

Preliminary Report of Some Recent Discoveries at Brean Down.

By N. C. COOPER, M.B.

It is now several years ago that walking along the foot of the glacial sandbank that is found at the junction of Brean Down with the southern coast line, I found lying amongst the pebbles, the greater part of a human pelvic bone. Tracing this clue upwards over the bank-face, several other portions of human skeleton were discovered, and the following results have been the outcome of spasmodic hours and half-hours work there in conjunction with a few others.

At a depth which varies with the slope of the sandbank, but of an average of four feet down, runs a rather darker layer of a greyish sand. On closer investigation, this layer runs along for about one quarter the length of the sand-bank, and is about two inches in thickness. It has been found to contain fragments of charcoal, and a very coarse thick pottery.

Above this the human remains (altogether, portions of five skeletons), have been found, and one flint flake.

HUMAN REMAINS.

The skeletons have shown various characteristics. One is female, two are male, and the others are young adults of indeterminate sex, though one is probably male.

The lower jaws of all are large and massive compared with our present day mandible, and the teeth are for the most part in excellent preservation, although in one jaw there is evidence of dental caries and pyorrhœa. The upper left molar on one maxilla looks directly outwards, and the central and lateral incisors of the mandible on one side appear to arise from a common socket. The skull bones are not abnormally thick, and there are no other points of interest except that the face is rather prognathous. The greater part of the parietal bones, and the occipital bone are missing.

There are no points of great interest with regard to the other skulls. One of the young skulls is nearly whole, and is of the Brachycephalic type (*Celtic stock*).

The ridges etc. for attachment of muscles are fairly well marked on all the skulls.

The femora of all are well curved antero-posteriorly, and have well marked lineæ asperæ. Two of them show a well marked third trochanter, and all show varying degrees of antero-posterior flattening of the upper end.

The tibiæ are of great interest, all being platycnemic (side to side flattening), and the interosseous space, between tibia and fibula, broad. One tibia is especially flattened. The prolongation of the inferior articular surface on the lower extremity of the tibia is in each case increased upwards over the anterior surface to a greater extent than normal.

One os calcis is extraordinarily large being $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide at the insertion of the tendo achilles, which insertion is well marked by spiny outgrowths of bone. The sustentaculum projects $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch.

One portion of humerus shows marked signs of having been gnawed, the tooth marks are carnivorous, and extend quite deeply into the bone.

ARTIFACTS.

The pottery is black with large white granules, some of which when examined carefully are found to be portions of shell. The surfaces are irregular, and as yet no decorations have been found on them. One portion shows a piece of rim formed by simple rounding of the edge and drawing a straight line round the pot about half an inch from the edge.

A small flint flake shewing signs of having been roughly worked, has been found, but it is not possible to gather any data from it.

No other finds have been made here, but the work is still in progress.

The bank has also yielded remains of boar and deer, and in one spot, many feet from the surface and underneath the position of two raised breaches, there have been found portions of reindeer antler and bones. Some of these antler remains, which have been numerous, are covered by a thin layer of sandstone.

CONCLUSIONS.

It would appear from the examination of the remains that the discoveries are probably Celtic in phase. The tibiae show the platycnemic change so typical of the Neolithic skeleton. Some of the human remains from the Keltic Cavern have been compared with these, and very little difference, if any, can be found between the anatomical features.

The presence of charcoal (and pottery) in the dark layer rather suggests occupation, but it is hoped that further finds will help to establish some definite basis for an opinion as regards date and other details.

FIELD WORK.

By E. K. TRATMAN.

This paper has for its object the recording of work carried out, and expeditions made in addition to the work carried out, at the three caves which are dealt with in detail elsewhere. The amount of work accomplished has only been made possible by holding camps at Easter, and in August, in both 1920 and 1921, in addition to the numerous Saturday and week-end parties.

Several expeditions to caves in other parts of the Mendips were made in 1920. On April 7th a visit was paid to Wookey Hole, and an enjoyable day spent in exploring it thoroughly under the guidance of Mr. H. E. Balch. This cave may be conveniently divided into two levels, though the river which flows through parts of it has occupied no less than five distinct levels.

The *Axe* flows through the lower of the two divisions, which consists of three great chambers. The upper division consists of two series of passages. One lot almost bare of stalactitic formation, but shewing up the conglomerate of which the cave is formed, in a remarkable manner, and the other with many beautiful stalactites and stalagmites.

On April 10th a cycle tour was made to Hutton and Loxton caves. The entrance of the Hutton cave was unfortunately found to be filled in, a small depression being the sole external sign of the existing cave. At Loxton there is a small three chambered