

LATE-CELTIC DISCOVERIES AT
BROADSTAIRS.

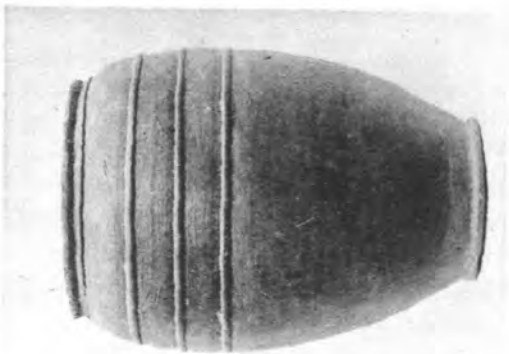
BY HOWARD HURD.

DURING the last six years a number of interesting archæological discoveries have been made at Broadstairs relating to the Bronze Age, Late-Celtic and Anglo-Saxon periods.

Perhaps the most interesting 'finds' are those connected with the Late-Celtic era, and they were the first to be brought to light. The term "Late-Celtic" is used to distinguish British Antiquities of the Iron Age prior to the Roman occupation of this country, and may be considered to cover a period of about three hundred years before Cæsar's time.

Between the summer of 1907 and the spring of 1909, excavations were made at varying intervals during the laying-out and development of a building estate situated on top of the cliffs in the neighbourhood of Dumpton Gap, and on the site of a road now called South Cliff Parade, which resulted in the discovery of an extensive system of trenches or ditches, principally V-shaped, varying from two feet to five feet six inches at the top, and one foot six inches to three feet wide at the bottom, and two feet to four feet deep. They were cut in the chalk subsoil and were probably used for the purpose of carrying off the surface water drainage, and they followed the lines of the rectangular and circular enclosures within which would originally be the portable dwellings of the Late-Celtic people and their cattle pounds, etc,

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CORDONED URN (1).

