

ART. VII. — *A Group of Cumberland Megaliths.\**

By C. W. DYMOND, M. Inst. C.E., F.S.A.

*Read at Workington, June 16th, 1880.*

“These antiquities are so exceedingly old that no bookes doe reach them, sc. that there is no way to retrieve them but by comparative antiquitie, which I have writt upon the spott from the monuments themselves.”—  
JOHN AUBREY.

THE four plans† which illustrate this paper, together with that of Gunnerkeld circle, described in the volume of these *Transactions* for last year, represent with great exactness the present state of some of the more noteworthy megalithic antiquities in the district of the English Lakes. These happen to exemplify most of the distinctive peculiarities which characterise the various classes of remains of this type in Britain: for we have—1st, a fine specimen—taking rank as the fourth in England—of the great stone-circle, with the added feature of a gateway, or rudimentary avenue, and an external mênhir; 2nd, an excellent example of the smaller circle, with stones in close order, and with a perfect entrance-gateway; 3rd, an instance of a circle, partly in open and partly in close order, with some possibly sepulchral indications, and with an included chamber on the eastern side; 4th, a typical specimen of an irregularly inclosed cemetery, with no marked peripheral feature; 5th, the low barrow (at Gunnerkeld, already described,) doubly-cinctured with concentric rings, emphasized by a *pylon*, and with traces of a segmental side-chamber.

To the memoranda written on the plans, I will add the following particulars:—

\* Reprinted, with additions, from the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, Vol. xxxiv, pp. 31-36.

† Of Long Meg and her Daughters, the circles at Swin-side and Keswick, and the principal circle on Eskdale Moor.

LONG

LONG MEG AND HER DAUGHTERS.—The earliest published account of these remains is that of Camden, who made a survey of Cumberland in 1599. He says:—\*

“At Little Salkeld there is a circle of stones, 77 in number, each ten foot high; and before these, at the entrance, is a single one by itself, fifteen foot high. This the common people call *Long-Megg*, and the rest *her daughters*; and within the circle are two heaps of stones, under which they say there are dead bodies bury'd. And indeed 'tis probable enough that this has been a monument erected in memory of some victory.”

In a note, the editor adds:—†

“The heaps of stones in the middle of this monument, are no part of it; but have been gather'd off the plough'd-lands adjoining, and (as in many other parts of the County) have been thrown up here together in a waste corner of the field. Both this and *Rolrich-stones* in Oxfordshire, may seem to be monuments erected at the solemn Investiture of some Danish Kings; and of the same kind as the *Kongstolen* in Denmark, and *Moresteen* in Sweeden.”

The latest edition of the same work supplies the following supplementary matter,—the quotation from Stukeley, given *in extenso* below, being omitted:—‡

“*Long Meg* and her daughters, in *Addingham* parish, q.d. *Ald Hengham*, a town at the old hanging stones, is a druidical circle, 300 feet diameter, of 100 stones of which 67 are now standing. At the south side 15 paces south-west at the distance of 70 feet or 40 yards is an upright squarish stone near 15 feet in girth, and 12 high, and near two yards square at bottom and hollow at top like a Roman altar, one of its angles turned to the circle, and each angle answering to a cardinal point, and near it next the circle four large stones, or as Stukeley three, forming an altar or sacellum, and two towards the east, west, and north.”§

Writing about fifty years later than Camden, Aubrey has a note on Long Meg. He says his information was derived “from Mr. Hugh Tod, Fellow of University

\* *Britannia*, Gibson's ed., p. 831.

† *Ibid.*, p. 831.

‡ Camden's *Britannia*, Gough's 2nd ed., 1806, Vol. III., p. 444.

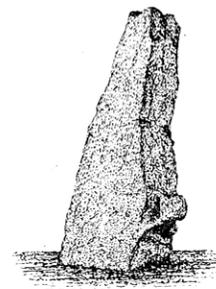
§ The authorities referred-to in this quotation are, Dr. Todd, Hutchinson, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1752, p. 311, Stukeley, 1, p. 47, Burn's *History of Cumberland*, II, p. 448.

Writing

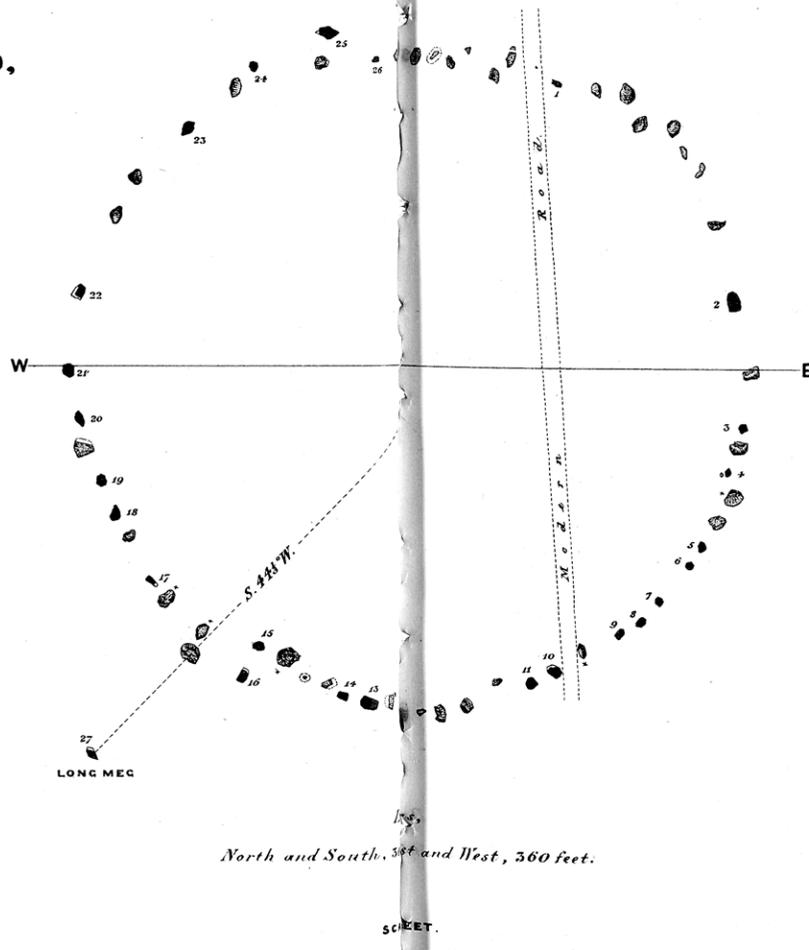
PLAN  
OF A  
STONE CIRCLE AND MËNHIR,  
CALLED  
"LONG MEG AND HER DAUGHTERS,"  
NEAR  
LITTLE SALKELD,  
CUMBERLAND.

SIZES STONES.

