

W.L. Lawrence, Esq. F.S.A. communicated in a letter to the Secretary an account of the examination of a chambered long barrow in Gloucestershire.

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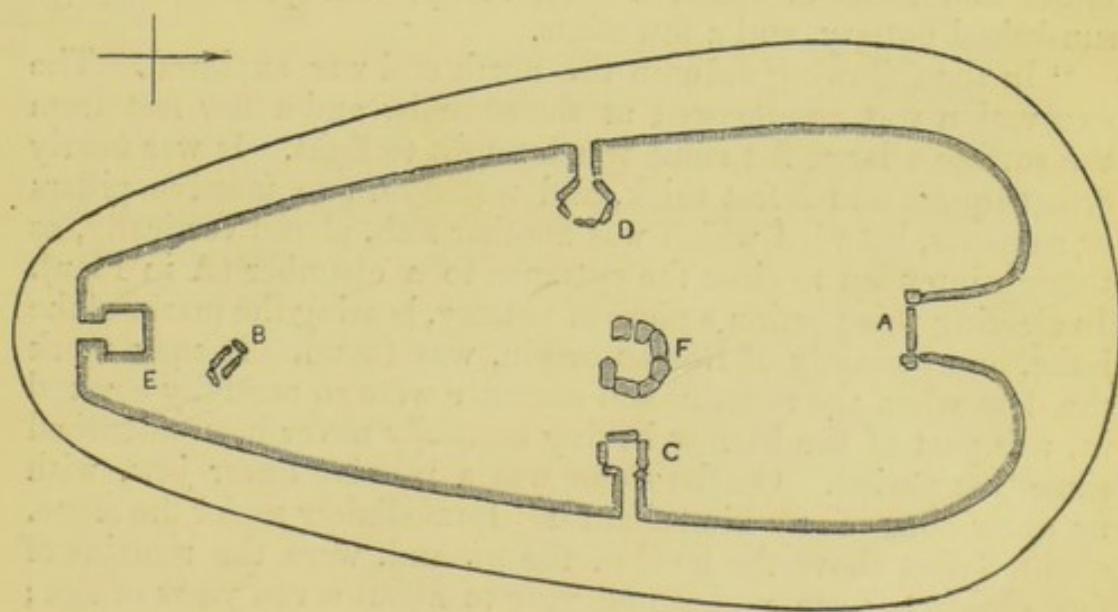
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p 62 Long Barrows. *Ant. Archaeologia xii. 1869* & fig. p. 61.

[From the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries, April 19, 1866.]

W. L. LAWRENCE, Esq. F.S.A. communicated in a letter to the Secretary an account of the examination of a Chambered Long Barrow in Gloucestershire, from which the following particulars have been extracted :—

The barrow is known by the name of Bellars or Belas Knap, and is situated on the property of Joseph Chamberlayne Chamberlayne, Esq. in the parish of Charlton Abbot's, co. Gloucester. It is on an elevated part of the high table-land of the Cotswold Hills, about seven miles east of Cheltenham, and four miles west of Winchcombe. It is immediately above a ravine which opens out into the vale of Evesham, and the precipitous side of which, to the east of the barrow, is called Humbel Bey How.

It is of oblong form, 197 feet long, and 75 feet wide near the centre. Before the excavations were made, it appeared to be a mound of earth and stones, apparently about 12 to 13 feet high. Near the centre was a depression which appeared to be filled with darker stones gathered from the land, and a massive stone was lying on the slope, having no doubt been brought to light in some former investigation.



GROUND-PLAN OF BARROW OF BELAS KNAP, NEAR CHARLTON ABBOT'S, CO. GLOUCESTER.
Scale, 50 feet to 1 inch.

The result of these extensive excavations is shown in the accompanying Plan, which has been adapted from that published by John Thurnam, Esq. F.S.A. in the *Memoirs of the Anthropological Society*, vol. i. p. 474, in illustration of his paper on Ancient British and Gaulish Skulls. It seems that about a yard within the circumference is a wall of slaty stone about 2 feet high, excepting at the north end, where it rises to 7 feet, and gradually curves inwards so as to make a passage towards the centre; this terminates at about 20 feet from the outer margin in a massive slab, set vertically between two pillars, and with them supporting a still larger slab of stone set horizontally. At the sides of the barrow are two smaller openings leading to cells, and another cell or cist is towards the southern end.

