



Royal Commission on the Historical  
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# **AN ENCLOSURE ON TREGARRICK TOR, ST CLEER, CORNWALL**

**An Archaeological Survey by  
The Royal Commission on the  
Historical Monuments of England**

## **INDUSTRY AND ENCLOSURE IN THE NEOLITHIC**

**March 1995**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In March 1995 the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England surveyed a hilltop enclosure at Tregarrick Tor on the south-eastern edge of Bodmin Moor in Cornwall (NGR SX 241 711). The survey was carried out as part of the Industry and Enclosure in the Neolithic Project, which seeks to provide a corpus of all Neolithic flint mines and enclosures in England (other than those already classified as cursus or burial monuments).

Tregarrick Tor lies at 310m above OD on the southern fringe of the granite uplands of Bodmin Moor: it forms the south-western tip of Craddock Moor, an area bounded by Stowe's Pound to the east and Caradon Hill to the south-east. Craddock Moor has been interpreted as a sacred landscape with settlements and field systems around its periphery (Johnson & Rose 1994); ritual monuments such as Rillaton barrow, Wollagate barrow, the Hurlers stone circles, the Craddock Moor stone circle, an embanked avenue and many cairns are located there. Prehistoric field systems and hut circles can be found below Rillaton barrow, Stowe's Pound and Tregarrick Tor, and also on the northwestern part of the Moor itself.

