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RUDE STONE MONUMENTS ON BODMIN MOOR,

By A. L. LEWIS, F.S.A.,  
Treasurer Anthropological Institute.

ILLUSTRATED.

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[*Reprinted from No. XLIII Journal of the Royal Institution of  
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## RUDE STONE MONUMENTS ON BODMIN MOOR.

By A. L. LEWIS, F.S.A., Treasurer Anthropological Institute.

*(Reprinted from No. XLII Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall).*

While the rude stone monuments of the Land's End district, and the "Hurlers" and "Trethevy Stone," in East Cornwall, have been known for centuries, and described very many times, the no less interesting groups of remains on the west side of Brown Willy and Rough Tor\*, have attracted but little attention; the Ordnance map surveyors noted them in the course of their duty, but few archæologists knew them, and, although plans of three of the circles were given by Messrs. Lukis and Borlase in their elaborate work on Cornish Rude Stone Monuments, published by the Society of Antiquaries, two others, the Leaze and Stannon circles, and the very extraordinary structure known as "King Arthur's Hall," were not mentioned by them at all. So far as I know, the only plans of any of these yet published, are those which I now place before the Institution by permission of the Council of the Anthropological Institute, which had them photographically reproduced from my drawings a year ago.

THE LEAZE CIRCLE may be most conveniently reached from Blisland on the one hand, or from St. Breward on the other, by the road which leads to and terminates at the farm marked as Leaze on the Ordnance map. Passing through the yards and an enclosure or two, the visitor will find the stones,—ten standing and one fallen, besides four or five fragments, three of which are buried in a fence which cuts the circle in halves.

The diameter of the circle appears to have been  $83\frac{1}{2}$  feet, but its south-eastern segment is wanting; the stones are from 3 to 4 feet high, and 1 to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in width and thickness. A little way from the circle, about 10 degrees east of north from it, are three

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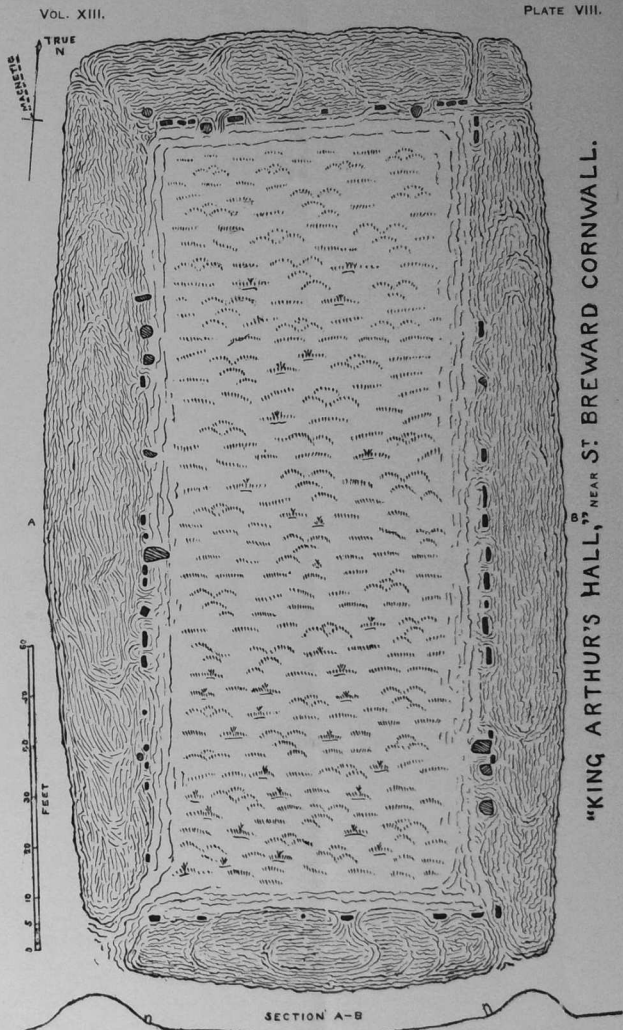
\*The names of Brown-Willy and Rough-Tor are not supposed to signify either "Brown" or "Rough," although in modern spelling they appear to do so. Their old Cornish titles "Bryn-whella" and, perhaps, "Rudh-tor," (similar in sound to Brown-willy and Row-tor) were expressive of "Hill-highest," and "Ruddy-prominence;" the latter being equivalent to Rouge-mont. With regard to Rhud, however, there are other adjectives worthy of consideration.—  
W. I., Co-Editor, R.I.C.J.

