

THE STONE ROWS OF DARTMOOR.

PART II.

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IN the course of my paper on the "Stone Rows of Dartmoor," read at the Plymouth meeting of this Association,¹ I remarked that while some of the rows which formerly existed had without doubt disappeared, it was extremely unlikely that all yet extant were recorded. This statement was verified, while the paper was in the press, in the discovery by Mr. R. Burnard of an undescribed row at Assycombe. Since then he has ascertained the existence of two more, for descriptions of which I am again much indebted to him; one has been discovered by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould; and I have myself found another (with possible indications of a fourth) at Merivale, and also remains of others on Cocks Tor.

Merivale.

A recent visit, under exceptionally favourable conditions of soil and atmosphere and their concomitants, to Merivale, has resulted in the discovery of the remains of a third stone row there, and apparently of traces of a fourth. The distinct row is connected with the great menhir, and it seems very remarkable that, as far as I am aware, it has never been noticed before. Possibly attention has been concentrated on the more important memorials—the well-known double "avenues." This row, so far as visible, is now represented by three small stones, equally spaced, immediately south of the menhir, and tending slightly east of south in a line not precisely from the menhir, but from a point in the eastern half of its circumscribing circle. On two points there can

¹ *Trans. Dev. Assoc.* xxiv. 387-417.

be no question. First, that these three stones represent a formerly existing row; and, secondly, that it was connected with the menhir; and it is specially worthy of note that the direction of this menhir row should be so nearly north and south, while that of the two great double rows is practically west-north-west and east-south-east.

Immediately to the east of the menhir is a low ring of grass-grown stones hollowed in the centre to the natural level of the ground, which may either be the outer rim of a small ransacked cairn, some six feet in diameter, or the disturbed stones of a small circle. The former is more probable; but it may possibly have been that they once enclosed another menhir. This, however, must remain purely matter of speculation.

The existence of a row in connection with this cairn or circle is suggested by a few low stones in line, pointing much in the same direction as the remains of the row attached to the menhir, but not precisely. And while I think it very likely that such a row may have existed, I only note it here, not as a certain fact, but as a possibility which ought to be put upon record, and which may have its value in estimating the frequency of this special form of sepulchral memorial on Dartmoor.

Laugh Tor.

I give the description of this row from the notes kindly supplied me by Mr. Burnard. Laugh Tor will be found on Sheet cvii.—N.E.—of the new six-inch Survey.

“The ‘avenue’ intersects the wall which divides Huccaby and Laugh Tor newtakes, at a point about 250 yards south of the rectangular enclosure at some time used as a cattle or sheep fold, on the slope of Laugh Tor. It has a direction from south-east to north-west, and the existing remains show that it was at least 657 feet long. On the south-east side of the newtake wall is a group of seven stones, whilst on the north-east side of this boundary there are eight stones, terminating with a fine prostrate menhir over twelve feet long, which near the base is two feet thick and tapers to ten inches at the top. The stones between these two groups have disappeared—probably they went to help build the newtake wall. The ‘avenue’ character of the existing stones is very clear. In the south-east group it is nine feet wide; in the north-west group it is five feet. There are now no cairns or kistvaens visible, but there are indications of both. The stones now standing are only from one to two feet high,

excepting at the commencement of the south-east group, where two of the stones are double this height. The immediate locality must at some time have been rich in stone remains. In the inner and outer Huccaby newtakes there are two large circular enclosures, remains of hut circles, and a little west and north-west of Laugh Tor there are some of the finest kistvaens on Dartmoor."

Conies Down.

For the account of this row I am also indebted to Mr. R. Burnard, the fortunate discoverer.

"It lies between Conies Down Tor and Conies Down (98 S.E. six-inch new Ordnance Survey) starting from a congeries of stones near the Lichway, and running south-south-west to north-north-east. It is 588 feet long and terminates close to a large prostrate slab which I think closed the upper end of the 'avenue.' About the centre of the line there are faint indications of a barrow or cairn; but no decided and distinctively sepulchral remains now exist. Less than a dozen stones are upright, most are flat and buried. There is a small cluster of hut circles near Cowsic Fork. The discovery brings such remains much nearer Beardown Man.

Launceston Moor.