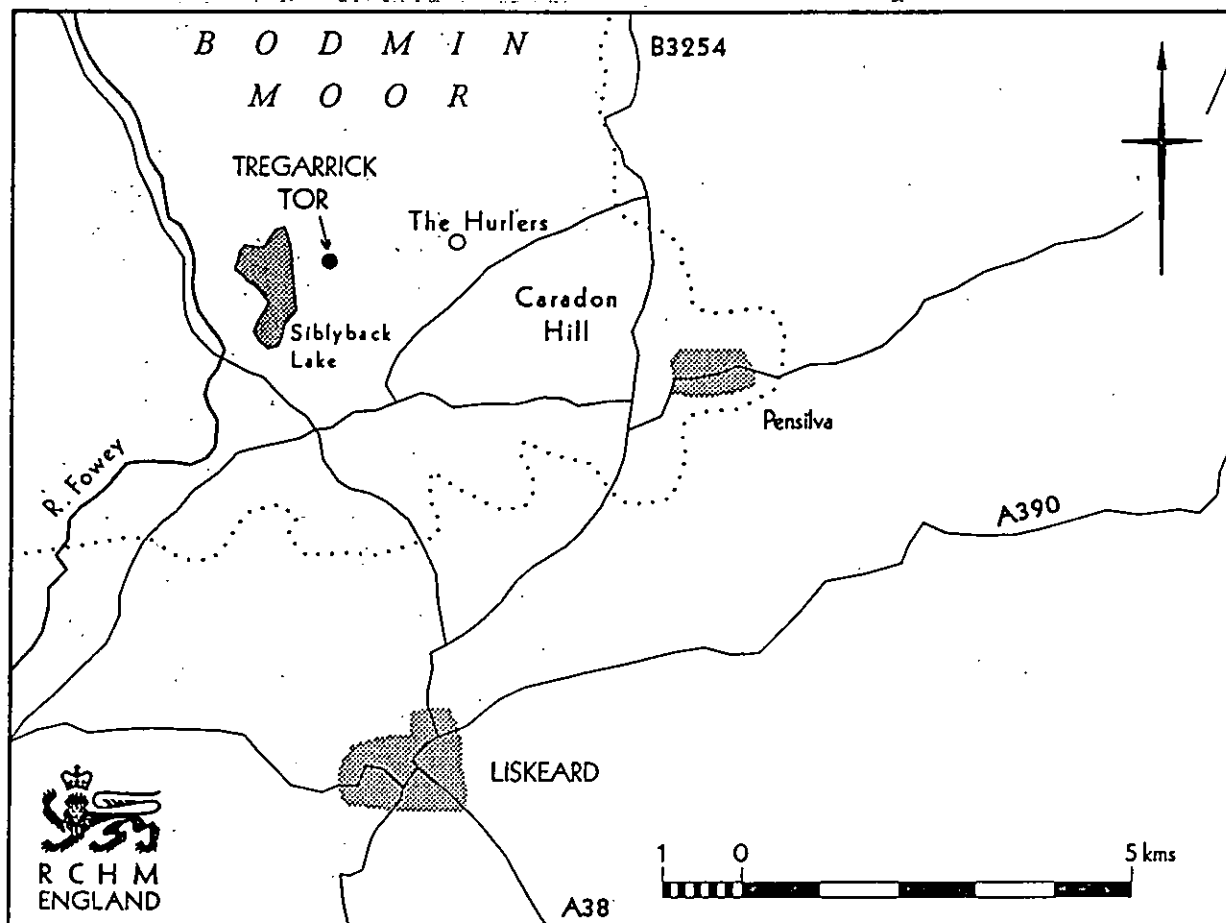


Figure 1: Location map

Tregarrick Tor comprises two outcrops with their surrounding dense scatter of smaller granite outcrops and clitter, situated on the summit of the hill, which has panoramic views across several kilometres in all directions. The prehistoric landscape immediately surrounding Tregarrick Tor includes hut circles and field boundaries on the northern, southern and western slopes of the hill.

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## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY

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Craddock Moor was surveyed as part of the RCHME - Cornwall Archaeological Unit Bodmin Moor survey, and was found to be extremely rich in prehistoric remains (Johnson & Rose 1994).

The enclosure on Tregarrick Tor has been suggested as a Neolithic site on the basis of similarities it shares with excavated Neolithic sites, such as Carn Brea and Helman Tor (Mercer 1981, 1986), and alleged Neolithic sites such as Stowe's Pound (Fletcher 1989). These enclosures share certain natural features: hilltop location; proximity to tors, natural outcrops and clitter fields; and the utilisation of natural outcrops and earthfast boulders in the enclosure construction. However, given the nature of Bodmin Moor, it would be difficult to avoid some of these geomorphological features.

