

Megalithic Remains on Bilberry Knoll, Matlock.

By JOHN SIMPSON.



THE ancient history of this country is written in a script that requires infinite care, patience, and perseverance to translate into language intelligible to the times. It is written in the barrows, tumuli, and lows, and in the camps, circles, menhirs, and other megalithic remains that lie scattered about the country, in silent testimony of a vigorous bygone age.

In the hope of adding some few words to the ancient history of Matlock, I venture to submit these notes on what I believe to be a stone circle on the summit of Bilberry Knoll, three-quarters of a mile to the south of Riber Castle.

Sun-worship, as is now well known, was world-wide in its distribution and influence. Its forms, ceremonies, and customs were, and are, found amongst savage nations and amongst peoples in widely different parts of the world. A striking case of the persistence of customs clearly identified with ancient sun-worship ceremonies is to be found in the "Human Leopard Society" of Sierra Leone, particulars of which have been recently disclosed in a Blue Book. Many old customs found at the present day in various parts of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales are directly traceable to the forms, ceremonies, and customs of ancient sun-worship. The very names of the days of our week are directly associated with it.

The religion of the Saxons was no exception to the general evolution of European pagan religions from sun-worship; "Odin" was simply a personification of the sun-god. There need, therefore, be no surprise if we find the religious use of stone circles continued in Saxon times, and to this conclusion we are led by the persistent recurrence of Saxon place-names which can only have reference to the "rite of fire."

Several eighteenth and early nineteenth-century writers have recorded the presence of megalithic remains at Matlock. From such records I extract the following:—

"On the top of the hill called Riber, which is above the church, is a stone, said to have been formerly a rocking-stone, but it is not moveable now. It has a round hole at the top, exactly resembling one which Dr. Borlase, in his *Antiquities of Cornwall*, has given a print of. It is not very large, and is placed upon two other stones." ¹

"On an eminence above Matlock Church, called Riber Hill, are the remains of what has been supposed a Druidical altar, but which has now the resemblance to a cromlech, though it may probably have only been intended as a point for the transmittal of signals. It is called the Hirst Stones, and consists of four rude masses of gritstone, one of which, apparently the smallest, is placed on the other, and is computed to weigh about two tons. On the upper stone is a circular hole six inches deep and nine in diameter, whereon about 50 years ago stood a stone pillar." ²

"On Riber Hill was formerly some large masses of gritstone, supposed by some to have been the remains of a Druidical altar. It consisted of four rude masses of stone, one of which, computed to weigh several tons, was placed on the others, whereon formerly stood a stone pillar. These were destroyed a few years ago for fencing by a reckless individual, though abundance of stone lies scattered in all directions. A stone

¹ Bray's *Tours in Derbyshire and Yorkshire*, 1783.

² Glover's *Peak Guide*, 1830.

chair was preserved from the wreck by Mr. George Wall, which is now placed in his farmyard."¹

There is at the present day no trace of the stones thus described. In a paper by Mr. Bryan in volume ix. of this *Journal*, Dr. Cox states in a footnote that "in 1866 he talked with two old cottagers of Riber, aged 80 and 84 respectively, who remembered the stones, and when children they often clambered up and filled the cup, which had always water in it, with spring flowers."

Mr. Wall, of Riber Hall Farm, in whose farmyard the chair spoken of still finds a resting-place, indicates the highest part of Riber Hill, immediately to the left of the path as you ascend the hill, as the spot from which the chair was taken. His opinion or tradition is singularly confirmed by another old writer, who took the trouble to climb the hill to see the stones for himself. In *Picturesque Excursions from Derby to Matlock Bath and its vicinity*, published 1818, Mr. Henry Moore says :—

"The eminence that rises to a great height above the village is called Riber Hill. On its summit are some singular stones that are supposed by antiquarians to have been a Druidical altar or a cromlech. They are called the Hirst Stones, but do not now appear to be known by that or any other name, as I made several enquiries for them, but without effect. I therefore determined to ascend the hill to search for this piece of antiquity, and struck into a path by the side of a publick house; the sign was some great man on horseback, but whom I forget.

