

## Archæological Notes

*The Soldiers' Grave, Dundry.* (O.S. 6 in. to 1 mile, Som. 12 N.W., N.G.R., ST 5535534.) This site lies south of the church and immediately north of the Ordnance Survey triangulation point. It is the one part of this area of Dundry Hill that has not been quarried. Traditionally, according to some of the older inhabitants of the area, the name is derived from the number of human bones once found there, though it has not been possible to find any record of their actual discovery, a long time ago. It is also claimed that this part of the hill, only about 30×20 yards in extent, was never quarried because the workmen at the time, which was well prior to 1791, refused to destroy the grave. Collinson (1791) in his account of Dundry Hill includes the following description of a structure at the site. "The hand of art never exerted itself here but in hewing out immense quarries in the days of yore, and erecting one poor, forsaken building for the purpose of a beacon house. This building (is) composed of two stones put slantwise for a covering with an arched doorway three feet high and two and a half wide. The room within is five feet and a half long by five feet wide." He concludes that it was not a beacon but rather the watch-house for the keeper but admits that no marks of fire are "distinguishable in any part of its composition". Collinson does not explicitly state that he had visited the site though his account certainly reads as if he had.

Skinner (1826)\* visited the site and found a large cist formed of four upright stones on which rested flat covers each about 8 ft. in length and 4 ft. in width. The intermediate space between the uprights was filled up with dry stone walling. The cavity was about 7 ft. long by about 6 ft. wide, "capable of holding three or four bodies laid side by side". One of the stones, then prone beside the cist, had been smoothed prior to removal but had been broken and left. The other stone was supported by the uprights and had apparently been squared. Skinner could gain no information as to when the cist had been opened and adds that the tumulus had not been completely removed, and seemed to be about 60 ft. in circumference. A sketch, which Phelps (1835, p. 90) seems to have copied without acknowledgment, is given. He describes it as "a cistvaen of huge stones". Scarth (1890) says he had examined it about forty years before and had concluded that it "was a small cabin, not apparently prehistoric, being formed of ashlar slabs and seemed rather to have been used as a place for tools in more recent times". There is nothing on the site at all now but it does seem remarkable that this small area should have been left unquarried when one sees how the old quarries run into one another without leaving any intervening area unquarried. There is just this little area unquarried.

The stone of the hill naturally splits up with little tooling into square or rectangular masses and Skinner's remarks need not imply that the structure was not old because the stones were tooled. There is a discrepancy between the description given by Collinson and Skinner, but part at least of the discrepancy would disappear if, in the interval between the two visits, one of the cover stones had slipped still further than in 1791 and fallen flat. The site may have been utilized, as Scarth suggests, as a toolshed, but that does not necessarily invalidate its alleged antiquity and a toolshed could only have been needed there when the quarries were being worked long prior to 1791 though it is hardly likely that the shed would be placed on the very summit and the hill quarried all round. Skinner specifically mentions that there were remains of the tumulus that once covered the cistvaen. On the whole the available evidence points to there having been on the site a prehistoric chambered tomb covered by a mound, probably of stones, as there is scarcely any soil on the site at the present day.

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*Another Henge Monument on Mendip.* (O.S. 6 in. to 1 mile, Som. 28 S.W., N.G.R., ST 559498, Catalogue number, T 239A.) Brief references to this discovery

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