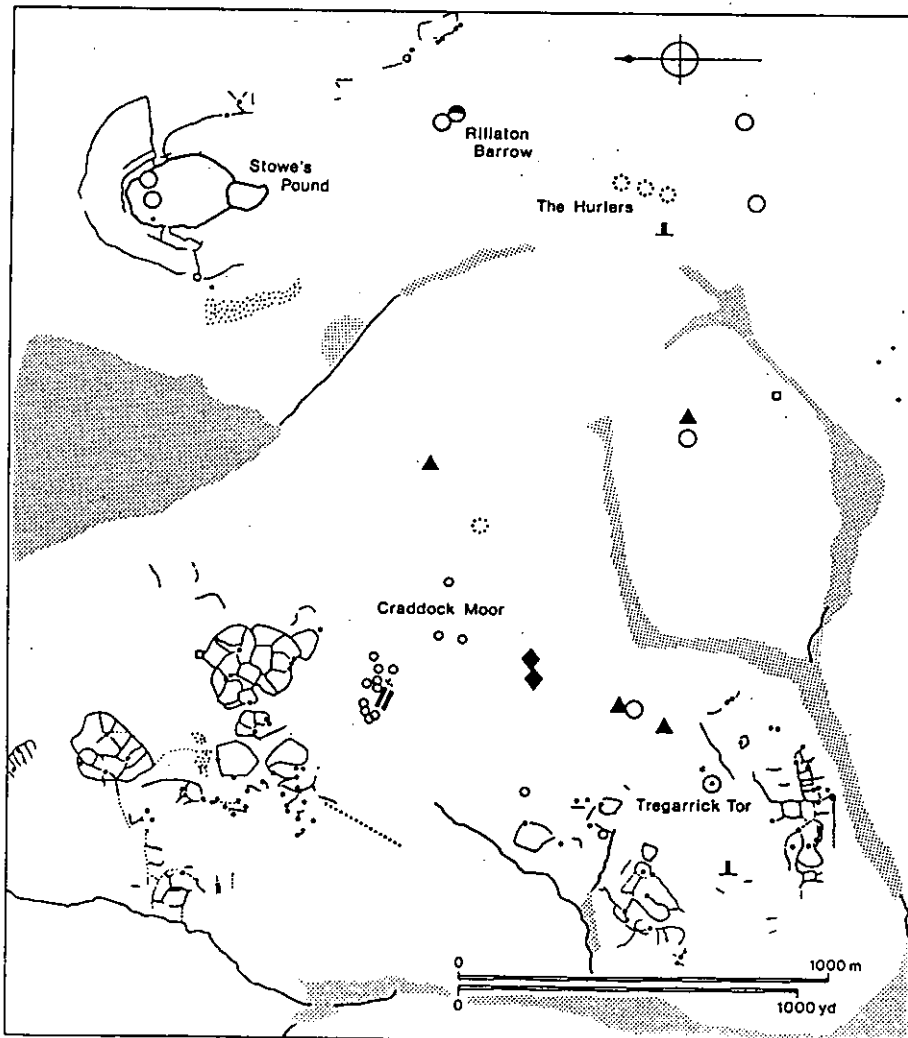


Figure 2: Craddock Moor (Johnson & Rose 1994, 45)

Other supposed similarities include internal settlement evidence of an early prehistoric nature (cleared hut platforms with little or no evidence of stone built structures); generally poorly defined entrances (where they can be identified); and proximity to areas of known early prehistoric activity, though this last point should be treated with some caution given the wealth of early prehistoric activity on Bodmin Moor.

The archaeological features on Tregarrick Tor have never been excavated, and the enclosure was not recognised until recently when it was scheduled as an early prehistoric hillfort (SAM Cornwall 15088). No detailed survey of the enclosure has previously taken place, although the English Heritage Field Warden, David Hooley, carried out a rough pace-and-tape survey (D Hooley, pers comm). None of the features surveyed during the project have appeared on Ordnance Survey mapping.

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### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION

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The survey area encompassed both Tregarrick Tor and its immediate environs. A number of features were recorded, principally a hilltop enclosure with hut platforms within and adjacent to it. The tor cairn was also surveyed, as well as numerous other prehistoric and later features on the slopes of the hill, primarily standing stones, cairns, clearance cairns, peat drying platforms and mineral workings.

Letters used in bold in the text correspond to those used on the plans.

#### **THE ENCLOSURE** (Figure 5)

**NMR No: SX 27 SW 105**

The enclosure comprises a series of stony scarps (maximum 4.0m wide and 1.0m high) connecting natural outcrops which are thereby incorporated into the enclosure. The scarps had no real structure, which made their identification among the clutter field more difficult, and in places, it is difficult to distinguish them: they were surveyed only where a clear scarp could be defined. Consequently, only the southern half of the circuit can be defined with confidence, forming an intermittent line from a point between the two tors to a point on the east side of the hill where a low stone wall heads off to the north east (see below). Another stony scarp breaks away from the main enclosure at **a**, heading south for some 7.0m between two natural outcrops, but this may be a natural feature.

The enclosure was originally interpreted as a small prehistoric camp. A later Ordnance Survey Investigator suggested that it was a natural rock outcrop (NMR No SX 27 SW 49), and this interpretation prevented the inclusion of the enclosure in the RCHME-Cornwall Archaeology Unit survey of Bodmin Moor (M Fletcher, pers comm).

The enclosure is morphologically similar (though on a much smaller scale) to those at Carn Brea and Helman Tor which have been dated with some certainty to the Neolithic period. At Carn Brea there was some suggestion of an active defensive use of the enclosure during this period (or that it was simply attacked), due to the recovery of large numbers of flint arrowheads (Mercer 1986, 53). There is no evidence to suggest that the enclosure on Tregarrick Tor was defensive, or even that it completed a full circuit; the Neolithic enclosure at Broome Heath was C-shaped and was therefore never intended to be defensive (P Topping, pers comm).

At **b**, a low (0.3m) stony bank (12.0m long) lies roughly north-south. Some 4.0m west of this is a line of stones parallel to the bank, defining a cleared area between them. Quinnell interpreted these features as a rectilinear enclosure (previously indexed as NMR No SX 27 SW 77), but although the two banks may be related, there is little evidence to suggest that they formed an enclosure. A similar low (0.2m) stony bank (23.0m to the southeast and 10.0m long) lying roughly northeast-southwest is partly lined by four small orthostats. It is possible that these features form an outlying part of the

main enclosure, but given that the perimeter of the enclosure is almost non-existent around the northeastern part of Tregarrick Tor, this relationship can not be confirmed.