Nº	HIGH FT INCH	BROAD FT INCH	THICK FT INCH	Nº	HIGH FT INCH	BROAD FT INCH	THICK FT INCH	Nº	HIGH FT INCH	BROAD FT INCH	THICK FT INCH
1	6.4	4.11	2.6	8	3.4	5.0	4.0	21	8.0	6.0	4.6
2	7.4	8.8	5.6	9	3.11	6.6	3.6	22	5.6	7.0	5.3
3	2.10	4.10	2.3	10	3.3	6.4	2.2	23	5.9	7.5	4.8
4	5.2	3.10	2.9	11	5.7	6.0	5.0	24	5.6	4.4	3.0
5	6.10	4.5	3.11	12	2.10	1.10	4.6	25	--	8.8	5.8
6	4.6	5.5	3.4	13	6.9	6.11	3.3	26	5.5	3.6	2.6
7	5.3	5.10	3.9	14	4.3	LONG MEG		27	12.0	3.6	3.6



VIEW OF LONG MEG.  
(LOOKING S.W.)  
FROM A SKETCH.



North and South, 584 and West, 360 feet.



Surveyed by C.W. [unclear] 21<sup>st</sup> Sept<sup>r</sup>, 1875.

**MEMORANDA.**

This Plan is plotted from an accurate instrument-  
al survey. The magnetic bearings were taken with a  
prismatic-compass. The local deviation of the needle  
was ascertained to be 23½° W.

Those stones which remain erect are filled-in with  
black on the plan: prostrate ones are stippled and  
line-shaded. These latter have generally been so dis-  
located, and, for many years, have been subjected to  
so much destructive violence, - having, until a com-  
paratively recent period, been wantonly broken-up  
for walling and road-materials, - that it is seldom  
possible, in the case of any prostrate stone, to say with  
any degree of assurance which was the base, and where  
it stood; but whenever this can be conjectured, it is in-  
dicated by a small cross.

The open road which intersects the eastern half of the  
peristalith was formerly bounded on the west side by a  
hedge, - since grubbed-up, - on the site of which lie two  
or three large fragments of the stones of the original  
work. These, being evidently at some distance from their  
original place, are not shown upon the plan.

The number of stones that remain, including "Long Meg,"  
but not including the small stone in front of N<sup>o</sup> 4, or the  
fragments by the road-side, is 69, of which 27 are erect -

**MEMORANDA.**

A gateway or rudimentary avenue interrupts the pe-  
ristalith in the direction of the menhir. This last is a  
monolith of hard red sandstone which, it is believed,  
was brought either from the banks of the Eden, 1½ m.  
N.W., or from Icaazonby Fell, on the further side of the  
river, in the same direction. All the other stones are of  
a very hard porphyritic nature. The rock of the site is  
a red sandstone of the Permian group; but small stones  
of, apparently, the same kind as those used in the circle,  
are found almost everywhere on the surface, and are both  
built extensively into the walls, and used for  
repairing the roads over a large area in the locality.

Traces remain of a ring-embankment, from 10 to 14  
wide, and now, at the most, a few inches high, forming  
the seat of the circle, especially of the western half.  
These Remains stand on nearly the highest part of  
a plateau, elevated about 350 feet above the surround-  
ing valleys. The site dips from Long Meg, which is  
erected at the highest part, toward stone N<sup>o</sup> 1, where  
the ground is about 20 ft lower.

Overhangs are shown in unshaded outline. The dot-  
ted lines indicate, approximately, the buried portions.  
Abt 638 y<sup>ds</sup>, N. 63° E., from the centre of this circle is a cist  
inclosed in a ring of 11 stones, formerly cov<sup>d</sup> with a mound

# A STONE CIRCLE NEAR KESWICK, CUMBERLAND.

## MEMORANDA.

This Plan has been plotted from an accurate instrumental survey. The magnetic bearings were carefully taken with a prismatic compass. Ascertained local deviation  $25\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  W.

These Remains are situated on a nearly level site, at the northern end of a flat ridge,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  M. E. from Keswick, 706 ft above the sea, and in the midst of an amphitheatre of mountains. A Naddle beck flows N. through an adjoining valley,  $\frac{1}{2}$  M. E. of the Circle, and the river Greta washes the foot of the ridge on the N. and N.W. sides at a distance of from  $\frac{1}{4}$  M. to  $\frac{3}{4}$  M.

The stones are set in a ring-bed of small rubble, some of which is exposed, and is shewn in the Plan. Those stones which are erect, or which have only declined somewhat from the perpendicular, are filled-in with black, the overhangs being shewn in outline. Prostrate stones are stippled and line-shaded. In one or two cases - as, e.g., Nos 25 and 27 - there may be some room for doubt as to whether the stones are in situ or have been overthrown, but, as appearances are in favor of the former, they are so

## MEMORANDA.

represented. Thus arranged, the peristalith now consists of 38 stones, 33 of these being erect, and 5 prostrate: the rectangular inclosure is fenced by 10 stones, 8 erect, and 2 prostrate. Disregarding small fragments, the total number of stones now remaining is 48. No 49 is the bed of a removed stone.

All the stones appear to be of metamorphic slate from the rocks of the locality. Portions of some of them exhibit both a gritty and a granitoid structure.

Within the area of the peristalith is a shallow circular trench, 13 ft in diameter, probably the remains of a barrow.

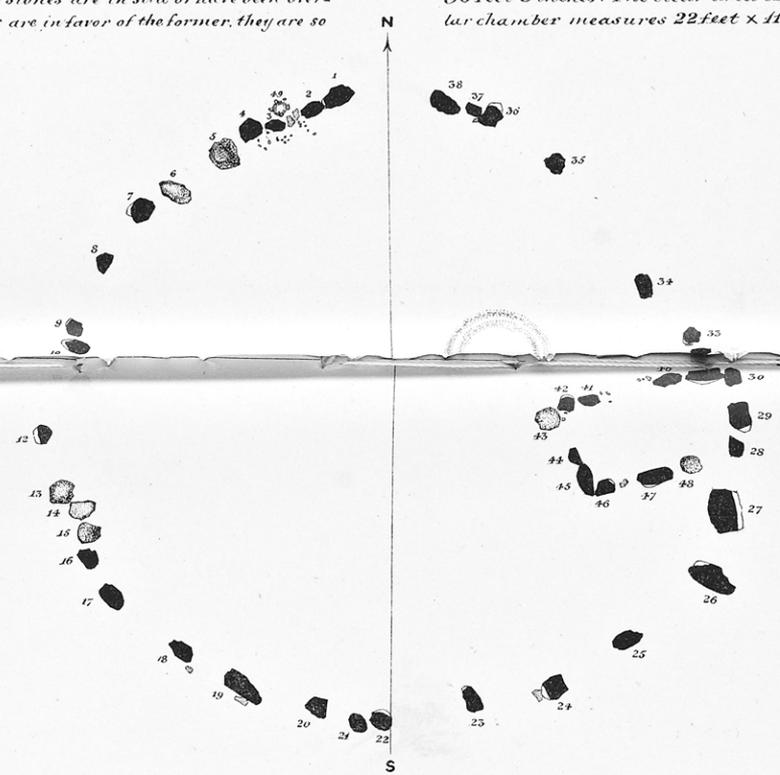
The peristalith is ranged on an irregular oval, or rather pear-shaped figure, the longest diameter of which, from centre to centre of the stones, is that measuring 107 feet N. and S., between Nos 38 and 21, and the shortest, that lying E. and W., between Nos 11 and 30, and measuring 96 feet 8 inches. The clear area of the inclosed rectangular chamber measures 22 feet x 11 feet.

