

SIXTIETH REPORT ON BARROWS.

BY R. HANSFORD WORTH, RECORDER.

HAWK TOR, otherwise OXTER, SHAUGH PRIOR.

On Shaugh Moor, on the brow of the hill east of the cross roads at Beatland Corner, there stands a something which has found not infrequent mention, chiefly in connection with the difficulty in determining its nature. Since it consists of a coverstone over a recess or chamber in the natural rock, it presents some of the features of a dolmen or cromlech.

POLWHELE, in 1793 (*Historical Views of Devonshire*, pp. 74, 75), writes:—"Though in the western part of Danmonium, there occur several Cromlechs (for a description of which I refer my readers to the *Antiquities of Cornwall*) yet, on this side of the Tamar, in a far more extensive tract of country, we have only to exhibit one solitary Cromlech. It is true, there are other places in Devonshire that have laid claim to this distinction. But the claim has been allowed only by those who, having an indistinct idea of druidical monuments, conceive *Cromlech* to be a general name for them all.

On a down, in the parish of Shaugh, commonly called Shaughmoor, there is doubtless some resemblance to a Cromlech. Many represented it as really a Cromlech. Others thought it nothing more than a rude natural rock. Curiosity, however, lately induced a gentleman to go to Shaugh-moor, purposely to look at the rock. And he returned, "perfectly convinced it was a Cromlech; and of the most durable kind, the top-stone *being supported on natural rocks*. The covering-stone was about fifteen feet long, and twelve feet broad." And the monument, it seems, was "*on the side of the hill*." This account requires little or no comment. The gentleman who pronounces these rocks to be a Cromlech, discovers nothing in the least appearance of art, excepting the position of the top-stone.

But the position of this stone is surely accidental. It may easily have fallen from the hill above, on the rocks that support it. And, as to the situation of this imaginary Cromlech, *the side of a hill* is not the usual place for erecting such a monument."

ROWE, in 1848 (*A Perambulation of the Ancient and Royal Forest of Dartmoor*, p. 160) challenges this conclusion,

writing :—" On Shaugh Common, east of the village, we shall notice many remains of hut-circles, as well as some larger enclosures. Proceeding along the slope 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 to 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."

It would appear that the true point at issue is whether the coverstone is part of a natural grouping of rocks, or has been artificially set over the recess, the three sides of which are undoubtedly formed by rock *in situ*; all else must be a matter of speculation.

The problem is perhaps insoluble, but here is the evidence. From the plan and Section (figures 1 and 2) it will be seen that there is a recess in the rock of the tor, which, at floor level, measures 12 feet 6 inches in depth, 8 feet 6 inches in breadth at the entrance, and 4 feet 4 inches in breadth at the inner end. The top of the eastern wall stands 6 feet 6 inches high above the floor, while the western wall is but 4 feet in height. The greater part of the area of the recess is roofed by a cover-stone, measuring 12 feet 6 inches by 10 feet, and having a greatest thickness of 2 feet 6 inches. The underside of the coverstone is practically level, since, although its ultimate support is from the eastern and western walls of the recess, their difference in level is compensated by the presence of a loose block of stone between the cover and the western wall. That block of stone makes a *prima facie* case for artificiality. A case which gains support from the fact that there has been no relative movement of the walls of the recess, so that neither wall could have dragged the coverstone with it across the recess; and there is now no higher mass of rock from which the coverstone could have fallen, nor is there evidence of the former presence of such a mass. The position is correctly described as on the brow of a hill, not on the hillside. In that respect POLWHELE'S informant misled him.

Against the idea of artificiality may be argued the somewhat similar arrangement of BRAY'S "tolmen" at Great Staple Tor. But there the conditions are different, and there is a large mass of rock at a higher level, from which the blocks may have fallen.