Two lines of orthostats, one roughly north-south, the other roughly east-west partially surround the smaller of the tors at Tregarrick (c). The north-south element contains three large and two small stones, all of which lean eastward (towards the tor); the east-west element contains three small stones, which are more upright, though they do have a slight northerly incline. The orthostats are supported by a stony scarp to the south and west, which is similar to the enclosure bank. Between the orthostats and the tor is a relatively stone-free area measuring 9.0m by 6.0m at its maximum.

This feature has been scheduled as a Tor Cairn (SAM Cornwall 15088), though only one of the criteria relating to the type appears to have been met. Only the north-south line of orthostats is in a position where it may have formed part of an enclosure surrounding the tor: the east-west line, as well as the bank which supports it, leads directly towards the tor rather than encircling it. There is no evidence that the bank which is supposed to encircle the tor extended any further than is visible today: it did not disturb the line of the enclosure bank which is thought to pre-date the 'tor cairn'. The area between the bank-with-orthostats and the tor is stone-free, creating a level platform: this is one of the characteristics of tor cairns as described in the Monuments Protection Programme Single Monument Class Description: Tor Cairns paper (unpublished report). However, this appears to be the only criterion which is fully met, and is certainly not enough to warrant its scheduling as a tor cairn.

The NMR report for this feature suggests that it may be the remains of a building, or perhaps an embryonic cairn similar to that surrounding the main tor at Tregarrick (NMR No SX 27 SW 73). Its shape and size would support the former interpretation, though more evidence is required before this could be confirmed.

None of these interpretations are satisfactory explanations for the awkward relationship between the bank-and-orthostats and the tor stack, and there is no reason to suggest that this feature is not a small annexe to the main enclosure, albeit slightly different in structure to the main enclosure bank.

### **Hut platforms**

Within the southern part of the enclosure, and to the northeast, are seventeen roughly circular cleared areas, most of which are partly ringed with stones, and some of which are defined by scarps. The scarp-defined features are almost certainly hut platforms, while those defined by stones, though less convincing are also possibly hut platforms. The interior of these features are all stone-free (with two exceptions, where low, earthfast boulders remain). Regularity and preservation are variable, as Figure 3 outlines.



Figure 3: Table showing hut platform characteristics

	scarp & stone defined	stone defined	internal stones	measurements (diameter)	note
1	yes	-	-	4.5m	certain
2	yes	-	-	4.3m	certain
3	yes	-	-	4.1m	probable
4	-	yes	-	4.8m x 5.2m	probable
5	-	yes	-	4.1m	possible
6	yes	-	-	4.1m	probable
7	-	yes	-	3.6m	probable
8	-	yes	yes	3.6m	possible
9	-	yes	-	3.6m	dubious
10	-	yes	-	3.5m	probable
11	-	yes	-	3.5m x 4.1m	dubious
12	-	yes	-	3.5m x 4.1m	very dubious
13	-	yes	yes	3.2m	dubious
14	yes	-	-	4.0m	certain
15	-	yes	-	2.4m x 2.8m	very dubious
16	-	yes	-	3.6m	possible
17	-	yes	-	3.4m	very dubious

#### THE TOR CAIRN (Figure 5)

NMR No: SX 27 SW 74

Partially surrounding the main tor at Tregarrick, on its northern and southwestern sides, are the remains of a tor cairn, formed by stones deposited on and around the tor (d). The majority of the stones are well-rounded (unlike the more angular natural clutter in the area) and measure between 0.3m and 0.5m in diameter. The cairn extends 7.0m from the edge of the tor, and has been heavily robbed.

Built into the southwestern side of the cairn is a small shelter (3.0m by 2.0m), typical of Medieval and later herdsman's shelters (SAM Cornwall 15088), though it may be a wartime Home Guard emplacement (NMR No SX 27 SW 74).

