

“This encampment of Winterfield exactly corresponds in character and situation with the more important one of Burpham, near Arundel, which is in like manner defended by a morass on one side, the river Arun on the other, and at the base of the triangle by a ditch and wall twice the size of the work in question. Arundel itself, the *ad Decimum Lapidem* of the Romans, was originally a British town of the same character, with the river on one side, a marshy and woody ravine on the other, and a fosse and vallum traversing the neck of land between the two, still to be seen, intersected by the London road, just without St. Mary's Gate.

“ To return to our British fastness of Winterfield. It is, as I before observed, about a quarter of a mile south of the walled tumulus, and will serve to connect it and its companion with Ancient British associations.

“ My first thought was, that they might be religious circles, and that the place of the large stones, generally used in the construction of Druidic temples, was here supplied by the wall of small stones, afforded by the surrounding wastes, at a time when all these wastes were mostly open glades, and would probably afford a plentiful supply of the angular boulder-stones, still to be found under the turf.

“ In support of this proposition, I may appeal to the authority of the enthusiastic but credulous Stukeley, who has left descriptions of religious works of various kinds. In that part of the *Itinerarium Curiosum* which was published after his death, I find figures of walled circles in Ireland and Anglesey, as they existed in his time.

“ There can be no question that the construction of the religious circle varied with the circumstances of the country in which it was situate. The mud-wall temple at Barrow, in Lincolnshire, is an important instance; Stonehenge, with its gigantic imposts, is an advance toward the walled building, from the single-stone erections of Abury, Stanton Drew, Rowitch, &c. And it cannot be supposed that any populous district would be without its religious edifice, more or less important, according to the means of its inhabitants.

“ Having these thoughts of our monument, and supposing that the singularity of a walled tumulus would not be uninteresting to the venerable historian of Wiltshire, I addressed a description of it to Sir R. Hoare, whose observations in reply are these:—

“ “ I have seen several earthen circles in Wilts and Somersetshire with a single entrance to them, but no one with a *wall*. Circles of stone enclosures are also frequent on Dartmoor, and I think they may be deemed *religious*, and were surrounded by a slight vallum of *earth*, where stone could not be *procured*, as on our downs.

“ “ The difference between religious earth-works and those for defence consists in the former having the *fosse* *withinside* instead of outside.

“‘I find also that sepulchral barrows were sometimes surrounded by a circle of single stones; and, as they could not have answered the purpose of a fence, no other motive but their implied sanctity can be assigned for their erection.’

“More, perhaps, might be said in favour of the religious nature of these mounds, still, it must be confessed that the case is very doubtful. The larger of them has no stone-work; they are not exactly alike, like the twin circles of Abury; and they are not enclosed in a common vallum, as they probably would have been if they had constituted one temple.

“Let us, then, consider what other uses they may have served, and how these appearances may be reconciled with the known habits and conditions of a rude and primitive people.

“Amongst the earth-works often seen upon our downs, and so minutely described by Sir R. Hoare, is what he has called the ‘pond barrow.’ It does not differ materially from our walled mound, except that it is not quite so elevated. It is thus spoken of by the above-mentioned author (I quote from his *Ancient Wiltshire*):—

“‘VI. THE POND BARROW.—I can form no conjecture about these tumuli that carries with it the least plausibility; they differ totally from all the others, and resemble an excavation made for a pond; they are circular, and formed with the greatest exactness, having no protuberance within the area, which is perfectly level. We have dug into several, but have never discovered any sepulchral remains. We generally find one or more of these barrows in the detached groups, and on Lake Downs there is a group of four or five of them altogether. I once thought that the Britons might have adopted this method of preparing their barrows for interment, by thus marking out the circle, and throwing out the earth on the sides; but the very great regularity of the vallum militates against this idea.’

“Elsewhere he supposes they were appropriated to the females in some way, having often found trinkets and articles of domestic use in them.

“In looking at these constructions, I have always been inclined to think that they were the sites of British habitations, perhaps of the superior order.