"The hill was very high and very steep, but the views kept improving in grandeur as I walked up, which amply repaid me for every exertion to gain the summit, from whence the view surpasses everything of the kind I ever beheld. The village of Matlock and the bridge are just underneath our feet, etc., etc. . . .

¹ Bagshaw's *History of Derbyshire*, 1846.

"Now here is the object of my search on the very summit of the hill. This altar or cromlech consists of a large stone placed upon three others. On the top of the upper one there is a hole, in which it is said was the shaft of a column. I cannot think that the three lower stones have been placed there by art. They appear to me to be parts of the solid rock of the mountain, which is gritstone, and that the only work of art has been the placing of the upper stone."

In a footnote he further states: "A clump of trees will be seen from below on the top of Riber; the Hirst Stones are very near to them."

This account is very clear, and exactly describes the path from Matlock town to Riber, and the exact spot pointed out to me by Mr. Wall. But although Mr. Moore appears to have been a keen observer, he mentions no chair, and this confirms an idea I had previously formed, that the chair was removed at a much earlier date, possibly in 1750, the date inscribed on the top of the chair back, and not at the time the other stones were broken up.

Although all traces of these stones have disappeared, I believe there are distinct remains of a dolmen, or stone table, on the side of Riber Hill. Below the brow, at the northern corner of the wood above Matlock Church, there are two stones standing together cleft from one. The outer sides of the stones shew clean, straight cleavages, so that they are not simply dislodged boulders. They are somewhat wedge-shaped, and the pointed noses are imbedded in a yew tree, about two feet through the trunk, which has grown about them; from which it may be inferred that they must have been in their present position some hundreds of years.

The name *Hirst*, or *Hurst*, would seem to have a more special significance than that usually assigned to it as referring to a wood. It is to be found given to similar remains in many places. The name of the farm near the Broad Stone (or Wishing Stone) is Hurst Farm. It may have some connection with "hir" in menhir—long or tall stone. There are similar

stones in Ireland, Cornwall, and also at Avebury, called "Long Stones." Dr. J. Hambley Rowe suggests that the name "Hirst" may originally have arisen from the awful or venerable character of any spot, transmitted by tradition of its use as a religious site. It is well known that such traditions have prevented the use of these sites for agricultural purposes, so that the persistence of a religious grove as a wood, by self-sown seeds, is easily accounted for, and the name "Hirst," applied at first in recognition of its sacred character, may in the course of time have come to be applied to the wood itself.

In considering the question of these megalithic remains, the thought arises, Where is the circle? For the circle, being emphatically *the* type of the sun, was the essential element in the "cult" of sun-worship; and whilst outlying dolmens and menhirs were necessary adjuncts—as, *e.g.*, for sacrifice (it being unlawful to shed blood within the circle itself), sight lines, and look-outs, etc.—they could have no *raison d'être* except from their association with a head centre in the form of a circle. Many of the place-names also seemed to point to the exercise of the sun-worship cult in this district, amongst them being Carr Lane, Upper and Nether Doe Car Woods, Beamoor, Cawdor, Shining Cliff, etc., bearing a striking resemblance to names in the neighbourhood of Stanton Moor and other circles.

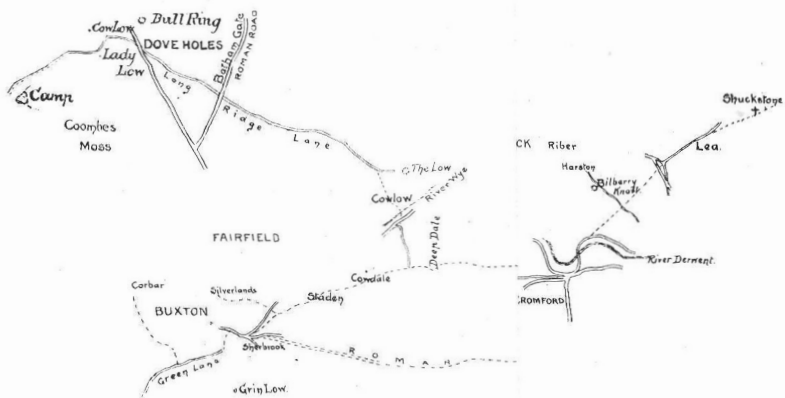
After some search I located what I believe to be such a circle, on the summit of Bilberry Knoll; the highest point of the hill three-quarters of a mile south of Riber Castle. From this spot there is an ancient path, which runs direct to the brow of Riber Hill above the suggested dolmen, diverted at two places by more recent roads; and down the brow of Riber hillside to the dolmen a road has been formed, which has been practicable for wheeled vehicles. The continuation of this path to the lane below has no regular formation, and is evidently of quite modern use.

