

## FOURTH REPORT OF THE BARROW COMMITTEE.

FOURTH REPORT of the Committee—consisting of Mr. C. Spence Bate, Mr. G. Doe, Mr. P. O. Hutchinson, Mr. E. Parfitt, Mr. J. Brooking Rowe, and Mr. R. N. Worth (Secretary)—to collect and record facts relating to Barrows in Devonshire, and to take steps, where possible, for their investigation.

Edited by R. N. WORTH, F.G.S., Secretary.

(Read at Crediton, July, 1882.)

---

THE sphere of the operations of the Committee having been enlarged, by the inclusion of Dartmoor, to comprise the whole of the county, they now beg to present a summary of the barrow literature for the Dartmoor district.

J. BROOKING ROWE, Chairman.

R. N. WORTH, Secretary.

### CHAGFORD.

“Kistvaens in the parish of Chagford.”—W. PENGELLY, F.R.S., F.G.S., *Trans. Devon. Assoc.* vol. xii. pp. 365–371.

### COSDON BEACON.

“As we ascend our attention will be attracted by other monumental relics. Scarcely fifty yards from the trackway a cairn, much dilapidated and diminished by the removal of the stones, will be noticed. But when we have nearly reached the object of our toilsome ascent—‘the windy summit, huge and high’—we shall find a cairn of a peculiarly interesting description, at no great distance from the highest part of the mountain. Unlike those monumental erections in general, which are merely extemporaneous agglomerations of stones, inartificially heaped up in the form into which they would almost necessarily fall, this cairn betokens much more preparation and design in its construction. The pile is inclosed

by a ring of slab stones, closely set, leaning outwards, apparently by design, and some of them not less than three feet in height.

"About sixty yards south-west of the last will be observed another cairn, of which the materials are unusually large. Surrounded by the stones of which the cairn is composed is a kistvaen, about seven feet square. The sides of the kistvaen are formed of slabs in the usual way, and two of them remain erect, and perfectly forming one of the angles of the sarcophagus. The others are more or less inclined or prostrate, and some appear to have been removed.

"Seventy yards west-south-west of the above, within the area of a circular enclosure, similar to that observed near Hound Tor, formed of slabs set closely together, and fifty-four feet in diameter, is a dilapidated kistvaen, eight feet square, and apparently exhibiting traces of an inner coffin, or sarcophagus, the cover-stone of which is not more than two and a half feet broad. . . . .

"The cairn is about ninety yards in circumference, and appears to have been opened in two distinct places, where there are hollows of considerable size; but for what purpose these hollows have been dug does not appear, unless with the view of forming a kind of hearth for the reception of the fuel of which the beacon fire was made."—*Perambulation of Dartmoor*, by the Rev. SAMUEL ROWE, pp. 84–85, 86, second edition.

#### WATERN TOR.

"Following the ridge of the hill, at the southern extremity, we shall observe a large barrow or cairn of the ordinary description. Other similar cairns will be noticed on the opposite hill, near Wild Tor, and on the higher hills above Taw Head, towards which we shall now bend our course, bearing due west from the cairn on Watern Hill."—*Ibid.* p. 92.

#### SHELSTONE AND ENDSWORTHY.

"On Shelstone and Endsworthy Hills are cairns or barrows, placed, like most other sepulchral monuments of this description, on the crest of the eminences."—*Ibid.* p. 89.

#### MARDON.

"Mounting the hill, and bearing towards the south, in search of the Giant's Grave, as laid down in the Ordnance Map, on the south-east side of Mardon, we shall notice the remains of a cairn, which seems to be the relic so designated,

but which presents no appearance worthy of particular remark. ['Mardon,' says Mr. Shortt, 'which boasts of the giant's cairn or grave; but the *tumulus* of the giant was unfortunately stripped of its granite to repair the roads, and the place of sepulture was nearly obliterated in consequence.' (SHORTT'S *Collect.* p. 28.) The Rev. W. Ponsford, the rector of Drewsteignton, gives a similar account of the removal of the materials of some tumuli, on Mardon, for the repair of the roads; and one of those is, in all probability, the cairn above mentioned, known traditionally as the Giant's Grave.]"—*Ibid.* p. 139.

