

THE ANTIQUITIES OF OCKERY AND ROUNDHILL, DARTMOOR.

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THERE are recorded on the new Ordnance maps of Dartmoor (6 inches to 1 mile scale) a great number of antiquities of prehistoric date, which had not been previously mapped; but when the very large area of the Forest proper, together with its fringe of commons, is considered—about 440 square miles—it is no wonder that a still larger number remain to be recorded. I verily believe that most lovers of the moorland who have thoroughly investigated certain limited areas will count it no exaggeration when I say that, in regard to certain objects, such as kistvaens, hut circles, tumuli and cairns, etc., there must be at least five times as many as have been entered on the maps. I trust therefore that there will be a combined effort during the next few years to explore systematically the whole area bit by bit, so that it may be possible in the not far-distant future to place on record in black and white a fairly complete account of these prehistoric remnants, and perhaps to issue a comprehensive map in which they may be included. One good result of such a work will be the preservation of at any rate many of these aids in our search for information as to the customs, beliefs, and manner of living, etc., in the dim patriarchal ages.

From 1893 onwards for six years I was not able to visit the invigorating heights of the great mid-Devon upland, but last summer the time came again, and, after referring to brief notes on many localities made years previously, I selected a small area very easy of access from Princetown, and mapped out, with, I hope, a fair degree of accuracy, the various bits of ancient human work which could be found.

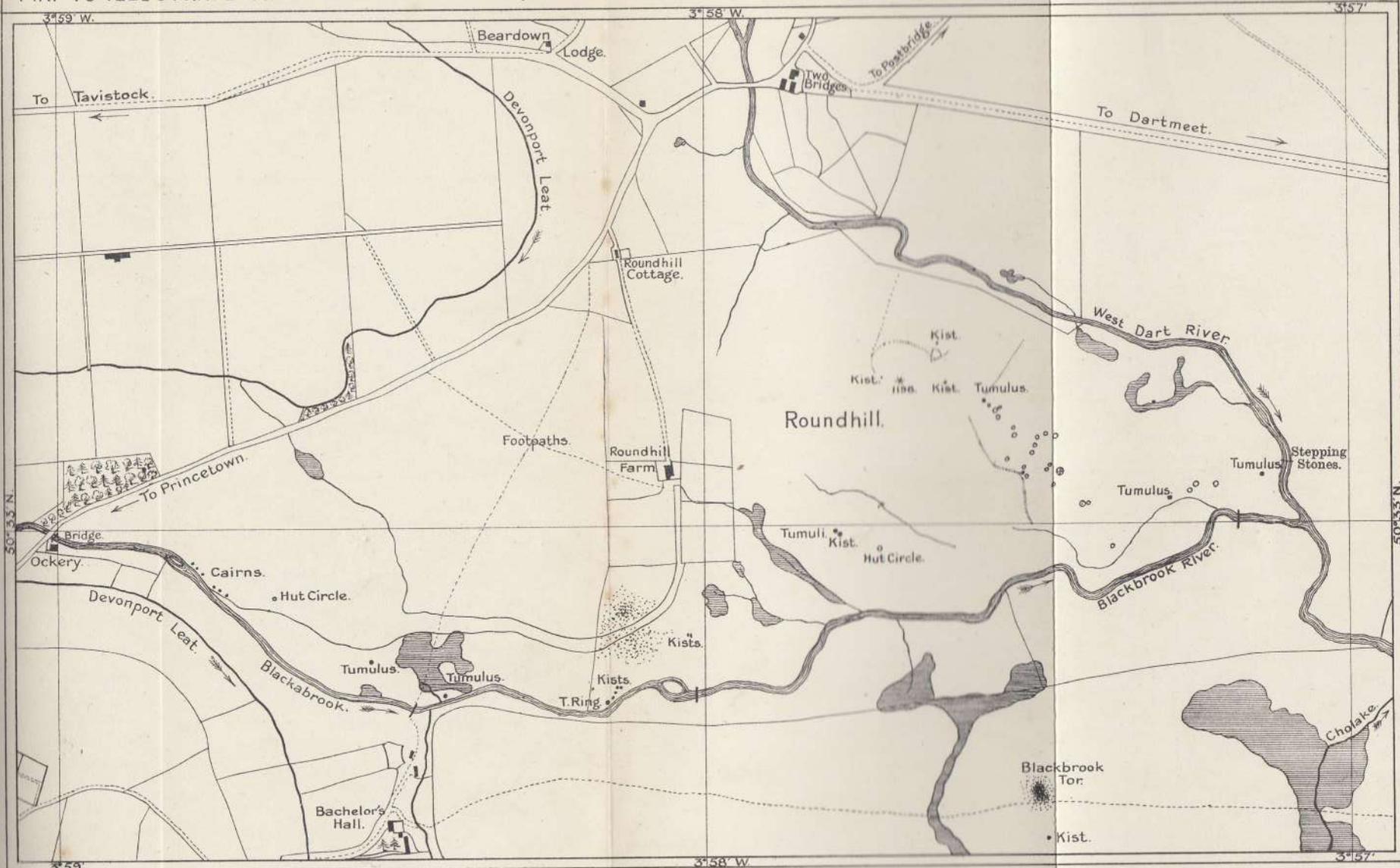
A reference to the 6-inch map, No. 107, N.W., shows that in that part of its area represented on the diagram illustrating this paper, there are recorded—(1) the old bridge at Ockery; (2) one kistvaen; and (3) nine hut circles. There are, however, at least twenty-eight hut circles, eleven kistvaens in various stages of dilapidation, and about a dozen tumuli and cairns. There may, of course, be others which I have overlooked. Of the eleven kistvaens, I find that the one marked on the Ordnance map and three others close by were described by Mr. Robert Burnard in a paper to this Association in 1890, but I cannot find anywhere a reference to the other additional antiquities.