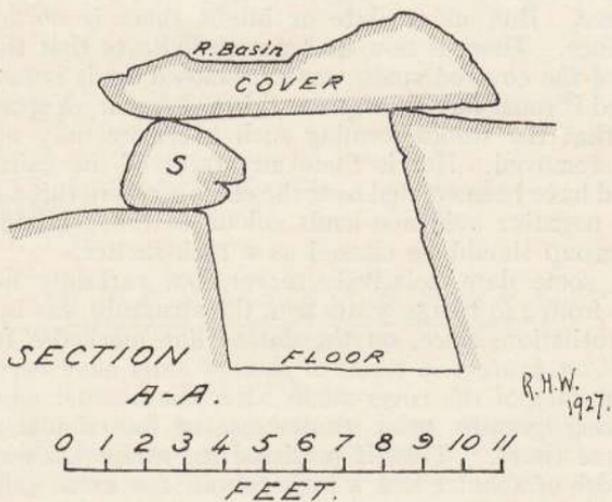
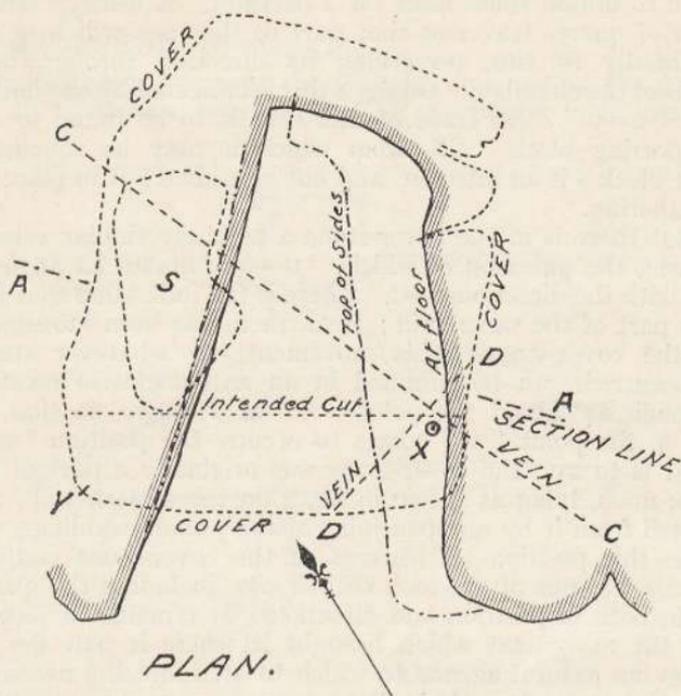


R H W

HAWK TOR, SHAUGH.

Fig. 1. Looking N. 23° E.

Fig. 2. Looking N. 18° E.



FIGS. 1 AND 2.

There is one feature of the rock-mass from which we may hope to obtain some basis for a decision. A nearly vertical vein of quartz traverses that part of the rock which is undoubtedly *in situ*, preserving its direction through both walls of the chamber. On fig. 1 this is indicated by the dotted line "C—C". No trace of this vein is to be found in the supporting block "s", from which it may be concluded that block s is an intruder, and not a residual left in place by weathering.

But there is in the cover-stone a precisely similar vein of quartz, the direction of which, "D—D", makes an angle of 84° with the direction C—C. There is full indication that this is a part of the same vein; if so, there has been movement of the cover-stone. This movement, by whatever stages it occurred, can be summed in an anti-clockwise rotation through 84° about the point "x" as a centre, so that, in fig. 3, the point "y" comes to occupy the position "y¹". That is to say, the cover-stone was originally a part of the rock mass, lying as shewn in fig. 3 on the eastern wall, and parted from it by an open joint of the pseudo-bedding.

In this position all features of the cover-stone conform to the features of the rock still *in situ*, including the quartz vein, both in position and direction. It remains to account for the movement which brought it where it now lies. I know no natural agency to which to attribute the necessary rotation; and I conclude that we must accept the probability of man's agency; and that we are dealing with an artificial product. But, as to date or intent there is no sufficient evidence. There is now no trace to indicate that the south end of the covered space was ever closed, as it is to be presumed it must have been were this a dolmen. Yet none can say that the stones forming such a closure may not have been removed. Nor is there any trace of the cairn which would have been erected over the chamber were this a dolmen. This negative evidence lends colour to the possibility that the group should be classed as a rock-shelter.

