

FORTY-NINTH REPORT ON BARROWS

BY R. HANSFORD WORTH, RECORDER.

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CONSIDERABLE interest has been shown during the past year in a supposed cromlech, near Meacombe Farm, in the parish of Chagford. This was, quite independently, discovered, or rather rediscovered, by the Rev. W. Gordon Baillie a few years since. And, as often happens, once attention is directed to an object, I have since heard of it from several quarters.

Although not a cromlech, it is yet an object worthy of record, and easily visited. It lies in a field of rough pasture, not far from the road hedge, a thousand feet north of the gate to Meacombe Farm (Meacombe pronounced with the "ea" as in "great"), and about a hundred feet to the west of the western hedge of the road leading to Drewston Cross and Chagford; about 70 yards past the kistvaen to the north is a field gate which gives ready access. The position is well-nigh at the summit of the hill. Precisely stated, the kist lies in long. $3^{\circ}-48'-15\frac{1}{2}''$ W., and lat. $50^{\circ}-40'-1\frac{1}{2}''$ N.

I have called it a kistvaen, for such it is, peculiar in nothing except the thickness of its coverstone, and the manner in which, at some time, it has been opened.

As it now stands the two end stones have been removed, and can not be traced; the side stones remain and still support the cover, thus forming a trilithon. The reason why the treasure seekers broke into this kistvaen by removing the end stones is fairly obvious. This procedure was a much less task than moving the coverstone, which measures 4 ft. 7 in. by 4 ft. and has a thickness varying from $23\frac{1}{2}$ in. to $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and probably averaging 19 in. I estimate its weight at 2 tons 2 cwt. The side stones are also fairly bulky.

The original dimensions of the kist were probably about 3 ft. by 1 ft. 6 in., inside measurement, the length of the shorter side stone being 3 ft. 6 in. The present height from the ground to the underside of the cover is $29\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The direction of length is S. 57° E., conforming to the rule that it should lie in the south-east quadrant.

I have prepared a plan, which is here reproduced, and two photographs, Figs. 1 and 2, Pl. XIX. Fig. 1 is taken looking S. 53° E., and Fig. 2 is taken looking N. $41^{\circ} 30'$ E., so that the two lines of sight are not strictly at right-angles.

The thickness of the coverstone is as follows: At the point marked "A" on plan, $23\frac{1}{2}$ in., at "B" 19 in., and at "C" $15\frac{1}{2}$ in.

I am indebted to the Rev. H. Hugh Breton, and to the secretaries of the Ancient Monuments Committee for directing my attention to this remain, which I had never visited.

I may add that no cairn or barrow is now traceable, nor any retaining circle, but the absence of these would be expected in enclosed land, with a hungry hedge close by.

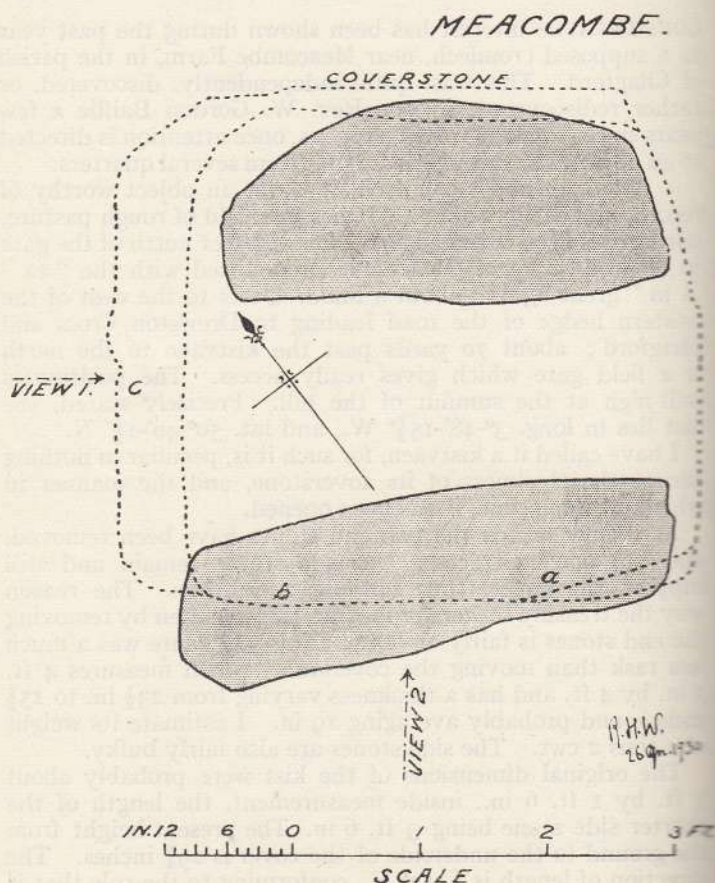


Fig. 3 Plan of Kistvaen at Meacombe.



Fig. 1. MEACOMBE KISTVAEN, View looking S. 53° E.



Fig. 2. MEACOMBE KISTVAEN, View looking N. 41°-30' E.