The progress of the excavations is best explained by the following extract from a report furnished to Mr. Lawrence by L. Winterbotham, Esq. :—

“ In the spring of 1863 a large flat stone, lying exposed on the surface of the barrow, at its south end, was removed, and proved to be the cover of a cell 6 feet long by about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet broad, and 3 or 4 feet from the surface of the mound. Its sides and one end were composed of large rough flat stones, the other end being formed by a semicircle of rough dry walling. This cell (B in ground plan) bore no relation to the general position of the tumulus, being placed S.S.E. and N.N.W. It was filled with rubble; amongst which were found the remains of four human bodies, two male and two female. The bones were much broken and decayed. There were also discovered the bones and tusks of boars, a bone scoop, four pieces of rough sun-baked pottery, and a few flints.

“ In the following autumn the north end was explored. The excavation was commenced at the summit, and a few feet from the surface a large flat stone was brought to light. It was nearly 8 feet square and 2 feet thick, and rested on two massive pillars or supports, between which was another slab, placed vertically, as though intended to close the entrance to a chamber (A in Plan). In clearing this portion a piece of pottery, bearing the marks of the lathe, and certainly of Roman origin, was found. It may mark the date when the tumulus and entrance were so carefully covered in, this part of the barrow having certainly never been disturbed since that period. On the stone was a massive lower jaw, with no other bone of any kind about it. Immediately under the stone, about 8 feet above the level of the ground, were the remains of five children, from under one year to about seven years of age; all the bones requisite for building up the skeletons were present, more or less warped and flattened; and the position and preservation of such minute and delicate bones, under a stone of such

magnitude, preclude the idea of this being anything but a primary interment, and seem to show that the combination of stones at the north end was not merely an entrance to a chamber. This view is further supported by the fact that, in the subsequent explorations, no sign of any chamber was found in connection with what externally appears to be an entrance; the chambers on the east and west opening out on the circumference of the barrow, and having no internal communication whatever; they are similar in this respect to the Rodmarton Barrow described by Mr. Lysons,* but differ from other barrows of the same kind.

“The gradation in the ages of these five children, beautifully shown in the dentition of the lower jaws, seems to denote them to be of one family. A remarkable male skull was with these bones, unaccompanied by other adult bones of any kind.

“In the next year, 1864, the exploration of the mound was continued by following the exterior wall round the east side. About the centre of the barrow the wall was found to dip in, forming a passage about 2 feet wide, to the chamber (C on Plan), which was then fully excavated. It was formed of four large flat rough stones inclosing an area more or less square in shape of about 5 feet. It seems originally to have been roofed in with large thin slabs of the same stone, slate, of which the boundary wall is formed. This weak roofing had given way, and the chamber had become filled with the superincumbent rubbish; two depressions on the surface of the mound having originally marked the position of this and of the corresponding chamber on the west side. In this chamber, squatting on flat stones round the walls, must have originally been placed twelve corpses; the falling in of the roof had crushed them flat, and broken many of the bones, and pressed them partially into the surface of the ground, rendering their extrication no easy task. I was fortunate enough to be present, just as the work was finishing, in time to dig out a perfect skull, and to determine the position in which the body was laid. On a flat stone, underneath the upright one forming the south wall of the chamber, were the pelvic bones of this skeleton; the two thigh and leg-bones were sticking out straight across the chamber, imbedded in clay; the vertebræ and ribs were in a mass around the pelvic bones. A little to the left lay the head, fallen over on its face, which was two-thirds buried in the clay; and across the condyles of the femora lay the arm-bones. In each nostril were found two phalanges of a fore-finger; the top phalanx of one having been driven through the back of the orbit into the cavity of the cranium, as if the body had been placed in the sitting posture, and the head kept erect by thrusting the fingers into the nose.

* Proc. 2nd s. ii. 275.

Immediately over these remains lay the thin flat slabs which originally formed the roof. The western chamber (D), afterwards disclosed, was nearly identical with this one; it contained fourteen bodies, differing from those found in the east chamber in this respect, that they were of all ages, whereas those in the east chamber were all middle-aged.

“No pottery, flints, or remains, other than human, of any kind were found in either of these chambers, except three teeth of a horse, and numerous bones of mice, found chiefly in the interior of the skulls; on many of which the tooth-marks of these small rodents are visible.”

A further and more extensive excavation was made by Mr. Chamberlayne in June in the past year, in which Mr. Lawrence took part.

The ground was cleared from the pillars of the so-called entrance (A) to the width of seven feet, towards the centre, but no chambers or cells were found, although in places the stones appeared to be placed in regular layers as of walls, or they may have been thus thrown up in excavating. There can, however, be no question that most if not all of this part of the barrow had been opened at some former time, as pieces of broken pottery were found at various depths during the work, and they are nearly all of the Roman or Romano-British period—a few only of more ancient date. The latter may have been derived from cells that had been destroyed, and this is the more likely as stones of similar form and quality to those now in the barrow are found lying at no great distance from it, and no stone of the same character exists in the quarries of the neighbourhood.