Communication between Bilberry Knoll and the dolmen seems to be the only predisposing cause for such a path. That its continuity was severed by the erection of the Manor House in A.D. 1633, and the diversion of part into a later carriage-way in front of Riber Hall, is evident; and it is clearly more ancient than the hamlet of Hearthstone, which is now the main objective of another section of it, as the hamlet completely blocks it, and turns it at right-angles out of its original course into Hearthstone Lane, an old but more recent road that passes by the circle.

The crown of the hill on which the circle stands appears to have been protected by ramparts, some remains of which are fairly distinct about 200 yards south of the circle. And near the circle there is a cross-wall, or rampart, built of very large boulders, forming the southern boundary of the small portion of Littlemoor Wood lying between Hearthstone Lane and the circle, which is strewn with large boulders.

Proceeding south along the Hearthstone Lane, about 500 yards beyond the circle, we come to a path crossing it at right-angles. Following this path to the west, we may trace a way, by *White Tor*, *Cromford*, *Scarthin*, *Bonsall*, *Brightgate*, *Robin Hood's Stride*, and *Cratcliff*, to the *Camp and Castle Ring* on *Harthill Moor*, and forward by *Bradford* to *Youlgreave*. Branching from this track, there are paths connecting with *Masson*; and by *Upper Town*, *Bonsall*, to *Harborough Rocks*; and by *Upper Town*, *Birchover*, *Bradley Rocks*, and *Rowtor Rocks* with *Stanton Moor*; and the *Nine Stones Circle* on *Harthill Moor* lies close by to the right, close to the *Camp and Castle Ring*.

From *Youlgreave*, a continuation of this track may be traced by *One Ash*, *Monyash*, *Flagg*, *Chelmorton*, *Kingsterndale*, *Cowdale*, and *Staden* to *Sherbrook*, near *Buxton*; and again by field path to *Green Lane*, through *Burbage*, and possibly to the district beyond the "*Cat and Fiddle*"; a district rich in place-names of a significant and suggestive nature. Branch-



ing from this track at Kingsterndale, there is a clear connection, by *Cow Low* and *Longridge Lane*, with the "Bull Ring" at *Dove Holes*, and the *Camp on Coombes Moss*. Beyond *Staden* a path branches off which may possibly be an ancient track connecting with the *Silverlands*, *Buxton*; where Roman remains have been found. And the path branching off by *Wye Head*, *Wyelands*, and *Gadley Lane* to *Nithen*, is probably an ancient one connecting with *Corbar* and with a track *Manchester way*. (*See map.*)

Although the main track has suffered disturbance by modern roads, particularly through *Monyash*, *Flagg*, and *Chelmorton*, there would, I think, be little difficulty in tracing it through to *Buxton*; and if so, is it not a strong argument of use in times anterior to the Roman occupation? For we find that this track runs almost parallel with a Roman road for some 15 miles, varying from 1 to 3 miles distant, until they approach each other at *Sherbrook*, near *Buxton*; and yet they do not appear to have any connection with each other. By all reasonable hypothesis, if the Roman road were in existence first, this track would never have been made or used; for anyone leaving *Youlgreave* for *Buxton* would naturally make for the Roman road by *Arbor Low*, to which there would, no doubt, be a direct road, somewhat in line with the present main road; but if the track was already in constant use before the Roman road was made, custom would tend to continue the use of it, especially if the old villages *Monyash*, *Flagg*, *Chelmorton*, etc., represent sites of ancient settlements. I believe, therefore, that we have here an old British track from some point east of *Shuckstone Cross*, through *Buxton*, to the neighbourhood of *Macclesfield*; possibly *Eddisbury Hill*. And I look upon it as evidence that *Bilberry Knoll* dates from ante-Roman times.