The row on Launceston Moor, near White Tor, was discovered by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould in June last. It was probably, when complete, about 140 yards long, but never could have been of much importance, save for the exceptionally fine menhir—prostrate when noted, but now re-erected by the Duke of Bedford—at its southern end. This is eleven feet eight inches in total length, with a greatest breadth of two feet one inch, and thickness of one foot seven inches. There is no doubt, as Mr. Baring-Gould suggests, that this menhir gave name to the locality first as Longstone, then corrupted into Launceston, Moor. It lay directly by the side of the Lichway, which crosses the row close to its northern end, as if the menhir had been taken as a guide. The row runs 20 degrees east of south and west of north, and began at the northern end with a cairn or barrow, of which there is now only left a kind of saucer-shaped rim, about eight yards across. Round this there seems to have been the customary circle of stones. The row itself is very dilapidated. There are only eighteen stones that can be certainly regarded

as in place, with two additional doubtful ones, and the former vary from sixty feet to four feet apart. Probably they averaged some five feet originally, in which case three-fourths have disappeared. The largest stone in the row is but 18 inches above the surface; and, with the menhir, they are all of the epidiorite or gabbro of the locality. I have no doubt the row is single.

A short distance to the west are the remains of an important boundary bank, with some long stones, standing and fallen, ranging up to nearly eight feet in length, and it has been suggested that these were probably removed from the row. But I do not think so. The quantity of stones in the bank is so great as to render the contents of the row quite insignificant by comparison. Moreover, the bank evidently includes the remains of one or more cairns *in situ*. I think it quite possible, however, that there may have been another row here connected with the cairns, and that these were utilised as the nucleus of this later bank, which has much the same orientation as the row. The long stones in the enclosure of the great 'pound' above Tavy Cleave, between Ger Tor and Hare Tor, have however quite the aspect of a row in the distance, and they were clearly never used for anything but their present purpose. Still further from the Launceston row to the eastward there are a few stones in line just above the surface, which may be the remnants of another. To the westward, nearer White Tor, is the kistvaen described by Dr. Prowse,² and it is worthy of note that the orientation of this and of Mr. Baring-Gould's row practically coincide.

Cocks Tor.

The slight sinkage of the surface of the plateau on the top of Cocks Tor, consequent upon the late drought, brought to view evident traces of circled cairns and of at least one row of low stones, the direction of which was practically the same as that on Launceston Moor. These remains are not under ordinary circumstances very distinct. One small cairn—it may be a kistvaen—has two circles round it, about eight feet and sixteen feet in diameter respectively; and this has traces of a row. In another case the circles appear to have been about seven and eleven feet in diameter. Two larger circles are some twenty-four feet across, and one encloses the remains of a cairn or barrow. The remains on Launceston Moor, with those on Cocks Tor, bring the rows within the Tavy water-

² *Trans. Dev. Assoc.* xxi. 167.

shed, where they were unknown when I last wrote. The only river valleys of Dartmoor from which record is now wanting, and where I have as yet failed to find any traces, are those of the Lyd and the Okements. Possibly they will turn up there some day.



Drizzlecombe.

To make these notes complete it is necessary to record here the re-erection of the three menhirs of the rows at Drizzlecombe, one of which, eighteen feet in length, now stands about fourteen feet above ground, and is by far the finest in the West of England. The work was executed by the kind permission of Sir Massey Lopes, under the superintendence of the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, Mr. R. Burnard, and Mr. R.

Hansford Worth; and a reproduction from a photograph taken by the latter gentleman immediately on the completion of this process is here annexed. The Rev. S. Baring-Gould and Mr. Burnard are on the left next the menhir; the Rev. W. Gray, of Meavy, on the right.

POSTSCRIPT.

Challacombe.

Since this paper was read the Rev. S. Baring-Gould and Mr. R. Burnard have investigated and "restored"—setting up fallen stones in the readily-discernable original pits in the subsoil—the rows between Birch Tor and Challacombe Down, opposite Grimspond, originally discovered by Mr. John Prideaux in 1828, as set forth in my paper last year. In addition, however, to the triple rows observed by him, they state that there are remains of five others; but while the original three are tolerably perfect, the others are represented only by from two to six stones each. The rows range 528 feet in length—north-north-west and south-south-east, terminating in a menhir eight feet six inches in height and five feet in breadth at the base. 103 stones in all are recorded. The number of rows is thus precisely the same as in the group on Coryndon Ball—which no longer remains unique—but, although of less importance, the latter seems to be more complete. I have not, however, unfortunately, been able to avail myself of the opportunity of personal inspection at Challacombe; and these brief notes must only be taken as completing the record so far as ascertained, pending a detailed description by the "restorers."