Nearly in the centre, and at the back of cell C, a broken circle of stones (F in Plan) was discovered. The soil all round them was deeply impregnated with wood ashes. The diameter of this circle of stones is about seven feet. No remains of any sort were found near it.

Other and considerable openings were subsequently made to the south and west of this, but without any result, except at the centre of the exterior southern wall.

In following the course of this, an opening was found, leading to a small cist (E). It was apparently perfect and untouched. Portions of a human skull, some teeth, and a deposit of animal bones, probably a wild boar, were met with in working down to it. It was walled all round, covered with three large horizontal stones, each about three feet square, but only contained pieces of broken stones.

Mr. Winterbotham adds:—

“The very fragmentary skull and the boar’s bones found at the south end are said to present marks of cremation. If this is the case, they show the only signs of fire anywhere about the

tumulus, except in the neighbourhood of the stone circle between the two cells. A small brass coin of Constantine was found under the turf about the centre of the mound. The obverse presented a helmeted head with the legend CONSTANTIN. AUG. and the reverse, two captives seated beneath a standard, and the legend VIRTUS EXERCIT. This, and a few small pieces of iron, were the only bits of metal of any kind discovered in the exploration of the barrow, and, like the pottery, may have been left there by some former excavators. There was no mark of a tool on any stone in the whole structure.

"The human remains are, then, in the whole barrow, those of thirty-eight bodies of both sexes, and of all ages, from the infant to extreme old age. The great majority of the skulls were too broken and crushed to be restored. They all, with one exception, bear the usual characteristics of the long-headed skull.

"The complete skull is more than usually dolichocephalic; the projecting glabella and retreating narrow frontal bone of this class of skull are well shown in this specimen, which is also remarkably heavy and strong.

"The skull found under the huge stone so often alluded to, is a contrast in every way to the other skulls, and might pass for a modern, well-developed, round head.

"Dr. Thurnam, F.S.A., believes this skull to have been from a secondary interment; but, from its position under the huge stone, I consider this to have been totally impossible. Supposing that this individual and the five children were sacrificial victims, it may well be conceived that they were prisoners of war from some distant tribe, and thus might present a difference of form from their captors.

"Another skull presents a peculiarity in the teeth, to which the attention of the Society is particularly directed. The upper incisors have had their crowns broken off, or ground down, even with the gums; this is the more apparent as the remaining teeth are sound and not much worn. There is no other upper jaw showing this peculiarity, though it will be seen that there are *two* lower jaws fitting nearly exactly the double curve formed by the deficient upper incisors, a fact showing that other individuals shared in this defect.

ham "The massive ~~upper~~ jaw found on the large stone is worthy of notice, for, while it bears no point of resemblance to any of the jaws found in the side chambers, it has, in the peculiarly broad chin, a family resemblance to the two male jaws from the small cell (B) first opened. There is nothing in the thigh and other long bones to denote that the men were more than the medium height of those of the present day, while the women are rather slight and small. The bones present well-marked ridges and attachments for muscles. A humerus has the notch for the

olecranon converted into a foramen, and two cervical vertebræ are anchylosed together, but no bones showed signs of injury during life.

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S.N.* "Among the remains which are not human should be noticed a peculiar, rounded bone, supposed by Professor Owen to be the head of the radius of some large animal, but of what animal is not known. I think it may be the long boss from which a stag's antlers may have sprung. Also part of the shaft of a bone with two drilled holes will be noticed."

Mr. Lawrence concluded in calling the attention of the Society to the zeal and skill shown by Mr. Winterbotham in devoting so much time to these excavations, and stated that the skulls and other human remains would be deposited, with the concurrence of Mr. Chamberlayne, in the Museum of the Hospital at Cheltenham.

In illustration of this communication, the skulls and other remains of all kinds discovered in the barrow were laid before the Society, as well as two lithographed views representing various portions of the barrow, made from drawings by Mr. Chamberlayne, and a plan of the barrow and two drawings by Mr. Winterbotham.

THOMAS LAYTON, Esq. exhibited, in connection with Mr. Lawrence's paper, four skulls discovered in the River Thames, near Kew.

These skulls formed part of a collection of eleven obtained at different times by Mr. Layton. One of them was of the long type usually found in the Long Chambered tumuli, and was a well-marked and characteristic specimen. Another presented some modifications of that type, and was of the class which has been denominated "river-bed skulls;" a third was a round skull, and might possibly be Roman. The fourth skull showed the marks of a violent blow made with some sharp cutting instrument.