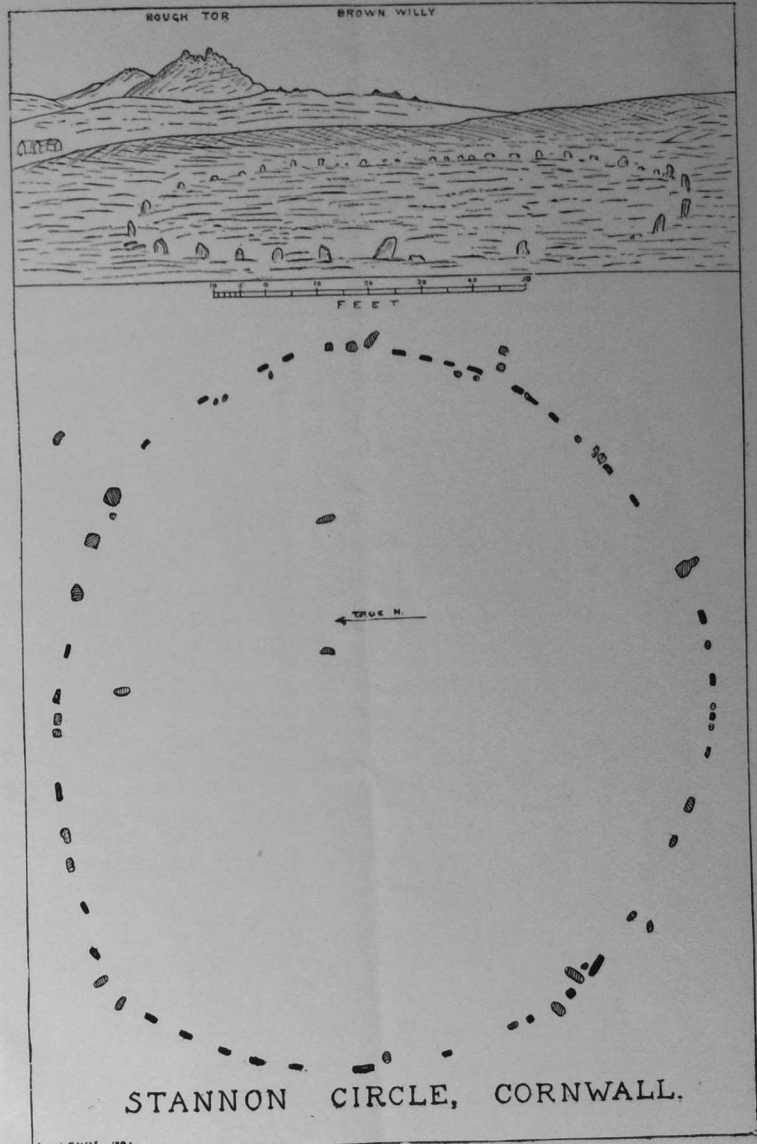
stones which may have formed part of a cist, and there are also about half a dozen stones, which may be the remains of another circle, a short distance to the north-west, beyond which, about half-a-mile from the Leaze circle, is

"KING ARTHUR'S HALL." This remarkable structure\* consists of a bank of earth, the present breadth of which varies from 12 to 20 feet at the base, and its height from 5 to 7 feet; this bank encloses an oblong space, 159 feet long, from north to south (within 5 degrees to west of north), 64 feet wide at the north, and 68½ feet wide at the south. Twelve stones stand or lie in line inside the north end of the bank, eighteen inside the east side, six inside the south end, and nineteen inside the west side; they seem to have formed a kind of retaining wall to the inner side of the bank, but are mostly pressed inward and in many cases nearly buried by its gradual wearing away, it is indeed probable that many stones are quite covered, and that the lines, if not quite continuous, were originally much more complete than they are now, but this can only be ascertained by digging or boring; the largest stones remaining in position are about five feet high. The middle of the enclosure is a foot or so lower than the ground outside, and in wet weather is full of water, which finds an outlet at the south-west corner. All the corners of the embankment are more or less broken and rounded, and it is lower at the north and south ends than at the east and west sides, but there is no appearance of any special entrance, the angles of the lines of stones being well-defined, except, perhaps, at the south-west corner.