#### OTHER FEATURES (Figure 4)

##### Wall (e)

NMR No: SX 27 SW 106

This stone wall leads northeast from the main enclosure, ending at a point 28.0m short of the present field wall, a total of 104.0m. Comprised mostly of large boulders (more than 0.5m in diameter), the wall contains at least two large vertical orthostats. The wall varies in height from 0.25m at its north-eastern end, to 0.7m immediately north of the break caused by a natural outcrop.

This wall was plotted as part of the Bodmin Moor Project, and interpreted as a prehistoric field boundary although it included part of what is now seen as the main enclosure bank (from SX 2416 7113 to SX 2420 7117) (Johnson & Rose 1994, fig 30). The English Heritage scheduling details classify the wall as an outwork of the main enclosure described above (SAM Cornwall 15088). However, the relationship between the two features is unclear. It may be a field boundary associated with the later prehistoric settlement on the lower hill slopes to the south and southwest (not plotted as part of this survey - see Johnson & Rose 1994, fig 30).

### **Standing stones**

**NMR No: SX 27 SW 82**

One probable and three possible standing stones are located on the northwestern and western slopes of the hill. That at f was plotted during the Bodmin Moor survey, and may be a boundary stone or way marker. This stone measures 1.6m high by 0.5m wide by 0.3m thick, and there are small packing stones around its base; it has no inscriptions (NMR No SX 27 SW 82).

The other standing stones are more dubious, though they may have been rubbing posts. Two are triangular, one (g) measuring 1.0m high by 0.9m wide at base by 0.5m thick, the second (h) measuring 1.4m high by 1.2m wide at base by 0.7m thick; these are located at the edge of a clutter field north of Tregarrick Tor. The third stone (k) measures 1.0m high by 0.5m wide by 0.5m thick and is in the middle of a large clutter field northwest of the Tor.

### **Hut circle (l)**

**NMR No: SX 27 SW 109**

A hut circle lies close to the existing field wall 300m southwest of Tregarrick Tor. It has been partially robbed (possibly for stones for the field wall), and consists of a low, broad, turf-covered bank forming a roughly circular area measuring 2.4m by 2.8m internally; the bank is 1.0m wide and 0.5m high. There is a possible entrance to the south.

North and east of this is a low bank, 3.0m long by 0.4m wide by 0.5m high, probably the remains of an old field wall.

### **Cairns**

**NMR No: SX 27 SW 107**

A large cairn with the remains of a possible central cist lies on the western slope of the hill (m). The cairn, which survives as a simple stony mound with an outer bank measures between 5.9m and 6.1m in diameter, and survives to a height of 0.7m; the bank is 0.8m wide. Part of the cairn has been damaged by a vehicle track on its eastern side. The rectangular cist is formed by three granite slabs (none on its northeast side): there is no evidence of a capstone. It is roughly central to the mound and measures 1.0m by 0.5m by 0.3m deep.

A small, low cairn, 3.4m in diameter and 0.5m high lies on the edge of a clutter field on the western slope of Tregarrick Tor, roughly 5m in front of three massive earthfast boulders (n).

A large, low turf-covered stony cairn, measuring 6.0m north-south, 6.9m transversely by 0.7m high, lies in a clutter field close to the field wall on the northeast slope of Tregarrick Tor (p). It contains a central mound, 3.0m by 2.2m by 0.5m high with a corresponding hollow 3.5m by 2.5m by 0.5m deep. On its northeastern side, the cairn has been partly damaged by a vehicle track.

#### **Peat stands**

**NMR No: SX 27 SW 74**

Two rectangular ditched features are situated on the northern slope of Tregarrick Tor, while a third lies on its western slope. That at q measures 5.3m by 5.6m eternally while the internal platform measures 1.9m by 3.2m ; the ditch is 0.5m deep and the platform is level with the eternal ground surface. The platform at r measures 3.2m by 4.3m eternally and the platform measures 1.5m by 2.0m; the ditch is 0.2m deep and the platform is level with the eternal ground surface. The western platform (s) measures 5.8m by 4.7m eternally and the platform measures 3.1m by 2.3m; the ditch is 0.2m high and the platform is level with the eternal ground surface.