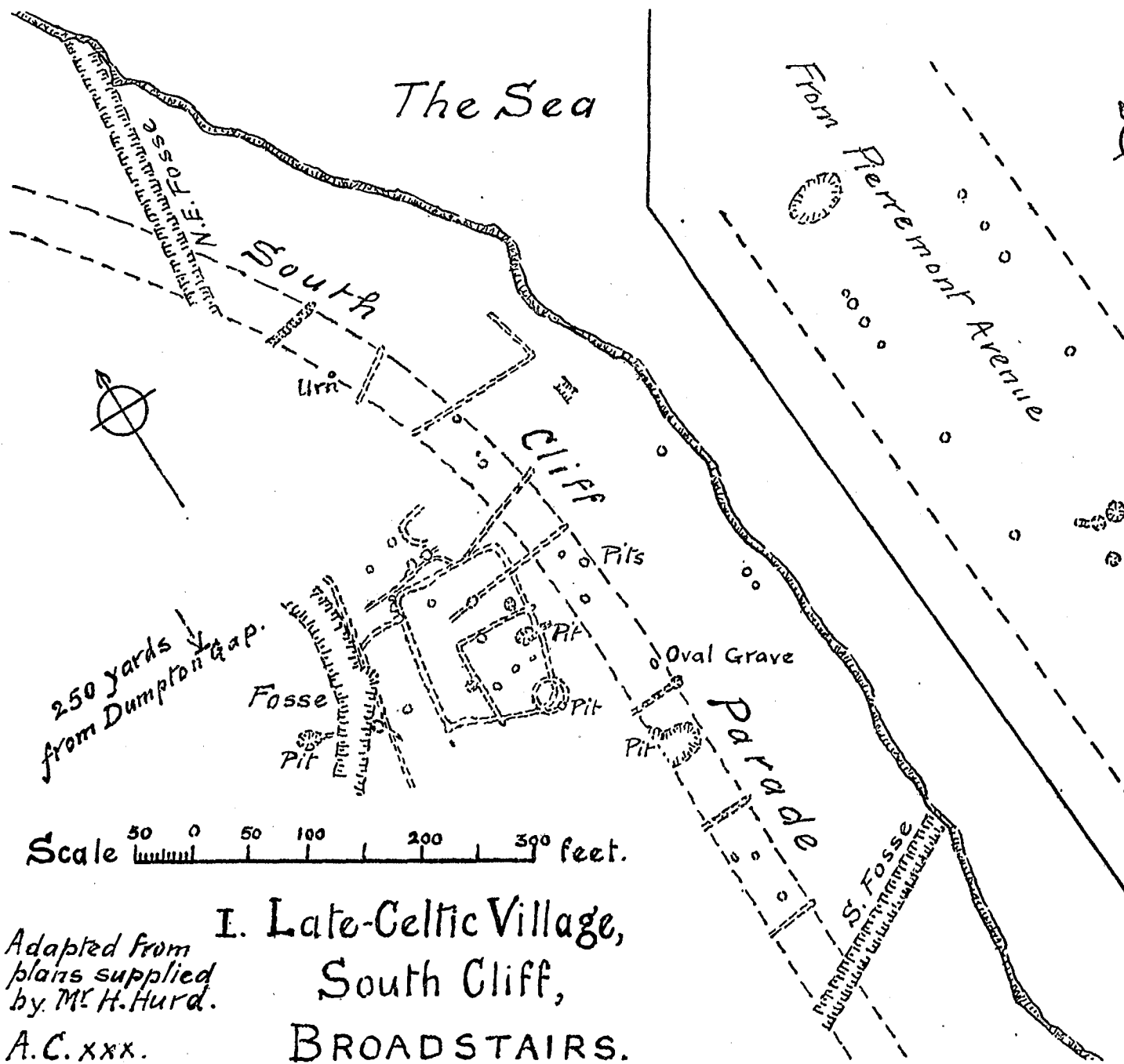


S. CLIFF, BROADSTAIRS (1): LATE-CELTIC POTTERY (1).

A large number of pits were uncovered, usually about six feet deep, which contained quantities of bones of sheep and oxen, with the teeth of horses and dogs. These pits also contained a considerable quantity of broken pottery of various kinds, also oyster, mussel and limpet shells. They were no doubt refuse pits. A number of small holes were also noticed, some containing fragments of pottery, burnt stones and fine ash, and were probably cooking pits; others were only eight or nine inches in diameter and were probably for posts, either for some kind of defence or domestic use. In one pit was found a number of lumps of daub, such as would be used for huts after the manner of wattle and daub.

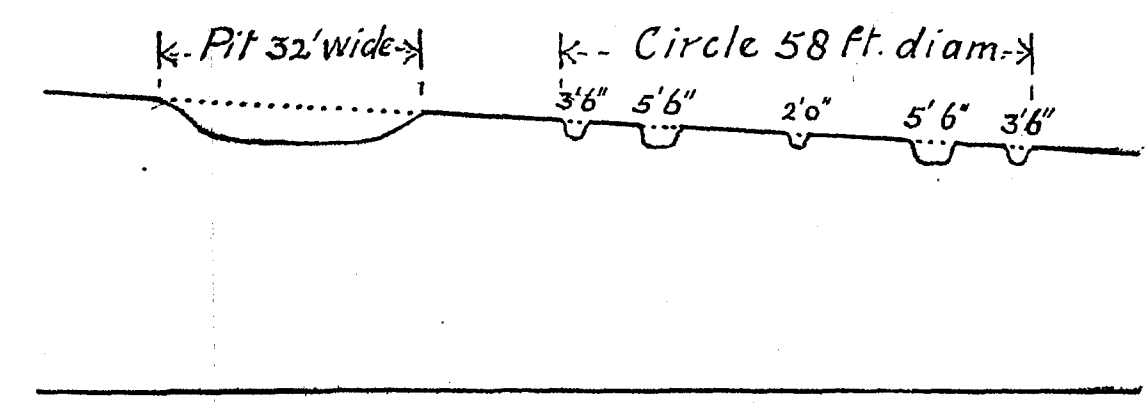
The Fosse which surrounded the prehistoric village was met with at three points, at some considerable distance from each other, practically north, south and west of the settlement. A number of other pits or wells were located in conjunction with the ditches, and were for the purpose of receiving the surface drainage (PLAN I.). Two oval graves were uncovered: in one was a cordoned urn of well-known and distinctive Late-Celtic type, which contained calcined bones; it was of a dull brown colour, nine inches high by six and a-half inches in diameter; it was protected when in the grave by being packed round with flints, which had been subjected to the action of fire (PLATE 1). In the other grave, which was lined with baked clay, was an urn, of coarse dark brown ware, which was incomplete, as was also a dull-red shallow pan or saucer. Both of them contained calcined bones.

The next thing of interest to be discovered was a bracelet of Kimmeridge shale in the form of a ring with circular section, and an outside diameter of two and three-quarter inches. In close proximity to this bracelet was found a bone hand-comb, about six inches long, such as would be used for beating in the weft on the loom; it is of the usual pattern common to early British sites; also a chalk loom weight of triangular shape, four sided, tapering towards the top, with a perforation shewing the chalk worn away by