Viewed as a stronghold, the situation of *Bilberry Knoll* is singularly well chosen. On the west from *Cromford Bridge* (*i.e.*, the old "ford," which, on reference to the map, is

pre-eminently the ford of the *crom*, or circle), along Matlock Bath and Matlock Dale to Matlock Green, there is practically one line of high cliffs, along the foot of which runs the River Derwent. This line of cliffs is broken at two places only, by Matlock Bath Station and by Pig Tor. Behind this first line of defence is the Riber ridge, starting near Tansley, and running by Matlock Cliff, Riber Hillside, Starkholmes, White Tor, and Castletop Farm to Lea Bridge, with a most abrupt ascent; and from Lea Bridge along the east side the ascent is still very steep, and leaves only a narrow neck of land towards Tansley with a practicable approach. And in addition to such a strong natural situation, the crown of the hill appears to have been guarded by a double line of ramparts, strongly built of huge boulders and earth, and probably enclosing a space some 350 yards long by about 150 yards wide. Within this presumed "caer," "dinas," "dun," or "bury," at the summit of the hill, and commanding a wide stretch of country in every direction, stands the circle; which is undoubtedly an artificially built mound, covering a space about 175 feet by 170 feet.

From certain stones which appear to remain as originally fixed, I have set out a circle 144 feet diameter, with the circumference divided into thirty-six parts; fifteen or sixteen stones approximate to these divisions. The divisions of this circle, however, though the same in number as the divisions of the compass, do not coincide with the true north, nor with the north star.

Many of the stones have clearly been much disturbed and overthrown, and the north-eastern section has been practically denuded of them, and many holes have been excavated in this section, probably for stone for fences; but there are many stones which apparently retain their original position, and others which approximate thereto, but are overturned.

Outside the circumference of my circle, at $23^{\circ} 00'$ south of east, there is an outlying group, evidently built together

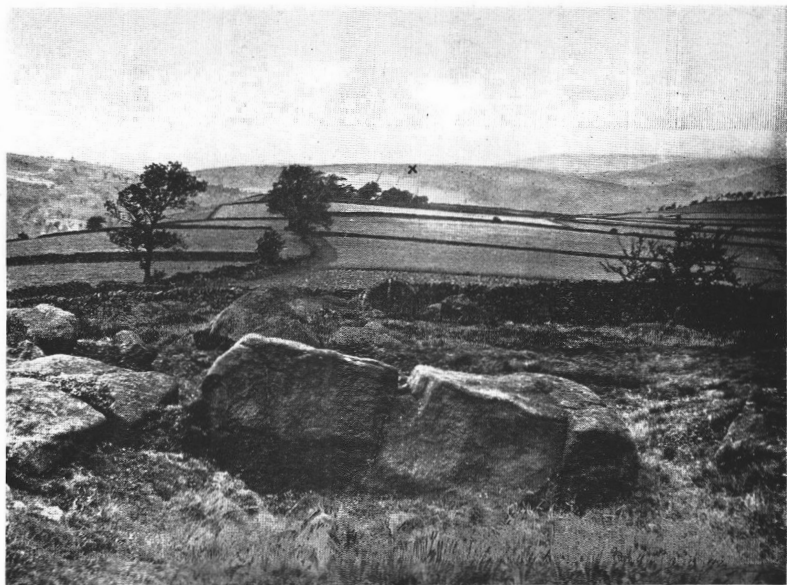


FIG. 1.

View on line of sunset, June solstice. X marks approximate position of the Nine Ladies on Stanton Moor.



FIG. 2.

