

“THE RUNDLESTONE.”

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IN a paper on the Forest Bounds near Princetown, read at Lynton in 1906 (Vol. XXXVIII, p. 411), I mentioned a large, roughly-shaped granite pillar as lying prone by the roadside nearly three hundred yards east of the point where the road from the prison joins the main Tavistock and Ashburton road. It is 8 ft. 5 in. long, and about 1 ft. 9 in. square in section.

Further investigation confirms me in the belief that this is the upper part of the old menhir from which the hamlet of Rundlestone takes its name; and which is referred to in the old route-book called *Britannia Depicta, or Ogilby Improv'd*, as “a Great Stone call'd Roundle” (4th edition, 1736, p. 180).

In regard, however, to the stone which I thought might be the *base* of the menhir, and which is embedded in the turf about fifty yards west of where the two roads join, I have had to alter my opinion. It is not nearly massive enough, and is sunk in the soil only a few inches, so that it can be moved by a strong man without much difficulty. The fact that there is a close correspondence in position and size of three “jumper” marks on the upper surface of this stone with three similar ones on the surface of the unweathered end of the great pillar, was one reason which made me think it might be the base of the pillar *in situ*; and its position—only a few feet from the line of the old forest boundary—lent support to this idea.

The fence of the prison grounds here follows the old forest boundary line; and a footpath over North Hessary Tor from Princetown comes down the hill-side just out-

side the fence to a "stile" formed by some modern steps of granite. Just opposite to this, on the other side of the road, is an old parish boundary stone, marking the line of division between "Lidford" and "Walkhampton"—i.e. between the Forest of Dartmoor and Walkhampton.

This stone witness proves my contention that the old forest boundary crossed the road at this point, and not where the modern line of granite posts—one hundred and fifty yards further west—would seem to show.

The fact also that the small farms forming the hamlet of Rundlestone are all on the western side of the *old* boundary line, whereas the *modern* line divides their lands, thus seeming to make their holders tenants in part of the Duchy and in part of the Walkhampton manor lord, as mentioned in my paper of 1906, also proves that the modern boundary line is not the true one.

In regard to the Rundlestone menhir itself, a man of over fifty years of age, who has lived all his life in the district, told me he remembered that, when he was a lad, a large stone pillar used to stand almost exactly where the stone steps are now placed at the beginning of the footpath leading to Hessary Tor; but that it was removed at the time that some work was being done on the fence of the prison grounds at this spot. What became of it he did not know, but thought it must have been broken up. It was, he said, a much bigger post than any now standing in the district.

If his memory can be relied upon, this evidence seems to prove that the old menhir was still standing, about half a century ago, where it had been placed at least six centuries before. It should be noted, however, that according to the old plan in *Britannia Depicta*, it stood on the *north* side of the road, and not on the south side where the stone steps are placed. If this evidence is to be trusted implicitly the menhir must have been almost on the spot that the parish boundary stone (before-mentioned) now occupies.

Would it not be possible to get the menhir re-erected? It may be that a little spade work in the turf close to the road, either on the north or the south side, would reveal the base from which the prostrate menhir was broken. The cost of this would not be great; and I imagine that the many lovers of the moor in this Association would

willingly contribute a small sum each to carry out such a desirable piece of work.

It seems most unlikely that any valid objection could be raised by the authorities controlling the roads, by the Duchy, by the lord of the manor, or by any residents in the locality.