Starting from Ockery Bridge, which is so well known that nothing need be said about it here, and passing down the left bank of the Blackabrook for nearly 300 yards, we come to a group of three cairns, each about four yards in diameter, on the verge of the brook and only a few yards distant from each other, made up of large rounded stones probably taken from the bed of the stream. About thirty yards further on is another group of three, slightly smaller, but otherwise similar cairns, which are a few feet back from the stream and close to the beginning of an old reave bounding the south side of a disused leat to Roundhill Farm.

A short distance east of this group on the slope of the hill is a hut circle five yards across. About 230 yards E.S.E. of this, on some slightly rising ground, is what I believe to be the remains of a small tumulus; and, nearer the river, nearly opposite the foot of its small affluent which passes Bachelor's Hall, is another mound about four and a half yards across.

Further on a new-take wall comes southwards from Roundhill Farm to the stream, and forty yards beyond this, close to the bank, is an imperfect ring of stones five yards in diameter, which must at some time have encircled a kistvaen. Just beyond this is the kist entered on the Ordnance map, and the three others described by Mr. Burnard in 1890. The dimensions, noted by me on the spot, vary somewhat from those recorded by Mr. Burnard; but this is probably due in part to alterations in the relative position of the stones enclosing the cavities. The measurements given in this paper are the internal dimensions of the kists mentioned in the following order for each—*length*, *breadth*, *depth*, and the figures are the averages of trials in two or three different places. The long diameters of all four lie N.W. by N. and S.E. by S. The first of the group is twelve yards

MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE PAPER ON THE ANTIQUITIES OF ROUNDHILL AND OCKERY, BY ARTHUR B. PROWSE, M.D., F.R.C.S., 1901.



SCALE:- SIX INCHES TO ONE MILE. ONE INCH = 880 ft. $\frac{1}{10560}$ OF NATURE.

beyond the tumulus ring mentioned just now, and is itself surrounded by an imperfect ring of stones five yards across. It is 3 ft. 6 in. \times 1 ft. 9 in. \times 3 ft. The S.E. end stone is lying flat, away from the cavity. The cover stone has been pushed off to the west side of the kist, and is 4 ft. 9 in. \times 4 ft.

The second specimen is north of the last about four yards. It has no circle, and the cover is absent. The west side stone is standing, the east lies flat, the north is much inclined inwards and the south is broken. The cavity is 4 ft. \times 2 ft. 6 in. \times 2 ft. The third of the group is about four yards N.E. of the second, and is extremely imperfect. Just to the south of it, and nearly buried in the soil, is the cover-stone. The fourth kist is three yards N.E. of the last. All four side stones are in place, but the cover is absent. It measures 3 ft. \times 2 ft. 9 in. \times 2 ft. 3 in. Around it is the remnant of a tumulus four yards across.

About 160 yards N.E. of the group, and 120 N. by W. of the stone buttress of an old clam bridge (marked on the Ordnance map, but now wanting), is the remnant of a small cairn enclosing portions of two kistvaens side by side level with the surface, and nearly filled up with soil. The west specimen has the two side stones upright, and is about 1 ft. 6 in. wide. The other has its east side stone alone in place. The long diameter of each is N.W. by N. and S.E. by S. Rather more than one-third of a mile away in a north-easterly direction across a marshy level is the top of Roundhill, and rather to the right of this line at about half the distance are two small tumuli. The north-westerly one is four yards across, and there is a large stone embedded in it which may be the south end of a kist. The other mound is of the same diameter, and is about seven yards distant. The four slabs of the enclosed kist are deeply embedded, and its dimensions are 3 ft. \times 2 ft. The long diameter is nearly due north and south. A cover stone lies at the foot of the mound, and is 3 ft. 7 in. \times 2 ft. 4 in. These tumuli are about one hundred yards south-west from a gap in an old reave, through which passes a footpath from Roundhill Farm towards Prince Hall. Eighty-five yards E.S.E. from the second mound is a hut circle, on level ground, three yards in diameter.