View on line of May sunset. O shews position of sun as observed on May 11th.

for some purpose. There is a similar formation $21^{\circ} 00'$ east of south, and possibly another at the north. Near the centre, on the south-west side, are a series of chambers, clearly formed of large boulders built together, and of earthen banks with boulders. The axis of these chambers is in line with the Nine Ladies on Stanton Moor (Fig. 1). The first chamber is of horse-shoe form, formed with broad earthen bank with boulders, the top of this bank being the highest part of the mound. The second chamber is of square form, and divided from the first by a large square block of stone, a passage-way being left on the right-hand side. There appears to be a third chamber on the same axis, but I am inclined to think it may be a recent excavation.

From the second chamber stones and raised ground have the appearance of a radial avenue, directed to the Black Rocks; and from this avenue there is a raised bank, forming a pathway to a group of stones, now overturned, but which, if raised into position, would form another chamber or cell.

North-east of the centre there are a series of square holes, from which large square blocks of stone have apparently been taken.

There are many prominent positions of the surrounding country in sight from Bilberry Knoll which bear distinctive names. How far these are directly associated it is difficult to say, but considering the acknowledged connection of circles with the cult of sun-worship, some of these positions are extremely significant.

From actual observation I find that the Nine Ladies, a well-known circle on Stanton Moor, is set out to indicate the sunset at the summer solstice (Fig. 1); whilst Blakelow Hill, on Tansley Moor, being at practically the corresponding angle to the north-east, indicates the sunrise at the same season. It is to be observed that whilst Blakelow Hill is a prominent natural feature, the Nine Ladies occupies a *chosen* site in a situation that gives considerable scope in the selection of position.

This is important, as, though the relative position of Blakelow Hill may be accidental, the position of the Nine Ladies indicates choice, and the relative positions of the three sites taken together amounts to an absolute certainty of purpose. This is further demonstrated by the fact that although the Nine Ladies is little more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Nine Stones Circle on Harthill Moor, and about $5\frac{1}{4}$ miles due east from Arbor Low, it is hidden from both these circles by the higher ground of the plateau on which it is placed, and apparently has no connecting link. If the installation of the Nine Ladies had been in reference to either of these circles, it would have been a simple matter to place it on the higher ground in direct sight from them.

Other important festivals were May Eve and November Eve. I am without data to fix these dates correctly, and they are not so easy to identify astronomically as the summer solstice, but if, as I suppose, an allowance must be made for the difference between the "old" and "new" style calendar, these dates would be May 11th and November 11th. By making this allowance, the spring festival also, March 10th, would accord with the spring equinox. On May 11th, 1913, the full disc of the sun rested on the horizon immediately over the intersection of Birchover hills with Masson at about $32^{\circ} 00'$ north of west (Fig. 2). This line could also be indicated by Bee Low, near to Youlgreave, and, projected on the Ordnance Map, it cuts Corbar Hill at Buxton.

I am told by the Rev. J. W. Chippett, of Riber Castle, that on rare occasions the dome of Buxton Hospital can be seen from the castle, and although the intervening higher hills near Chelmorton would seem to render such a view impossible, a consideration of the tables of mean refraction seems to bring it within the bounds of possibility; and Corbar Hill, being 200 to 300 feet higher than the dome, is far more likely to be within sight from Bilberry Knoll, which is 70 to 80 feet higher than the castle; a fact which may be of some importance.

Comparing these results with alignments which I have computed from diagrams, since obtained from Sir Norman Lockyer's valuable work on *Stonehenge*, strong confirmation as well as further evidence is forthcoming.

I find that at the present era (1905) the sun sets at the June solstice over a horizon having an angle of altitude of $13'$ (the height of Stanton Moor) on an alignment N. $47^{\circ} 15'$ W. The alignment of the *Nine Ladies* is N. $46^{\circ} 30'$ W. The angle of altitude of Blakelow Hill is about the same, $13'$, the sunrise being thus, N. $47^{\circ} 15'$ E., whilst the alignment of the summit of Blakelow Hill is N. $46^{\circ} 00'$ E.

It should be understood that, owing to variation in the obliquity of the earth's orbit, the sun rises later and sets earlier than at the period these circles were established.

