

Report on the Animal Remains found in Read's Cavern, near Burrington Combe, Somerset.

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The collection of animal bones, found by the members of the Bristol Spelæological Society during their researches at Read's Cavern, has been submitted to me for report by Mr. E. K. Tratman, the Secretary of the Society.

As in many similar caves and prehistoric sites generally, the remains, on the whole, are in a fragmentary condition. The limb-bones are represented in many cases by distal and proximal extremities. Some are split in the characteristic manner for the extraction of the marrow; others have been broken or chopped across, doubtless for the same purpose, or in order that they might fit into the stewpot. One or two of the bones have been perforated or worked in such a way as to suggest their use as some sort of implement or handle for a tool. The skulls, too, are in a similar broken condition, so much so that it is not possible to obtain detailed measurements.

The domestic animals represented in the collection are the sheep, pig, celtic ox, and horse; the wild animals are the roe-deer, red-deer and wild boar.

The above lists refer only to the remains sent to me for examination. Other animals are mentioned in earlier reports dealing with this cave, *e.g.*, goat, badger, hare, etc.

Possibly a few of the lower jaws, referred to sheep in this article, may have belonged to goats, but some doubt is thrown upon this by the absence of typical horn-cores, metacarpal and metatarsal bones in the collection.

The most numerous remains are those of sheep, and it is quite evident that mutton and lamb formed the staple food of the cave-dwellers. Pig comes next in abundance, then ox, and finally horse. In all probability the wild animals were not used to any extent for food.

The domestic animals present the closest affinity with those recorded from the Glastonbury Lake Village of the Prehistoric Iron

Age.¹ They also agree with those from the somewhat earlier inhabited sites (Hallstatt and La Tène I) at All Cannings Cross, Wilts,² and Fifield Bavant Down, S. Wilts.³

THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS.

SHEEP.

The remains of sheep consist of limb-bones, jaws, and broken skulls. Many are those of adult animals, but a larger number belong to lambs. A few of the bones have been broken across, and others have been shaped or perforated for industrial purposes, as at Glastonbury and other places.

The metacarpals range in length from 110 to 132 mm., and are all extremely slender in the shaft, agreeing closely with the Romano-British examples figured by Pitt-Rivers,⁴ and with others of earlier date found at Glastonbury, All Cannings Cross, Fifield Bavant, etc. One example, 124 mm., in length, and perforated at the middle, is figured in Plate XX, of Vol. 1, No. 2, of these Proceedings.

The metatarsals range from 114 to 129 mm. They are all slender in build and remarkably constricted above the distal articulation (See Pitt-Rivers, *op. cit.*, pl. cxliii, fig. 16, especially). Very similar bones were found at all the stations mentioned above, as well as at Dog Holes Cave, Warton Crag, Lancs,⁵ and many other Prehistoric and Romano-British places. Two of the specimens found in Read's Cavern are perforated; one at the proximal articulation, and the other at the same place as well as at the top of the bone near that end (see these Proceedings, Vol. I, No. 3, pl. XXVI, Fig. 5).

The other limb-bones are too much broken for measurements, but they agree in type with Glastonbury, etc. One of the radii is perforated at each end (See Proceedings, Vol. I, No. 3, Pl. XXVI, Fig. 4).

The lower and upper jaws are all quite typical of the Glastonbury series.

The skulls have been split down the middle, as at Glastonbury. One half-skull (D34) has a large, subtriangular, horncore, and agrees with the Glastonbury big-horned form (series B). Several loose

1 *The Glastonbury Lake Village*, Vol. II, 1917, pp. 641-672.

2 *The Early Iron Age Inhabited Site, at All Cannings Cross Farm, Wiltshire*. By Mrs. Cunnington, Devizes, 1924 (Report on the Animal Remains, by J. Wilfrid Jackson, pp. 43-50 and Pl. 52).

3 See forthcoming Report, by the writer, in June No. of *Wilts. Arch. and N. H. Mag.*

4 *Excavations in Cranborne Chase, II*, Plate CXLIII.

5 Jackson, *Third Report on the Explorations at Dog Holes, Warton Crag, Lancs.*, *Trans. Lanc. and Ches. Antiq. Soc.*, XXX (1913), 99-130.

horncores are of the same type. One skull-fragment has no horncore, and probably belonged to a female.

There appears to be only one breed of sheep represented in the cave series, as was the case at All Cannings Cross, and this agrees in every way with the large-horned domestic sheep, known as Studer's sheep (*Ovis ariès Studeri*), found in the Swiss Lake dwellings of the Bronze Age, and in Pre-Roman and Roman camps and villages in Great Britain. This type is represented at the present day by the almost deer-like sheep of Soay Island, near St. Kilda. The latter are closely related to the wild mouflon of Corsica and Sardinia.

PIG.

Numerous bones of young pigs, as well as bones, skulls, and jaws of adult animals, are present in the collection.

The limb-bones are very similar to the Glastonbury series, and the adult skulls have been split down the middle as at that station. These, together with the lower jaws, are comparable with the "Torschwein" or turbarry pig (*Sus scrofa palustris*) of Rutimeyer from the Swiss Lake dwellings of the Neolithic Period. Similar remains have been found at All Cannings Cross, and other sites in Britain.

Ox.

This animal is represented by many limb-bones, young jaws, and teeth. The limb-bones are mostly fully adult, and nearly all are split or broken across. The remains are quite typical of those found at Glastonbury and other places, and all belong to the small Celtic Ox (*Bos longifrons*), whose nearest representative to-day is probably the Kerry breed of cattle.

HORSE.

The remains of this animal are scanty, consisting solely of a last lower molar, an incisor, a radius broken off at the distal end, and a proximal end of a scapula (split). These agree with the small slender-limbed type found at Glastonbury, All Cannings Cross, and in numerous Romano-British villages and sites, Roman stations, etc. The type is best represented to-day by the Exmoor pony.

THE WILD ANIMALS.

WILD BOAR.

Two large tusks (E21 and another unnumbered) seem, from their size, to belong to the wild form of pig.

The largest (E21) is figured in these Proceedings, Vol. 1, No. 1, Pl. V, and another specimen, perforated for suspension or some other purpose, is figured in Vol. 1, No. 2, Pl. XVIII.

Probably, as at Glastonbury, the wild boar was rare in the neighbourhood.

RED DEER.

A distal end of a radius (broken across) belongs to red-deer, and several antler-tines of this animal are figured and described in early reports (see Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 88, Pl. XVIII; Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 138, Pl. XXVI, Figs. 9—14).

ROE-DEER.

The only bone referable to this animal is a perfect metatarsal which measures 172 mm. in length. It agrees exactly with a similar bone found at Glastonbury. In earlier reports on Read's Cavern, antlers of this animal are figured and described: one in Vol. 1, No. 1, Pl. V., left-hand figure; another in Vol. 1, No. 3, Pl. XXVI, Fig. 15.

Roe-deer antlers were also found at All Cannings Cross.

In addition to the foregoing species, there are several bones and jaws of a small cat; but these remains look much more recent than those of the main collection.

One canine tooth and a metacarpal bone of fox (or small dog) are also included.

There are also the following remains of birds: brain-case of skull about the size of that of a missel-thrush; a tibiotarsus of a small fowl (?); humerus of goose; and other bones which have been figured in these Proceedings, Vol. 1, No. 3, Pl. XXVI, Figs. 6 and 7. The latter are highly polished as if they had been used for some special purpose.