“I suppose the shallow excavation to be the area of the

hut, and the low circular vallum the basis upon which the superstructure rested, consisting of long rafters meeting at top over the centre of the area, like a pile of hop-poles; and these being strengthened, and closed in with boughs and thatch, formed the habitation—than which, we may suppose the noblest Briton, with his flint or copper spear-head, his pottery of unbaked earth, and other rude appliances, ‘could boast no better home.’ The circular embankment on which the rafters rested would serve to carry off the water as it trickled down the roof, and keep the interior dry and comfortable.

“To this rude cottage was added, in our present instance, a stone wall at the foot of the mound, to defend it from the intrusion of cattle or other injurious animals.

“The supposition of its being the site of a human habitation is strengthened by the discovery of the stones in that part of the crown of the circle which corresponds with the doorway in the wall, and were placed in the entrance of the hut, perhaps, to make the pathway firm; and also by the discovery of the broken millstone and pottery under the floor of the area.

“To this use I am inclined to assign all the pond barrows, and that is the reason Sir R. Hoare so frequently found trinkets and articles of domestic use in them.”

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In a letter afterwards addressed to the editor of the *Garland*, dated 16th Nov., 1836, the writer made the following additional observations (p. 426):—

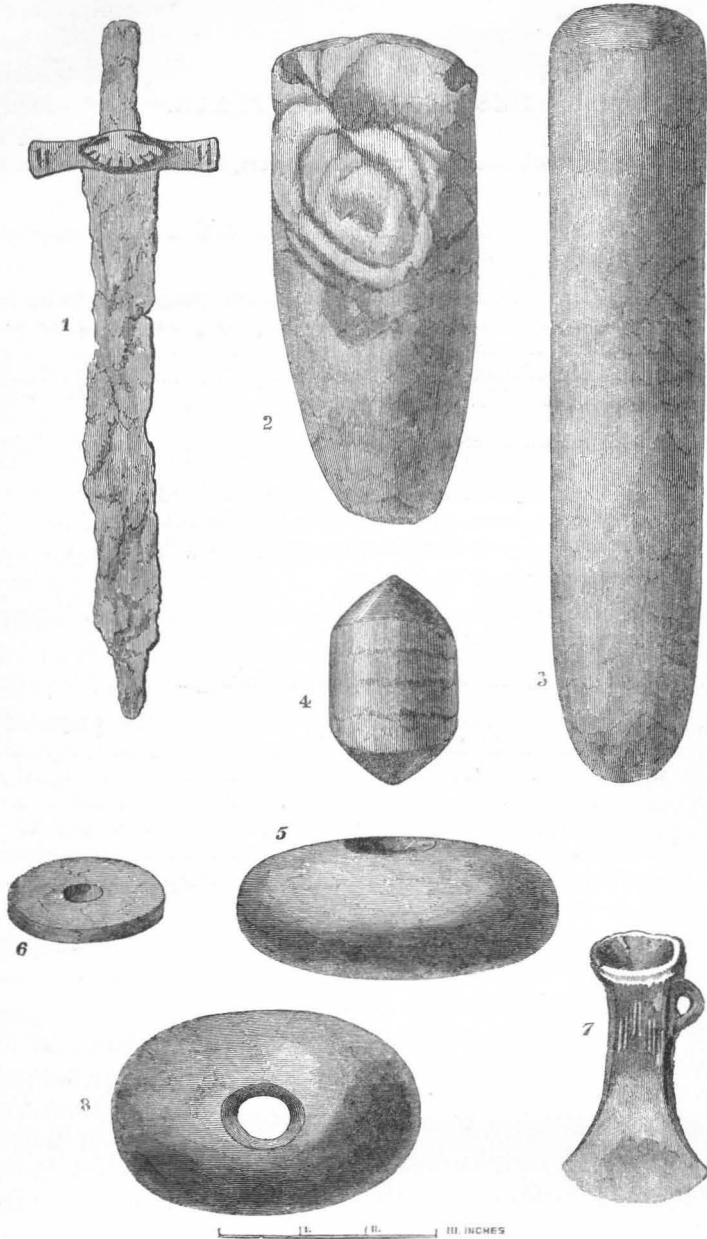
“The revision contemplated on the publication of my paper comprehended the addition of such explanations and illustrations as were given at the reading verbally, or by the exhibition of diagrams; with such supplementary matter as might be obtained in corroboration of the opinion of the real use of the pond barrow, and of such mounds as did not appear to be sepulchral, and yet were found associated with them; and, also, of the reasonable supposition that the huts of the higher orders of the semi-barbarous inhabitants of Ancient Britain were erected on these eminences; and that, in this instance (and perhaps in many more, where the stones have been removed), a fence wall served to give security and importance