These peat stands (or peat drying platforms or peat stack platforms, as they are also known) are similar to hundreds of others on Bodmin Moor. They are usually playing card shape, comprising a ditch with an inner platform or mound, and often an outer bank. Typically they measure 6.0m by 3.0m overall, with a 0.5m wide ditch, though there is great variation; the platform is rarely more than 0.2m above eternal ground level. Peat stands are thought to be Medieval in origin, though some may be later. (See NMR No SX 17 SW 31 for a general description of the type.)

#### **Mineral workings (t)**

**NMR No: SX 27 SW 108**

A substantial turf-covered stony bank, measuring 1.8m wide and 0.7m high, with a ditch 2.5m wide and 0.1m deep at its eastern end, runs for more than 200m downhill from the present field wall northeast of Tregarrick Tor. The relationship between the bank and the ditch is very reminiscent of field walls which have robbing ditches to one side. However, the linear feature runs into a large openwork (not surveyed) and is probably associated with tin working, for which there is abundant evidence in the surrounding landscape.

#### **Clearance cairns**

Numerous small clearance cairns are scattered across the western slope of the hill. Typically they measure between 1.0m and 1.5m in diameter and are 0.6m high. Many of them are situated upon larger, often earthfast, boulders.

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#### 4. DISCUSSION

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The importance of the tors at Tregarrick Tor cannot be measured, though prominent features in the landscape have long been ascribed a symbolic value, and often became the focus for ritual and burial monuments. On Bodmin Moor large cairns (over 10m in diameter) are usually sited on ridges or plateaus outside the area of settlement, (Johnson & Rose 1994, 41). The tor cairn on Tregarrick Tor is no exception: it is located on a prominent hill, the lower slopes of which housed Bronze Age settlement (Johnson & Rose 1994, Fig 30).

The location of the enclosure is significant, given the commanding views the site affords, and in this it is comparable with the known Neolithic sites of Carn Brea and Helman Tor, and with the possible early prehistoric defended enclosures of Roughtor and Stowe's Pound (Johnson & Rose 1994, 46). The lack of clear structure and the incompleteness of the enclosure at Tregarrick Tor, however, does not support a defensive interpretation. The majority of the hut platforms are formed by circular areas cleared of stone. On Bodmin Moor, similar hut platforms have only been found elsewhere at Roughtor and Stowe's Pound, and they probably supported small huts constructed of wood (Johnson & Rose 1994, 53-5).

Roughtor and Stowe's Pound are thought to be early prehistoric, and the similarities between these sites, Carn Brea and Helman Tor would suggest, on morphological grounds, a similar date for the enclosure at Tregarrick Tor. However, this cannot be confirmed without further study and excavation. If the enclosure is Neolithic, this would raise interesting questions regarding the changing use of the landscape at Tregarrick Tor: earlier activity utilised the higher ground, while later settlement occupied the lower slopes, and the hilltop was reserved for burial monuments.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE GAZETTEER

NMR No	Period	Description	Grid Reference
SX 27 SW 105	UP	Not named. Possible enclosure containing hut platforms	SX 241 711
SX 27 SW 74	UP	Not named. Tor cairn	SX 2416 7120
SX 27 SW 106	UP	Not named. Stone wall	SX 2420 7117 - SX 2429 7121
SX 27 SW 82	UN	Not named. Standing stones	SX 2390 7116
SX 27 SW 109	UP	Not named. Hut circle	SX 2386 7109
SX 27 SW 107	UP	Not named. Cairns	SX 2393 7115 SX 2405 7121 SX 2429 7131
SX 27 SW 110	UM	Not named. Peat drying stands	SX 2418 7134 SX 2423 7131 SX 2397 7116

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## 6. SURVEY AND RESEARCH METHODS

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The archaeological survey was carried out by Moraig Brown and Hazel Riley of the RCHME. Hard detail and major features were surveyed using a Wild TC1610 Electronic Theodolite with integral EDM. Data was captured on a Wild GRM 10 rec Module and plotted via computer on a Calcomp 3024 plotter. Further details of the plan were supplied at 1:1000 scale using conventional graphical methods. The report was researched and written by Moraig Brown and edited by Peter Topping. The site archive has been deposited in the National Monuments Record Centre, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ.