### SIZES OF STONES.

NO	HEIGHT FT INCH	LENGTH FT INCH	BREADTH FT INCH	THICK- NESS FT INCH
1	5.8	--	5.0	2.8
2	2.4	--	3.4	2.0
3	1.5	--	2.9	1.7
4	4.0	--	3.1	3.0
5	--	4.6	1.1	--
6	--	5.0	2.4	--
7	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--
9	--	--	--	--
10	--	--	--	--
11	--	3.10	3.7	--
12	--	5.5	2.6	--
13	--	5.3	2.11	--
14	3.2	--	3.2	2.6
15	5.6	--	4.0	2.6
16	2.10	--	3.9	2.1
17	5.2	--	6.4	2.6
18	4.10	--	3.0	2.6
19	4.4	--	3.0	2.4
20	2.8	--	3.0	2.8
21	5.8	--	3.2	2.3
22	6.4	--	3.6	3.2

### SIZES OF STONES.

NO	HEIGHT FT INCH	LENGTH FT INCH	BREADTH FT INCH	THICK- NESS FT INCH
23	2.5	--	4.5	2.3
24	7.6	--	7.0	3.4
25	3.3	--	6.3	3.8
26	4.0	--	2.11	2.2
27	4.4	--	3.9	3.1
28	2.11	--	3.1	2.8
29	3.2	--	3.2	2.6
30	3.2	--	3.6	2.10
31	3.2	--	3.6	2.10
32	3.2	--	2.3	1.6
33	5.6	--	4.3	2.11
34	3.0	--	5.9	2.0
35	3.1	--	4.5	1.10
36	2.6	--	3.1	1.9
37	3.0	--	2.6	2.4
38	--	3.7	3.0	--
39	2.9	--	2.4	1.8
40	3.0	--	4.7	2.2
41	3.0	--	3.0	2.0
42	2.3	--	5.0	2.2
43	--	3.1	2.5	--



SCALE OF FEET.



SCALE OF ORIGINAL PLAN, 1 INCH = 16 FEET.



View looking S. 17 E. — From a photograph.

College in Oxford, a Westmorland man," and it runs thus:—\*

"In little Salkeld in Westmorland are stones in an orbicular figure about seventie in number which are called Long Meg and her daughters, Long Meg is about.....yards: and about fifteen yards distant from the rest." And he incidentally adds:—"Quære Mr. Rob-  
inson the minister there, about the Giants bone, and Body found there. The Body is in the middle of the orbicular stones."

The same writer has the following, which can hardly have referred to any other than the circle in question, whose distance from Kirk Oswald is only about three miles,—there being, so far as is known, no other sufficiently important example in that neighborhood.†

"From Sr. Will. Dugdale Clarenceaux: but 'tis not entred in his Visitation of Cumberland; but was forgot by his servant. In Cumberland neer Kirk-Oswald is a Circle of stones of about two hundred in number, of severall Tunnes. The Diameter of this Circle is about the diameter (he guesses) of the Thames from the Heralds-Office, which by Mr. J. Ogilby's Mapped of London is [880] foot. In the middle are two Tumuli, or Barrowes of Cobble-stones, nine or ten foot high."

The width of the river, left blank in the original, has been supplied by measurement on a modern plan of London. It is singular that the exaggeration of the diameter (really averaging 332 feet) is closely proportionate to that of the number of stones, as compared with the number (about 70) given in the former account, with which, and with Camden's, this latter seems to harmonize in relation to the inclosed sepulchral traces.

The next observer in order of date is Stukeley, who in 1725 says:—‡

"Mr. Patten and I went to view that famous monument of antiquity called Long Meg and her Daughters, in the parish of Aldingham, between Little Salkeld and Glassenby. It stands upon a barren elevated plain of high ground, under the vast hill called Crossfell

\* From Part I, *Monumenta Britannica*, M.S., in the Bodleian.

† Ibid.

‡ *Liter curiosum*, ed. of 1776, Vol. II, p. 47.

to the east. This plain declines to the east gently, or rather north-east, for that I find to be the principal line observed by the founders. It is a great Celtic temple, being a circle of 300 feet in diameter, consisting of 100 stones: they are of unequal bulk: some are of very large dimensions: many are standing, but more fallen, and several carried away: but lately they have destroyed some by blasting, as they call it, *i.e.* blowing them in pieces with gunpowder; others they have sawed for mill stones: but the major part remaining, gives one a great idea of the whole; and it is a most noble work. The stones are not all of the same kind: some made of square crystallisations, (of the same sort as those at Shap) and I saw many of that sort of stone scattered about the country: others of the blue hard flaky sort, like those of the temple at Mayborough. The intervals are not exactly equal, but judiciously adapted to the bulks of the stones, to preserve as much as possible a regular appearance. This large ring thus declining north-east is now parted through by a ditch, so that the larger half lies in an inclosure, the other in a common; and the road lies by the side of it, that goes from Little Salkeld to Glassenby. South-west from it seventy foot, stands a very great and high stone, called Long Meg, of a reddish grit, seeming to have been from the side of some quarry of the country: I think it leans a little north-east; it is about fifteen foot high. In the middle of the circle, are two roundish plots of ground, of a different colour from the rest apparently, and more stoney and barren, which probably were the immediate places of burning the sacrifices or the like. Not far from hence toward Glassenby is a very fine spring: whence no doubt, they had the element of water, used at their religious solemnities: and higher up the field is a large spring, intrenched about with a vallum and foss, of a pretty great circumference, but no depth. Full south-west from this work, in the next enclosure and higher ground, is another circle of lesser stones in number twenty: the circle is 50 foot diameter: and at some distance above it is another stone placed regarding it, as Meg does the larger circle. In that part of the greater circle next the single stone, called Meg, are two stones standing beyond the circle a little, and another fallen: which I believe were a sort of *sacellum*, perhaps for the *pontifex* to officiate in: and westward is another stone or two, perhaps of a like work: but the ruinous condition of the work would not admit of any certainty about it."

As to the number of stones, which Stukeley here puts down at 100, the above quotations from earlier authors shew that it must have been his estimate of what constituted

stituted the complete work, rather than a record of the number that then remained to be counted.

An account of Long Meg, written by G. S[mith], appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1752, p. 311. Omitting his opinions and reflexions, the most important of the writer's facts (several of which are quite erroneous) are thus recorded :—

[The eminence on which the remains are situated] “appears to have been all moor formerly, but now about half the stones are within enclosures, placed in an orbicular form, in some places double. [Doubtless, this refers to the gateway, and, perhaps also, to the position of No. 25.] I make 70 principal ones, but there are 1 or 2 more disputable; several lie flat on the surface, their greatest eminence not exceeding a foot, others yet less, and others perpendicular to the horizon; the highest of those in the circular range does not much exceed 3 yards, nor is it more than 4 wide, and 2 deep; but none of them have a regularity of shape. \* \* \* Long Meg herself is near four yards high, and about 40 yards from the ring, towards the south west, but leans much, it being of what they call the free-stone kind, is more regular than those in the circle, and is formed like a pyramid on a rhomboidal base, each side being near two yards at the bottom, but a good deal narrower at top. \* \* \* The others in the orbicular range are of the kind of stone to be found in that neighbourhood, and the four facing the cardinal points are by far the largest and most bulky of the whole ring. \* \* \* In diameter the ring may be 80 yards or more, and the circle is pretty regular.”