At some date, relatively recent, but certainly not later than from 120 to 150 years ago, the structure was in danger of mutilation, since, on the dotted line marked "Intended Cut" on figure 1, a series of shallow slots have been cut in the surface of the cover-stone, after the manner adopted in splitting granite prior to the use of the circular drill of modern times. This, if persisted in, would have removed a width of about 2 feet 4 inches from the south end of the cover.

In the text, fig. 1 gives a general plan, fig. 2 a section, and fig. 3 affords a suggested restoration of the rocks, prior to the rotation of the cover. While plate figs 1 and 2 are

views necessary to the comprehension of the description above given.

ERME POUND, to north of.

In the angle south of the *Redlake*, and east of the *Erme*, Mr. J. H. Dobson and Mr. R. C. E. Carpenter have found a

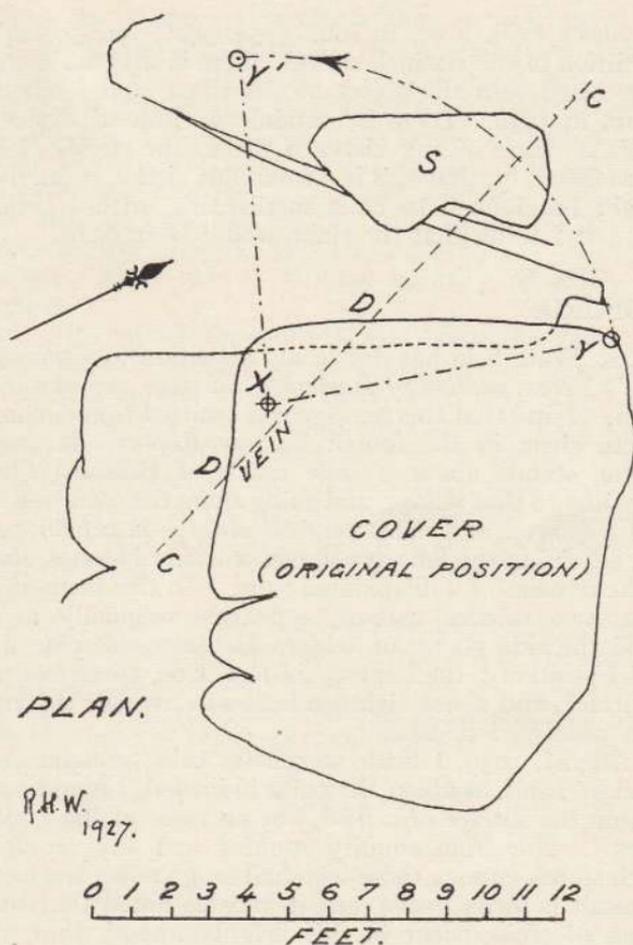


FIG. 3.

barrow which had not previously been recorded. It is a small cairn, from 15 to 16 feet in diameter. Near the centre lies a flat stone, which measures 2 feet 11 inches, by 3 feet 4 inches, and which may be a cover-stone, but no kistvaen can be traced; as to this there can be no certainty without excavation. One of the compass bearings by which I sought to fix the position is undoubtedly somewhat in error. A

sufficient approximation to enable the cairn to be found would be: Devon six inch O.S., sheet cxiii, s.w., lon. $3^{\circ}-55'-13''$, lat. $50^{\circ}-28'-39\frac{1}{2}''$. I hope to correct this location in a later report.

ERME POUND, to east of.

On sheet cxiii, s.w., in lon. $3^{\circ}-54'-592''$, lat. $50^{\circ}-28'-25''$, first edition of the six inch survey, there is shewn a kistvaen. I have often seen the object so described, and I examined it again in 1940. There is certainly a circle of stones, but there is no trace of any kistvaen within the circle. I think now, as formerly, that this is a small hut circle. Conceivably it might be claimed to be a small cairn, with a retaining circle, but I think that the claim would be in error.

BRIDFORD.