On the conclusion of Mr. Lawrence's paper, JOHN THURNAM, Esq. M.D. F.S.A. made the following observations:—

"I have little to add to what I have said already in the paper referred to, and which is published in the first volume of the Memoirs of the Anthropological Society; but as my name has been mentioned, I may be permitted to say that Mr. Winterbotham has rather stretched the suggestion which I threw out, before the barrow had been completely explored, as to the round skull, for I added another suggestion which I decidedly prefer, which was that the skull probably belonged to a man of some other tribe, or more probably of a race entirely distinct, some individuals of which had been captured by the people by whom this mound

was erected, and slaughtered perhaps in honour of the obsequies of the persons interred in the principal chambers. I certainly incline to the second opinion, which is the one Mr. Winterbotham has himself adopted.

“As this subject is somewhat new perhaps to the Society of Antiquaries, I may be permitted to state that the investigations of late years show that among the tumuli in the south-west of England—I will not go beyond that, for that is the limit to my observations—in the counties of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somersetshire, the long barrows, which are comparatively few in number, are frequently accompanied by smaller circular barrows, which may be said to surround them ; not that they occur in anything like contact. In the long barrows no trace of metal has hitherto been found, but only flint and other stone-implements ; which I think justifies us in referring them to the Age of Stone—and in them we find only long skulls ; but when we come to examine the round barrows, which contain spear-heads and dagger-blades of bronze, we find round skulls. Therefore, when we come to a long tumulus which in this instance contained a large number of skulls which generally speaking are long, and we find one round one in a different part of the barrow, it is a fair inference that the round skull belonged to another tribe or people.

“As regards the view entertained by the author of the paper that the barrow was a place of worship, I am not entirely prepared to endorse that view in his sense of the term. It was clearly a sepulchral monument. But religious rites generally accompanied sepulchral rites, and the manes of the dead may have been worshipped there and necromancy practised.”

Professor HUXLEY, F.R.S. made the following remarks :—

“Having been requested to examine the skulls, and hearing that they came from one barrow, I was at once struck with what appeared to me a striking confirmation of the views entertained by Dr. Thurnam about the coincidence of the long skull with the long barrow ; but shortly afterwards my attention was called to the fact that Dr. Thurnam had described these skulls in his paper delivered before the Anthropological Society ; and, on consulting that paper, I found, as might be expected, (for we are all acquainted with the accuracy of Dr. Thurnam’s work), there was nothing for me to do but to say that what he states in that paper is perfectly correct. One of the skulls is undoubtedly very different from the rest, and I should be quite inclined to agree with Dr. Thurnam that the round or broad skull proceeded from some different tribe.

“I may add, with regard to the skulls found in the bed of the Thames, that some weeks ago I was at Kew, and had

the opportunity of examining the large collection of antiquities and skulls which has been gathered there by the careful researches of Mr. Layton; and it was a very remarkable circumstance, that, out of the eighteen skulls which I saw in the collection, by far the great majority were of the long type, and were of that form to which I at one time gave the name of 'river-bed skulls,' which I think will be found identical with Dr. Thurnam's long type. Such is the general character, so far as I know, of skulls found in river beds; but out of those eighteen there were two which were at once distinguishable from all the rest, and they belonged to the broad or round type; one of these is exhibited on the present occasion."

JOHN CRAWFURD, Esq. F.R.S. being called upon, made the following remarks :—

"I have little to say after those two distinguished anatomists have spoken. As to this barrow, I conceive it to be nothing more or less than a burying-ground, very probably a family burying-ground. It seems to consist of two distinct parts, a very old one which contains flint implements, and which shews that metal implements were totally unknown at the time, and therefore that it belongs to a very rude and early period of society. The other portion of the barrow represents a much more recent period, very recent indeed, for it contains specimens of pottery with the mark of the lathe; and it seems also to contain fragments of iron, shewing that iron had been used at the time of the later inhumation.*

"With respect to the skulls, I have no confidence in skulls. Long or round, these are relative terms that tell you nothing. They say that a skull is more or less round or more or less long, but nothing beyond it. Now, two skilful anatomists are here present, and I ask them if I were to lay before them fifty or one hundred skulls, including those of Teutons, of Anglo-Saxons, of Celts, of Slaves, of Hindoos, of Chinese even, and of Arabs, whether they could tell me which was one or which was the other? I am sure that my friend Professor Huxley will not venture to say that he could. How should you be able to tell? You cannot tell the difference between the skull of the dog and the wolf, animals far more remote from each other than any two descriptions of human beings; and there are a great number (sometimes we call them forty and sometimes sixty) different types of men. Although nothing is easier than to distinguish a lion from a tiger, you cannot tell a tiger's skull from a lion's, either as a part or a

* These pieces of iron, as well as the fragments of lathe-turned pottery, did not probably belong to any interment, but showed the period at which the barrow must have been attempted to be ransacked on a previous occasion.

whole skull. If anybody could do it, it would be my friend Professor Huxley.