Spencer has a short early notice,\* evidently culled from Camden.

Hutchinson, who visited Long Meg in 1773, gives a plan and a view of the circle, both drawn conventionally—the latter quite worthless. The plan represents 64 stones (2 less than the number still remaining) undistinguished as to attitude, all nearly of the same size and shape, and ranged on a true circle. Two additional stones outside the ring form the cheeks of an entrance, opposite to the centre of which, and in close proximity, Long Meg

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\* *English Traveller*, 1773, p. 560.

is placed. The author describes these remains in the following terms :—\*

“Near to *Little Salkeld*, on the summit of a large hill, inclining a little towards the north, we had the pleasure of seeing a large and perfect druidical monument, called by the country people *Meg and her Daughters*. A circle of three hundred and fifty paces circumference is formed by massy stones, most of which remain standing upright;—these are sixty-seven in number, of various qualities, unhewn or touched with any tool, and seem by their form to have been gathered from the surface of the earth;—some are of blue and grey limestone, some of granite, and some flints;—many of such of them as were standing, measured from twelve to fifteen feet in girt, and ten feet in height; others of an inferior size.—At the southern side of this circle, at the distance of seventeen paces from its nearest member, is placed an upright stone naturally of a square form, being a red free stone, with which the country about Penrith abounds.—This stone is placed with one of its angles towards the circle, is near fifteen feet in girt, and eighteen feet high; each angle of its square answering to a cardinal point.—In that part of the circle most contiguous to the column, four large stones are placed in a square form, as if they had constructed or supported the altar: and towards the east, west, and north, two large stones are placed, at greater distances from each other than any of the rest, as if they had formed the entrances into this mystic round.—What creates great astonishment to the spectator is, that no such stones, or any quarry or bed of stones are to be found within a great distance of this place; and how such massy bodies could be moved, in an age when the mechanical powers were little known, is not to be conceived. \* \* In Camden’s description of this place, we find him mistaken, both as to the number of stones in the circle, and in his assertion, that within the circle were heaps of stones, which he was told covered those slain in fight.—There is not the least appearance of any such tumuli or heaps of stones.—He took many of his northern remarks from hearsay only, from whence he was liable to the errors discovered in his works.”

Though the stones vary in composition, it may here be noted that none of them are of granite.

Grose gives a view of this circle, looking west, from a sketch taken in 1774, while the wall of the intersecting road was standing, and the fallen stones in the field beyond

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\* *Excursion to the Lakes*, pp. 108—111.

were

were hidden by standing corn. His account\* is merely a summary of Hutchinson's, and repeats its errors.

Nicolson and Burn notice this circle,† and state the number of stones as 72; but Hutchinson, repeating in another work‡ particulars quoted above, corrects this, reporting that it should be 67.

Otley writes as follows, merely giving the substance of Hutchinsons' description :—§

“A monument of the same kind [as the Keswick circle], but of far larger dimensions, called Long Meg and her Daughters, stands near Little Salkeld, seven miles N.E. of Penrith. This circle is 350 paces in circumference, and is composed of 67 massy unformed stones, many of them 10 feet in height. At seventeen paces from the southern side of the circle, stands Long Meg—a square unhewn column of red freestone, nearly 15 feet in girth, and 18 feet high.”

Lastly, I quote Dr. Fergusson's account :—||

“About half a mile from Little Salkeld is the circle known popularly as Long Meg and her Daughters, sixty-eight in number, if each stone represents one. It is about 330 feet (100 mètres) in diameter, but does not form a perfect circle. The stones are unhewn boulders, and very few of them are now erect. Outside the circle stands Long Meg herself, of a different class of stone from the others, about 12 feet high, and apparently hewn, or at all events shaped, to some extent.” After quoting Camden, he proceeds :—“I am not aware that the centre has ever been dug into with a view of looking for interments. My impression, however, is that the principal interment was outside, and that Long Meg marks either the head or the foot of the chief's grave.” In a note, he adds :—“On this stone (Long Meg) Sir Gardner Wilkinson traced one of those circles of concentric rings which are so common on stones in the north of England. I did not see it myself, but assuming it to be true,—which I have no doubt it is,—it will not help us much till we know when and by whom these circles were engraved.”

All traces of the two cairns have long since been obliterated by cultivation. The number of stones is now

\* *Antiq. Repert.*, reprint of 1809, Vol. IV, p. 458.

† *Hist. Cumb. and Westm.*, Vol. II, p. 448.

‡ *Hist. Cumb.*, Vol. I., p. 226.

§ *Guide to the Lakes*, 8th ed., 1849, p. 67.

|| *Rude Stone Structures*, p. 127.

69, exclusive of several rather large fragments lying by the road-side; so that it seems we may go back even to Aubrey's date without finding that these remains have been subjected to much numerical loss. There can, however, be no doubt, after hearing the reports of people on the spot as to the depredations of former occupiers of the ground, that the sizes of many of the stones must have been reduced even in recent times. Among the largest of the prostrate ones, are two measuring respectively 10 ft. by 8 ft. 8 ins., and 9 ft. 11 ins. by 8 ft. 6 ins. A sufficient number remain erect to shew that this peristalith was an irregular oval—the departure from continuity of line being very manifest on the northern side, especially about the stones numbered 24, 25, and 26. It may, however, be well to note that No. 25 is so much inclined as to make it difficult to decide in which category it should be put. Thus, it may possibly not be *in situ*; and yet, even with this angle removed, No. 24 is still considerably out of the run of the curve. The eastern face of Long Meg—the only one that is really flat—points  $26\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  west of north. The spacing of the stones seems to be a mean between the open order and the close; and, if we supply seven evident gaps with one stone each, we shall obtain an average distance, from centre to centre of successive stones, of a little over 14 feet. The aspect of the gateway is nearly south-west, and slightly up-hill, in contrast to the majority of examples which I have seen, and which usually look toward a valley with a stream. The limited time of my visit was too entirely absorbed in the work of the survey to permit examination and delineation of the cup-and-ring-marks noticed by Sir J. G. Wilkinson, and shown in Professor Sir J. Y. Simpson's work on cup-and-ring-marking.\* Since the memoranda on the plan were written, I have met with additional evidence in support of the theory that the stones of this circle were erratic blocks, found on the spot.