## MOOR BARTON.

"Retracing our steps by Blackstone to the Moreton turnpike, we shall pass near a farm, called Moor Barton, in the parish of Moreton, where, at no distant time, there existed a cairn, which was destroyed by the occupier in carrying into effect some agricultural improvements on the estate. The spear-head, glass bead, &c., which were taken from the kistvaen, were for some time in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Carrington, late vicar of Bridford, and are important in the chain of evidence by which the occupancy of this part of the island in remote ages is established. [Mr. Shortt thus describes the cairn and the interesting relics found there when it was opened: 'The tumulus was nine land yards round, in which a sort of rude kistvaen, of six great stones, was found, with a spear-head of copper, the two pegs, or screws, which fastened it to its staff, a glass British bead, and a small amulet of soft stone—memorials of some chief—calcined bones, ashes, &c.' (SHORTT'S *Collect.* p. 29.)]"—*Ibid.* p. 145.

## MANATON.

"Leaving Becky Fall, and proceeding up the hill-side, south-west, we shall notice a dilapidated cairn, with a trackway, bearing in some places the appearance of an imperfect avenue, or parallelithon, coming upwards north-east from the valley, and ending, after a course which can be traced two hundred and forty yards, in the cairn above."—*Ibid.* p. 149.

## HAMILTON.

"Cairns are numerous on the adjacent downs and hill. We shall find them on King Tor, north, and Hamilton Tor, east of Grimspound."—*Ibid.* p. 159.

"On Hamilton they [the trackways] are not above half a mile from each other, and in the neighbourhood are several

cairns, barrows, and circles."—*Ibid.* p. 161, quoted from Rev. R. P. JONES.

CUMSDON TOR, ETC.

"On this extensive track we shall find very few monumental relics; while those that occur, such as a cairn near Cumsdon Tor, another about half a mile south . . . present nothing worthy of particular remark. Cairns also are found on the eminences at Holne Ridge and Peter's Boundstone."—*Ibid.* p. 175.

THREE BARROW TOR.

"Ascending the slope on the northern side, we shall strike upon a fine trackway, coming up the hill from the north-west, sixteen feet wide in many parts, and ending in the large cairn on the crest of the height. This cairn is of enormous size, probably one of the very largest in Devonshire, and with the two others immediately near it on the same eminence, and in a straight line, gives its name to this conspicuous and well-known tor. The cairns appear to have been erected upon the line of the trackway, which we shall trace from the north-western tumulus, through the centre, to the south-eastern, and from thence shall follow it in that direction to the extent of a mile.

"Proceeding towards Coryndon Ball, we shall observe an entrance gate opening upon the inclosed lands adjoining the common, through which the road leads to South Brent. Within a hundred yards of the gate will be noticed a congeries of massive stones, in which the observant investigator will have no difficulty to discover unequivocal evidence of a cromlech, once standing on this spot, but now in ruins, and apparently overthrown by intentional violence; as I observed that the supporters are not crippled under the impost, as if pressed down by the superincumbent mass, but are lying in situations where they could not have accidentally fallen. The third supporter stands erect in its original position, of a pyramidal form, only four feet high, and five feet wide in the broadest part. The impost, or quoit, is eleven feet long, five feet at the widest end, and fourteen inches in average thickness. There are other stones scattered around, so as to lead to the supposition that these are only large masses of granite, among many others, naturally thrown into these positions. There is only another large flat stone, of greater size than the impost, suggesting the notion of a covering for an Arkite cell. The height of the supporters of the overthrown cromlech appears more adapted to the purposes of a kistvaen than of a cromlech; and it may also be observed that the monument

stood at the verge of a large mound of stone and sod, sixty yards in circumference. A few score yards, south-south-east, are the evident remains of a cairn, sacked doubtless, to build the boundary wall adjoining."—*Ibid.* pp. 179–180.

#### EASTERN BEACON.

"The Eastern Beacon . . . is crowned with a characteristic tor, the western pile of which is surrounded with a cairn-like agglomeration of stones. We shall observe that all the neighbouring heights are crowned with cairns, as we proceed southward, to Butterson Hill and the Western Beacon."—*Ibid.* p. 181.

#### HARFORD.

"In our progress along the side of the hill, above the eastern bank of the Erme, we shall notice a kistvaen in considerable perfection, within a circle of nine stones still erect, one of which is a large slab, four feet six long, by three feet wide in the broadest part. The kistvaen itself is four feet six inches by two feet four. The cover-stone appears to have been broken, and has fallen into the cavity, which is about eighteen inches deep. This antient relic will be discovered without difficulty by a practised eye, as the surrounding common is remarkably free from natural rocks, furze, and heather."—*Ibid.* pp. 183–184.

#### SHARP TOR.

"Proceeding up the slope of the common, north-east, we shall cross a line of bound-stones, tending towards the cairn on the summit of Sharp Tor. This cairn is about sixty yards in circumference, and at least ten feet high."—*Ibid.* p. 184.