Passing on up Roundhill, which is 1,198 ft. above sea-level, we find, twenty-five yards W.N.W. from what seems to be the highest point, a slight mound five yards across, with a few of its ring stones left, and in the centre a kistvaen 4 ft. 3 in. \times 2 ft. \times 2 ft. Long axis W.N.W. and

E.S.E. The north-west side slab is absent. The displaced cover stone is 4 ft. 6 in. \times 3 ft. 9 in.

One hundred yards N.E. of the top of the hill are the remains of another kist, about 4 ft. \times 2 ft. 6 in. Long axis N.W. by N. and S.E. by S. The south-east end stone lies prone; the opposite one is erect. The side stones are absent. The cover, which is very massive, measures 5 ft. 6 in. \times 4 ft., and lies to the north side of the kist. There are some of the ring stones still left. A few yards south by west of this is an imperfect circular arrangement of small stones about twenty-four yards in diameter, which is in relation on the south with the end of an intermittent line of stones which curves round on the nearly flat hilltop, forming about half of a broad oval, and ending near the kist which is on the west side of the highest point. From near the end of this curve a scanty line of stones stretches down the hill N. by E. towards the West Dart.

Almost due east of the hill top about ninety-five yards away is a third kistvaen, 3 ft. \times 1 ft. 7 in. \times 1 ft. Its long axis is W.N.W. and E.S.E. The cover stone has been pushed off on the east side, and is 4 ft. 9 in. \times 3 ft. This kist is on the verge of a steep slope towards the south-east: and seventy-five yards distant rather to the south of east is a small mound, the nature of which is doubtful, though probably it is a tumulus, for an intermittent line of stones passes from it down the hill north-east towards the West Dart, which is about 200 yards distant. Extending down the south-east slope towards the Blackabrook is a succession of twenty-three hut circles, varying in diameter from ten to three yards, the greater number being four or five. The largest of these encloses two small ones. West of this group is a slightly marked bank, with a general south-east trend, and with an occasional larger stone marking its course until it ends, where an old reave runs east and west at some little distance north of the stream.

About 250 yards E.S.E. of the largest hut circle, on some rising ground beyond an intervening level, is what looks like a small tumulus, and forty yards further in an east-by-north direction is the first of a group of three hut circles, between four and five yards in diameter. Still further on, close to the Dart above its junction with the Blackabrook, is another small tumulus.

The only remaining object to mention now is another kistvaen, which is on the other side of the Blackabrook, and eighty yards south of a footpath along the side of Royal

Hill from Bachelor's Hall to Moorlands, near a small unnamed cluster of boulders, which may perhaps be distinguished as Blackabrook Tor. There are small remains of the enclosing barrow. The four side stones are erect and massive. The cover stone, 5 ft. 6 in. \times 4 ft. 6 in., rests obliquely against the north-west corner. The cavity measures 3 ft. \times 2 ft. \times 2 ft., and its long axis is N.W. by N. and S.E. by S.

As there are a large number of boundary walls in addition to houses and other buildings in the small area represented by the map illustrating this paper, it is a wonder that so much prehistoric work has escaped destruction; and though this locality would seem to have been a favourite one with our early ancestors, and, as such, more fully occupied by them, I think I am quite justified in the opinion that careful systematic search over the whole moor will result in the discovery in almost every part of large numbers of hitherto undescribed antiquities. Surely such a survey might and should be carried out by an Association like ours, which includes so many devoted lovers of the moor. Its area might be divided into fifty or sixty parts, each represented by a quarter-sheet of the 6-in. Ordnance Survey, on which the position of every find not yet mapped should be carefully shown, the dimensions, etc., being always noted at the time.

Even if not more than twenty members undertook to help, with a real sense of responsibility, a few years might see the completion of the work; and in what pleasanter way could a few weeks yearly be spent? It must be well to have a definite object before one even during a holiday, instead of spending the time in an aimless manner—mere creatures of the impulse or whim of the moment! Is it not a satisfaction to be doing something which will be really useful, and to be adding to the very limited information we have concerning our remote ancestors?