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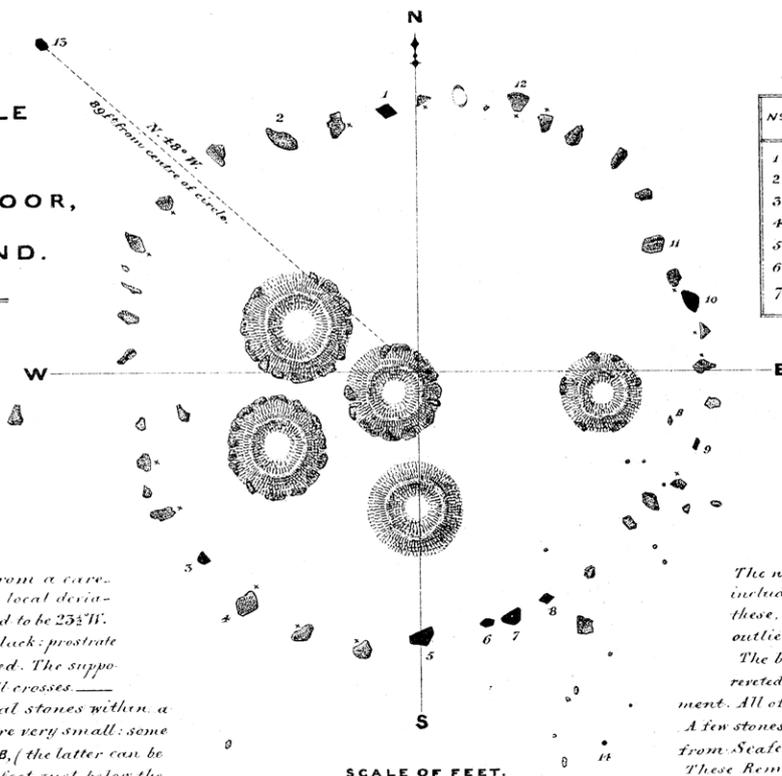
\* *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, Vol. VI, Appendix, Pl. VII.

The

Lying on the ground.

Diameters.-  
W.N.W. & E.S.E., 105 ft.  
N & S., 95 ft.

**STONE - CIRCLE**  
ON  
**ESKDALE - MOOR,**  
**CUMBERLAND.**



SIZES OF ERECT & OTHER STONES.

No	HEIGHT FT. INCH.	LENGTH FT. INCH.	BREADTH FT. INCH.	No	HEIGHT FT. INCH.	LENGTH FT. INCH.	BREADTH FT. INCH.
1	2.2	—	±.0	8	2.0	—	2.9
2	—	6.9	2.10	9	2.0	—	2.0
3	2.9	—	2.6	10	2.11	—	±.±
4	—	±.10	±.2	11	—	±.6	3.6
5	3.4	—	±.6	12	—	3.8	3.6
6	2.1	—	2.8	15	1.0	—	2.6
7	1.11	—	±.5	1±	±	—	—

**MEMORANDA.**

This Plan has been plotted from a careful instrumental survey. The local deviation of the needle was ascertained to be 25½ W.  
Erect stones are filled-in with black; prostrate ones are stippled and line-shaded. The supposed bases are indicated by small crosses.  
The plan embraces extramural stones within a radius of 100 ft. Most of these are very small: some are loose; and some, as A and B, (the latter can be traced for a distance of many feet just below the surface) with perhaps others, may be living rock.

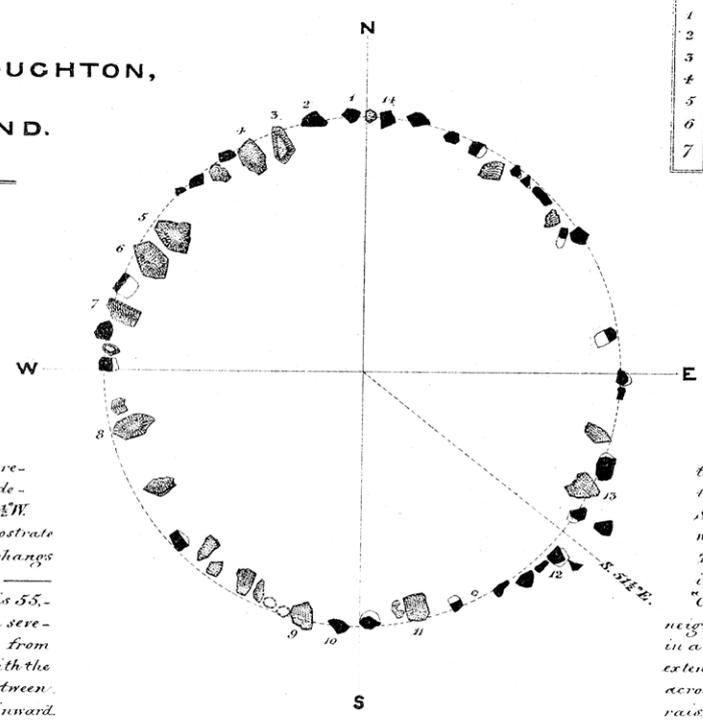
**MEMORANDA.**

The number of stones remaining in the ring, including the two very small ones, is 11. Of these, 8 are standing, the rest prostrate. Two outliers, Nos 13 and 14, are erect, the last small.  
The barrows are composed of peat and stone, reveted with stones sketched in without measurement. All of these have been opened.  
A few stones, on E. and S.E. sides, are porphyritic, from Seafell; the rest are granite of the moor. These Remains are situated on a boggy, elevated plateau, on which are several others of a like kind.

SCALE OF FEET.

Diameter of average circle = 92 feet.

**STONE - CIRCLE**  
AT  
**SWINSIDE, NEAR BROUGHTON,**  
**CUMBERLAND.**



SIZES OF PRINCIPAL STONES.

No	HEIGHT FT. INCH.	LENGTH FT. INCH.	BREADTH FT. INCH.	No	HEIGHT FT. INCH.	LENGTH FT. INCH.	BREADTH FT. INCH.
1	6.0	—	—	8	—	7.9	±.0
2	—	—	±.8	9	—	5.0	±.0
3	—	6.10	3.9	10	6.6	—	—
4	—	6.9	±.5	11	—	5.0	±.0
5	—	7.0	6.0	12	5.7	—	—
6	—	8.0	5.4	13	—	6.6	±.±
7	—	6.5	3.6	14	7.6	2.9	2.9

**MEMORANDA.**

This Plan has been plotted from a careful instrumental survey. The local deviation of the needle was found to be 25½ W.  
Erect stones are filled-in with black; prostrate ones are stippled and line-shaded. Overhangs are represented by unshaded outline.  
The number of stones now remaining is 55, of which 52 are still standing, (though several of these have declined considerably from the upright,) and 25 are prostrate. With the doubtful exception of the fragment between Nos 1 and 14, all of these have fallen inward. West of No 9 are the seats of two more stones which have been removed.

**MEMORANDA.**

tion from exact regularity—ranged on the circumference of a circle, 92 ft diam. Stone, No 2, has been rent by a Rowan tree which has grown through it.  
The stones, which consist of a porphyritic slate, are of a kind locally known as "Grey Cobbles", and were furnished by the neighboring hill-slopes. They are founded in a seating of small rammed stones which extends around the whole of the ring, and across the floor of the gateway, but is not raised into an embankment.  
These Remains are situated in an elevated pasture, at the foot of a mountain spur from which the surface dips, at first very gently, toward a stream which flows S.E., at the distance of a quarter of a mile from the circle. The view from the spot is not extensive.