THE STANNON CIRCLE is a mile and a half north (slightly west) from "King Arthur's Hall," and will be most readily found by getting to the position where Rough Tor is due east *by compass*, about a mile and a quarter away, and the three highest peaks of Brown Willy are just visible over the ridge, as shown in the sketch on my plan. The circle consists of about

\*The members of the Royal Institution of Cornwall visited Arthur's Hall Roughtor, Brownwilly, and neighbouring stone-remains, in the course of their Annual Excursion, 1837. It has been conjectured that Arthur's Hall may have been a great cattle-pound, a place of assembly, or an earthwork occupied by a small detachment of Roman troops.—W.L., Co.-Ed.





70 stones and fragments, of which 33 are upright, but none of them exceed five feet, and some of them are not more than two feet in height. The diameters are 138 feet from east to west, and  $125\frac{1}{2}$  feet from north to south, there being a peculiar flattening of the northern side, in which respect it resembles Long Meg circle in Cumberland.

On measuring the distances between four out of the five circles on Bodmin Moor upon the level surface of the six-inch Ordnance map, a remarkable result is obtained, those distances being (within a working error of one per cent.) in the following proportions:—2, 3,  $7\frac{1}{2}$ , 8, and  $8\frac{1}{2}$ , and working out into even numbers of an Egyptian or Royal Persian cubit of 25.1 inches, as do the diameters of the circles themselves. These latter (after correcting Mr. Lukis's errors in plotting his own measurements), are:—

Fernacre	..	146—7 feet	=70 cubits of 25.1 inches.
Stannon	..	} 138 feet east to west	=66 " "
			125 $\frac{1}{2}$ ,, north to south
Trippet Stones		104 $\frac{1}{2}$ ,,	=50 " "
Stripple Stones		146—7 feet	=70 " "
Leaze	.. ..	83 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet	=40 " "

The distances between the circles are, as nearly as can be ascertained from the six-inch Ordnance map:—

Trippet Stones to Stripple	}	4180 feet=1998 $\frac{1}{2}$ cubits of 25.1 ins.
Stones		(practically 2000)
Stripple Stones to Fernacre		15730 feet=7520 " "
		(practically 7500)
Fernacre to Stannon	..	6275 feet=3000 " "
Stannon to Trippet Stones		16400 feet=7840 " "
		(for 8000, 2 per cent. error)
Trippet Stones to Fernacre		16880 feet=8070 " "
		(for 8125)
Stripple Stones to Stannon		16850 feet=8055 " "
		(for 8125)

It must not be forgotten that the above distances are measured as on the level, while the ground is very irregular. But if measured over the surface without regard to its irregularities the apparent errors, which with one exception, are all

short measurements, would be largely reduced. The one exception is in the distance between Stripple Stones and Fernacre which thus measured would be in excess of the proportion above stated ( $7\frac{1}{2}$ ). The conception of such a proportioned arrangement and the measurements necessary to carry it out, even with the degree of accuracy attained, would seem only possible for someone accustomed to the works and ways of a higher state of civilisation than that of the people who lived in the stone huts, and probably erected the stone circles, but the use of an oriental measure would indicate intercourse with a more civilized people, and the fact that the 25.1 inch cubit does not, so far as I know, appear in connection with any other circles, seems to suggest that that intercourse may have been of a casual rather than of a frequent character. It may therefore not be unreasonable to suppose that someone from some country bordering on the Mediterranean may have visited Cornwall, perhaps three thousand years ago, as a merchant, explorer, or refugee, or possibly as a slave carried there for sale, and that, being there, he was employed by the local chief in the construction of his public works, and made use of a measure which he happened to have with him. Still, as all these coincidences of measurement and proportion may be accidental, I do not wish to build any theory upon them, but I think it will be admitted that they should be recorded.

There are, however, some other facts regarding the positions of the circles relatively to each other and to the hills around them, concerning which I have formed a very decided opinion.

