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Report On the Excavation at Druid Stoke

by F. Were
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REPORT ON THE EXCAVATION AT DRUID STOKE.

Read by Mr. F. WERE to the Bristol Members of the Society,
on October 20th, 1913.

PERMISSION having been granted to the Society by Mr. Featherstone Witty, owner of the so-called cromlech at Druid Stoke, to make what examination it pleased of the partially-buried stones forming component parts of the cromlech, work under the direction of the Hon. Secretary for Bristol and Mr. Francis Were was commenced on September 8th, 1913. Four stones were visible, the great table stone, which we will call No. 1, leaning against No. 2, which it was considered advisable to leave entirely alone for fear of bringing No. 1 completely to the ground. No. 3, of which but little could be seen, lies in front of No. 2, the north end of it touching the gravel drive in front of the house. No. 3 was first dealt with by clearing the earth away from it on every side; when cleared it was revealed as a large stone, with a curious ledge upon its upper part, the whole lying upon its side. The following measurements were taken: length, 6 ft. 10 in.; height, taken in three places, 3 ft. 9 in., 4 ft. 5 in., and 2 ft. 3 in.; depth, 1 ft. 3 in.; circumference, 17 ft. 8 in. The shortest distance from the corner of the stone touching the drive to the wall of the house is 26 ft. 6 in. Adjoining No. 3 on the south is No. 4 (shown in the photograph propped up on end). This appeared to be a large stone, as a good deal was visible above ground. However, on clearing away the soil it was found to be much smaller than No. 3, and of no thickness. The measurements are: length, 3 ft. 8 in.; breadth, 2 ft. 4 in.; depth, 7 in.; circumference, 11 ft. 6 in. Its north end was found to be resting on a fifth stone hitherto buried. The weight of No. 4 was not so great as to prevent its being raised and set on end by the

united strength of those present, giving them room to excavate the new discovery, No. 5, which was deeply buried exactly in the middle of the other stones. As it lies, the probable base points eastward and the top westward. It measures 3 ft. 8 in. in length and 1 ft. 2 in. in breadth. It was not found possible to take the circumference. A slight trench only was dug on the south side of No. 1, the measurements of which are: length, 10 ft. 4 in.; breadth in three places, 4 ft. 10 in., 5 ft. 6 in., and 3 ft. 9 in.; while in depth it varies from 2 ft. to 2 ft. 7 in.

The position of the overturned stones, we think, shows that when No. 1, or the table stone, was overthrown it came from an easterly to a south-easterly alignment, while No. 3 was slued round to the north and lay almost flat on its side. No. 5, the deeply-buried stone, when standing on its base probably supported the south-east corner of the table stone. Seyer conjectures that No. 1 stood upright with No. 3 in front; but it is too near the stone it rests upon, No. 2, to have fallen from that position, and if so, this number must have included the fragile, propped-up one No. 4, which is too weak in size and quality to help bear the weight of No. 1, but was more probably the base or side of a cist; in fact, all that has been left of one which might have been rifled at the overturning centuries ago. About a foot and a half below the surface of the ground rough cobble-like stones tightly packed together were found. A resident in the locality told us that this characteristic obtains over all parts of the field (now gardens) which have been dug into.

Seyer seems rightly to have diagnosed the stones as breccia, and not millstone grit, as it is poor in quality compared to the dolomitic conglomerate of the Mendips, and therefore is probably local. Professor Lloyd Morgan says it is dolomitic conglomerate from Henbury; but Seyer thinks they came from King's Weston Down, where he says many of them were to be seen, but of smaller size, which Mr. Farr collected for the foundation of his house.

The members of Council who viewed the positions of the stones were divided in opinion as to whether the table stone rested upon three or four upright stones. It certainly was not a monolith as illustrated by Seyer.

Photographs were taken of the uncovered stones, prints of which are appended to this report.

The work took three days altogether. By desire of the owner of the stones they are all left visible to the eye, but otherwise remain *in situ*.

The best thanks of the Society are due to Mr. and Mrs. Featherstone Witty, not only for leave to excavate, but also for much kind hospitality shown to members.

F. W.
L. J. U. W.