"So it happens with all the lower animals of the same genera; and, if this cannot be effected with respect to animals considerably more remote from each other than are any varieties of human beings, how is it possible to expect that it ever should be accomplished in the case of man?"

Professor HUXLEY made the following remarks:—

"A full discussion of the questions raised by Mr. Crawford would take a very long time. To one or two of his positions I should venture to give a direct negative. As respects the dog and the wolf, and I include the jackal in the same category, I believe he is quite right in saying there is no precise line of demarcation between those animals; but I disagree with him *in toto* if he says there is no difference between the skulls of different races of mankind. And then as to lions and tigers, they can be distinguished by their skulls just as easily as by their stripes and the character of their coats.

"With respect to the question of cranial difference, I think there is a great deal of what Goethe calls *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, truth and fiction, in what Mr. Crawford has said. There is truth in so far as the variety of colour, complexion, and hair of men may sometimes be more marked than the varieties of their cranial structure. So far as that goes, I should be very largely inclined to agree with him, and I should say one might be unable to distinguish the skulls of some races of mankind who are very different from others in their hair and complexion, just as it would be very difficult to distinguish by their skulls a jackal from a wolf. But it is equally true that there are certain races which are distinguishable by their cranial characteristics. There are particular forms of skull which you find over a certain geographical area, and do not find anywhere else. I take, for example, one of the largest continuous areas in the whole world, that is to say, Australia. Anybody who examines a collection of Australian skulls never finds anything but the long form; the broad skull is not known among the Australians. Hundreds have been examined, and no round Australian skull has been found; and the crania of these people present so many peculiarities that in nine cases out of ten you may diagnose an Australian skull with certainty. The whole of the large continent of Africa which lies south of the Sahara never presents a broad skull. In that area almost invariably a very long skull is found. In the South of Germany, and thence eastward to Central Asia, including the whole Central Asian area, we shall find as a general rule a broad type of skull predominating. Now I do not mean to explain those facts, but I do say that they are not to be dis-

regarded. Where structural facts prevail over a large area, they have significance; and what we must endeavour to do is to find out what that significance is, and rescue it from the cloud and confusion in which it has been buried by mingling ethnology with philology.

Mr. CRAWFURD made, in answer, the following additional observations:—

“It is a pleasure at all times to hear my friend Professor Huxley, and I very often agree with him, but sometimes disagree with him. He has pointed out to you three or four areas in which the skulls are quite distinct and separate. In all that I agree. He has pointed out a very small number of savages in Australia, where the skulls are all long; and he has pointed out to you the skulls of the African race, and they are all long also. But can he tell me the difference between the skull of the African negro and the skull of the Australian? I do not believe that he can, or that he will venture to do so. There are two distinct races in Asia, the Arab and the Hindoo. No two people can be more distinct as to race, physically and mentally. Can Professor Huxley tell me the difference between an Arab's skull and a Hindoo's skull? I am sure he cannot. Professor Huxley has stated that throughout the whole of central Asia, wherein there exists a vast number of races wholly distinct, the whole of the skulls were of a broad type in themselves. How then? What is the distinction between broad skulls and long skulls, because they are one and the same in totally different races? In the extreme case of the African we do not require an examination of the skull; we know perfectly well a negro and a white man without examining the skull. And I will repeat what I have said before, and Mr. Huxley has heard before, on the authority of an eminent comparative anatomist, of the very class and rank of Mr. Huxley himself, whom I once consulted about this very opinion I am venturing to give before the Society as to the extreme uncertainty of the skull as a test of race, and he said, ‘Certainly, I am quite satisfied that it is a most uncertain test;’ and he took up a skull placed among the African skulls in a certain extensive museum; but when he turned up the skull he saw the label upon it ‘Head of a Scotch sergeant, killed in the Battle of Waterloo.’ There were about 120 skulls of the different classes of Hindoos exhibited by the same great anatomist, and they included not only Hindoos, but Nepaulese, and even Tibetans; and the conclusion he came to was this, ‘I do not see any great difference between these skulls and such as might have been turned out of an English churchyard.’”