SCALE OF FEET.

SCALE OF ORIGINAL PLAN, 1 INCH = 20 FEET.

Surveyed by C. W. Dymond, C. E., in April, 1872.  
Revised and corrected by J. G. ... October, 1877

The smaller circle with external mênhir, mentioned in the passage from Gough's Camden, quoted above, was not reported to me when on the spot; and, possibly, may not now exist. Another circle, of intermediate size, called the *Grey Yawd*, is described by Nicolson and Burn\* as on the summit of a fell called *King Harry*, in the parish of Cumwhitton, 7 miles south-east of Carlisle, and 7 miles north-west of Kirk Oswald; and as consisting of about 88 stones, in an exact circle, 52 yards in diameter; one stone, larger than the rest, standing out of the circle, about 5 yards north-west.

SWINSIDE CIRCLE. This is a very good example of a circle built in close order; and it is probable that, when perfect, all the successive stones were nearly contiguous. The gateway points slightly down-hill. But few of the stones seem to have been removed — probably because plenty of material for walling and road-making could be collected from the neighboring hill-side. A rowan-tree has sprung up in a rift in stone No. 2, which has been rent asunder by its growth. The falling of all the stones (perhaps excepting one) inward, is a rather singular circumstance which can hardly be accounted-for by the usual natural causes.

Being in a remote and unfrequented corner of the district, these remains have received little attention; and the references to them in former writers are few and fragmentary. Perhaps the earliest may be that of Gough who says:—†

“At Swineshead, a very high hill between Bowfell in this county [Cumberland] and Broughton in Furness in Lancashire, four miles from the latter, is a druidical temple, which the country people call *Sunken Kirk*, i.e., a church sunk into the earth. It is nearly a circle of very large stones, pretty entire, only a few fallen, upon sloping ground in a swampy meadow. No situation could be more agreeable to the Druids than this; mountains almost encircle it, not a tree is

\* *Hist. Cumb. and Westm.*, Vol. II, p. 495.

† Camden's *Britannia*, Gough's 2nd edition, 1806, Vol. III, p. 432.

to be

to be seen in the neighbourhood, nor a house, except a shepherd's cot at the foot of a mountain surrounded by a few barren pastures. At the entrance are four large stones, two placed on each side at the distance of six feet. The largest on the left hand side is five feet six inches in height, and ten feet in circumference. Through this you enter into a circular area, 29 yards by 30. This entrance is nearly south-east. On the north or right-hand side is a huge stone of a conical form, in height nearly 9 feet. Opposite the entrance is another large stone, which has once been erect, but is now fallen within the area: its length is eight feet. To the left-hand or south-west is one, in height seven feet, in circumference 11 feet nine inches. The altar probably stood in the middle, as there are some stones still to be seen, though sunk deep in the earth. The circle is nearly complete, except on the western side some stones are wanting. The largest stones are about thirty one or two in number. The outward part of the circle upon the sloping ground is surrounded with a buttress or rude pavement of smaller stones raised about half a yard from the surface of the earth. The situation and aspect of the druidical temple near Keswick, mentioned by Mr. Pennant in his tour,\* is in every respect similar to this, except the rectangular recess formed by 10 large stones, which is peculiar to that at Keswick; but, upon the whole, I think a preference will be given to this at Swinshead, as the stones in general appear much larger, and the circle more entire. This monument of antiquity, when viewed within the circle, strikes you with astonishment how the massy stones could be placed in such regular order either by human strength or mechanical power."

In a few points, this account would not now be accurately descriptive of what may be seen at Swinside. The once swampy meadow has become a well-drained pasture: the shepherd's cot has been succeeded by a good farmhouse: the stones in the centre of the ring are no longer visible, and may have been only slight exposures of living rock: and the "buttress or rude pavement" has entirely disappeared, — unless (as is probable) it was never any thing more than the ring-bed of rubble in which the uprights were set, as may be seen by the matrices of two, west of stone No. 9.

Hutchinson's account is as follows: —†

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\* Engraved in *Antiq. Repert.*, Vol. I, p. 239.

† *Hist. Cumb.*, Vol. I, p. 529.

“In the neighbourhood of Millum, at a place called Swinside, in the estate of William Lewthwaite, Esq., of Whitehaven, is a small, but beautiful, druidical monument. It is circular, about twenty yards in diameter. The stones of which it is composed are from six to eight feet high, all standing and complete. A little to the north is another, of larger dimensions, but not in so perfect a state. The neighbouring people call such places by the emphatical name of *Sunken Kirks*.”

To which he adds the following information:—

“At a place called Kirksanton is a small tumulus on the summit of which are two huge stones pitched endwise, eight or nine feet in height, and about fifteen feet asunder. Near adjoining to this monument several other stones stood lately, placed in a rude manner.”

Checked by the nearly cotemporary observation of Gough, this author appears to err in asserting that all the stones were standing at the time when he wrote.

Next to Hutchinson, I find Lysons, no doubt describing at second-hand, quoting the name by which the circle was popularly known, and adding the statement that part of another circle is near to it.\*

The next original reporter whose account I have seen is Edwin Waugh, who says† that the circle “is 285 feet in circumference; and consists of 54 moss-grown stones, some of which are prostrate, a few nearly upright, and all slanting more or less in different directions.” He refers to the opinion of Lightfoot and Gilpin that the rowan tree, or mountain ash, was held in high estimation by the Druids; and to the statement of the former that “it may be observed to grow more frequently than any other tree in the neighbourhood of those druidical circles of stones so often seen in the north of Britain; and the superstitious still continue to retain a great veneration for it.”

I will conclude this section with a quotation from a yet more recent writer, Mrs. Lynn Linton:—‡

\* *Magna Britannia*, Vol. on Cumberland, cxxix.

† *Seaside Lakes and Mountains of Cumberland*, 1861, p. 7.

‡ *The Lake Country*, 1864, p. 243. Annaside and Gutterby are both in the parish of Whitbeck.

“Many Druidical circles exist in this district. At Annaside twelve stones in a circle, which were once, it is natural to suppose, a temple like that at Keswick: near Gutterby are thirty stones in a circle, called Kirkstones; and two hundred yards off is a cairn. The Standing Stones are three miles farther south: these are eight big blocks, which once formed part of a circle twenty-five yards in diameter: in Millom grounds are the imperfect remains of a circle: about a mile east of Black Combe is the Sunken Kirk [Swinside]: and a mile off, another circle, smaller.”

I have not seen that other circle near Swinside which Hutchinson places toward the north, and this last quotation fixes at the distance of a mile from it. It is here described as being smaller than Sunken Kirk; but in Hutchinson, as being larger, though less perfect.