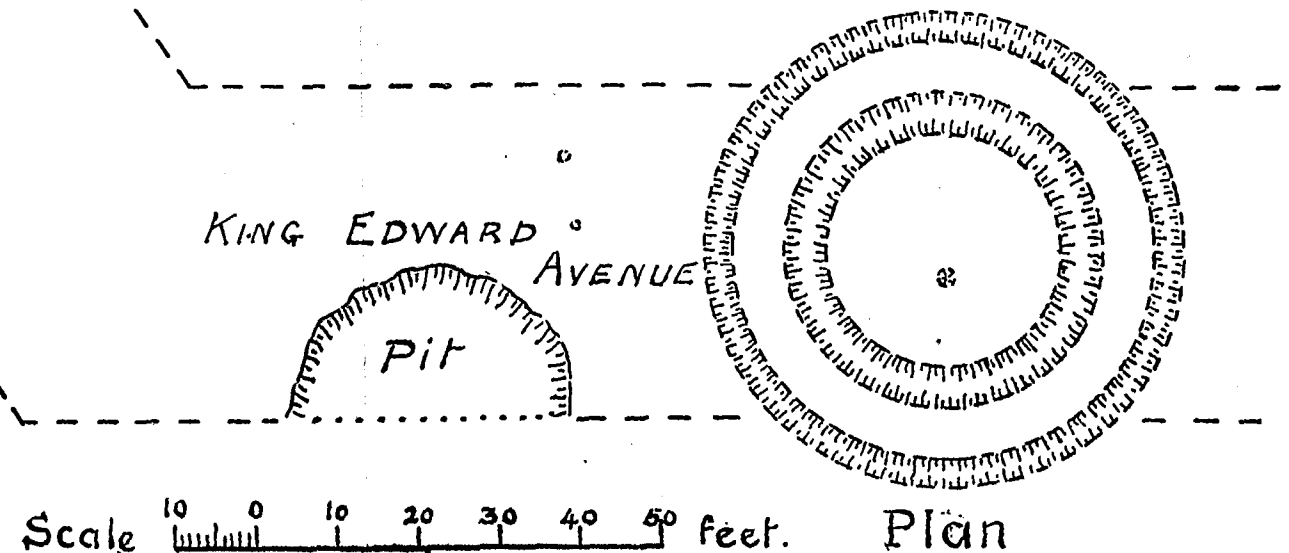


I. Late-Celtic Village,
South Cliff,
BROADSTAIRS.

Adapted from
plans supplied
by Mr. H. Hurd.
A.C. xxx.



Section



II. Late-Celtic Settlement,
King Edward Avenue.

Scale 0 10 20 30 40 50 feet.

use; also two other loom-weights of baked clay and one of flint (PLATE 2).

As the work of cutting the new road proceeded, other articles of interest were discovered, including a number of flint pounds, varying from three to five inches in diameter; they were stacked together in a heap comprising about a dozen. Near them was a small hand-quern of gritstone; it was not complete, and was broken in three pieces. A part of another quern was also found, and a large flat-topped flint stone with a tapering piece of sandstone shaped to suit the hand, and bearing signs of having been used for grinding purposes.

The fragments of pottery found in this field are such as cover a fairly wide range both as to texture and quality of material; also as regards the nature and style of ornament used. There appears to be no hand-made pottery, but all has been made on a wheel. The colours vary from light brown to pale brick shade, while some are quite black and shiny. As to ornament, there is the rudely stabbed pattern, and some pieces have raised ribs or cordons, whilst others are elegantly moulded. Then there is the characteristic linear ornament, and a number of specimens with comb markings (PLATES 1 and 2).

It may be interesting to remark that the Dumpton field has yielded some fragments of pottery of a similar type to that which has been found in the neighbourhood of Rheims, and which is generally accepted as belonging to a period between 300 and 200 B.C., and forms part of the Morel collection in the British Museum; therefore, it seems to point to the conclusion that the Late-Celtic tribes either brought such pottery from the Continent with them, or else made it on their arrival in Thanet.

The general features of this Late-Celtic village appear to resemble somewhat the village of "Woodcuts" in Dorset, which was excavated by General Pitt-Rivers, excepting, of course, that no pit-dwellings were found at Dumpton. There seems little doubt that the inhabitants of the Dumpton Late-Celtic village were engaged in pastoral and probably

agricultural pursuits, as so far no warlike weapons whatever have been brought to light, while an iron hunting spear or lance was found with the remains of a skeleton.

Other Late-Celtic remains have been discovered in Broadstairs at King Edward Avenue and Lanthorne Road, the former consisting of two concentric circular trenches, the inner one having a diameter of twenty-eight feet, and the outer one a diameter of fifty-eight feet. The trenches or ditches were V-shaped, three feet six inches wide at the top, and two feet six inches deep for the outer trench, and the inner one five feet six inches wide and the same depth (PLAN II.).

Near the centre of the circle was a round shallow hole which contained a large urn. The pottery was of a coarse character, and ornamented with rough incised lines round the top of the vessel. The urn fell in pieces when being removed from the ground. In the ditches were found a few bones and one fossil *echinus*. In an adjacent pit were similar remains to those at Dumpton, such as fragments of black and pale-red pottery with bones and teeth of oxen and horses, and a few oyster, mussel and limpet shells.

About forty yards in a north-westerly direction from the circular enclosure there was a number of small holes varying from eight to fifteen inches in diameter, in two parallel lines (fifteen holes in all), which may have held posts that formed part of a stockade or some other means of defence.

The general characteristics seem to indicate that the circular enclosures were associated with a burial on this site.

The relics at Lanthorne Road, also relating to the same period, consisted of a black ware bowl (incomplete); an iron spear-head about twelve inches long, in a very oxidized state; a large quantity of bones of various domestic animals, such as sheep, horses and oxen; a considerable quantity of broken pottery similar to that found at Dumpton, and a number of whetstones. They were in a pit which was four feet wide, twelve feet long and twelve feet deep, each end being semicircular.



Photo]

[*J. Walton*

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LATE-CELTIC COMB, LOOM-WEIGHTS, AND POTTERY (1),
S. CLIFF, BROADSTAIRS (2).