Associated with the June year is the winter, or December solstice, and it is worthy of remark that the sun sets over a horizon of $13'$ altitude—*i.e.*, the highest point of Middlepeak, S. $49^{\circ} 15'$ W. This alignment cuts the northern declivity of Middlepeak at about its intersection with the hills beyond. The sunrise is indeterminate, but it would be a little south-west of Crich Stand, probably at the profile of the cliff as it was before landslips and quarrying disturbed it.

Coming to the May year, Sir N. Lockyer gives May 6th as the exact commencement of the May year, being half-way between the spring equinox and the June solstice. But the date observed varied somewhat in different countries; the Roman calendar was May 9th. The fact that May 9th is the chief fair-day at Matlock may possibly have some bearing on the subject.

The alignment of sunset on May 6th over a horizon of $10'$ altitude (the Chelmorton hills) is N. $61^{\circ} 8'$ W. The extreme upper rim of the sun just before it disappears is taken, and not the whole disc, as seen in my May 11th observation.

The alignment of the intersection of Masson with Birchover hills is N. $58^{\circ} 00'$ W., and making allowance for the earlier

date and for difference due to change in the obliquity of the ecliptic, it seems probable that this hill intersection would indicate the May sunset at the period of its usefulness. And a small cairn at Redhill, Middleton Moor, S. $62^{\circ} 00'$ W., would seem to indicate the sunset in November, the alignment of which is N. $63^{\circ} 53'$ W.

These figures, being computed from very small scale diagrams, can have no claim to mathematical exactitude. They are, however, sufficiently accurate to shew that in *Bilberry Knoll* there is matter for very interesting investigation.

Observations kindly undertaken at the *Bull Ring*, Dove Holes, by Mr. J. Braylesford Bunting, of Chapel-en-le-Frith, with a view to corroborative evidence, were unfortunately unsuccessful, owing to a series of hazy mornings; but computing from Sir N. Lockyer's diagrams, I find that the June sun rises over *Lose Hill*, and would be close by the southern escarpment of Mam Tor, whilst the May sun rises over *Crow Chine* on *Middle Moor*. And reference to maps suggests that other well-known circles have similar alignments.

It will be seen that such observations need time and patience, but although my evidence is far from complete, there seems strong reasons to conclude that circles *were* set out with reference to prominent features of the surrounding country that would indicate the position of the sun at its rising and setting on the chief festivals dedicated to sun-worship, and that the circle on Bilberry Knoll bears evidence of having been in like manner set out with that view.

* Some of the many prominent sites surrounding may yield other evidence, as, *e.g.*, Crich, Alport Hill, Barrel Edge, Black Rocks, etc., etc., but the only one I propose to mention here is Harborough Rocks.¹ This site bears unmistakable evidence of direct association with Bilberry Knoll. Near to the highest point there stands a squared pillar, formed out of the solid rock, and leaning considerably out of the perpen-

¹ See vols. xii., p. 108, and xxxi., p. 89, of this *Journal*.



FIG. 3.

Pillars formed out of solid rock at Harborough Rocks, near Brassington. The man standing at pillar marked B, with hand on rock basin, is in direct line with Bilberry Knoll, from the man seated on the squared pillar, marked A.



FIG. 4.

The pillar marked B in Fig. 3, worked to oval form, with rock-basin at top, having a waste-hole, marked *a*. C is the foot-stool or standing-place in line with Bilberry Knoll, from the squared pillar.

dicular (marked A in Fig. 3). It is about 5 ft. 6 in. high, with a seat formed 4 ft. 6 in. above ground, and notches cut in the rock for steps to the seat. This seat faces directly towards Bilberry Knoll, the view of which is obscured, when seated upon the pillar, by a ridge of rocks rising about 7 ft. high twelve yards distant, but, seated 3 in. or 4 in. higher, Bilberry Knoll is in full view just over the ridge of rock. It should be noted that the seat has apparently been redressed in modern times. About four yards farther, on the other side of the ridge of rocks, there stands another rock pillar (Fig. 4, and marked B in Fig. 3), the top part of which is worked to an oval or lozenge form, the points of the lozenge being apparently in line with another Blakelow Hill on Bonsall Moor. Near the top of this pillar there is a rock basin, 10 in. diameter, 6 in. deep in front, rising to 12 in. deep at the back to the top of the pillar, and with a perfectly formed waste-hole about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter on the right-hand side (marked *a* in Fig. 4). This pillar stands to the immediate left of the line to Bilberry Knoll, and at its foot on the line there is a piece of rock which may have been a footstool, or standing-place (marked C in Fig. 4).

