

Report on Excavations at Worship's Farm, Redhill, Wrington

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MAP REFERENCES—

SOMERSET O.S. 6 INCH SHEET XI S.E.

SOMERSET O.S. 25 INCH SHEET XI, 11.

INTRODUCTION.

The site was first observed in January, 1926, while the writer was carrying out a preliminary field survey of the area, and was recorded briefly in the *Proceedings*.¹ The site is in the field immediately to the east of Worship's Farm and consisted of some ring mounds with hollow centres, a presumed tumulus, and an irregular enclosure.

It was thought that these were probably remnants of hut circles and an open living site, and in this Mr. O. G. S. Crawford, who was shown the site, concurred. A few sherds of pottery had been picked up on the surface, tending to confirm this view.

Stretching from east of the main road at Redhill along the southern slopes of the ridge as far as and a little beyond Worship's Farm are numerous old field banks; the character of these banks somewhat resembled those of Keltic field systems, but their great irregularity was rather against their being of that date. There is also another group of field banks to the north of the Redhill-Wrington road.

EXCAVATIONS.

Site 1. The first site selected was the supposed double hut circle.² The turf was first removed over an area 10 feet in diameter, covering the whole of the hollow area of the western division of the double circle and encroaching slightly upon the surrounding ring mound, which was marked for excavation later.

Under the turf the soil was removed in foot-deep spits, and at the base of the first foot undisturbed soil was reached, except in a well-defined and roughly circular area in the centre of the excavations.

¹ *Proceedings, University of Bristol Spelæological Society*, 1926, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 276. (Note.—For "west" read "east" of Worship's Farm.)

² *Ibid.*, p. 277, sketch map inset.

This inner area had a diameter of approximately 5 feet. In the central area excavations were carried down to a depth of 6 feet from the bottom of the hollow. Even at this depth modern glazed pottery was constantly encountered, and it was obvious that the hollow merely represented a trial pit for ochre, which had been imperfectly filled in; the surrounding ring representing the surplus soil left round the pit when it was first filled in.

Site 2. T. 37. Lat. $51^{\circ} 22' 2''$ N. Long. $2^{\circ} 42' 7''$ W. This supposed tumulus consisted of a simple mound with a hollow in the north-east sector. Starting well outside the mound, a trench 4 feet wide was dug through the mound, the base of the trench being carried to a minimum of 1 foot depth into the undisturbed sub-soil.

The mound unfortunately proved not to be a burial mound at all, but to be the spoil from a shallow mine shaft made to extract limestone "spar" used in smelting operations. The hollow to the north-east proved to be the mouth of the shaft. No finds of any description were made.

Site 3. A series of trenches was dug to rock inside the irregular enclosure in the south-east portion of the field.³ Rock was encountered a few inches under the turf except in one or two areas where the natural irregularities of the surface prevented it. The north to south bank on the east and the re-entrant east to west bank on the west proved to be natural rock outcrops. Portions of the bank on the west appeared to be composed of soil brought away from the higher slope to the east. There was no trace of any building or huts to be observed. A small quantity of pottery was recovered as well as a small iron knife. One or two flint fragments and some coal were found.

The pottery has been submitted to the British Museum, and the report was to the effect that nothing need be earlier than XII-XIV century. Attention is drawn to one or two specimens which show "sagging bases" which are probably XII to early XIII century. Only some of the pottery is glazed.

The presence of the pottery is probably best explained as being the casual remains associated with mining activities in the XII to XIV centuries rather than with a definite living site. Such an explanation is well supported by the finds from *Site 3*.

Site 4. While excavations were in progress the writer was visited by Mrs. Marah Bendall, of Row of Ashes Farm nearby, who informed him that pottery of a similar nature to that from *Site 3* was often turned up on molehills in a field,³ to the south-east of Mazsegrove

³ 25-inch O.S. map, Field 68.

LIST OF BARROWS, TUMULI, AND MOUNDS (5)

CATALOGUE No.	SOMERSET 6-IN. O.S. MAP SHEET No.	LATITUDE 51 N.		LONGITUDE 2 W.		CATEGORY	TYPE	MEASUREMENTS IN FT.			REMARKS
		Min.	Sec.	Min.	Sec.			Central Mound Height	Central Mound Diam.	Total Diam.	
T25B	XI N.E. . .	22	36	42	39	Mound	S.B.	5	25	..	* See notes on Som. XI
T35-A	XI S.E. . .	22	18	42	35	Tumulus	—	—	—	..	* Ploughed out : see notes
T279	XVII S.W. . .	18	32	54	36	Tumulus	S.B.	2	12	..	* Depression in centre
T280	XVII S.W. . .	18	30	54	37	Tumulus	S.B.	3	40	..	* Somewhat mutilated
T281	XVII N.E. . .	19	8	52	10	Tumulus	S.B.	2	30	..	* Near Winthill House
T282	V S.E. . .	24	7	41	52	Mound	S.B.	2	25	..	* Near Jubilee Stone, Barrow Hill
T283	XVII N.E. . .	19	37	49	33	Mound	Disc	1	7	25	* See notes on Som. XVII
T284	V S.E. . .	24	34	43	15	Tumulus	S.B.	1.5	25	..	* Built of stone
T285	V S.E. . .	24	32	43	16	Tumulus	S.B.	2.5	25	..	* Built of stone : much mutilated
T286	V S.E. . .	24	30	43	31	Tumulus	S.B.	8	50	..	* } See notes
T287	V S.E. . .	24	30	43	32	Tumulus	S.B.	8	40	..	* }
T288	V S.E. . .	24	25	43	14	Tumulus	Disc?	3	14	30	* Built of stone : see notes
T289	V S.E. . .	24	22	43	7	Mound	S.B.	1.5	15	..	* Slight hollow on N. side
T290	XI S.E. . .	20	49	42	40	Tumulus	Disc	—	—	109	* See notes
T201	XI S.E. . .	20	48	42	46	Tumulus	Disc	—	—	95	* See notes

* Not previously recorded or marked on ordnance survey map.

S.B. = Simple bowl type.

coppice. This field and neighbouring ones show obvious signs of mining activities in search of iron ore. Some pottery was found and submitted with the other to the British Museum, where it was again placed as belonging to XII-XIV centuries.

In this field and in others nearby are to be seen a complex of banks of extreme irregularity. It is probable that they represent the banks of village gardens and are probably of much the same date as the pottery described above. Similar irregularly-shaped gardens can often still be seen in Somerset villages of the present day.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

The supposed hut circles are the remains of shallow ochre pits.

T. 37 is not a tumulus but merely the spoil from a mine shaft. The Society's catalogue has been amended to show this.

The pottery from the irregular enclosure is to be associated with mining activities in XII and XIV centuries. Most of the banks of the enclosure consist of natural rock outcrop with the central area probably artificially levelled.

The series of old field banks on the south slope of the ridge to the east of the main road are probably of XII and XIV century date, or later rather than earlier.

The Society's thanks are due to Mr. L. Keel, the owner of the land, for permission to excavate ; and to Messrs. T. D. Kendrick and Christopher Hawkes, of the British Museum, for their examination of and report on the pottery.