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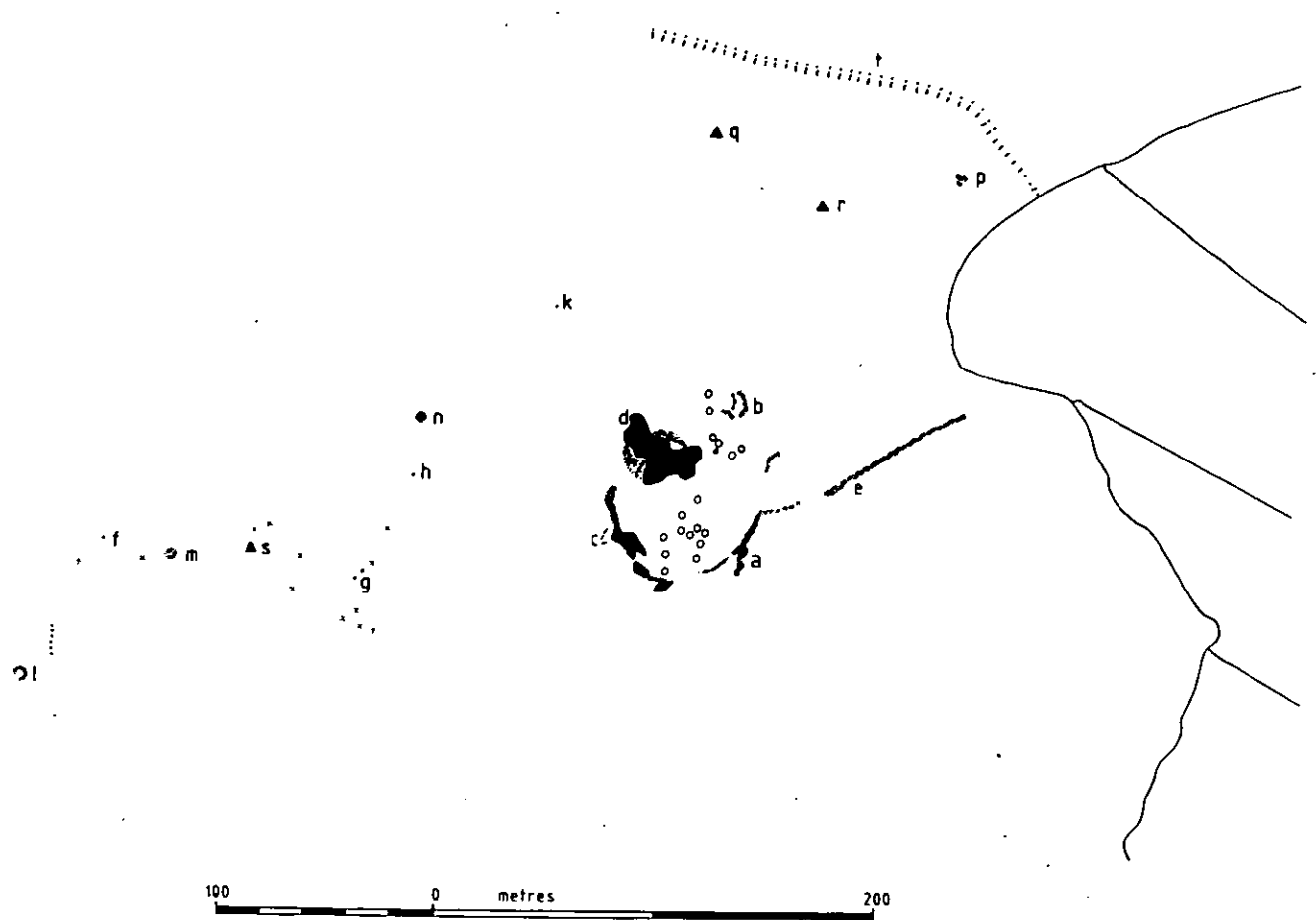
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# TREGARRICK TOR, ST CLEER, CORNWALL

## Plan of Area



- sea bank
- outcrop
- hut circle/platform
- cairn
- ▲ peat drying platform
- standing stone
- ⊕ clearance cairn



TREGARRICK TOR,  
ST CLEER, CORNWALL  
Plan of Enclosure