#### LANGCOMBE BOTTOM.

"Here the South Quarter ends, and the Western takes its commencement; and near this point, about a quarter of a mile west of Plym Head, in Langcombe Bottom, with Sheeps-tor looming boldly against the western sky, we shall observe one of the most perfect specimens of the antient kistvaen in the whole of Dartmoor. This aboriginal sarcophagus is formed of granite slabs, about a hand-breadth in thickness. The side stones of the sarcophagus are four feet nine in length; the foot-stone is two feet three inches,—the breadth of the kistvaen in the clear. The depth is about three feet. The cover-stone has fallen in, but in other respects this antient sepulchre is singularly perfect. It seems to have been constructed on an artificial mound, or tumulus, slightly elevated above the natural level. A circular inclosure, thir-

teen yards in circumference, surrounds the kistvaen; some of the stones of which it is formed remain erect in their original position, others have fallen."—*Ibid.* 185–186.

## PEN BEACON.

"From hence, mounting the hill, north-west by north, we shall make for the cairn on the summit, well-known by the name of Pen Beacon."—*Ibid.* p. 187.

## SHAUGH COMMON.

"Proceeding along the ridge of the common, above the road from Shaugh to Plympton, we shall observe an interesting relic of the cromlech kind, but to which Polwhele denies the honour,—for reasons which, on examination of the object itself, will immediately appear inapplicable and groundless. The impost-stone is doubtless supported in an unusual manner, resting partly on a ledge of rock, which forms also a natural wall on one side of the area covered by the quoit, but artificially supported on the other side. The impost apparently stands in its original position, and is similar in appearance to those which belong to undisputed cromlechs."—*Ibid.* p. 196.

## BLACK TOR.

"Nearly a furlong from the tor, in the glen below, on the eastern bank of the stream, are a pair of avenues, which are only forty feet apart, and run parallel to each other, east and west. They are formed of stones two and a half feet high, and each is terminated at the east end by a circle thirty-six feet in diameter, consisting of fifteen stones, enclosing a cairn. . . . Between the northern avenue and the stream, is a cairn. Another will be observed at the extremity of the southern, but very imperfect."—*Ibid.* pp. 205–206.

## HESSARY TOR.

"Proceeding northward, towards Hessary, we shall reach the high road from Plymouth to Prince Town. In the immediate neighbourhood of an antient stream-work, we shall observe a number of hut circles close to the highway. There are many others on the slope of the opposite hill eastward. . . . North-west of these is a cairn containing a dilapidated kistvaen."—*Ibid.* p. 206.

## LAKEHEAD HILL.

"Crossing this road to the common opposite, we shall find many aboriginal relics on Lakehead Hill. On the higher part

of the eminence is a congeries of stones, possibly the ruins of a very large kistvaen, one of the side-stones being about six feet in length. At the east end the stone is fallen, and the cover is also displaced. On the same hill, about a furlong north-west, is a kistvaen in great perfection. The sides, which are about four feet four inches long by one foot nine, stand fifteen inches above the ground. Another kistvaen, at no great distance, will be observed in connection with a cairn, as in other places.—*Ibid.* p. 211.

#### KING'S OVEN.

“From hence, passing over Redridge Down, where we shall notice a circular inclosure in a very imperfect state, we shall proceed to the Wallabrook, above which Quarnian Tor rises on the south-east. In this direction we shall observe many cairns, but none sufficiently remarkable to detain us from our progress up the Wallabrook, for the purpose of tracing the line of perambulation from hence to King's Oven, where we left it in our former excursion. Having observed the cairn which, on the summit of the eminence, marked this well ascertained boundary, and exercised our ingenuity, as others have done, in endeavouring to find some relics which would account for this curious designation, we shall direct our course westward, and leaving Merripit Hill on the right, shall proceed to Post Bridge, on the East Dart.”—*Ibid.* pp. 211-212.

#### ARCHERTON.

“In the immediate vicinity relics of kistvaena, more or less perfect. One of these primitive sepulchres may be particularly noticed, as it is surrounded by an external circle eight feet in diameter. The kistvaen itself measures four feet six inches by four feet three.”—*Ibid.* p. 213.

#### BROAD DOWN.

“Passing over Broad Down and Ladehill, we shall notice several cairns on the heights.”—*Ibid.* p. 213.

#### AMICOMBE HILL.

“In our progress over this part of the moor, we shall meet with few antient monuments except some cairns on the surrounding heights.”—*Ibid.* p. 241.

See also general references in *Devon. Assoc. Trans.—Celtic Remains on Dartmoor* (JOHN KELLY), vol. i. part v. pp. 45-48; *On the Prehistoric Antiquities of Dartmoor* (C. SPENCE BATE, F.R.S.), vol. iv. pp. 491-516.