It will be seen from the Ordnance map, and can be verified on the spot, that the Stripple-Stones circle, Garrow-Tor, the Fernacre circle, and Rough-Tor, are all in a direct line, nearly due north and south; and that the Stannon circle and Fernacre circle are in a direct line with Brown-Willy, at a right angle to the first line, that is nearly due east and west, while the Trippet Stones circle and Leaze circle are in a line with Rough-Tor, 11 to 12 degrees east of north. A difference in the situation of any of these circles, of one or two hundred feet, would put them quite out of these lines, but there is no apparent reason why they might not just as well have been put anywhere round about as

on the particular spots they occupy, indeed, I think a better site might have been found for most of them, therefore I cannot imagine that these three lines of circles and hills can have been formed accidentally in placing only five circles; in other words, I see no escape from the conclusion that each of these circles was placed on the exact spot it occupies, because that spot was in a certain direction from the hills I have mentioned. I say from the hills rather than from the other circles, because the only circles that are visible from each other are the Stripple Stones and Trippet Stones.

In support of this conclusion I may add that I have found a similar relation between circles and hills elsewhere. At the Meinieu-Hirion circle near Penmaenmawr two large stones in the valley, now prostrate, but probably once upright, direct the eye toward a hill in the line of the Midsummer sunrise. A straight line drawn in the same direction, from the Mitchell's-Fold circle in Shropshire, to the "Hoarstone" or Marshpool circle, passes over Stapeley Hill, midway between the two circles, and terminates in a group of three low hills to the north-east of the "Hoarstone." At the Swinside circle in Cumberland a straight line may be taken in the same direction from the top of Black-Combe, the most prominent hill near it, through the circle to a group of three low hills to the north-east of it. The circle near Keswick in Cumberland is so placed, that Skiddaw and Blencathra, the two highest mountains round, are, respectively, 34 to 35 degrees west and east from north of it. Blencathra presenting the appearance of a triple summit; these are too far north to have any connection with the sunrise, but would direct attention to the revolution of the Great Bear round the pole-star.

The relative positions of the circles and the hills, as stated above, are facts which anyone may verify, either at the circles or from the Ordnance maps. As to the meaning of the facts, it is open to everyone to form his own opinion. The relation of the "Friar's Heel," and, indeed, of the whole structure of Stonehenge, to the rising sun at Midsummer is well-known, and it is my opinion that, while outlying stones were used as skymarks on flat horizons like that at Stonehenge, the hills themselves were used as skymarks in hilly countries. It is true that hills

may be found in directions which do not appear to have any meaning, as well as in those which have, but, although the circle-builders could not remove those hills, they could ignore them, and their presence would help to conceal from the uninitiated (as it still does) the selection of those hills on which the gaze of the worshipper was to be fixed.

To pursue the subject further in its general bearings would extend this paper beyond its proper limits, but I may mention that in Egyptian theology we have the Eastern Solar Mountain, where the sun rises, and where he is saluted by the powers of the East.\* Other particulars as to the connection between circles, hills, and the sun, may be found in the *Archæological Journal*, Vol. XLIX, p. 136. With regard to the Bodmin Moor circles, I may say, in conclusion, that the line drawn due north through the Stripple Stones and Fernacre circles was probably intended to point to the polestar, and that the line due east through the Stannon and Fernacre circles to Brown-Willy, evidently was meant to indicate the equinoctial sunrise, while hills due south (of which there are instances here and elsewhere), were kept in view as directing attention to the sun at noon. The sun shining between the granite peaks of Rough Tor, as it must at some time in the year, would present a very impressive appearance to anyone viewing it from the Stannon circle; and the triple peak of Brown-Willy, seen from the same spot, as shown in my sketch, may be compared with those in other places mentioned previously. Garrow is in the line of midsummer sunrise from the Leaze circle, and three smaller tors are in the same line from the Stripple Stones. The lines of direction from the Trippet stones and Leaze circle to Rough-Tor are probably in connection with some star or stars, being too far north for any reference to the sun. Rough Tor is the only one of the hills which is visible from all the circles on Bodmin Moor, and may therefore be considered to have been the sacred hill of East Cornwall, though not quite so high as Brown Willy. There are no hills of any great note to be seen on the west side of these circles.

\* P. Lepage Renouf (President) in *Proc. Soc. Biblical Archaeology*, Vol. 18, page 7.

I am not aware that any interments have been made in any of the circles, but, if any have, they would not have precluded the use of the circles for other purposes, any more than burials in churches have prevented their being chiefly used as places of worship.