to the edifice. It is not my intention to follow out the disquisition here; and there is not much room, in the same locality, for making new discoveries in the habits and practices of the Ancient Britons. But, since my paper was read, a curious stone mall, or pestle (*see fig. 3*), was found near the same spot (deposited by Dr. Forbes, at my request, in the Chichester Museum); and I have been able to trace a circular vallation, of five or six acres area, upon the open waste, on Hurston Warren, hard by the 'fastness' of 'Winterfield.' This ditch and vallum crowns an eminence rising over the spot on which there was lately made a remarkable 'find' of Roman coins, at Redford, in Storrington parish. The form of the encampment is circular; and, though the bank is not high, being crowned with palisades, it would closely resemble the 'pah' of New Zealand, and other strongholds of the South Sea Islanders. Two sepulchral barrows (one bearing the marks of having been rifled) are to be found on West Chilmington Common, adjoining to Nutbourne; and similar ones occur here and there in the line of sand-hills ranging from Washington, by Coldwaltham, to Lavington and the country south of Midhurst. But the writer has not been able to detect many specimens of the mounds like those here described as 'pond barrows.' There was one (levelled a few years ago) on what appeared to be, and still is, an unbroken piece of grass, in the priory grounds at Hardham, within a few hundred yards of the Roman camp there. There are also two or three mounds in Parham Park, west of the house, which are probably pond barrows, but they do not appear ever to have been examined."

Finally, this part of Sussex has afforded to the writer many indications of human occupancy in all historic times, attested by weapons and other memorials of "the stone," "the copper," and the "iron" ages. But it is only lately by the discovery of the celts near Billingshurst, and a celt or hammer of iron sandstone, now in the possession of Mrs. Weekes, and a flint spear-head at Brinsbury, that we have got assurance that the country, which must then have been an interminable forest of oak timber, gave shelter to, and was the hunting-ground of, the British savage.





## DESCRIPTION OF PLATE.

- Fig. 1.—Sword, with iron blade and hilt of brass, from Nutbourne Common, Pulborough.
- Fig. 2.—Celt of flint; one of four found in making a new ditch in 1852, near Billingshurst.
- Fig. 3.—Mall or pestle, made of a gray quartzose granite,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, and 2 inches diameter. Found in digging ground near the walled tumulus. It was perhaps used with a mortarium, as referred to in Vol. VIII. of *Sussex Arch. Collections*, p. 287, and may probably be Roman, not Celtic.
- Figs. 4, 5.—Fig. 5 is a water-worn boulder of silicious stone, in which a hole has been bored to the depth of half an inch by the friction of fig. 4, which is another pebble of similar stone, highly polished. They were both found some yards apart in the ruins of St. Botolph's Priory, Pembrokeshire—illustrating the process of piercing fig. 8. In the possession of H. Latham, Esq.
- Fig. 6.—Pierced bead of unbaked earth  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch diameter, from Nutbourne Common, Pulborough.
- Fig. 7.—Copper celt, found by a ditcher at Pulborough.
- Fig. 8.—Stone hammer head, or weapon, of silicious hornstone, possibly from the gravel-pits in the vicinity. Found August, 1856, in grubbing an ash-tree root near Pallingham Quay. A similar stone, apparently prepared for boring, has been found at Pulborough, and is in the possession of Henry Latham, Esq., as are also 4 and 5. It measures 3 inches by  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , and is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch thick. It is not quite circular, tapering a little to one side, with a sharp edge all round.
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