**KESWICK CIRCLE.** It has been the fashion to class this with the temples of the prehistoric ages. The magnificence of its site, and the rectangular inclosure on the eastern side,—which has been thought to be an *adytum*, foreshadowing the chancel of a Christian church,—have lent strength to the idea. In the present imperfect state of our knowledge on this subject, it is, however, well to refrain from using technical terms which involve the advocacy of premature theories; and to confine ourselves to such as are simply descriptive of that which meets the eye. Nothing now remains to show for what purpose this chamber was constructed. If it once contained a barrow, all traces of such an object have disappeared. A shallow circular trench, shown on the plan, within the stone-ring, but outside this chamber, at first sight looks like the remains of a barrow; but as the field was ploughed little more than a century ago, and, perhaps, continued to be for many years, it is probable that this trench is still more recent.

The earliest printed notice of this object of antiquity appears to have been published by Stukeley, the substance of whose account will be found below, in a quotation from Gough.

Next,

Next, in order of time, is that of Gray\* who visited the circle in 1769, and writes thus shortly:—

“After dinner walked up the Penrith road two miles, or more, and turning into a corn field to the right, called Castle-rig, saw a Druid circle of large stones, one hundred and eight feet in diameter, the biggest not eight feet high, but most of them still erect: they are fifty in number.”

The fact of the field being sown with corn at that time, shews that it had been ploughed. It is now, and has for many years been, a pasture.

Following Gray, Hutchinson, in 1773, writes:—†

“We visited a *Druidical Monument* within about two miles of Keswick, situate to the south of the road which we had passed from Penrith.—This monument is placed on a plain, formed on the summit of a hill, around which the adjoining mountains make a solemn circle;—it is composed of stones of various forms, natural and unhewn; they seem to have been collected from the surface, but from what lands it is impossible to conjecture, most of them being a species of granite. The stones are fifty in number, set in a form not exactly circular, the diameter being thirty paces from east to west, and thirty two from north to south: at the eastern side a small inclosure is formed within the circle by ten stones, making an oblong square in conjunction with the stones of that side of the circle, seven paces in length, and three in width, within. In this place we conjectured the altar had been erected. At the opposite side, a single square stone is laid at the distance of three paces from the circle;—possibly this may have been broken off, and is only the foot of such a column as Long Meg in the Salkeld monument. \* \* \* The stones forming the outward line are some of them standing erect, others fallen, and the same observation is to be made, as to the appearance of entrances, as at Salkeld. The stones here are of various sizes; some of the largest of those standing being near eight feet in height, and fifteen feet in circumference. The singularity noticed in this monument, is the recess on the eastern side.”

The next account of the circle is that of Pennant, who visited it under the guidance of Dr. Brownrigg, and who describes it as follows:—‡

\* *Gray's Works*, Vol. II, *Letter to Dr. Wharton*, p. 332.

† *Excursion to the Lakes*, pp. 159, 160.

‡ *Tour in Scotland*, in 1774, edition of 1790, Vol. I, p. 43.

“An arrangement of great stones tending to an oval figure is to be seen near the road side, about a mile and a half from Keswick on the summit of a pretty broad and high hill in an arable field, called Castle. The area is 34 yards from north to south and near thirty from east to west; but many of the stones are fallen down, some inward, others outward: according to the plan, they are at present forty in number. At the north end, are two much larger than the rest, standing five feet and a half above the soil: between these may be supposed to have been the principal entrance. Opposite to it, on the south side, are others of nearly the same height: and on the east is one near seven feet high. But what distinguishes this from all other Druidical remains of this nature, is a rectangular recess on the east side of the area, formed of great stones like those of the oval. These structures are in general considered to have been temples or places of worship: the recess here mentioned seems to have been allotted for the Druids, the priests of the place, a sort of Holy of Holies, where they met, separated from the vulgar, to perform their rites, their divinations, or to sit in council to determine on controversies, to compromise all differences about limits of land, or about inheritances, or for the tryal of the greater criminals, the Druids possessing both the office of priest and judge. The cause that this recess was placed on the east side, seems to arise from the respect paid by the antient natives of this isle to that beneficent luminary the sun, not originally an idolatrous respect, but merely as a symbol of the glorious all seeing Being, its great Creator.”

Gough says:—\*

“In the neighbourhood of this place, on the right hand of the road from Keswick to Penrith, is a *collection* of stones, of unequal size and shape, about thirty nine yards diameter, and on the east side, within the circle or area, two more rows of like stones, including a space of about eight yards by four. Stukeley† describes it as very intire, an hundred feet diameter, consisting of forty stones, some very large, at the east end a grave, made of such other stones, in the very east point of the circle, and within it not a stone wanting, though some are removed out of their original situation. They call it the *Carles*, and corruptly *Castle-Rigg*. At the north end is the kistvaen of great stones. There seemed to be another lower, in the next pasture, towards the town.”

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\* *Antiq. Repert.* Vol. I, p. 248.

† *It. curios.*, Vol. I, p. 47, Vol. II, p. 48. Can Stukeley have mistaken the gateway for a cist-faen?

Another

Another contributor to the same work thus writes :—\*

“This Druidical Monument is not mentioned by Camden, neither has it yet acquired any name, and indeed seems little known. Mr. Pennant says it was discovered by Dr. Brownrigge, who resides somewhere near it. It stands on the flat summit of a hill, close under the mountain Saddleback, about two miles from Keswick, and near the road from that town to Penrith. It is composed of stones, mostly granite of divers shapes and sizes evidently collected from the surface of the earth, being rude and untouched by any instrument. They are ranged nearly in a circular figure, some standing, and others lying: the diameter from east to west is thirty paces or yards, and that from north to south measures thirty two. The stones at the north end, are the largest, being near eight feet in height and fifteen in circumference. At the eastern end a small inclosure is formed by ten stones, in conjunction with those of the side of the circle: three sides of it are right lined, the fourth being a small portion of the circle, is necessarily rounding. On the whole, not attending to this rounded side, but considering it as straight, the shape would be what is called an oblong square. This is supposed to have been the *Adytum* or *Sanctum Sanctorum*, into which it was not lawful for any, but the Druids to enter. It is on the inside seven paces in length from east to west, and three in breadth: here probably the altar was placed. On the outside, opposite the *Adytum*, a single stone lies about three paces out of the circle. The whole monument consists of fifty stones, forty of which form the circle, and ten are employed in the *Adytum*.”

At nearly the same time, Clarke says :—†

“About a quarter of a mile farther on the left is *Castrigg* or *Castle Rigg*: here is a druidical monument consisting of a circle of fifty-two large stones. This temple (as they all commonly get that name) differs from all I have seen, in having on the eastern side an inclosure formed within the circle: this inclosure is of the form of an oblong square, one of the shorter sides of which is formed by part of the circle, and its dimensions are nearly four yards by two.”

The last account I shall quote is that of Otley, whose work contains the only plan of the circle that has hitherto been published: and, considering the date of its execution, it is fairly correct. His description is as follows :—‡

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\* *Antiq. Repert.*, reprint of 1809, Vol. IV, p. 458.

† *Survey of the Lakes*, p. 62.

‡ *Guide to the Lakes*, 8th ed., 1849, p. 67.

“A Druidical Circle, 100 feet by 108 in diameter, in a field adjoining the old Penrith road, at the top of the hill, a mile and half from Keswick. It is formed by rough *cobble* stones of various sizes, similar to what are scattered over the surface, and imbedded in the diluvium of the adjacent grounds. The largest stands upwards of seven feet in height, and many weigh about eight tons. Ten other stones form a square within, on the eastern side.”

