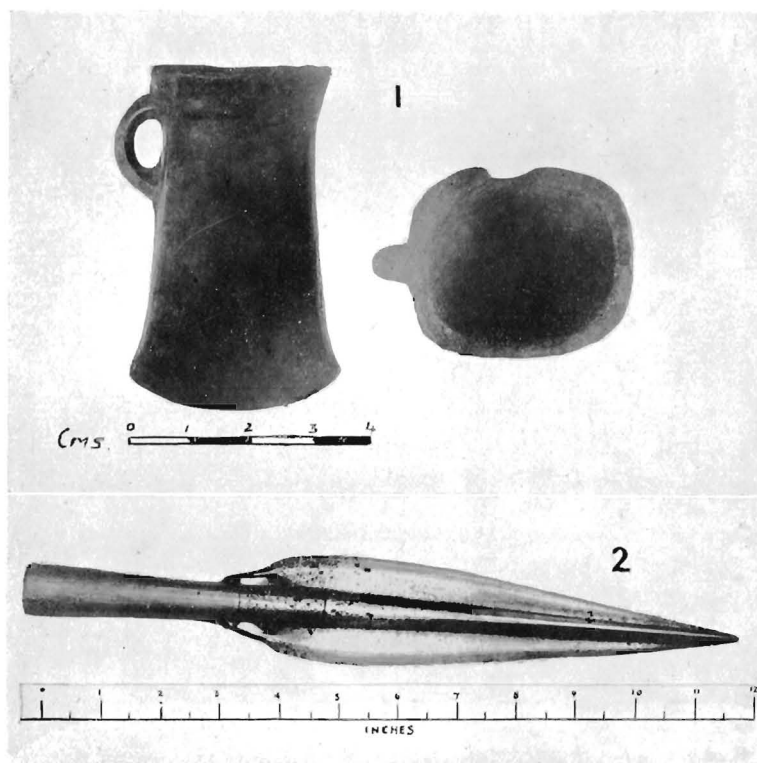


A



B

PLATE IX.

Fifth Report on Read's Cavern.

BY E. K. TRATMAN, B.D.S.

Since the last report little work has been done in this Cave, as excavations of greater importance have had to be given preference. There are now practically no untouched areas in the cave left to be excavated. The hearth area at B.40 and B.41¹ has now been fully explored, but has yielded no additional remains of importance: the hearth site is, however, important as it is the only instance in the whole cave, as at present explored, in which a made hearth has been found. Throughout the rest of the cave the fires had been lighted on the rock floor, though it is possible that a small quantity of clay had been introduced in the region of E.20 and E.21² to fill up small hollows. Again small stones seem to have been used to cover over cracks in the floor which is composed of accumulations of fallen masses from the roof and walls of the cave. This use of small stones cannot be definitely asserted.

FINDS.

1. HUMAN BONES.

A single left ulna was found upon a ledge on the south side. This area had been previously carefully examined on a number of occasions, and therefore the bone must have come down from the jammed mass of fallen blocks and scree that bars the way to the surface here. This find is further evidence to support the theory that the majority of the human bones fell into the Cave after the occupation had ceased; but it is not suggested that they are of different date from the rest of the remains in the cave; on the contrary all the evidence at present available would suggest that the cave was abandoned because the entrance was closed by a collapse, which caused the death of several individuals; subsequently some of this collapsed material slid down into the cave proper, carrying parts of the skeletons with it. In support of this suggestion is the fact that there have been two minor falls into the cave in the last two years.

¹ Vol. II, No. 1, p. 51.

² Vol. I, No. 2, p. 90.

The bone was very friable, and fell to pieces on being touched, but later it was pieced together and found to be rather massive, with a slightly larger curvature along its length at the proximal end than is usual.

2. WORKED BONE AND ANTLER (Plate IX, A).

E.31/32. A phalanx of sheep or pig having a slot cut into the distal end (No. 1).

Another bone article consists of a stout piece of bone which has been extensively cut, but for what use it was intended cannot now be determined (No. 2).

There is a metatarsal of an ox (No. 3) shewing cutting at the ends, while the shaft is highly polished. A similarly polished radius of sheep (No. 4) comes from D.24. Both these resemble burnishers from Glastonbury Lake Village and from Wookey Hole.

E.18. A metatarsal of sheep with a single hole drilled through the proximal epiphysis. Similar finds are reported from nearly all the Early Iron Age sites yet explored.

B.45. From this area come the fragments of another so-called cheek-piece. The only part that can be pieced together shews a plain tip as far as the beginning of the first hole.

E.16. This is a small portion of an antler implement. It is so slender that the part remaining most closely resembles the antler point figured in Vol. I, No. 3, Plate XXVI.

3. IRON. (Plate IX, A).

H.19. Underneath a large fallen block was found an iron bar 36 cms. long, circular in section with a diameter of 8 mm. The handle end is bent into a shepherd's crook loop with the terminal portion of the loop hammered in against the main rod. The rod is slightly curved towards the distal end, which is too much corroded to enable the purpose of the implement to be determined (No. 5).

C.14. Three fragments of a greatly corroded knife. The part recovered measures 10.5 cms. in length, and shews a single rivet with a burred head. This rivet projects on one side only. (No. 6).

E.20. Below this area is a little chamber which communicates with the general floor of the cave through numerous cracks and chinks. A number of articles have fallen into this chamber through these cracks, and have already been described. Recently, however, a knife (No. 7), 13 cms. long was found. The knife is broad for its

length, averaging 3.3 cms. across the blade. The handle portion is nearly equal in length to the blade and is quite as wide, the whole being blunt backed; it bears two rivets, one of which, the smaller, projects on both sides a distance of 1 cm. and lies 1.7 cms. from the end. The other rivet is larger, has a burred head and projects on one side only. Some of the wood of the original handle still remains round the rivets. The knife closely resembles a glazier's knife, which is used with a hammer for cutting out old putty and broken glass. Nothing very similar is figured from Glastonbury Lake Village, Wookey Hole, All Cannings Cross or Hengistbury Head.

4. POTTERY.

Reconstruction has been continued, and it is now evident that the number of vessels represented by the finds is not far short of a hundred.

5. OTHER FINDS.

No other finds of importance have been made.
