

Bronze Age Cist from Gib Hill.

By J. C. HEATHCOTE.

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THANKS to Capt. Waterhouse, M.P., and the Office of Works, the stone cist which was excavated from Gib Hill by Thomas Bateman in 1848, and taken to his garden at Lomberdale Hall, has now been brought back to Gib Hill. This stone tomb has been re-erected in its original state on the top of the mound.

The metal plate which Bateman had fixed to the large copestone has the following inscription:—

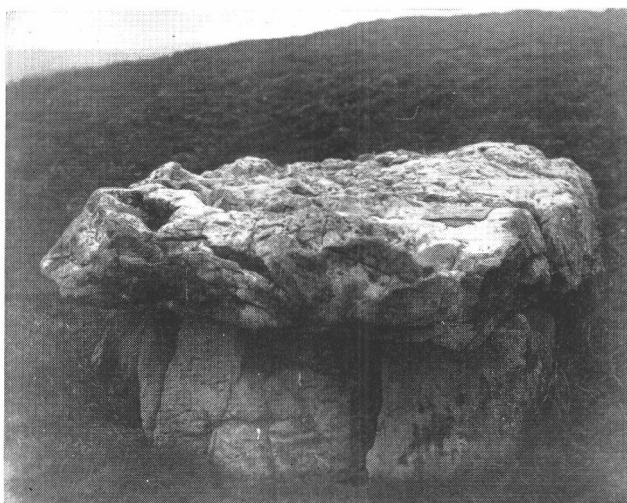
“Cist Vaen from the Gib Hill Barrow, near Middleton-by-Youlgrave, opened by Thomas Bateman, January, 1848.”—T. Bateman.

This large mound is situated about 350 yards westward from the well-known stone circle Arbor Low. Gib Hill which is visible over a wide area is on the Upper Oldham's Farm, about one mile from Parsley Hay Station and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the village of Youlgrave. Bateman in his *Vestiges* says the tumulus is very conical and rises to the height of about 18 feet and has the usual basin-like concavity on its summit. It appears to have originally been connected with Arbor Low because there can be seen traces of a rampart of earth which runs from the circle towards the Hill. Several attempts at excavation have been made to ascertain what were the contents of this massive structure. In 1824 William Bateman was not very successful, only unearthing a flint arrow head and a fragment of a basaltic celt. It was in 1848 that Thomas Bateman made a determined effort to try and



I.—GIB HILL CIST as it appeared in the grounds of Lomberdale Hall.

From a photo. by Mr. T. L. Tudor, taken in 1932.



II.—GIB HILL CIST as it now appears re-erected on its original site in 1940.

Facing p. 66.

ascertain some approximate data respecting the obscure period of the foundation of the neighbouring circle. Owing to the large size of the mound his operations extended over several days. Thomas Bateman gives a full description of his work in his "Ten Years Diggings." It appears that expecting the interment to be at the bottom of the mound he accidentally discovered it almost at the summit. He writes:—

A tunnel was driven from the west side of the trench at right angles in the hope of finding an interment, but after carrying it a few yards it was deemed unsafe to continue it, and after supporting timbers being knocked away, previous to abandoning the work, the whole structure fell in, and much to our surprise revealed the interment near the top of the mound, which we had been so laboriously seeking at its base. This consisted of a rectangular cist measuring 2 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. composed of four massive blocks of limestone covered in by a fifth of irregular form averaging 4 ft. square by 10 in. thick. The capstone was not more than 18 in. beneath the turf covering the summit of the barrow. In fact the men had been working directly under the cist for some time. By the sudden fall of the two sides and the adjacent earth a very pretty vase of a small size was crushed to pieces the fragment mingling with the burnt human bones with which it had for ages occupied the sepulchral chamber. The urn measuring $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. in height has since been restored. It is of that class of vessel deposited with human remains, burnt or unburnt, and which probably may have contained food or drink, but never the remains, as in the case with cinerary urns. The vase [now in the Sheffield Museum] is elegantly ornamented with incised lines, two moulded bands, one of them with five projecting knobs in its circumference. 6 ins. diameter at top and 3 ins. at base.

From the position of the interment Bateman concluded that Gib Hill was not in the first instance a sepulchral mound. The date of this interment would probably be in the early Bronze Age period about the same time as the large barrow on the rampart at Arbor Low somewhere near 1500 B.C. This may have been some time after the erection of the Stone Circle. Many barrows have cists like this in their centre, but few of them were left open after excavation.

The cist at Gib Hill is very similar to the one excavated on Stanton Moor in 1928 at the No. 2 barrow, except that the Gib Hill cist was built of limestone while that at Stanton Moor was made of the local sandstone.

It is interesting to note that there appears to be the outline of what may have been a large disc barrow, about 20 yards from the Hill. Unfortunately, agricultural operations have almost entirely obliterated these remains.

NOTE BY T. L. TUDOR.

The photograph shown above was taken in the year 1932 by the kind invitation of Mrs. Waterhouse of Lomberdale Hall, Youlgreave, in the grounds of which the monument was then standing. When discovered in 1848, as explained in the remarks by Mr. J. C. Heathcote, it was conveyed to Mr. Bateman's private grounds and there erected. Apparently, judging from the illustration in "Ten Years Diggings," in comparison with the accompanying photograph taken as above stated, the re-erection was carried out with tolerable correctness. The monument remained undisturbed from 1848 to 1932, and so far as this writer knows, from 1932 to the recent construction in its original place on Gib Hill.

It should be remarked that in the quotation given by Mr. Heathcote from Bateman's record, the statement that the vase discovered is "in the Sheffield Museum," is added to the original record. It was not until after Mr. Bateman's death that his collection of antiquities was dispersed. Many prehistoric objects, including a wonderful collection of flints, from Derbyshire barrows found their way to the Sheffield Museum.

It was during a course of lectures on "Historic Derbyshire" given by this writer under the Nottingham University College Adult Education Scheme, that the late Mrs. Waterhouse, who attended the course, offered to the lecturer the opportunity of photographing the cist.