After giving directions how to find the “Druids’ Temple,” Otley continues :—\*

“We have given a plan of the circle, on a scale of 40 feet to an inch, with the exact number of stones, in the positions they have occupied from time beyond memory, and as they remain to this day, May 2nd, 1849. Very probably the spaces have been once filled up by smaller stones which have been since removed for secular purposes.”

There is some uncertainty as to the exact number of stones remaining when the early writers counted them. It will be observed that, while both Stukeley and Gray report the number as 50, Clarke, who came later, calls it 52. Hutchinson, following, merely endorses Gray’s statement. The editor of these *Transactions* has in his possession a published plate of antiquities containing a birds-eye view of the circle, described as discovered by Dr. Brownrigg, F.R.S., and of the last century, which represents 49 stones, one, now gone, apparently being between Nos. 43 and 44 of my plan; while Otley’s plan shows 48, the present number. Clarke has inadvertently greatly erred in recording the dimensions of the rectangular inclosure. The outlying stump on the west side has probably disappeared, for nothing of the kind, so far as I know, is now visible unless the reference be to the stone which was seated at 49 on my plan. Perhaps the same may be said of the *cist-faens* mentioned by Stukeley. The position of the gateway may be compared with that at Gunnerkeld. The transverse position of stone No. 26 suggests, at first sight, the question whether it may not have been one jamb of another gateway, of which the fellow may have been removed. The probabilities are, however, against it; for

\* *Guide to the Lakes*, 8th edition, 1849, p. 114.

we sometimes find stones standing similarly across (as, *e.g.*, at Gunnerkeld) in positions where a gateway is not suggested. A slight peculiarity, common to both the circles at Keswick and Long Meg, may be noticed in the breach of continuity made by No. 49 (missing stone) of the former, and No. 25 of the latter, — each at about the same part the circumference.

**ESKDALE CIRCLE.** This, though the finest, is only one of several similar remains on the same moor. About 100 yards to the west, are two smaller rings in an imperfect state, each about 50 feet in diameter, and each inclosing one barrow. A quarter of a mile west-north-west, on Low Longrigg, are two others; one apparently perfect, about 50 feet in diameter, consisting of nine stones, and inclosing one barrow; the other imperfect, with diameters of about 75 feet and 65 feet, and inclosing two barrows. A number of ancient “dykes,” each consisting of a slight ditch and embankment, intersect the moor near these remains.

An imaginary plan of this inclosure is published by Dr. Fergusson, and it is described by him thus:—\*

“The circle or rather circles, on Burn Moor, near Wast Water, Cumberland, are described by Mr. Williams† as consisting of a 100-foot circle, formed of forty four stones, beyond which, at a distance of 25 feet is an outer circle of fourteen large stones. A niche or square enclosure on one side of the inner circle contains a cairn 25 feet in diameter, and within the circle are four others, irregularly spaced, and measuring 21 to 25 feet in diameter, each like the circle itself, surrounded by fourteen stones. These, on being opened, were found to contain a rude chamber formed of five stones, in which were found remains of burnt bones, horns of stags, and other animals.

One point of interest in this monument is, that it explains the existence of a similar square enclosure on one side of a well known 100-foot circle, near Keswick. There is no sign of a cairn there now; it may have been removed, as those at Salkeld were, or it may be that the body was interred without this external indication; but that it lies, or lay, in this enclosure seems certain. The principal reason for referring to it here is that it is undoubtedly sepulchral.”

\* *Rude Stone Structures*, p. 159.

† *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, iii, p. 225.

The plan is purely conventional, representing a perfect circle of stones of uniform size, with an outer concentric ring of fourteen megaliths, and an inner (nearly rectangular) inclosure fencing-in the eastern barrow. There is no evidence on the ground to shew that such an outer ring ever existed; nor is it likely that, placed as these remains are, out of the way of risk of molestation, such evidences, if there were any, would have vanished. One very small erect stone stands as an outlier to the north-west; and three or four others, equally small, lie prostrate on the surface, or are partly sunk into the ground, on the north, east, west, and south-east sides: that is all. Not the slightest trace of a barrow-inclosure can be found, though I carefully sought for it by probing. The eastern barrow was being opened at the time of my first visit in 1866, though the exploring party were not then on the spot.

Now I think a comparison of the four examples herein described will lead to the conviction that, though they have an outward similarity, they may not all have been devoted to the same purposes. The character of the last-mentioned is purely sepulchral. There is a careless irregularity in the ranging of the peripheral stones, which gives the impression of being sufficient for purposes of separation, though little congruous with the dignity of a structure intended for ceremonial uses. Much of the area is occupied by the barrows; while, hard by, we find four other similar inclosures, also devoted to sepulture. Who can resist the conviction that, in this case, but one end was to be answered—that of consecrated interment?

There is no record of any barrow having been observed within or near the Swinside circle. The ruins are those of a bold and carefully-constructed peristalith. The stones were ranged nearly in a true circle, well founded on a dry site,\* in a rammed stone-bed, and placed, for the most part at least, in juxtaposition—often, indeed, so close that it is possible there was no convenient access to the

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\* It must have been dry when the stones were erected, as it is now, though, in the interim, it became swampy.

interior,

interior, save through the gateway. Hence, in this case, a necessity for that feature, which was evidently thought an important one, and must have been designed to give ceremonial access to the sacred inclosure. Perhaps this is one of the best examples we have of a structure which, according to our ideas, would be eminently suited to be a hypæthral temple; and I suggest that, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, this may have been the chief purpose for which the Swinside circle was erected.

The import of a gateway is much enhanced when we find it, either in its simple form, a marked incident of an open stone-peristalith, as at Keswick and Long Meg; or extended into a short avenue, as at Stanton Drew; or into a longer one, as at Callernish. In all these, the inference is irresistible, that the recognised mode of entering and leaving such inclosures—which were open on every side—was by the prescribed avenue; and, hence, we arrive, by an easy step, at the conclusion that processional services were a common feature of their use; but whether connected with religious, political, judicial, or sepulchral objects, or with a union of them, we do not yet know. It is probable that some of these structures may have been destined to a compound service,—primarily, perhaps, as temples; then, for a kindred purpose, as courts of judicature, or places of council; while, in certain cases, they may have been raised as memorials: and, thus consecrated, the ashes of the great may have been honored with dignified sepulture around, and even within their pale, as, in later times, the remains of the departed came to be laid in the church-yard; and, in special instances, even beneath the floor of the sacred building.

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NOTE BY THE WRITER. It is due to the editor of these *Transactions* to acknowledge the kindness with which he has hunted-up, and copied for this paper, extracts from several old local authorities which were out of the writer's reach, and with some of which he was previously unacquainted. The discrepancies between them, and their errors of fact, are, as usual, so numerous, that the reader will hardly be in danger of accepting anything they say without testing it, when possible, by reference to trustworthy records, such as it is the object of this paper, and of the illustrations which accompany it, to supply.

G