Mr. R. Waterfield has drawn my attention to a passage in ROWE'S *Perambulation of Dartmoor*, on page 117 of the first edition. I find that this passage was omitted from among the extracts given in the fourth Barrow Report. It runs:—
 "Heltor stands about a mile north of Bridford Church. Proceeding to that village, and going along the road to Exeter, about a quarter of a mile, we shall observe in a field, on the right, adjoining the lane, a conglomeration of stones, looking like the remains of a dilapidated cairn. In this heap of small stones, two tabular masses, appearing originally to have formed the side stones of a large kistvaen, are placed in a parallel position; the largest, six feet wide, three feet above the surface, and about eighteen inches in average thickness." ROWE published in 1848.

In August, 1939, I made search for this "conglomeration of stones", and, at about the point indicated, I found a stony patch on the surface of a field, but no trace of the "tabular masses". Nor from enquiry could I find any recollection of such stones, among those who had long known the locality. The result is inconclusive, but it may be noted that surface patches of stone occur in this neighbourhood, that are of natural origin. The position of the patch which I examined is, Devon, six-inch O.S. Devon, xci. n.w., lon. $3^{\circ}-40'-132''$, lat. $50^{\circ}-39'-53''$.

Mr. Waterfield has also kindly sent to me some extracts from a manuscript written by the Rev. Mr. Carrington, at one time vicar of *Bridford*. From these notes it appears that the *Bridford* neighbourhood was formerly rich in barrows and cairns, the destruction of which has been consequent upon enclosure and agricultural operations.

TRENCHFORD, as *Moor Barton* in SHORTT'S *Collect.*

p. 29

SHORTT'S note is reprinted in the fourth Barrow Report, 1882. CARRINGTON'S MS. gives the more precise account, and, I doubt not, the more accurate. He says that he had the loan from Mr. Wills, tenant of *Moreton Moor*, of a lance head of fine shape and workmanship, of cast metal of the usual kind, together with its rivets, and some half-burnt bones and ashes. The spear or dagger blade, and the rivets by which it was secured to the shaft, lay, together with the bone and one or two blue and white beads, at the bottom of an oblong sort of chest, made of flat stones. The side, bottom and cover not adhering, but rudely jointed. Over all lay a large heap of loose stones, the removal of which to fill in gutters in wet ground close by disclosed the cover of the kistvaen. There was a trifling quantity of earth in the kistvaen.

As to the site of the cairn it was "near the valley on the south-west side, leading up from *Trenchford*. The plat may be called *Tentfield*." Now there were two *Moor Bartons*, distant about two miles; of these the northwestern lay at the head of the *Trenchford* valley in what is now the watershed of the Torquay waterworks. This was the *Moor Barton* which lay on *Moreton Moor*, and it was near this that the cairn stood. SHORTT says that there was also an amulet of soft stone, and that the cairn was nine land-yards in circumference.

SHORTT speaks of the kistvaen as consisting of six great stones, CARRINGTON writes of the removal of the top stones, so that the cover stone was at least in two, which with the four sides would make six stones in all, and it does not seem probable that the reference "the bottom" means that there was a stone floor.

According to SHORTT the articles found in this barrow were being carefully preserved by Mr. Wills, the tenant of the Farm.

BARN, CHRISTOW

LYSONS, *Devon*, p. cccx, state "The Rev. Mr. Carrington found several (celts) in some kairns between Bridford and Christow."

Probably the reference is to certain celts which were dug up in a barrow on Thomas Hamlyn's estate of *Barn* in *Christow*. CARRINGTON'S version is:—"The celts were found when Mr. Thomas Hamlyn of Christow, who lives on his own estate (of Barn), took advantage of a large heap of stones to build a wall fence. He had cleared this to the ground level, and a pair of horses were ploughing over the site of the stone

heap when both sunk to their bellies by the earth giving way. There was a cavity under the heap. A quantity of ashes and some burnt earth were found in the hole, with 4 or 5 celts, which the man said he thought were sherds, and three were built into the dry wall with the stones, two given his master", of which Mr. Carrington had one.

Evidently the interment had here been covered with a rough built dome of stone, such for instance as was found at *Broad Down* No. 62. (See second Barrow Report, 1880, opposite page 137, p. 21 of reprint.)