Whatever may be said of the many rock basins found in various parts of the country, of which most of those found in the gritstone are probably "water worn," this one at Harborough Rocks is undoubtedly the handiwork of man. And although eighteenth-century predilection for redressing and generally touching up megalithic remains, detracts considerably from the value of their evidence, that predilection does not provide any satisfactory explanation of the position of these pillars, nor why the squared pillar should turn its back upon the valley, its natural outlook, and face the blank wall of a ridge of rock.

It seems evident that when these pillars were formed, Bilberry Knoll was a position of importance in the estimation of the people who installed them.

Amongst the various contributory evidences is that of place-names, and the evidence seems to me overwhelming that place-names owe much to the influence of sun-worship. It is much to be regretted that such influence appears to be totally ignored by the many writers on the origin of place-names. If sun-worship has impressed itself on the days of the week, how much more likely it is to have left impressions on the localities with which it was closely identified.

As the translation of words of British or Celtic origin seems to be rather a matter of individual opinion than of scientific basis, I feel some hesitation in referring to this branch of my subject. There are, however, a few names that recur so frequently in the neighbourhood of circles that they may almost be held as evidence in themselves, and whilst I am unable to do more than suggest a possible meaning, I am convinced that the simple meanings usually assigned to them are wholly without warrant.

Take the word "cow," or "caw," in the numerous Cowlows, Cowleys, Cowdales, etc., derived by more than one writer from the pasturage of that useful quadruped that provides us with our milk and beef. Mr. Herbert writes in *Cyclops Christianus*: "Mature reflection has persuaded me that *caw* was one of those mythical and mystical names that were employed in Bardism. . . . Caw is band, or bond of union; from which the highest degree of the Bards were termed *Beirdd Caw*, Bards of the Band. . . . Cow is only caw prefixed in composition, and Cowllog, otherwise written Cawllog, meant Band of Compact or Covenant." This word is often found on old Ordnance maps as caw. It is usually found in association with circles, as, e.g., "Cowlow" and "Ladylow," on each side of Longridge Lane, between the camp on Coombes Moss and the Bull Ring, and another "Cowlow" overlooking Ashwood Dale, at which the same road ends as Longridge Lane before crossing the Ashwood Dale and River Wye to join the Youlgreave to Buxton track before mentioned.

Again, we have the word "middle," in Middlepeak, and the many Middletons and Middle Hills scattered about the country. The accepted meaning of the word—*i.e.*, central—is by no means a satisfactory explanation of its general application. At Middleton-by-Youlgreave we have Middleton *at one end*, Youlgreave in the *middle*, and Alport at the other end. Middleton-by-Wirksworth stands at the top of a long hill, and could not possibly be described as a central town. I would suggest as a more likely derivation the Celtic word *myd*, meaning circular enclosure. Mr. Herbert, in *Cyclops Christianus*, says: "For Myd (which comes from the plural of MWD, an arch or cove) see *Cadair Ceridwen*, v. 18; see also Owen's Dictionary, ed. 2nd."

The word "middle" is generally found in the neighbourhood of a circle, or with such associations as suggest the probability of a circle. Middleton-by-Youlgreave is near to Arbor Low, which is itself situate on Middleton Common, and two miles to the north-west of Arbor Low, close by the Roman road, there is a farm called Middle Street. Stoney Middleton is about two miles south of Wet Withins circle on Eyam Moor. Associated with the Bull Ring at Dove Holes there is Middle Hill, in line with Mam Tor, and another Middle Hill two miles east by south towards Wheston. And, again, we find Middle Hills and White Middle Hills eight miles due west from Arbor Low in a suggestive district lying between Flash and Leek. And associated with Bilberry Knoll we have Middlepeak and Middleton-by-Wirksworth, Middle Moor (part of Matlock Moor) and Middlehills Wood, Tansley Moor.

