

*C O M M O N*

*Gate*

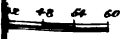
*Leck*

1793.

*Remains formerly* 832.

**THE DREWSTEIGNTO**

*J. W. Diamond del*



NOTICE OF PRE-HISTORIC REMAINS FORMERLY  
EXISTING NEAR THE DREWSTEIGNTON  
CROMLECH,

OBSERVED BY THE REV. R. POLWHELE PRIOR TO 1793, AND MAPPED  
BY THE REV. WILLIAM GREY IN 1838.

BY G. WARREING ORMEROD, M.A., F.G.S.

(Read at Exeter, July, 1872.)

THE questions "by whom" or "for what purpose" the Drewsteignton Cromlech was erected will be carefully avoided; the sole object is to record the very extensive Circles and Avenues which formerly existed there, and which have been now removed.

Polwhele, in his *Historical Views of Devonshire* (1793), vol. i. page 61, and *History of Devon* (1797), vol. i. page 150, when describing the Cromlech at Drewsteignton, writes thus: "Towards the west of the Cromlech are several conical pillars, about four feet high. On the south side there are three standing in a direct line from east to west. The distance from the most western to the middle is two hundred and twelve paces; from the middle to that on the east one hundred and six—just one-half of the former; by which, it would seem, that an intermediate pillar at least had been removed. In a parallel line to the north are two others, remaining erect, the one from the other distant about fifty-two paces—nearly one-fourth of the greatest space on the opposite line. The area between is ninety-three paces, in the midway of which, at the eastern extremity, stands the Cromlech." He further adds, in the *Historical Views* (page 94), and *History of Devon* (page 154): "At Drewsteignton the Cromlech is placed on an elevated spot overlooking a sacred way, and two rows of pillars, and several columnar circles."

In 1807 Mr. Samuel Lysons visited and took a drawing of the Cromlech; and, prior to 1830, Mr. Rowe examined the district; but neither of them allude to the existence of any remains near the Cromlech. Early in this year (1872) Mr.

King, of Crediton, wrote to me, asking if I was aware of the existence of certain remains near the Cromlech which had been mapped by the Rev. W. Grey, now of Exeter, in 1838. During my residence at Chagford, from 1855 to 1869, I had carefully examined the fields near the Cromlech, where I thought these remains had existed, in the endeavour to discover them; and Mr. King informs me that he had done the same; but our researches had been in vain, and no person remembered their existence. Mr. Grey has kindly given all the information in his power, and the following description is copied from his journal containing the notes taken on the spot:—

“Wednesday, 4th July, 1838. Visited first, from Moreton, the Druidical Circles above the Cromlech. The Cromlech lies in a field about one hundred and ten yards to the east. Here are two concentric circles of stones, the inner circle having entrances facing the cardinal points, that to the north being sixty-five paces in length and five broad. The outer circle, besides these, has avenues diverging towards N.E., S.E., S.W., N.W.; a smaller circle seems to intersect the larger, of which the avenue eastwards is very evident.”

. The plan was made by Mr. Grey and his brother on the spot, on the morning of July 4th, 1838, and was completed by him on the evening of the same day at Okehampton. These remains are, doubtless, the “Sacred Way,” the “two rows of Pillars,” and “Columnar Circles,” noticed by Polwhele. As Mr. Grey does not mention the pillars to the north and south of the Cromlech, it is probable that the work of destruction had commenced before his visit. The remains mapped by Mr. Grey were situate on the westerly side of the Cromlech, on the land now occupied by two fields; in the most easterly of these no large stones now are seen, in the adjoining field many stones remain near the gate to the common, and in the upper part some are seen which possibly formed part of these circles and avenues.

By permission of Mr. Grey, his plan has been reproduced on a larger scale, and the stones described by Polwhele have been also inserted. As the distances are given in paces, the map cannot be considered strictly correct. A pace has been taken as a yard.