The homestead of *Barn* lies on the south-west side of the road which leads from *Christow* to *Bridford*, and about three hundred yards out from *Christow*.

BRIDFORD—CHRISTOW

About half a mile from the barrow at *Barn* (but in which direction is not stated) and on the right of the road going from *Bridford* to *Christow*, "old Mr. Clampitt", on the removal of a large heap of stones from his ground, found a granite bowl. The bowl was 31 inches in circumference, 10 inches in diameter, and three inches deep at the centre. Its capacity was $2\frac{1}{2}$ pints, it was neatly finished around the rim, was more worn on one side of the bottom than on the other, and exhibited the effects of fire. The date of this discovery was 1828.

No evidence of any interment is mentioned, and it seems probable that this "heap of stones" was not, in fact, a barrow.

BRIDFORD—DREWSTEIGNTON

In the same year, 1828, "old Joshua Lang (of the 28th Regiment, that fought in Egypt)" found a stone hammer of over five pounds in weight, under a vast accumulation of stones on the precipitous side of a hill between *Bridford* and *Drewsteignton*.

ILSINGTON.

There is also a reference to a well finished celt (presumably in metal) found under a barrow near *Ilsington*, in 1790.

Notwithstanding the destruction which has been wrought, there yet remain cairns and barrows in the parish of *Bridford*. We are indebted to Mr. Waterfield for our knowledge of these.

SEVEN ACRE LANE, *Bridford*

In a field to the east of *Seven Acre Lane*, and but a hundred feet away from the road, is a bush-grown cairn of between 28 and 30 feet diameter; it is easily found, since it is very near a gateway from the lane to the field, and in full view when one looks over the gate. This cairn will not be found

marked on the Ordnance Survey. It should appear on the six-inch sheet xci, N.W., at lon. $3^{\circ}-40'-52\frac{1}{2}''$, lat. $50^{\circ}-40'-6\frac{1}{2}''$.

LOWER LOWTON DOWN, *Bridford*

Lower Lowton Down, although enclosed, is rough pasture and really residual moorland which has not been cultivated. The approximate centre of this enclosure lies lon. $3^{\circ}-40'-47''$, lat. $50^{\circ}-40'-26''$, which is within the area of six-inch O.S. xci, N.W.

Irregularly disposed in this enclosure are eight or more small cairns, up to 16 to 18 feet in diameter. They do not appear to have been disturbed, but of this one can not be quite certain. There is no indication of any of these cairns on the Ordnance Survey.

We are much indebted to Mr. Waterfield for these notes on an area which has long been neglected in our reports. One notable feature is that bronze was found in two of the cairns, and presumably in the third, while another "heap" yielded a stone hammer; and yet another, which very possibly was not a burial place, covered a stone bowl. It may well be that little previous disturbance had been suffered by these cairns, for the record is much richer than we are accustomed to in the open country on Dartmoor. On the other hand it is probable that only those cairns which yielded objects of interest have found record, and many more which were destroyed may have been barren.

[Mr. Worth has suggested that a note might be added to this report, upon the Carrington MS. This was the work of the Rev. Robert Palk Carrington, 30th Rector of Bridford, 1805-42, and begun in the winter of 1838, 1839. It consists of 347 plus 8 pages of text in a vellum book measuring 8 x 5 inches, with a brown clasp. The book is lettered "Parochiales Bridfordii," and has an armorial bookplate: Sable, on a bend argent three fusils of the field. It is deposited at the Exeter City Library. An extract edition by the Rev. E. R. Gotto, a former rector of Bridford, has been referred to in print; another abstract made by T. A. Falcon is in *Devon Notes and Queries*, III, 58, 1904, and reference also made in a paper by Mr. Tapley-Soper read at the meeting at Torquay in 1936.

Mr. Carrington, son of James Carrington of Ide, was presented to the rectory by Sir Lawrence Palk, in 1805; the living had been previously held for him, as he was too young, and partly served by a curate. He died, it seems, in July 1842.

R. WATERFIELD.]