The idea of "central" never could have described any of these positions, and the conclusion is inevitable that it is a corruption of "myd," or some other British word having reference to sun or fire worship. Supporting this conclusion is the spelling *Myddeton* for Middleton-by-Youlgreave on Speed's Map, 1610.

Another word of seemingly simple derivation is "broad," or "brad," but this also is always found in association with circles, and the sense of *wide* gives no possible explanation to many of its positions. In a pamphlet *On Local Names*, the Rev. Prebendary Earle, M.A., explaining the vagaries of the Celtic word *man*, "the place," gives a word *brawdfa* as "the place of judgment." If *brawd* is a Celtic word meaning judgment, it offers a much more likely explanation of the wide application and of the associations of the word "broad," or "brad," than the usually accepted meaning from its presumed Saxon extraction.

"Green" is probably a corruption of Grin.

"Bee," in the numerous Beelows, Beeleys, Beamours, etc. (to which must be added the many Bolehills and Bullhills), from Bel, Beal, Belin, etc., the sun-god. I include the word "Bilberry" under this head.

"Bar," high or exalted.

"Car," or "carr," from *cor*, "the circle," or *caer*, "the camp."

"Gorse," from Gorsedd.

Then we have "doe," or "dor," the special use of the word "Coombs," and the words "lea," Al "port," and "haven," all implying shelter or protection.

"White," "blake" or "bleak," "shining," and "bright," are all words expressing the same idea, and speak for themselves; and whilst misunderstanding may be excusable in the case of "blake" or "bleak," "bleak" now bearing the totally different meaning *exposed*, and "blake" being so often corrupted to *black*, its direct antonym, the very frequent recurrence of the words "white" and "shining" should cause reflection. When in nearly every *old* hamlet, village, or town we come across the word *white*, in Whitehall, White House, White Knoll, White Tor, White Fields, or White Hills, etc., it is not, surely, in the true spirit of research to treat the word as of no importance. Nothing but the "rite of fire" can

give any satisfactory explanation of the wide distribution of these five words.

The study of place-names¹ is absorbing, but it would require too much space to deal at all adequately in this article with their connection with sun-worship. All the names mentioned, and others, are to be found in the district around Bilberry Knoll, and are, I contend, strong presumptive evidence of a circle somewhere in their vicinity.

Striking evidence may occasionally be found amongst *field-names*. Such, I think, may be considered the name *Dunkirk*, "the church of the hill-fort," which is borne by the field immediately adjoining that in which the circle stands.

If these notes, which touch but the fringe, and are necessarily much curtailed, succeed in arousing some interest in the subject, I hope some organised investigation will be established in Derbyshire, where there is such a wide field for such research.

I have received much encouragement from visitors to Matlock interested in archæology who have visited the circle with me, and Mr. J. Walter Hobbs, of London, who has devoted much time to the study of circles in Cornwall, made a special journey to Matlock to examine and compare Bilberry Knoll. The notes he has been kind enough to send me are much too voluminous to include here, but I cannot do better than close my article with his concluding paragraph:—

"We think the stones around the knoll may once have ringed off the centre, and have been denuded, etc., and slid into positions now occupied by some. The distinguishing feature is, however, the central mound—its alignment to obvious points, the chamber entrance towards and on the line of the Nine Ladies at Stanton Moor. These confirm our former view, viz., that Bilberry Knoll was the fortified home of the Priest Astronomers, who lived there in security, watching for the critical sun rising, star rising, or what not,

¹ Cf. article on place-names in vol. xxxvi., and in this volume.

and gave a signal to the Nine Ladies Circle, by fire, smoke, or other means, when the festival or ceremony should begin."

This strong confirmation of my views, coupled with the evidence I adduce, will, I hope, satisfy archæologists that Bilberry Knoll is worthy of serious consideration and further investigation.